



OUR STUDENTS, OUR TEAMS . . . OUR FUTURE.

# MECHANICS

AIA Football Officials Advisory Committee

Approved by the AIA Commissioner of Officials  
For use in AIA football contests

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 2024 AIA MECHANICS CHANGES**

The following are changes to the AIA mechanics manual for the 2024 football season:

5.4 - Time officiating crew takes the field adjusted to 45 minutes prior to kickoff.

## 1.2 AIA MECHANICS AND RULES EXPERIMENTS

The Arizona Interscholastic Association continues to be a leader in player safety with the experimentation and development of new rules that enhance player safety.

As in the past, the AIA will again be running both rule and officiating mechanics experiments in conjunction with the NFHS. The data and information collected from these experiments will be reported to and utilized by the NFHS rules committee in order to determine the viability of future rule and mechanics changes.

All listed experiments will be in effect for the football season and apply to all levels of AIA football. Any mechanics or rulings in this section take precedent over any contradicting statements in other sections of this manual.

### ***1.2.1 DATA COLLECTION: GAME TIME***

- Varsity officiating crews will be responsible for recording and reporting the length of game time for all contests. The Back Judge will be responsible for recording the time of the opening kickoff, the time the game ends, and any significant delays. Significant delays include any administrative stoppage greater than five minutes (homecoming, injury, etc.). Varsity crews will also be responsible for reporting the sportsmanship of coaches, players, and fans of both teams. The Referee is responsible for his/her crew submitting the information to the online form (via AIA dashboard) following the contest. Only one report should be submitted per crew.
  - Example:
    - Kickoff 7pm, Game ends 8:57, homecoming (5 minutes added to halftime)
    - Sportsmanship (3 Options): Poor, Fair, Good

### 1.3 OFFICIAL'S CODE OF ETHICS

Schools have entrusted officials to assist them in the educational development of their youth through athletics. The proper operation of such a process requires that officials be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people they serve.

In recognition of these expectations, it shall be the responsibility of an official to follow the directions provided in the following Official's Code of Ethics. Violation of the Code of Ethics will be a violation of AIA Bylaws and may result in a sanction to the offending party.

AN OFFICIAL SHALL:

Place the welfare of the individual athlete above all other considerations.

Maintain confidence and control from start of an assignment to finish.

Devote time, thought and study to the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to carry out these rules so that one may render effective and creditable service in a fair and unbiased manner.

Work with fellow officials and the State Association in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during debate of points or rules at issue.

Resist every temptation and outside pressure to use one's position as an official to benefit oneself.

Under all circumstances avoid promoting the special interest of any person or group of persons other than the athletes we serve.

Constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the avocation in all personal conduct and relations with the student athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public and to be a worthy example to the athletes under one's jurisdiction.

Be prepared both physically and mentally, dress according to expectations, and maintain a proper appearance that is befitting the importance of the contest.

Remember and recognize that it is important to honor contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss.

Do not make statements to the news media critical of any school administrator, school, team, coach, player, other game official or the AIA.

Do not smoke or use any form of tobacco on or in the vicinity of the playing area, nor drink any alcoholic beverages or use any drugs on the day of the contest.

Carry a responsibility to act in a manner becoming to a professional person. The conduct of any official influences the attitudes of the public toward the profession in general as well as toward the official in particular.

WHEN OBSERVING A GAME AS A FAN, DO NOT PUBLICLY CRITICIZE OR Demean OFFICIALS AS THEY OFFICIATE AN ATHLETIC CONTEST.

## APPEARANCE & UNIFORM

### 2.1 PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Officials shall maintain a professional appearance at all times. Hair shall be kept clean and presentable. Hair shall not impair vision. Neatly trimmed mustaches and beards are permissible.

### 2.2 UNIFORM

Officials shall purchase and maintain their uniforms and equipment. Officials will be required to wear the uniform as indicated. Uniform, including shoes, should appear clean.

One of the following (whole crew must match):

- Black and White Football Official Striped Shirt with AIA Logo
  - Black and white vertically striped (2 in.), long or short sleeve knit shirt with knit cuff and Byron collar.
- Plackets on back of shirts, by position R-U-L-H-B-F-S (*Varsity Only*)
- Black football pants with 1 ¼" white stripe running from waist to cuff.
- All black belt
- Long black socks
- Black football shoes with black shoelaces. (*Shoes may have some white markings*)
- Black football cap (*sized*) with white piping.
  - For identification purposes, REFEREE shall wear a solid white football cap (*sized*).
- No jewelry. (Wedding rings and medical alert bracelets are an exception)
- No watches. (Except as needed for timing purposes)

\* **EXCEPTION:** Junior varsity and freshman officials will wear black shorts, instead of pants, and white or black socks.

### 2.3 EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is required to be carried by all game officials, unless noted by position.

- Whistle (*Fox 40*)
- Device for tracking number of downs
- One penalty marker - 15" x 15" light gold flag with weight
- Game card and pencil
- Beanbag (White, Blue, or Black – All crew the same)
  - Note: BACK JUDGE (*5-Person crew*) and LINE JUDGE (*4-Person crew*) should carry two beanbags of different colors.
- Chain Clip (HEAD LINESMAN or LINE JUDGE only)
- Coin (REFEREE)
- Timing device
  - BACK JUDGE and Wing Officials (*5-Person crew*)
  - REFEREE and Wing Officials (*4-Person crew*)
  - Optional: BACK JUDGE may also wear an additional timing device on the belt.

## 2.4 AIA TRADEMARKED LOGO

Officials shall wear the **official** AIA insignias when working all AIA contests. Other organizational patches are not permitted. Failure to wear the required insignias during a contest shall result in a warning. A second offense may result in loss of assignments.

THE AIA LOGO IS TRADEMARKED AND CAN ONLY BE WORN  
WHEN OFFICIATING AIA SANCTIONED EVENTS.

## SAFETY GUIDELINES

### 3.1 INCLEMENT WEATHER

The following are the procedures for when inclement weather occurs during a contest:

- The safety of athletes (participants), spectators, coaches, athletic directors, school personnel, and all others present at an athletic contest must be the first and foremost concern to the contest officials, the building administrators and/or their designee.
- When a contest has been scheduled and dangerous playing conditions exist or severe weather is anticipated, the following should be considered:
  - Prior to beginning an athletic contest when severe weather is anticipated the head contest official and the principals of each school, or their designees, will meet to review the suspension and/or postponement procedures. This would include any playing rulebook coverage.
  - If severe weather conditions develop, the host team building administrator and the head contest official will notify coaches, school administrators and, if applicable, the individual responsible for public address announcements that the possibility of abrupt suspension of play exists.
  - If severe weather conditions persist, the contest should be suspended immediately. If any life-threatening condition occurs (lightning, wind, rain, etc.), play should be suspended immediately.
- When a suspension of a contest occurs, consider the following:
  - If the suspension is 45 minutes or greater, resuming at a later date should be considered.
  - Prior to resuming play following a suspension, all administrators and officials must meet and agree that weather conditions are safe for resumption. If any administrator or official votes against resuming, the suspension shall continue.
  - If play is to be resumed, provide ample time for warm-up.

There are specific criteria for dealing with situations where there is a lightning disturbance:

- When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
- Once play has been suspended, wait at least thirty minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the thirty-minute count, reset the clock and another thirty-minute count should begin.

If the game is interrupted due to weather during the last three minutes of the second period, and the delay is at least 30 minutes, the opposing coaches can mutually agree to shorten halftime intermission, provided there is at least a one-minute intermission (not including the three-minute warm-up period).

## 3.2 HEAT & HUMIDITY

Heat and humidity can become a serious issue and be dangerous for both players and officials. This is especially true during the first month of the season. The following guidelines should be taken into consideration in situations of extreme heat or humidity.

*Day before the game:* All officials should properly hydrate.

*Game day:* Discuss with athletic directors, head coaches, and medical personnel the importance of keeping players hydrated.

*During the game:* It is highly recommended that water breaks be taken during team timeouts, after changes in possessions, and following scores. In extreme heat or humidity situations, water breaks can be taken during an officials' timeout. Wing officials should communicate these breaks to the sideline coaches to ensure that all players remain properly hydrated. All officials should also rehydrate whenever possible during these breaks.

## 3.3 CONCUSSIONS

Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. It is not the responsibility of the game officials to determine if this clearance occurs. The game officials are responsible for ensuring that the coach is informed, and the player sits out one down. If the player appears in the game after sitting out a down, it should be assumed that the player has been cleared.

## 3.4 BLOOD

Any player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or any amount of blood on their uniform or person shall be directed to leave the game. The player must sit out one play and may not return until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed.

## 3.5 CASTS

The UMPIRE should check all casts during pregame. Casts should be padded with at least ½ inch of protective padding. Doctor notes are not required to be given to officials.

# ABSOLUTES

## 4.1 GENERAL ABSOLUTES

The following absolutes are philosophies and mechanics that should always be followed by all game officials.

1. Every crew member will be on the field at the specified times listed in order to professionally deal with all pregame duties.
2. The coin toss will take place 3 minutes prior to scheduled kickoff.
3. At the snap, initial positioning will fall within the proper guidelines.
4. The goal line is "SACRED", and as such, will always be covered properly.
5. Player safety is foremost in our game. Err on the side of safety.
6. Verbal and visual communications will be given prior to and during each down.
7. Individual officials will NEVER sound a whistle without seeing the ball.
8. DO NOT echo whistles or touchdown signals. DO echo time-out signals.
9. Time-outs and between period intervals will be conducted with professionalism and according to proper mechanics.
10. Movement of chains and the box between periods will be handled as outlined.
11. Penalty information, communication, and enforcement will be handled as outlined.
12. Remove whistle from mouth after snap.
13. Be a dead ball official.
14. Always be a professional.



## PRE - GAME

### 5.1 PRE-GAME COMMUNICATIONS

It is important to communicate as a crew prior to the day of a contest. All officials are responsible for contacting their crew chief at least two days prior to the scheduled contest and confirming their intent to be there. For varsity contests, crew chiefs should make contact with the Athletic Director of the home school in order to communicate locker room locations and any timing changes (such as an extended half for homecoming).

### 5.2 ARRIVAL AT GAME SITE

The following section outlines when officials should arrive at the location of the scheduled contest.

#### ***5.2.1 SUB VARSITY CONTESTS***

Officiating crew should arrive at the game site and be on the field no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled kickoff. Authority over the contest begins at this time and it is important to have an officiating presence.

A short pregame discussion should be conducted on the field prior to carrying out on field duties. Possible items to cover during pregame discussion include:

- New or interesting rules.
- Issues or plays from the previous week.
- Responsibilities and mechanics.

Sub varsity contests are where less experienced officials are able to learn under the guidance of more experienced officials. Certified officials should use this time to mentor and guide newer officials. Newer officials should, in turn, use this time to ask questions.

#### ***5.2.2 VARSITY CONTESTS***

Officiating crew should arrive at the game site at least 90 minutes prior to kickoff.

Conduct pregame as a crew. Possible items to cover during pregame discussion include:

- New or interesting rules.
- Issues or plays from the previous week.
- Video review.
- Responsibilities and mechanics.

### 5.3 DRESS

There is only one opportunity to instill a favorable first impression. Minimum acceptable dress standards going to a varsity contest are:

- Shirt with a collar (polo or button-down casual)
- Casual slacks – no jeans or shorts.
- Casual shoes or boots – no tennis shoes or sandals.
- Hair/mustaches/beards neatly trimmed.

*NOTE:* Sub varsity officials generally do not have access to a locker room to change prior to the game. Due to this, officials should arrive at the game site already dressed in uniform.

### 5.4 PRE-GAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD

The entire crew will enter the field 45 minutes before the scheduled game time. While pre-game duties are being completed, any official that does not have a task to do will patrol midfield between the teams while they warm up.

Teams will be required to warm up on their side of the 45 yard-line with no players warming up in the middle of the field between the 45 yard-lines.

During this time all crew members should spot check player equipment. When possible, officials should attempt to take position and see practice snaps (at least one official will stay between the teams). If coaches' meetings and instructions to chain crew, ball boys/girls, and clock operator are completed **and** one or fewer teams are on the field, the crew may re-enter the locker room and come out again prior to the coin toss. Once all pre-game duties are completed the entire crew will come together to discuss anything that came up during pre-game conferences.

*NOTE:* For sub varsity contests, all officials should be on the field no later than 30 minutes prior to kickoff.

- **REFEREE:** Meet with each head coach, home team first, and complete the pregame conference. The H will accompany the Referee when visiting the home coach. The L will accompany the Referee when visiting the visiting coach. The items covered in the conference should include:
  - Introductions
    - Introduce yourselves.
    - Give the coach a list of the officials by position.
    - Identify the wing officials that will be working on the sideline of that coach.
  - Equipment & Player Information
    - Ask the coach if all players are legally equipped (REQUIRED)
    - Ask if there are any players wearing casts or other special equipment.
    - Ask the coach for the numbers of the captains (no more than four).
    - Ask the coach for up to three game balls (two balls only for sub varsity contests).
  - Timing
    - Confirm the time of kickoff.
    - Inform the coach that the coin toss will occur when the game clock reaches zero (three minutes before the scheduled game time).
  - Team Information
    - Ask the coach to identify any unusual plays or formations.
    - Ask the coach if there are any questions.
    - Ask the coach to share his game film via HUDL following the game. (See [AzFOA.org](https://www.azfoa.org) for HUDL Information Card example)

Following the pregame conference, inspect the field to ensure that there are no potential safety hazards. Spot-check players for any illegal equipment or uniforms. Relay any useful information from the pregame conference to other members of the crew. Give the game balls to the LINE JUDGE or ball people. The wing official who is not meeting with a coach will be positioned between the teams in the middle of the field.

- **UMPIRE:** Inspect the legality of the equipment of every player. Check that the line indicating where the try is snapped from is marked correctly.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Meet with the official game timer. Confirm that the clock is running and set to hit zero three minutes before the scheduled game time. The items to cover with the clock operator should include:
  - When to start and stop the clock
  - Official's signals to look for (stop, wind, ready for play)
  - Length of halftime
  - 42-Point rule timing
  - Find out how the crew can contact the clock operator if required

Check the end zones and end lines. Make sure that all pylons are in the correct positions. Inspect the area around the end zones for any safety hazards.

*NOTE:* During sub varsity contests (4-Person Crew), the LINE JUDGE will complete all pregame responsibilities of the BACK JUDGE.

- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Accompany the REFEREE and meet with home coach. Take position at the 50 yard line while the R & L meets with the visiting coach. Identify the "get back" coach and ask the coach to assist in keeping the sideline clear of players and coaches when the ball is live. Check the sideline with the press box (home sideline). Move all yard markers at least two yards off the sideline. Move the G markers at least five yards off the sideline.

Ask coach or game management to designate three ball people. Instruct the ball people on their duties over the course of the game. Items to cover with the ball people should include:

- Work on the designated side of the field (2 on the home side and 1 on the visiting side).
  - Stay off the field at all times. Also, be aware of the game and stay safe on the sideline.
  - Relay game balls to officials on the field as required.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Accompany the REFEREE and meet with visiting coach. Take position at the 50 yard line while the R & H meets with the home coach. Identify the "get back" coach and ask the coach to assist in keeping the sideline clear of players and coaches when the ball is live. Check the sideline on the opposite side of the press box (visiting sideline). Move all yard markers at least two yards off the sideline. Move the G markers at least five yards off the sideline.

Check the line to gain equipment and instruct the chain crew. The items to cover with the chain crew should include:

- Operate the chains two yards off the sideline.
- Do not move unless the wing official or REFEREE signals.
- Do not move if there is a flag on the field.
- Down Box: Move and set the down box before changing to the next down.
- Be aware of the game and drop the chains straight back if the play comes close to the sideline.

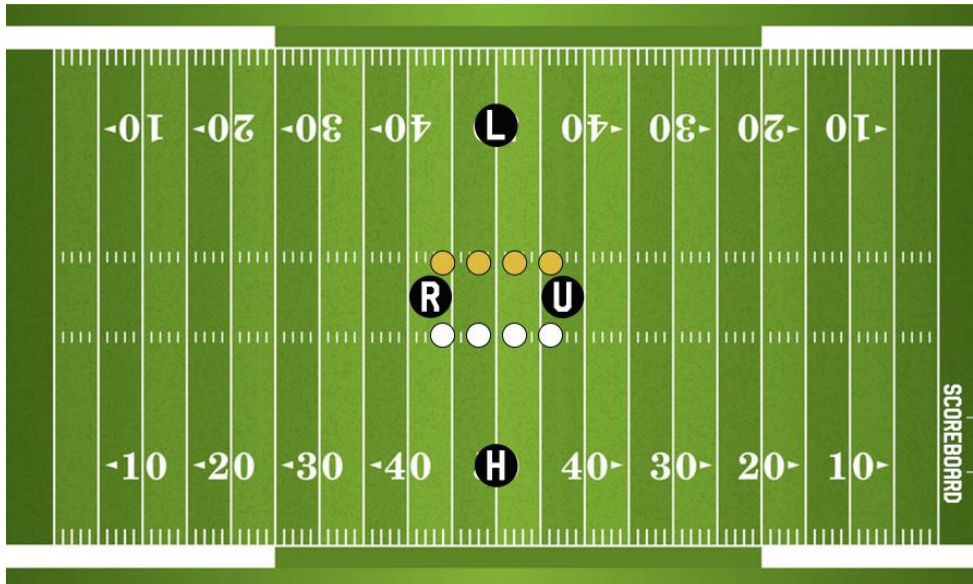
- Instruct on how to set the clip.
- Once a first down is reached inside the 10-yard line, have the chains moved far off the sideline and set on the ground. Do not allow chains to be dropped anywhere near the pylon.
- Ensure that the chains have tape placed at the halfway point.

## 5.5 COIN TOSS

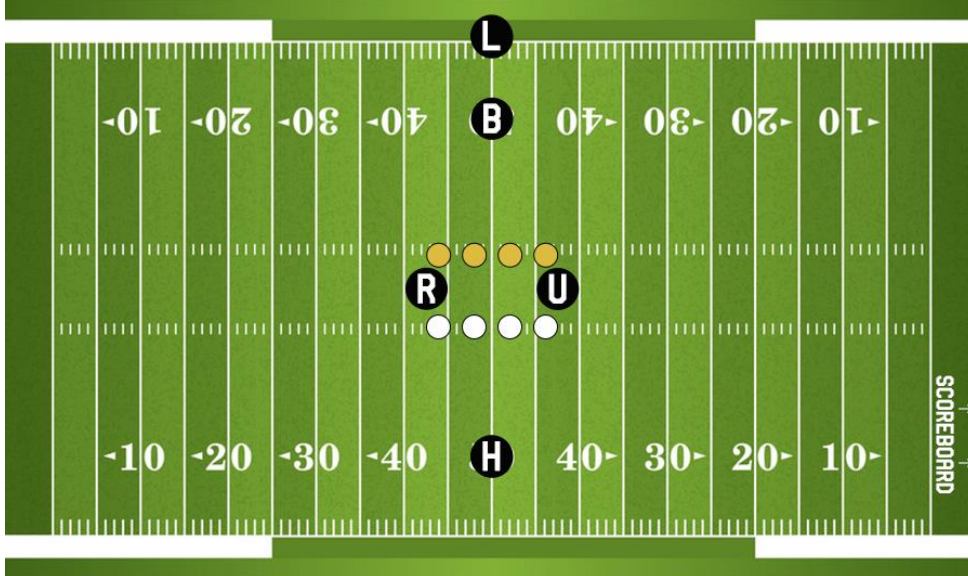
The coin toss should occur in the middle of the field, on the 50-yard line, three minutes before the scheduled game time.

- **REFEREE:** With three minutes left on the clock, take position at the intersection of the 50-yard line and the home team's sideline. Be positioned so that you are standing slightly off the line, towards the side of the field opposite the scoreboard. When there are thirty seconds remaining on the clock, jog out onto the middle of the field with the UMPIRE. Once at the middle of the field, signal to the sidelines to have the captains brought out. Items to cover with the captains:
  - Have captains shake hands.
  - Sportsmanship.
  - Perform the coin toss.
- **UMPIRE:** With three minutes left on the clock, take position at the intersection of the 50-yard line and the home team's sideline. Be positioned so that you are standing slightly off the line, towards the side of the field has the scoreboard. When there is thirty seconds remaining on the clock, jog out onto the middle of the field with the REFEREE. Listen to the REFEREE's conference with the captains and write down the decisions as they relate to the coin toss.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** With three minutes left on the clock, take position at the intersection of the 50-yard line and the home team's sideline with the team captains. On the signal from the REFEREE, escort the captains towards the middle of the field. Stop at the numbers and allow the captains to continue on. Remain at the numbers until the coin toss is completed. Ensure that the home team remains off of the field during the coin toss.
- **LINE JUDGE:** When the clock hits zero, be in position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and the 50-yard line. If pregame with the chain crew is complete, observe the coin toss and assist the BACK JUDGE in keeping the visiting team off the field during the coin toss.
  - *SUB VARSITY:* With three minutes left on the clock, take position at the intersection of the 50-yard line and the visiting team's sideline with the team captains. On the signal from the REFEREE, escort the captains towards the middle of the field. Stop at the numbers and allow the captains to continue on. Remain at the numbers until the coin toss is completed. Ensure that the visiting team remains off of the field during the coin toss.
- **BACK JUDGE:** With three minutes left on the clock, take position at the intersection of the 50-yard line and the visiting team's sideline with the team captains. On the signal from the REFEREE, escort the captains towards the middle of the field. Stop at the numbers and allow the captains to continue on. Remain at the numbers until the coin toss is completed. Ensure that the visiting team remains off of the field during the coin toss.

### 5.5.1 FOUR-PERSON COIN TOSS DIAGRAM



### 5.5.2 FIVE-PERSON COIN TOSS DIAGRAM



The following general mechanics are to be used by all AIA football officials in both varsity and sub-varsity contests. Minor differences between four and five person mechanics are noted.

## 6.1 TIMING

Timing includes the starting and stopping of the game or play clock, in addition to any intermissions.

### 6.1.1 STANDARD TIMING

All officials are responsible for ensuring that the clock is running, stopped, or started at the correct times.

- **LINE JUDGE:** Time the game if no visible play clock is used.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Instruct the clock operator prior the game. Time all intervals during the course of a game.

- Start the 25 or 40 second clock as required by rule. Give a visual arm count of the last five seconds. If a visible play clock is operating, DO NOT give any visual signal.
- Time the 60-second interval between periods and during timeouts. Inform the teams and officials when 15 seconds remain.
- Time the three-minute intermission before the start of overtime and the two-minute intermission between overtime periods.
- **REFEREE:** Correct any obvious timing error if it is discovered prior to the second live ball following the error, and before the period has officially ended.

**NOTE:** In sub-varsity contests, the LINE JUDGE will provide instruction to the clock operator and the REFEREE will handle all other responsibilities of the BACK JUDGE.

### **6.1.2 RUNNING CLOCK / MERCY TIMING**

Special timing rules will apply anytime a team is ahead of an opponent by 42 or more points in the first half OR 35 or more points in the second half. The game clock will continue to run unless the game is stopped for:

- A team timeout
- An official's timeout (including injury)
- Following a score
- A change of possession
- Following a legal kick play

In the cases listed above, the referee will start the clock on the ready for play signal.

Regular timing rules will apply in the last two minutes of the game or when the score differential returns to less than 42 points in the first half. The speed up rule will remain in effect if the score returns to less than 35 points in the second half.

### **6.1.3 CHARGED TIMEOUT**

If a team has timeouts remaining, and the ball is dead, any player or the head coach may call a timeout. The official that hears the request should blow the whistle and signal the clock to stop. Once the covering official has gotten the attention of the REFEREE, the official should point in the direction of the team who has taken the timeout. All other officials should also give the signal to stop the clock. If there is a penalty, the enforcement must occur prior to the timeout being given. During a charged timeout, officials should not congregate in one location (unless important information related to the game must be shared). All officials should mark the timeout information on their game cards and visually confirm with the crew the number of timeouts remaining for each team.

**Important:** Stay Hydrated

- **REFEREE:** Give the stop the clock signal while facing the press box. Follow this signal by pointing to the team who took the timeout. This point should be done by turning towards that team's goal line and pointing with both arms at shoulder level. Move to a position about five yards from the ball in the offensive backfield and away from players, coaches, and other officials. When the BACK JUDGE gives the warning whistle with 15 seconds remaining in the timeout, point to the HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE to get their teams lined up for the next play. When the BACK JUDGE gives the timeout expiration signal, confirm that the teams and officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the ready for play signal. *(Reminder: Charged time-outs may be reduced in length if both teams are ready to play prior to the 25 second ready-for-play signal by the REFEREE.)*

- **UMPIRE:** Stand over the ball until the REFEREE gives the ready for play signal.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** Ensure that any authorized conferences take place in the designated areas. An authorized conference may take place with one coach between the hash marks or with any number of team personal at the sideline between the 25-yard lines. No conferences should take place between the numbers and the hash marks or between the 25-yard line and the goal line. Move the team if necessary, to comply with this rule. Take position about ten yards away from the team and wait for the timeout to end. Once the BACK JUDGE gives the 15-second signal, inform the team that the timeout is over. If the team on your sideline took the timeout, inform the coach of how many timeouts are remaining.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Move to a position about 15 yards from the ball in the defensive backfield and away from players, coaches, and other officials. Start timing the 60-second timeout period when the REFEREE grants and signals the timeout. Notify the REFEREE with a few short blasts on the whistle when 15 seconds remain. Point to the REFEREE when the interval has expired. If both teams are ready to resume play before the expiration of the timeout, notify the REFEREE to mark the ball ready for play.

#### **6.1.4 COACH & REFEREE CONFERENCE**

A head coach may request a timeout in order to discuss the possible misapplication of a rule (*not a judgment call*), even if the team has no timeouts remaining. The request will be granted, by the nearest official, if it occurs prior to the ball next becoming live. The official that hears the request should blow the whistle and signal the clock to stop. Once the covering official has the attention of the REFEREE, the official should point in the direction of the team who has taken the timeout. All other officials should also give the signal to stop the clock. The covering official should then inform the referee that this timeout is being used for a coach-referee conference. The mechanics used will be the same as for a charged timeout, except:

- **REFEREE:** Meet with the coach who requested the conference in front of that team's team box and near the sideline. If the conference results in a changed ruling, inform the head coach of the other team and make on field adjustments as necessary. If the conference does not result in a change, the team will be charged with a timeout. If the team does not have any timeouts remaining, a delay of game penalty should be enforced.
- **HEAD LINESMAN or LINE JUDGE:** Accompany the REFEREE during the conference with the coach, if on your sideline.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Time the 60 second interval for the timeout. If the REFEREE is still conferring with the coach when there is 15 seconds left in the time out, do not blow the warning whistle until the REFEREE has returned from this conference.

#### **6.1.5 OFFICIAL'S TIMEOUT**

An official's timeout occurs in very specific situations with no team being charged a timeout. These situations include:

- Enforcement of a penalty
- Change of possession
- Measurement for a first down
- If a player appears to be injured
- The repair of equipment that will last longer than 25 seconds

- Water break (due to extreme heat or humidity)
- Any other game management issue that could delay the game from continuing in a timely manner.

The mechanics are different for each situation, with some being addressed in other sections, as noted.

- Injury Timeout
  - If a player appears to be seriously injured, and the ball is dead, blow the whistle and stop the clock. Allow coaches and medical staff to come on the field to tend to the player.
  - If a player appears to be less than seriously injured, allow a short opportunity for the player to recover before stopping the clock.
  - If an official's timeout is taken for an injury, that player must come out of the game for at least one play (unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs).
  - During an injury timeout, allow players the opportunity to get water.
  - Coaches may have a sideline conference with their other players during an injury timeout. Players are **not** required to take a knee or stay in the middle of the field.
  - Mechanics of officials are similar to an enforced timeout, except that there is no timing required by the BACK JUDGE.

### **6.1.6 INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS (1<sup>ST</sup> TO 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> TO 4<sup>TH</sup>)**

- **REFEREE:** Once time expires, ensure that there are no fouls or timing errors that must be addressed. Hold game ball overhead to signal the end of the period. Give ball to UMPIRE to spot (if required). Meet with the UMPIRE and the wing official with the chains at the point where the ball is spotted. Review and record the down, distance, yard line, and spot of the ball relative to the hash marks before relocating to the opposite side of the field.
- **UMPIRE:** Spot the ball. Meet with REFEREE and wing official with the chains at the point where the ball is spotted. Review the down, distance, yard line, and spot of the ball relative to the hash marks before relocating to the opposite side of the field. Spot the ball at the new location. Check with others on crew to ensure that the spot is correct.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Instruct chain crew to remain set until you come to move them. Meet with REFEREE and UMPIRE at the point where the ball is spotted. Review and write down the down, distance, yard line, and spot of the ball relative to the hash marks before moving to and relocating the chains. Grab the chain clip and move the chains to the proper location on the other end of the field. Ensure that the ends of the chains are flipped and that there is the same down, distance, and location of the box as before. Make sure that the down box is showing the correct number.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE THE CHAINS:** Move down the sideline to the yard line where the ball will next be put into play once the intermission is finished.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Time the 60 second intermission. Move to the spot on the other end of the field where the ball will next be put into play. Inform the officials and teams when there are 15 seconds left in the intermission.



### 6.1.7 INTERMISSION AT HALF

- **REFEREE:** Once time expires, ensure that there are no fouls or timing errors that must be addressed. Hold game ball overhead to signal the end of the half. Once both teams have cleared the field, give the signal for the clock to start.
- **UMPIRE & LINE JUDGE:** Ensure that both teams remain separate from each other while leaving the field. If both teams must exit on the same location on the field, it is important that you physically stand between the teams. Require one team to wait, if necessary, until their opponent has passed. Assist the HEAD LINESMAN with the gathering of the game balls (if required).
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Gather the game balls from the ball people. Make sure the location of the home team's locker room is known (follow the team if necessary). As the halftime intermission is nearing completion, retrieve the HOME team from their locker room and escort them back to the field.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Assist the UMPIRE and LINE JUDGE in keeping the teams separate. Time the halftime intermission. Assist the HEAD LINESMAN with the gathering of the game balls (if required). Make sure the location of the visiting team's locker room is known (follow the team if necessary). As the halftime intermission is nearing completion, retrieve the VISITING team from their locker room and escort them to the field.

All officials should ensure that each team remains separate during the halftime intermission. Once the halftime intermission has begun, officials should meet in their locker room (*on the field for sub-varsity contests*) and discuss details of the first half. Suggested items to discuss include:

- Any issues that came up during the first half
- Communication
- Tendencies
- Things to look for

Be on the field, with both teams, when the halftime intermission comes to an end. Observe teams during the three-minute warm up period. Get the second half options from the coaches and promptly begin the second half when the warm up time has expired. Captains will no longer come out for second half options.

## 6.2 WHISTLE USE

The whistle is the official's most important tool. It can be used to do the following:

- Indicate that the ball has become dead by rule.
- Mark the ball ready for play
- Draw attention to timeouts, penalties, etc.

It is important that whistles are blown firmly and with authority. Whistles are used to draw attention to something and must be used as such. There are two different ways that a whistle should be blown. A single, solid blast should be used to end routine plays and to mark the ball ready for play. Multiple, short blasts should be used to draw the attention of players or officials. This type of whistle is commonly used to indicate that there was a penalty on the previous play.

### 6.2.1 READY FOR PLAY WHISTLE

The REFEREE is the only official who will blow a whistle to indicate that the ball has been marked ready for play when a 25 second play clock is being used. The ready for play whistle will be blown after the ball has been spotted for the next play and the chains are set in place. There is no ready for play whistle when a 40 second play clock is being used. When a first down occurs in bounds, the REFEREE will give a silent wind (no whistle) after the UMPIRE has spotted the ball and moved into position.

### 6.2.2 DEAD BALL WHISTLE

If a covering official sees the ball down in player possession, or dead by rule, they should blow their whistle and give a dead ball signal (raise a flat hand straight into the air). An official should not blow a whistle or give a dead ball signal when the ball becomes dead outside of their area of responsibility. There is rarely a need for more than one official to blow a whistle on a play. The covering official must physically **SEE** that the ball is dead. If the ball cannot be seen, **DO NOT** blow the whistle or give a dead ball signal. No whistle or a delayed whistle is much better than an inadvertent whistle. It is important to officiate without a whistle in your mouth. Officials (except the Back Judge) should have their whistles in their mouths prior to the snap. Once a play has begun, with no dead ball fouls, officials should remove the whistle from their mouths and return them only when ruling the play dead.

It is also important to remember that the ball becomes dead by rule, not due to a whistle.

### 6.2.3 INADVERTENT WHISTLE

Inadvertent whistles can happen at the worst possible times. They are often embarrassing, but they do occur. When they do it is extremely important that they are handled in the correct manner. The most important thing is to **NEVER** cover it up. Once an inadvertent whistle occurs, blow the whistle again repeatedly in order to stop the action. If you see that the ball was loose and another member of your crew blew the whistle, come in and discuss it. Attempt to note the spot of the ball when the whistle was blown, if it is in player possession. Confer as a crew and give the offended team their options. Mark the ball based on the option and inform the opposing coach of the result.

If a foul occurs during a down, prior to the inadvertent whistle and the penalty is accepted, the inadvertent whistle is ignored.

## 6.3 HANDLING OF GAME BALLS

This includes the mechanics for moving and spotting the ball during the course of a game.

### 6.3.1 MOVING THE BALL

There is no rush to retrieve game balls. Officials must tend to dead ball officiating prior to retrieving any game balls. Do not walk away from opposing players who are close together and leave them unattended.

When relaying the game ball use short, underhand throws. If you cannot make the distance on a throw close the distance before attempting. Do not let the ball hit the ground.

- **REFEREE:** On short yardage plays that go into a side area (less than about 5 yards), help relay the ball from the wing official to the UMPIRE. Form the point of a triangle with the officials that you are relaying between.

- **UMPIRE:** Move outside of the hash marks and retrieve the ball. Hold the dead ball spot for a wing official to allow them to retrieve a ball (when required).
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Help to gather any dead ball in your area. In doing so, do not leave the spot where the ball became dead unattended. Hold the spot until someone either gets the ball or holds the dead ball spot. If there is a deep incompleteness on your sideline and that ball cannot be brought back quickly, retrieve another ball from the ball person and relay that to the UMPIRE.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Help to gather any dead ball in your area. In doing so, do not leave the spot where the ball became dead unattended. Hold the spot until someone either gets the ball or takes hold of the dead ball spot. If there is a deep incompleteness on your sideline and that ball cannot be brought back quickly, retrieve another ball from the ball person and relay that to the UMPIRE.
- **BACK JUDGE:** On long yardage plays that go into a side area (greater than about 5 yards), help relay the ball from the wing official to the umpire. Form the point of a triangle with the officials that you are relaying between. Also help in the retrieval of any long passes that are incomplete.

### 6.3.2 SPOTTING THE BALL

When spotting a ball, an official should face the official that is holding the dead ball spot and place the ball on the ground even with the feet of that official. The ball should be placed in between the hash marks. If the ball became dead in a side area, the ball should be placed on the nearest hash mark.

- **UMPIRE:** Will spot the ball most of the time. It is important to spot the ball and quickly move back into position once the crew is ready (REFEREE points).
- **REFEREE:** Will occasionally spot the ball following a free kick play or when the UMPIRE must cover a large distance in order to spot the ball.
- **WING OFFICIALS:** Will spot the ball on close goal line or first down plays after they have crashed into the spot.

## 6.4 BEANBAGS

Beanbags are used to mark spots that could be important points of reference in the future. Beanbags are not used to mark the spot of a foul. A beanbag should be dropped or tossed on a particular yard line to indicate that a certain event occurred. Continue to officiate the play even after a beanbag is tossed.

An official should toss a beanbag when any of the following occurs:

- Fumble occurs beyond the line of scrimmage
- First touching of a scrimmage or free kick occurs
- A scrimmage kick ends
- A catch is made that falls under the momentum rule
- An official is marking the dead ball spot and must leave it to tend to dead ball officiate

An official should **NOT** toss a beanbag when any of the following occurs:

- Interception (unless momentum rule applies)
- Free kick ends (unless momentum rule applies)
- A member of the receiving team touches kick
- A snap is muffed

## 6.5 COUNTING

### 6.5.1 COUNTING DOWNS

All officials are responsible for knowing what down it is. All officials should verify the number of downs with each other between every play. If there is confusion on what the next down should be, get together as a crew and discuss it.

### 6.5.2 COUNTING PLAYERS

It is important to know how many players are on the field at any given time. In order to accomplish this, officials must count the number of players before every play.

Prior to plays from scrimmage:

- **REFEREE & UMPIRE:** Always count offense. After the offense has broken their huddle, make eye contact with each other and signal the confirmation the count. Signal this by extending one arm straight out with the fist closed.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE THE CHAINS:** Always count the defense. After the offense has broken their huddle, make eye contact with the BACK JUDGE (opposite wing in sub varsity) and signal the confirmation the count. Signal this by extending one arm straight out with the fist closed.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH THE CHAINS:** Not required to signal a count prior to scrimmage plays during a varsity contest. If pre-snap time permits, assist in the counting of the defense.
  - During sub varsity contests only, count the defense. After the offense has broken their huddle, make eye contact with the opposite wing official and signal the confirmation of the count. Signal this by extending one arm straight out with the fist closed.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Always count the defense. After the offense has broken their huddle, make eye contact with the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE THE CHAINS and signal the confirmation of the count. Signal this by extending one arm straight out with the fist closed.

Prior to free kicks:

- **REFEREE & UMPIRE:** Always count the receiving team. Make eye contact with each other and signal the confirmation of the count before the ball is blown ready for play. Signal this by extending one arm straight out with the fist closed. On a free kick, the ball will not be marked ready until both teams have 11 players on the field ready to participate.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Always count the kicking team. Signal the confirmation of the count by putting one arm straight up into the air.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH THE CHAINS:** During a varsity contest always count the receiving team. Make eye contact with the REFEREE and signal the confirmation of the count before the ball is blown ready for play. Signal this by extending one arm straight out with the fist closed.
  - During sub varsity contests only, always count the kicking team. Signal the confirmation of the count by putting one arm straight up into the air.

- **BACK JUDGE:** Always count the kicking team. Signal the confirmation of the count by putting one arm straight up into the air.

## 6.6 DEAD BALL OFFICIATING

Dead ball officiating is one of the most important aspects of ensuring player safety. It is vital to learn not to watch the ball once it is out of your coverage area. When the ball is not in your area you must continue to watch the players who are, even after the ball is dead. Observing players after the play is over can ensure that the game remains under control. Personal and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls are most likely to occur after plays are over.

Do not let other responsibilities, like retrieving a ball or reporting a penalty, take your attention away from the players.

To be an excellent official, you must be an excellent dead ball official.

## 6.7 FUMBLES

An official who sees a player fumble the ball should drop or toss a beanbag on the yard line and near where the fumble occurred and continue to cover the play. (It is not necessary to throw the beanbag to the exact spot where the fumble occurred. What is important is the yard line where the fumble occurred.) The first official who is certain as to who has gained possession of the loose ball will give the appropriate signal and not worry about who eventually comes out of the pile with the ball. If the offense recovers the ball, the covering official should signal the number of the next down. If the defense recovers the ball, the covering official should give the stop-the-clock signal and point in the direction of the opponent's goal line.

If the fumble results in a pile-up of players, the official nearest the pile becomes the digger, i.e., the official responsible for removing players from the pile and digging into the pile to determine who recovered the ball. The next two officials to reach the pile give the stop-the-clock signal and assist with removing players from the pile and keeping other players away from the pile. The digger should verbalize the color of the team who recovered the ball and not point in a direction. Notify the REFEREE verbally when the recovering team has been determined. If the offensive team recovers the ball, the REFEREE will indicate the next down and give the start-the-clock signal. If the defensive team recovers the ball, the REFEREE will give the first down signal while facing in the direction of the opponent's goal line. At least one official should always remain well away from the pile and observe players who are standing around the pile.

## 6.8 CALLING FOULS & PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

### 6.8.1 CALLING A FOUL

Use good judgment in applying the advantage-disadvantage philosophy when determining whether to call a foul. Call any foul you see that puts a team at a disadvantage or any safety or unsportsmanlike conduct foul. When in doubt, follow the philosophies written in the manual ([Section 11](#)). When a foul is detected, throw the flag and continue to officiate. Mentally note the spot of the foul, the number of the offending player, and the status of the ball (*e.g., in player possession, loose, or dead*). When the play is over, blow the whistle repeatedly and give the stop-the-clock signal. Other officials repeat the stop-the-clock signal.

There are two ways to throw the flag:

- Spot fouls: Carefully throw the flag to a spot on the yard line where the foul occurred.
  - Do not throw the flag at the offending player.
- Non-spot fouls: Throw the flag high into the air.
  - Do not hold and wave a flag over your head instead of throwing it into the air.

When the play is over, ensure that the down box and line-to-gain equipment are not moved. The calling official(s) should ensure the flag(s) are at the correct spot(s). If the flag landed at the wrong spot, pick it up and place it at the right spot. If there are multiple flags for the same foul, move all flags to the same spot before the foul is reported to the REFEREE.

Place the ball on the ground at the dead-ball spot until the REFEREE or UMPIRE asks for it. A non-calling official should cover the dead-ball spot. If possible, another non-calling official should cover the spot of the flag. Continue to observe players while fouls are being reported and penalty options administered.

### **6.8.2 REPORTING A FOUL**

Report the foul to the REFEREE. If there is more than one flag on the play, come together and discuss before reporting the foul to the REFEREE. Do not give visual foul signals; verbally report the foul (*Exceptions: BACK JUDGE may give the delay of game signal to the REFEREE. Wing officials may give the false start or encroachment signal to REFEREE if that is the only flag thrown*).

Give the following information to the REFEREE:

- Type of foul
- Offense / Defense / Kicking Team / Receiving Team
- Number of the player
- Status of the ball

If there are multiple flags on a false start or encroachment situation, the HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE will meet with the UMPIRE in the middle of the field to determine which foul is to be penalized. Report the decision to the REFEREE.

If an unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant personal foul is called, all officials should record the player information on their game card.

### **6.8.3 ENFORCING A PENALTY**

- REFEREE:
  - After being notified of the foul(s), move to a clear area away from the players; come to a complete stop facing the press box; give the preliminary foul signal; and point to the offending team's goal line. Give the dead-ball signal prior to all dead-ball foul signals.
  - If the offended team's choice of options is obvious, administer the option without consulting with the team. If the choice of options is not obvious, look to the sideline to get the decision from the designated representative. When a decision is made, discuss with the UMPIRE on how to administer the option. Once this is completed a formal signal and announcement can be given (except where noted below). When giving a verbal announcement, include the number(s) of any player(s) that committed a foul.
  - If the penalty flag was mistakenly thrown and there is no foul, do not give any type of foul signal. Only give the "disregard flag" signal and indicate the number of the next down.
  - If the foul involves a false start, encroachment, or illegal snap infraction, the preliminary signal may be given while the UMPIRE marks off the penalty. No final signal is required after the penalty has been enforced.

- If the foul requires penalty enforcement at the succeeding free kick spot, give the preliminary foul signal; point to the offending team; and then point to the area of the field where the free kick will occur.
- **UMPIRE:** Meet with the REFEREE briefly when the foul is reported. Mark off all penalties except those prior to a free kick. If a foul occurs in a side zone, mark the penalty off in the side zone and then return it to the hash mark. When marking off a short penalty, walk quickly to the spot. When marking off a longer penalty, jog to the spot. Do not count off individual steps. Identify the new yard line and move directly to that spot. Verify the penalty has been enforced correctly with the wing officials before placing the ball at the new spot.
- **HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE:** The official with the chains marks off the penalty with the UMPIRE. The wing opposite the chains holds the spot until the penalty has been properly marked off and follow as the second check. Make sure that the chains do not move until you signal them. If the foul choice belongs to the team on your sideline, help explain the penalty options to the designated representative. Following enforcement, move the down box and chains as necessary. Inform the coach on your sideline of the foul, enforcement, and player number (if their player committed the foul).
- **BACK JUDGE:** If there are multiple spot fouls, hold the spot of the foul while enforcement decisions are made. If a penalty is to be enforced on a free kick, go to the succeeding free kick spot. Place the ball on the ground. Face the press box and repeat the foul signal. Pick up the ball and enforce the penalty yardage. Hold the ball at the yard line where the free kick will occur until the kicking team is ready.

#### 6.8.4 DISQUALIFICATION

Anyone affiliated with a team, based on their own actions, can disqualify himself or herself from a game. When a disqualification occurs, all officials should write down any notes that could be required in a report of the incident. The REFEREE should move to the sideline and provide an explanation of the disqualification to the head coach. If the disqualified individual is an adult, they must leave the stadium or field and will not be allowed to return (get the help of game administration if necessary). If the disqualified individual is a player, they will not be required to leave the stadium (*for safety reasons*). Under no circumstance will a player be forced to leave the field. They may stay on their sideline but may not participate further in the game.

All disqualifications should include pertinent information that will assist the AIA in evaluating the incident. This information must be reported to the AIA at the completion of the game via the AIA dashboard.

### 6.9 MARKING SPOTS

When marking a dead ball spot, an official shall stand with his or her downfield foot at the spot that the ball became dead. The UMPIRE will use the downfield foot of the official marking the spot in order to set the ball for the next down.

#### 6.9.1 FIRST DOWN

When a first down is reached and the ball is dead, the wing official will stop the clock and inform the REFEREE that the line to gain has been reached. Once the REFEREE has signaled a first down, the official with the chains will signal for the chains to move. Set the chains at least two yards off the field. Provide a back foot for the chain crew to set up off of. Ensure that the chains are correctly positioned.

### 6.9.2 PROGRESS

The forward progress spot is determined by the foremost part of the ball in player possession, when that player's advancement towards the opponent's goal line is stopped by rule. During most plays from scrimmage, the wing officials will determine the forward progress spot. When progress is ruled, blow the whistle repeatedly in order to end the play and get players to stop.

## 6.10 LINE TO GAIN & MEASUREMENTS

It is important to determine, in a timely manner, whether the line to gain has been reached.

### 6.10.1 CHAIN TAPE

The middle of the chain should be marked with tape prior to the game starting. The tape can be used to determine whether a five-yard foul by the defense will result in a first down without having to look at the chains after enforcement.

- **WING OFFICIAL WITH THE CHAINS:** If the ball is marked near the middle of the chain, look to see if the ball is inside or outside the tape. Signal the position of the ball to the REFEREE and UMPIRE. If the ball is inside the tape (at or inside 5 yards), put both hands out front with thumbs pointed together. If the ball is outside the tape (outside 5 yards), put both hands out front with both thumbs pointed apart. Also verbalize to the REFEREE and UMPIRE whether the ball is inside or outside.

### 6.10.2 LINE TO GAIN

The line to gain stake is the second, and most common, method for determining whether a first down has been reached.

- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE THE CHAINS:** Has the main responsibility of determining whether a first down has been reached. When the ball is dead and the line to gain has clearly been reached, kill the clock, point in the direction that the offense is going in, and verbalize that a first down has been reached. When the ball is dead and it is very close to the line to gain, have the REFEREE take a look. If the ball is close to the line to gain in your area, place the ball at the dead ball spot so the REFEREE can decide if a measurement is necessary.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH THE CHAINS:** If the ball is close to the line to gain in your area, place the ball at the dead ball spot so the REFEREE can decide if a measurement is necessary.
- **REFEREE:** If the ball is dead and close to the line to gain, determine if a measurement is necessary. If the ball is clearly behind or beyond the line to gain, give the appropriate signal. Stop the clock and call for a measurement if it is still unclear whether the line to gain has been reached.
- **UMPIRE:** Assist in communicating to the REFEREE that a measurement might be required.

### 6.10.3 MEASURING FOR A FIRST DOWN

- **REFEREE:** After calling for a measurement, stand near the ball and wait for the chains to be brought in. Keep the area around the ball clear of players. Determine whether the ball is behind or beyond the line to gain and give the appropriate signal. If the ball is short and located outside the hash marks, grab the chain at the foremost point of the ball. Use the chains to spot the ball on the nearest hash mark.



- **UMPIRE:** Stand over the ball until the BACK JUDGE can hold the ball. Once the chains are in place for the measurement, take the foreword stake and pull tight. Put the stake on the ground on the side of the ball opposite the press box. Assist in the positioning of the chains if the ball must be moved back inside the hash marks.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH THE CHAINS:** Instruct the person operating the down box to move to the spot of the line to gain chain. Grab the clip that is located on the back of the major yard line nearest the back stake. Grab the clip and chain and move the chains to the spot designated by the wing official opposite the chains. Place the clip on the back of the yard line marked by the opposite wing official. Get a firm grip on the clip and hold it in place as the UMPIRE pulls the front stake.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE THE CHAINS:** Mark the spot where the opposite wing official will place the clip for the measurement. Place a foot on the major yard line, nearest the back stake, in line with the ball. Bring in the second game ball that can be used if the ball needs to be relocated to between the hash marks.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Kneel on the defensive side of the ball and hold the ball in position. Hold the ball so that it does not move until the REFEREE can decide whether the line to gain has been reached.

## 6.11 SIDELINE

The sideline is the location on the field where proper mechanics are the most important in order to keep officials, players, and coaches safe from harm.

### 6.11.1 SIDELINE PLAY COVERAGE

On wide runs from scrimmage or quick sideline passes, wing officials should allow the play to pass in front of them and then trail the play by a minimum of five yards. If you find yourself too close to the runner, take a step back towards the offensive backfield and let the play clear in front of you. Letting the play get by you widens your field of vision, allows you a better view of the action, and decreases your chance of being injured. When the ball carrier steps or is taken out of bounds, sound your whistle and move quickly but cautiously to the spot. Direct your attention to the players immediately around the dead-ball spot being especially alert if the play ends in or near a team box.

The presence of more than one official on sideline plays is imperative to maintain control of the game. The BACK JUDGE and REFEREE should help on sideline plays as required. Officials should use voice commands to let the players know an official is present. If opposing players begin taunting, shoving, or fighting, the covering official should drop a beanbag at the dead-ball spot and move quickly to separate the players and any other sideline personnel involved in the confrontation. The BACK JUDGE and the REFEREE should quickly close on the area to help control the situation. The officials should accompany any players who have gone out of bounds into the opponent's team box area back onto the field. The officials should not leave the spot until the area has been cleared. Officials not needed on the sideline must continue to observe the players on the field.

### 6.11.2 SIDELINE WARNING

This foul occurs when team personnel are in the restricted area, with no contact, while the ball is live. The first violation results in a warning. The second violation is a 5-yard penalty. Any further violations will result in a 15-yard penalty on the head coach. Two of these particular 15-yard penalties will result in the disqualification of the head coach. These fouls are to be kept separate from the sideline interference and unsportsmanlike fouls. Two fouls of differing types cannot be added together to create a disqualification.

When it comes to sideline warnings, use good judgment. Always attempt to work with a team before throwing sideline flags. At the beginning of a game, remind coaches to stay back. Throw sideline warning if the team does not listen to verbal warnings. Use all the tools available to keep the restricted area clear.

Sideline officials should do a good job communicating the sequence of these fouls to the head coach on their sideline.

Coaches are required to remain on the sideline when expressing disagreement with an officiating decision. If a coach comes on the field to argue an officiating decision, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be enforced.

### ***6.11.3 SIDELINE INTERFERENCE***

This foul occurs when an official makes contact with team personnel in the restricted area. All violations of this rule result in a 15-yard penalty on the head coach. Two of these particular 15-yard penalties will result in the disqualification of the head coach. These fouls are to be kept separate from the sideline warning and unsportsmanlike fouls. Two fouls of differing types cannot be added together to create a disqualification. This foul should be called immediately when it occurs. This is a major safety rule that is in place in order to protect officials and team personnel from injury. Do not, for any reason, seek out contact. Make every possible attempt to avoid making contact with anyone on the sideline.

## **6.12 VICTORY FORMATION PROTOCOL**

- When a team is ahead by 9 or more points and can take a knee(s) to run out all of the remaining clock, officials will request for the leading team to declare their intent on whether they will be taking a knee. The officials will then inform the other team of the decision.
- If the leading team wishes to enter the victory formation, the officials will ensure that both teams understand and are expected to end the game in a sportsmanlike manner and without further contact.
- If the offensive team declares that they will be utilizing the victory formation, and runs an offensive play, then the officials will rule this an unfair act.
- If the offense fumbles the snap the ball is live and can be recovered by either team.

## FOUR-PERSON MECHANICS

The following mechanics are to be used when officiating all AIA games where there are four officials.

### 7.1 FREE KICKS

A free kick is any legal kick, which puts the ball in play to start a free-kick down. A free kick is used for a kickoff, for a kick following a safety, and is used if a free kick is chosen following a fair catch or awarded fair catch. No free kick play will be marked ready for play until both teams have the proper number of players.

#### **7.1.1 STANDARD KICKOFF**

A standard kickoff is one in which an onside kick is not expected.

Initial Position (assuming a kick from the kicker's 40-yard line):

- **REFEREE:** Take position at the pylon at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and R's goal line (move up the sideline based on kicker ability). Mark the ball ready for play once all officials are in position and have signaled that both teams have the proper number of players. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and the 20-yard line.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** For the first kickoff of each team or any free kick moved by a penalty, take position in the middle of the field on R's restraining line until there are 11 players on both the receiving and kicking team. After the count has been confirmed with L, jog to take position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and R's restraining line. Prior to all other kickoffs, take the position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and R's restraining line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take position on K's restraining line in the middle of the field with the game ball in hand. After counting with H to ensure that there are 11 players on the field for the kicking team, hand the ball to the kicker. Tell the kicker to wait for the whistle before kicking the ball. Jog to take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and K's restraining line. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.

Enforce any penalties that are carried over to the kickoff or that occur during the kick that require the free kick down to be replayed. When this occurs, place the ball on the ground at the original free kick spot. Give the penalty signal. Walk off the penalty to the new free kick spot.

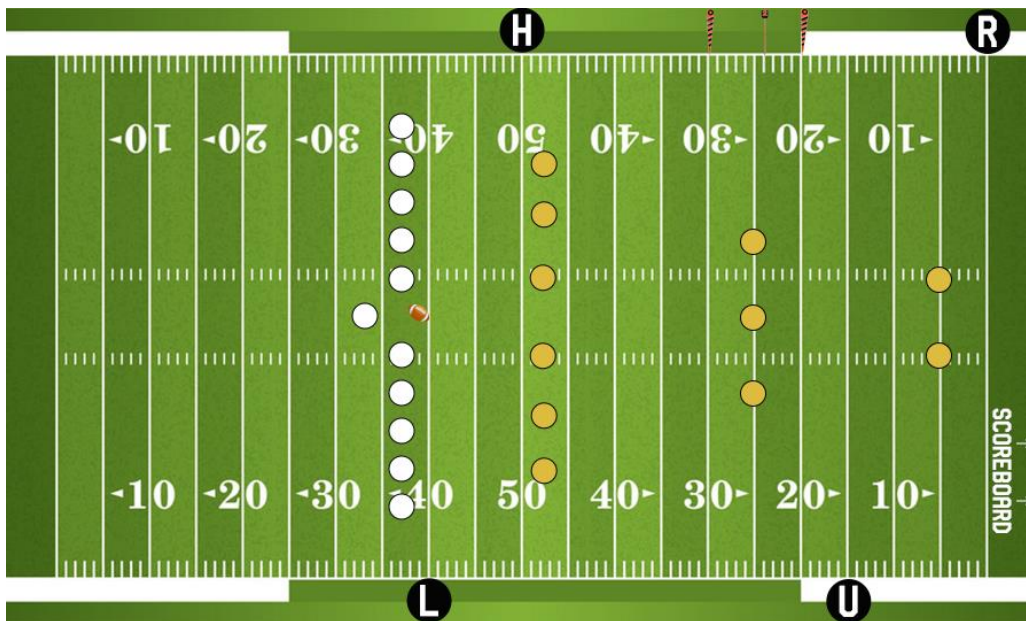
After the kick (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Be ready to rule whether the kick crosses the plane of the goal line. Wind the clock when the ball is first legally touched. Signal a touchback if the kick crosses the goal line. Remain on goal line until it is clear that the ball will no longer threaten it.

If the ball is kicked out of bounds, untouched by the receiving team, throw a flag and mark the spot where the ball goes out. Wind the clock when the ball is first legally touched. Watch for a possible fair catch signal. Once the ball is being returned, move up field watching the blocks around the runner. Continue to move with the play up field, along the sideline, until the play has ended. Get the dead ball spot all the way until the goal line.

- **UMPIRE:** If the ball is kicked out of bounds, untouched by the receiving team, throw a flag and mark the spot where the ball goes out. Wind the clock if the ball is first legally touched in your half of the field. Move up field and watch the block around the runner. If the runner is returning the ball on your side of the field, keep an eye on the ball carrier. Continue to move up field with the runner until the play has ended. Get the dead ball spot all the way until the goal line.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving down field no more than 10 yards. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the REFEREE to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Ensure that the kicking team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Also make sure to note whether the ball was grounded during the kick. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving down field no more than 10 yards. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the UMPIRE to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.

### 7.1.2 FOUR-PERSON KICKOFF DIAGRAM



### 7.1.2 *ONSIDE KICK*

A free kick when an onside kick is expected to occur based on game conditions.

Initial Position (assuming a kick from the kicker's 40-yard line):

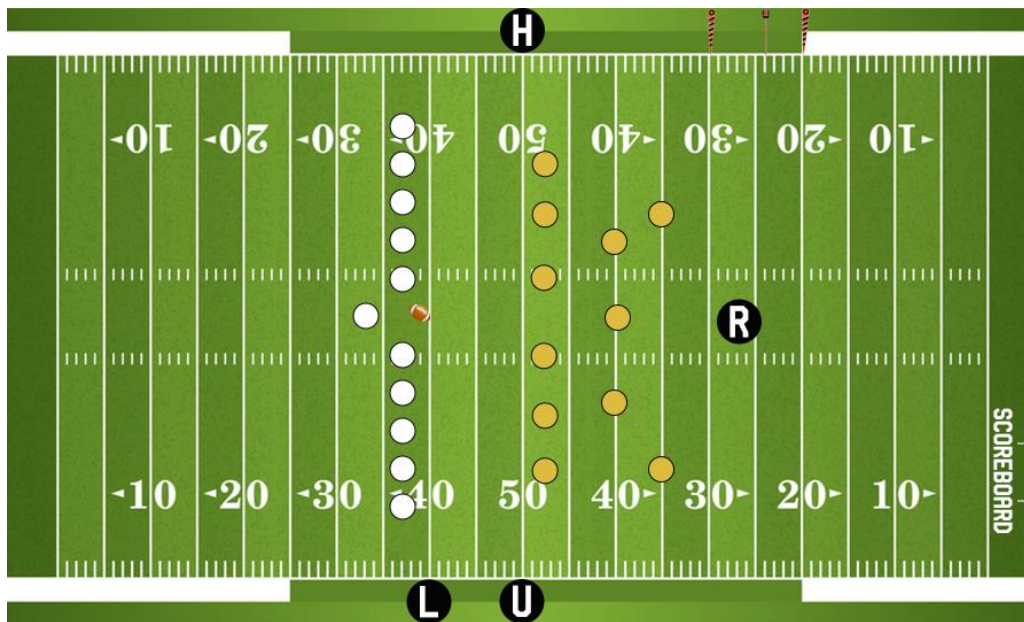
- **REFEREE:** Take position on R's goal line in the middle of the field. Mark the ball ready for play once all officials are in position and have signaled that both teams have the proper number of players. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and R's restraining line.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Take position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and R's restraining line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take position on K's restraining line in the middle of the field with the game ball in hand. After counting to ensure that there are 11 players on the field for the kicking team, hand the ball to the kicker. Jog to take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and K's restraining line. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.

Enforce any penalties that are carried over to the kickoff or that occur during the kick that require the free kick down to be replayed. When this occurs, place the ball on the ground at the original free kick spot. Give the penalty signal. Walk off the penalty to the new free kick spot.

After the kick (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Be ready to rule whether the kick crosses the plane of the goal line. There is still a chance that the ball might be kicked deep. Move down the goal line slightly as necessary to keep distance from the receiving players and keep a good view of the ball. Wind the clock when the ball is first legally touched. Signal a touchback if the kick crosses the goal line. Remain on goal line until it is clear that the ball will no longer threaten it. If an onside kick occurs, move up field quickly to assist.
- **UMPIRE:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Once the ball is kicked, watch for first touching or any illegal block. Be ready to assist with any piles that occur on your sideline.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. One the ball is kicked, watch for first touching or any illegal blocks. Also, if the kicking team recovers the ball, note if the recovery occurred prior to the ball traveling 10 yards. Be ready to assist with any piles that occur on your sideline.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Also make sure to note whether the ball was grounded during the kick. One the ball is kicked, watch for first touching or any illegal blocks. Also, if the kicking team recovers the ball, note if the recovery occurred prior to the ball traveling 10 yards. Be ready to assist with any piles that occur on your sideline.

### 7.1.3 FOUR-PERSON ONSIDE KICK DIAGRAM



### 7.1.4 FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY

A free kick after a safety will occur after a safety has occurred. The kicking team will have the option to put the ball in play using a place kick, drop kick, or a punt.

Initial Position (assuming a kick from the kicker's 20-yard line):

- **REFEREE:** Take position at least ten yards deeper than the deepest receiving team player on the visiting team's sideline. Mark the ball ready for play once all officials are in position and have signaled that both teams have the proper number of players. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position on the home team's sideline and even with the REFEREE.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Take position in the middle of the field on R's restraining line until there are 11 players on both the receiving and kicking team. After the count has been confirmed, jog to take position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and R's restraining line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take position on K's restraining line in the middle of the field with the game ball in hand. After counting to ensure that there are 11 players on the field for the kicking team, hand the ball to the kicker. Jog to take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and K's restraining line. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.

Enforce any penalties that are carried over to the kickoff or that occur during the kick that require the free kick down to be replayed. When this occurs, place the ball on the ground at the original free kick spot. Give the penalty signal. Walk off the penalty to the new free kick spot.

After the kick (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** If the ball is kicked out of bounds, untouched by the receiving team, throw a flag and mark the spot where the ball goes out. Wind the clock when the ball is first legally touched. Watch for a possible fair catch signal. Once the ball is being returned, move up field watching the blocks around the runner. Continue to move with the play up field, along the sideline, until the play has ended. Get the dead ball spot all the way until the goal line.
- **UMPIRE:** If the ball is kicked out of bounds, untouched by the receiving team, throw a flag and mark the spot where the ball goes out. Wind the clock if the ball is first legally touched in your half of the field. Move up field and watch the block around the runner. If the runner is returning the ball on your side of the field, keep an eye on the ball carrier. Continue to move up field with the runner until the play has ended. Get the dead ball spot all the way until the goal line.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving down field no more than 10 yards. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the REFEREE to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Ensure that the kicking team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Also make sure to note whether the ball was grounded during the kick. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving down field no more than 10 yards. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the UMPIRE to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.

### **7.1.5 FREE KICK AFTER FAIR CATCH**

After the completion of a fair catch or an awarded fair catch, the receiving team may elect to attempt a free kick.

The mechanics are the same as a regular free kick, except:

- **REFEREE:** Take position behind the upright on the visiting side. Blow one loud blast on the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line. If the ball does not cross the goal line, do not blow the whistle. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with UMPIRE. Use simple words like “Yes-Yes” or “No-No” to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the UMPIRE. Both REFEREE and UMPIRE should signal together at the same time.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position behind the upright on the visiting side. Rule on the upright and crossbar. Be vocal and communicate with REFEREE. Use simple words like “Yes-Yes” or “No-No” to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the REFEREE. Both REFEREE and UMPIRE should signal together at the same time.

## 7.2 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

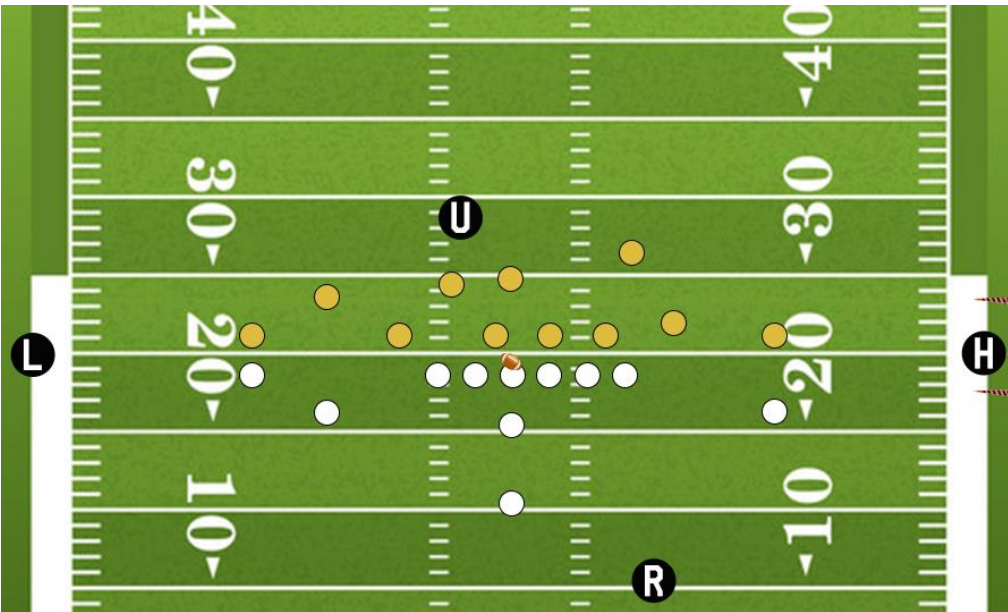
A scrimmage down is the time between when a legal snap occurs to the time that the ball next becomes dead by rule.

### 7.2.1 CREW POSITIONING

The following are the general starting position of officials during scrimmage plays (except for scrimmage kicks).

- **REFEREE:** Line up 12-15 yards deep and outside the TE (or where the TE would be) to the side of the passer's arm. Move inward between guard and tackle if ball is near inbounds spot. As you move in toward center, go a little deeper and give yourself a wide view.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position 6-8 yards from the line of scrimmage, preferably opposite the TE and just inside the offensive tackles shoulder. Try not to interfere with player movement.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline.

### 7.2.2 FOUR-PERSON SCRIMMAGE PLAY STARTING POSITIONS



### 7.2.3 PRIOR TO THE SNAP

- **REFEREE:** Check that all officials are in position and the chains are set. Announce the down verbally and with a visual signal. Take position 5-8 yards behind the neutral zone and clear of players when giving the ready for play signal. Mark the ball ready for play. Count offense while in the huddle and signal to the UMPIRE when the huddle is broken. Signal this by holding one arm straight out, perpendicular to your body, with the fist closed. If the offense has fewer than 11 players, get the attention of and signal to both wing officials. Signal this by holding both hands in front of your body with hands open. Watch for any last second substitution issues. Watch the opposite tackle and any backs located between the tackles for possible false starts.
- **UMPIRE:** Spot the ball and remain over ball until the REFEREE gives the ready for play signal. This is especially important if the team is in a hurry up offense. Note the field location of the ball in relation to



the hash marks. Count the offense as the huddle is broken and signal to the REFEREE. Signal this by holding one arm straight out, perpendicular to your body, with the fist closed. If the offense has fewer than 11 players, get the attention of, and signal to, both wing officials. Signal this by holding both hands in front of your body with hands open. Check to ensure that there are 5 players, numbered 50-79, on the offensive line. Watch for center and guards to ensure the legality of the snap and watch for false starts. Make sure that the defense does not use disconcerting words or signals that interfere with the snap.

- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Verbalize the correct down to the person operating the down marker. Count the defense and signal to the LINE JUDGE to confirm the count. Signal this by holding one arm straight out, perpendicular to your body, with the fist closed. If the defense has fewer than 11 players, Signal this by holding both hands in front of your body with hands open. Be alert for illegal substitutions. Watch for false starts and encroachment. Be alert for players in motion towards yours sideline.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Check that the down marker number is correct. Count the defense and signal to the HEAD LINESMAN to confirm the count. Signal this by holding one arm straight out, perpendicular to your body, with the fist closed. If the defense has fewer than 11 players, Signal this by holding both hands in front of your body with hands open. Be alert for illegal substitutions. Watch for false starts and encroachment. Be alert for players in motion towards yours sideline.

## 7.3 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – RUNNING

This section covers mechanics and keys that are specific to running plays.

### 7.3.1 RUNNING KEYS

- **REFEREE:** Observe the block by the opposite side tackle. Delay moving immediately and then move behind play to cover runner and action around runner. If play is between the tackles, do not move. If play is outside the tackles, run parallel to the line of scrimmage. Watch for any illegal blocking around the runner. Once the runner is outside the tackles, watch for any illegal blocking at or behind the runner.
- **UMPIRE:** Observe the blocks of the center and guards. Watch for any illegal action at the point of attack. Attempt to stay still and pivot with the flow of the play. Move slightly if threatened by players. As play passes or gets outside the tackles, observe action behind the runner. Hustle to the dead ball spot when the play ends and assist in retrieving the ball. Continue to dead ball officiate. Take dead ball spot from the wings and spot the ball for the next down.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** Look through to tackle to read whether it will be a run or pass. Be alert for quick plays into the line. Mark the dead ball or progress spot.
  - When ball comes to your side:
    - Be alert and move back into the offensive backfield if the play comes wide. Keep a safe distance and prepare to trail the play.
    - Cover sideline and watch for block coming back towards the runner.
    - On option plays towards you, observe the pitchman, the ball, and the possible runner.
    - Observe blocks around the runner.
    - Watch the runner and action against the runner.
    - If the ball goes out of bound, blow the whistle and signal. Mark the spot where the ball crossed the sideline. Turn with players that go out of bounds and watch action after the play.

- If the ball becomes dead in the side zone, assist in relaying the ball to the UMPIRE or BACK JUDGE.
- When the ball goes to the opposite side:
  - Observe action occurring at the backside of the play. Watch for personal or safety fouls.
  - Try to mirror the opposite wing official on spots.

## 7.4 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – PASSING

This section covers mechanics and keys that are specific to passing plays.

### 7.4.1 PASSING KEYS

- **REFEREE:** Observe the blocks by the opposite side tackle. Observe all blocks behind the line and then key on the QB if he becomes threatened. Main responsibility is the QB when threatened. Must rule on fumble/forwards pass, intentional grounding (did passer leave the original free blocking zone), and roughing the passer. If the QB is under pressure, do not watch the ball in flight after the pass. The safety of the QB is the primary responsibility on all passing plays. After the QB has thrown a forward pass, loudly verbalize that the “ball is gone”. Follow the QB towards and into the sideline zone if attempting to roll out to pass.
- **UMPIRE:** Observe the blocks of the center and guards. If the linemen show pass, slowly move to the line of scrimmage. Watch for any illegal action on the line of scrimmage. If the QB approaches the line of scrimmage and passes the ball, judge whether it was from behind or beyond the line. Observe whether the pass reached the neutral zone. Give the tip signal if necessary. Pivot and assist on short passes. Do not watch the QB or judge pass interference.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** Look through to tackle to read whether it will be a run or pass. Observe all eligible receivers that are on your side of the field.
  - When the pass is thrown:
    - Watch for pass interference on either team.
    - Be ready to rule on whether a catch occurs in your area.
    - Observe whether the pass reached the neutral zone.

If the pass is complete in your area, trail the play and mark the dead ball spot. If the pass is incomplete in your area, give the incomplete pass signal and help with the retrieval of the ball.

- If the pass is intercepted:
  - Be aware of the goal line.
  - Use a beanbag to mark momentum (if applicable).

Rule Book: 8-5-2a: “When a defensive player intercepts an opponent's forward pass; intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass; or an R player catches or recovers a scrimmage kick or free kick between his 5-yard line and the goal line, and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball remains in the end zone and is declared dead in the end zone in his team's possession or it goes out of bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered or the kick was caught or recovered.”

- Move to trail the play in the opposite direction.
- Mark the dead ball or progress spot.
- Signal direction and stop the clock if interception ends in your area.

## 7.5 SCRIMMAGE KICKS

A scrimmage kick is any legal kick in or behind the neutral zone. A place kick, punt, or drop kick may be used. For a place kick, the ball must be controlled on the ground or on a legal kicking tee by a teammate. Scrimmage kicks include punts, field goals, and a kicking try. A scrimmage kick formation is one in which no player is in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs, and at the snap, either:

1. A player is 10 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage and in position to receive a long snap.
2. A player is in position with a knee on the ground 7 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage, in position to be the holder and receive a long snap and with another player 3 yards or less behind that player and in position to attempt a place kick.

### **7.5.1 REGULAR PUNT**

A scrimmage kick in which the offense lines up in a punt formation (example #1 above).

Initial position:

- **REFEREE:** Take position on the LINE JUDGE side of the field 1-2 yards behind the kicker and wide enough (8-10 yards) to see all eleven players, while having a 45-degree angle on the kickers leg.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position about 9 yards from the line of scrimmage, on the LINE JUDGE side of the field, and in position to see action against the snapper.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline. Responsible for pre snap line of scrimmage fouls.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Take position toward your sideline, about 10 yards wider and 5 yards deeper than the deepest returner with a beanbag in hand.

After the snap (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Watch to ensure possession of the ball by the kicker or possible knee on the ground. Once the ball is kicked, shout, "ball is gone." Stay with the kicker and be prepared to rule on possible roughing or running into. Stay on the kicker until the action is cleared. After the kick, be prepared to stay towards the middle of the field and fade to goal line if the kick is returned. You are responsible for the goal line on a return.

For kicks that go out of bounds in the air, note the position of where it crossed the sideline (protecting the kicker is primary). If you know where the ball crossed, hold one arm high up into the air. When the LINE JUDGE or HEAD LINESMAN reaches that point along the sideline, bring that same arm down and point at that official. If you do not know where the crossing spot is, point at the LINE JUDGE or HEAD LINESMAN from the start. This will tell them that they must find the spot.

- **UMPIRE:** Watch for any illegal action against the snapper. Observe blocking on the line of scrimmage. Watch for touching of a low kick at the line of scrimmage and signal if applicable. Once the kick is away, and the line play has disintegrated, turn and drift slowly downfield. Observe blocking as the play comes towards you. Let the play pass and clean up dead ball action behind the play.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Make sure that the kick crosses the line of scrimmage and does not come back. Stay on the line of scrimmage until it is clear that the ball will stay across. Move slowly downfield and along the sideline. Watch for illegal blocks. Also, watch for illegal blocking after a fair

catch signal is given. Prepare to let the play pass you on a long return. You are responsible for the dead ball spot. The REFEREE will have the goal line.

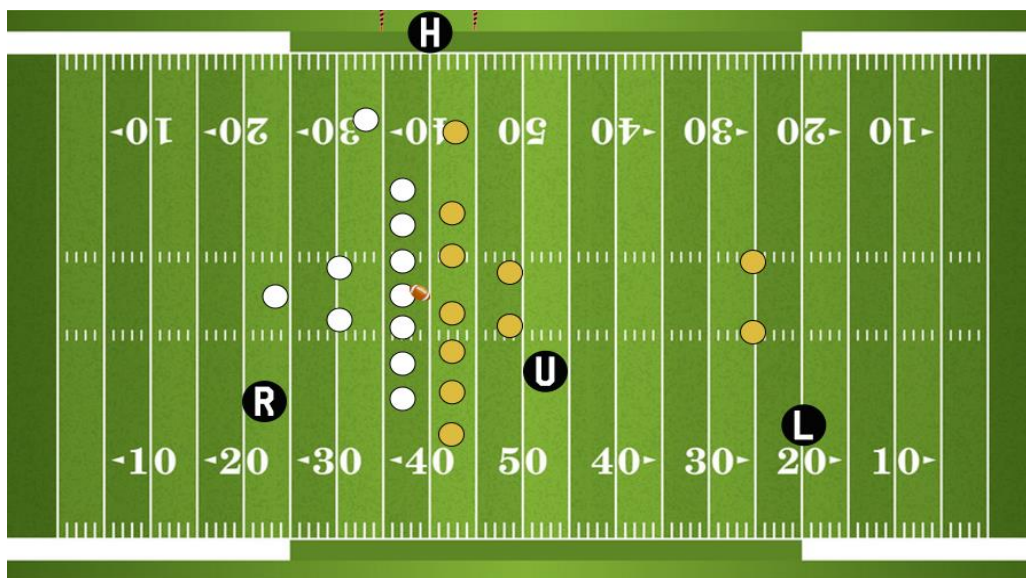
If the ball is kicked out of bounds in the air, on your side, move down the sideline and slightly beyond the point where you think it crossed the sideline. Watch the REFEREE. Put one arm in the air and start to move back down the sideline. When you reach the point where the ball crosses, the REFEREE will bring his arm down and point at you. If the REFEREE is pointing at you from the start, make a best guess about where the ball went out and mark that spot.

- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Watch the “gunners” (players coming down to tackle the return man). Watch up field to make sure that ball is kicked. Watch for possible blocks in the back that occur. Be aware of any fair catch signals. Watch for first touching by the kicking team (mark with bean bag). Ensure that the receiver is given an opportunity to complete the catch. Once the ball is in player possession, mark the end of the kick with a beanbag.

Once the ball starts to be returned, watch the runner and blocks out in front of the runner. Take responsibility for the runner and the spot as the ball is advanced downfield. You are responsible for the spot all the way up to the goal line. Move down the sideline and trail the play as necessary.

If the ball is kicked out of bounds in the air, on your side, move down the sideline and slightly beyond the point where you think it crossed the sideline. Watch the REFEREE. Put one arm in the air and start to move back down the sideline. When you reach the point where the ball crosses, the REFEREE will bring his arm down and point at you. If the REFEREE is pointing at you from the start, make a best guess about where the ball went out and mark that spot.

### 7.5.2 FOUR-PERSON PUNT DIAGRAM



### 7.5.3 PUNT FROM INSIDE THE 50

If the offense is attempting a punt and the ball will be snapped from inside the 50-yard line the mechanics will be the same as above, except:

- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Take position on the receiving team's goal line in the middle of the field. Be ready to rule on whether the kick crossed the goal line.

#### 7.5.4 FIELD GOAL

A scrimmage kick in which the offense lines up in a field goal formation.

Initial position:

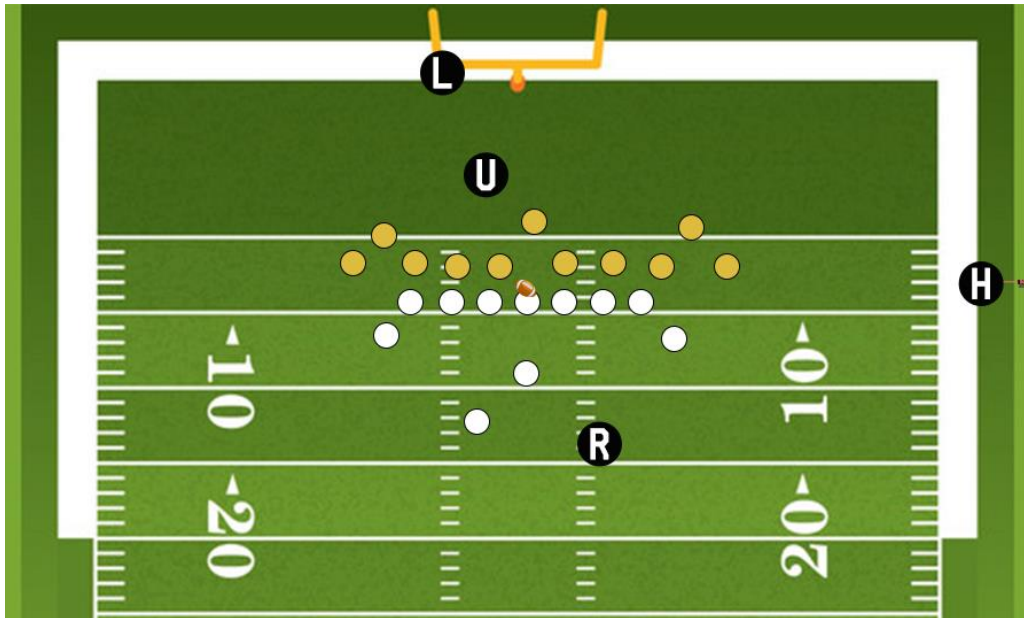
- **REFEREE:** Take position to the non-kicking leg side of and 1-2 yards behind the kicker, while being wide enough (8-10 yards) to see all eleven players and have a 45-degree angle on the kickers leg.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position about 9 yards from the line of scrimmage, on the LINE JUDGE side of the field, and in position to see action against the snapper.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline. Responsible for pre snap line of scrimmage fouls.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Beyond the end zone and behind the slice upright.

After the snap (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Watch to ensure possession of the ball by the holder. Watch for any trick plays where the knee of the holder could be in question. Once the ball is kicked, shout, "ball is gone." Watch the hook post. Look for signal from the LINE JUDGE on opposite post and crossbar. Give the appropriate signal to the press box (depending on result of the play). Do not blow whistle after the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Watch for any illegal action against the snapper. Observe blocking on the line of scrimmage. Watch for touching of a low kick at the line of scrimmage and signal if applicable. Once the kick is over make sure that the line play has stopped. Be vocal if necessary.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Make sure that the kick crosses the line of scrimmage and does not come back. Stay on the line of scrimmage until it is clear that the ball will stay across. Watch for illegal blocks. Watch for any action on the kicker and holder. Be prepared to rule on roughing/running into if necessary. If the ball has no chance of being returned, come onto the field and watch dead ball action around the line of scrimmage. Be vocal if necessary. If the ball is returned, move slowly downfield and along the sideline. Watch for illegal blocks. Also, watch for illegal blocking after a fair catch signal is given. Prepare to let the play pass you on a long return. You are responsible for the dead ball spot. The REFEREE will have the goal line.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Make sure that kick is away cleanly. Blow one loud blast on the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line. If the ball is kicked short and might not reach the goal line, be prepared to move to the goal line and judge whether the ball crosses. Rule on your upright and the crossbar. Step up to the end line and signal. Hold your signal until the REFEREE begins to signal the press box. Do not rule on the opposite upright.

Remember: Field Goals are live, until the ball crosses the goal line.

### 7.5.5 FOUR-PERSON TRY/FG DIAGRAM



### 7.5.6 TRY

A scrimmage kick in which the offense lines up in a field goal formation after a score (example #2 above).

Initial position:

- **REFEREE:** Take position to the non-kicking leg side of and 1-2 yards behind the kicker, while being wide enough (8-10 yards) to see all eleven players and have a 45-degree angle on the kickers leg.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position about 9 yards from the line of scrimmage, on the LINE JUDGE side of the field, and in position to see action against the snapper.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline. Responsible for pre snap line of scrimmage fouls.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Beyond the end zone and behind the slice upright.

After the snap (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Watch to ensure possession of the ball by the holder. Watch for any trick plays where the knee of the holder could be in question. Once the ball is kicked, shout, "ball is gone." Watch the hook post. Look for signal from the LINE JUDGE on opposite post and crossbar. Give the appropriate signal to the press box (depending on result of the play). Do not blow whistle after the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Watch for any illegal action against the snapper. Observe blocking on the line of scrimmage. Watch for touching of a low kick at the line of scrimmage and signal if applicable. Once the kick is over make sure that the line play has stopped. Be vocal if necessary.

- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Make sure that the kick try crosses the line of scrimmage and does not come back. Stay on the line of scrimmage until it is clear that the ball will stay across. Watch for illegal blocks. Watch for any action on the kicker and holder. Be prepared to rule on roughing/running into if necessary. After the kick, come onto the field towards the team and watch dead ball action. Be vocal if necessary. Following the try, jog up the Visiting team's hash marks and stop where the visiting team is huddling. Following the official's timeout, inform the team to take their free kick positions. Move to take your initial free kick position.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Make sure that kick is away cleanly. Blow one loud blast on the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line. Rule on your upright and the crossbar. Step up to the end line and signal. Hold your signal until the REFEREE begins to signal the press box. Do not rule on the opposite upright. Following the try, jog up the Home team's hash marks and stop where the home team is huddling. Following the official's timeout, inform the team to take their free kick positions. Move to take your initial free kick position.

### 7.5.7 SWINGING GATE

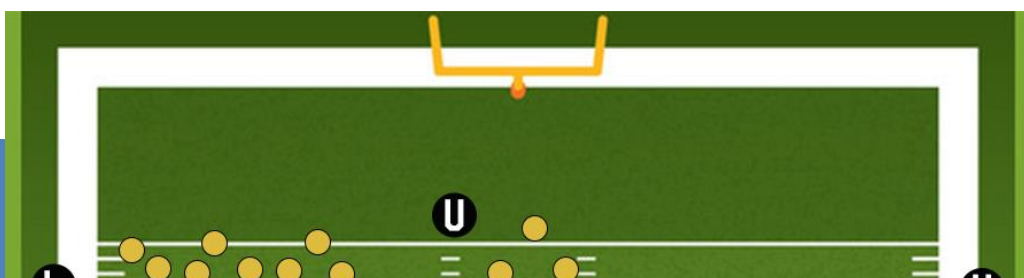
The swinging gate formation is occasionally used on try plays. The offense lines up with the snapper, holder, and kicker between the hash marks and the majority of the remaining players in a side zone. In order for the formation to be considered a swinging gate, the snapper must have his hand on the ball and a player must be in position to receive a snap. Because this formation presents several options for scoring, the officials must position themselves to maximize coverage.

Officials will need to adjust their positions and some duties to effectively cover the swinging gate formation and the multiple plays that can be run from it.

Unlike in five-person mechanics, if the offense shifts back to a more conventional try formation the officials should also move to their normal try positioning.

- **REFEREE:** Take position to cover the entire goal post. Do not watch the kicker or holder. If the team kicks out of this formation, be prepared to rule on the entire goal post and give the appropriate signal. Once the team shifts back to a normal formation, move back to normal try mechanics.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take your standard scrimmage play position. Once the team shifts back to a normal formation, move back under your upright.

### 7.5.8 FOUR-PERSON SWINGING GATE DIAGRAM



## 7.6 GOAL LINE

This section describes specific mechanics for officiating run or pass plays line when the ball is snapped near the goal. These mechanics are additions to the general mechanics described for all plays from scrimmage.

### 7.6.1 GOAL LINE MECHANICS

Goal line mechanics are used when the offensive team snaps the ball inside their opponent's 15-yard line. The mechanics are adjusted again if the snap is made at or inside the opponent's 5-yard line.

When the offense snaps the ball from inside their opponent's 15-yard line, officials should use the standard scrimmage play mechanics except as noted below:

- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** When the ball is snapped, stay even with or slightly ahead of the runner so you can be at the goal line to observe a possible scoring play when the runner gets there.

**DO NOT TRAIL THE RUNNER. BE AT THE GOAL LINE FIRST.**

If the runner is threatening your goal line pylon, get to a position at least 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended. Be prepared to back up even further if necessary. Work your way back along the sideline to mark the dead ball spot if the play ends short of the goal line.

Be alert for pick plays on passes. Watch for players going out of bounds voluntarily and returning to the field of play. Be ready rule on catches of passes in the corner of the end zone. If you see the receiver is out of bounds on the sideline or does not have control of the ball before going out of bounds, immediately signal the pass is incomplete.

If the ball is marked short, but very close to the goal line, wing officials should come in quickly and spot the ball instead of the UMPIRE. This action helps to sell that that official definitely had the ball short.

If the play ends very close to the goal line in the middle of the field (a dive play), and it is unclear about whether there is a score or not, wing officials should move quickly in (crash) to determine the result of the play. Officials should not signal or blow their whistle until the result of the play is clear. A small delay is far better than an inadvertent whistle.

When the offense snaps the ball from at or inside their opponent's 5-yard line, officials should use the mechanics noted above, except:



- **UMPIRE:** Never mark the progress spot near the goal line. Never give the touchdown signal. Only give the wing officials verbal or physical signals to help them determine if there is a score if there is no doubt the player was in. Communicate verbally with wing officials when possible.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** At the snap, move immediately to get to a position at least 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended.

**DO NOT TRAIL THE RUNNER. BE AT THE GOAL LINE FIRST.**

Work your way back along the sideline to mark the dead ball spot if the play ends short of the goal line.

### **7.6.2 REVERSE GOAL LINE MECHANICS**

Reverse goal line mechanics are used when the offensive team snaps the ball inside their own 10-yard line. The mechanics are adjusted again if the snap is made from inside the 5-yard line.

When the offense snaps the ball from inside their own 10-yard line, officials should use the standard scrimmage play mechanics except as noted:

- **REFEREE:** Responsible for the end line behind the offense. Also responsible for the goal line along with the wing official that the REFEREE is facing. Be alert for ball becoming dead in the end zone or behind the end line. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the possession of the offensive team, give the safety signal. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the possession of the defensive team, give the touchdown signal.
- **WING OFFICIAL that REFEREE is Facing:** On the snap, immediately retreat towards the goal line pylon to determine if the ball gets completely out of the end zone before it becomes dead. Stay towards the goal line until it is no longer threatened. Pinch in on the field of play to mark progress or look for the ball near the goal line. Pinch in in the end zone to signal safety or a touchdown by the defensive team. Work back toward the line of scrimmage and square off to identify the forward progress spot if the ball becomes dead in the field of play away from the goal line.
- **WING OFFICIAL that REFEREE is Not Facing:** Run standard scrimmage play mechanics.

When the offense snaps the ball from inside their own 5-yard line, officials should use the standard scrimmage play mechanics except as noted below:

- **REFEREE:** Responsible for the end line behind the offense. Be alert for ball becoming dead in the end zone or behind the end line. If the ball becomes clearly dead in the end zone in the possession of the offensive team, give the safety signal. If the ball becomes clearly dead in the end zone in the possession of the defensive team, give the touchdown signal. If the ball becomes dead close to the goal line, let the wing officials make the judgment.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** On the snap immediately retreat to a position about 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended to determine if the ball gets completely out of the end zone before it becomes dead. Stay on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. Pinch in on the field of play to mark progress or look for the ball near the goal line. Pinch in in the end zone to signal safety or a touchdown by the defensive team. Work back toward the line of scrimmage and square off to identify the forward progress spot if the ball becomes dead in the field of play away from the goal line.



## FIVE-PERSON MECHANICS

The following mechanics are to be used when officiating all AIA games where there are five officials.

### 8.1 FREE KICKS

A free kick is any legal kick, which puts the ball in play to start a free-kick down. A free kick is used for a kickoff, for a kick following a safety, and is used if a free kick is chosen following a fair catch or awarded fair catch. No free kick play will be marked ready for play until both teams have the proper number of players.

#### **8.1.1 STANDARD KICKOFF**

A standard kickoff is one in which an onside kick is not expected, and the team is kicking the ball deep.

Initial Position (assuming a kick from the kicker's 40-yard line):

- **REFEREE:** Take position on R's goal line in the middle of the field. Mark the ball ready for play once all officials are in position and have signaled that both teams have the proper number of players. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position 1-2 yards behind the pylon at the intersection of the HOME sideline and R's goal line, keeping the pylon between the official and the kicker. (May move up after initial kick based on kicker ability).
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Take position 1-2 yards behind the pylon at the intersection of the VISITING sideline and R's goal line, keeping the pylon between the official and the kicker. (May move up after initial kick based on kicker ability).
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** For the first kickoff of each team or any free kick moved by a penalty, take position in the middle of the field on R's restraining line until there are 11 players on both the receiving and kicking team. After the count has been confirmed with B, jog to take position at the intersection of the HOME sideline and R's restraining line.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position on K's restraining line in the middle of the field with the game ball in hand. After confirming with L that there are 11 players on the field for the kicking team, hand the ball to the kicker. Tell the kicker to wait for the whistle before kicking the ball. Jog to take position at the intersection of the VISITING sideline and K's restraining line. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.

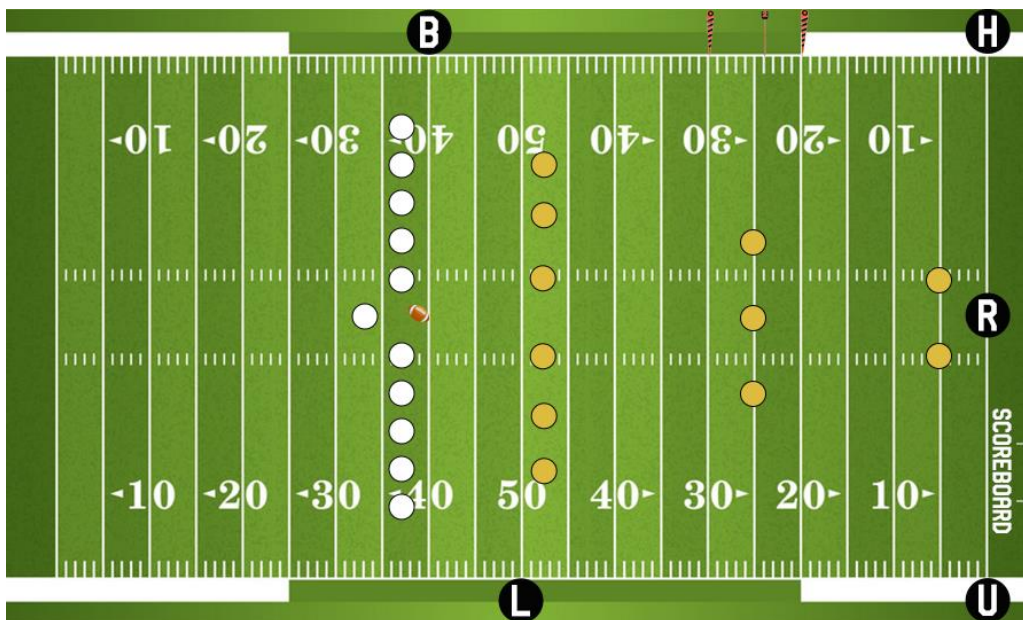
Enforce any penalties that are carried over to the kickoff or that occur during the kick that require the free kick down to be replayed. When this occurs, place the ball on the ground at the original free kick spot. Give the penalty signal. Walk off the penalty to the new free kick spot.

After the kick (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Be ready to rule whether the kick crosses the plane of the goal line. Move down the goal line slightly as necessary to keep distance from the receiving players and keep a good view of the ball. Wind the clock when the ball is first legally touched. Signal a touchback if the kick crosses the goal line. Remain on goal line until it is clear that the ball will no longer threaten it. Once the ball is being returned, move up field watching the blocks around the runner. During a long kickoff return, move up field and watch action of players that are behind the play.

- UMPIRE & WING WITH CHAINS:** Be ready to rule on any kick that goes towards the pylon. Do not rule on possible touchbacks that do not threaten your pylon. Remain at the pylon until it is clear that the ball will not threaten it. If the ball is kicked to the other side of the field, move up field to help with cross-field spot. If the ball is kicked out of bounds, untouched by the receiving team, throw a flag and mark the spot where the ball goes out. Wind the clock if the ball is first legally touched in your half of the field. Move up field and watch the block around the runner. If the runner is returning the ball on your side of the field, keep an eye on the ball carrier. Continue to move up field with the runner until the play has ended. Get the dead ball spot all the way until the 1-yard line.
- WING OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving down field no more than 10 yards. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure you have enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the UMPIRE to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.
- BACK JUDGE:** Ensure that the kicking team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Also make sure to note whether the ball was grounded during the kick. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving no more than 10 yards down field. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure you have enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the WING WITH THE CHAINS to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.

### 8.1.2 FIVE-PERSON KICKOFF DIAGRAM (SECOND HALF)



### 8.1.3 ONSIDE KICK

A free kick when an onside kick is expected to occur based on game conditions.

Initial Position (assuming a kick from the kicker's 40-yard line):

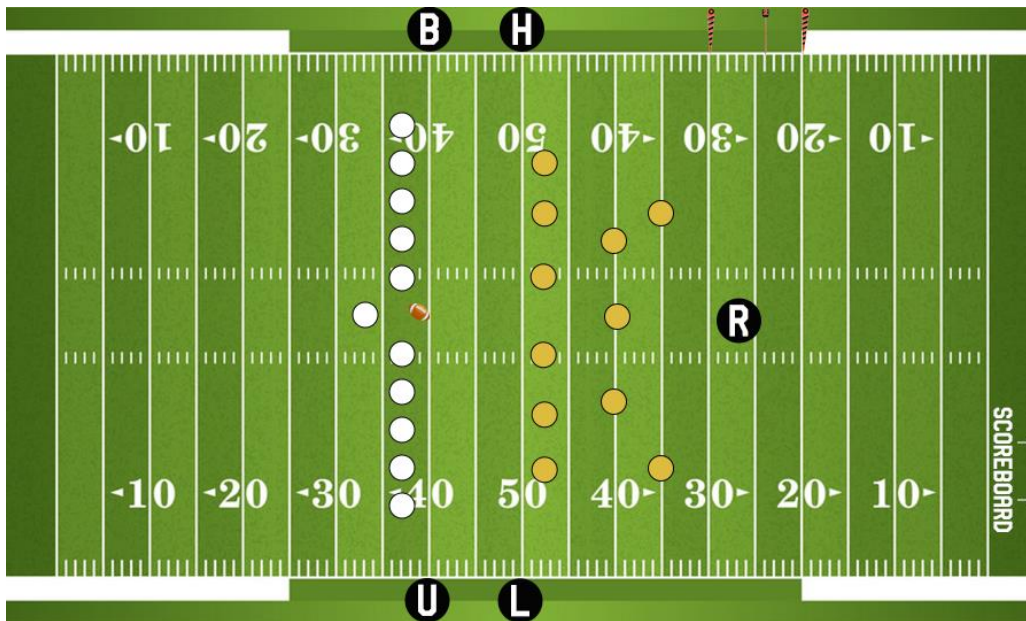
- **REFEREE:** Take position on R's goal line in the middle of the field. Mark the ball ready for play once all officials are in position and have signaled that both teams have the proper number of players. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and K's restraining line.
- **WING WITH CHAINS:** Take position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and R's restraining line.
- **WING OPPOSITE CHAINS:** For the first kickoff of each team or any free kick moved by a penalty, take position in the middle of the field on R's restraining line until there are 11 players on both the receiving and kicking team. After the count has been confirmed, jog to take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and R's restraining line. Prior to all other kickoffs, take the position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and R's restraining line.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position on K's restraining line in the middle of the field with the game ball in hand. After counting to ensure that there are 11 players on the field for the kicking team, hand the ball to the kicker. Jog to take position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and K's restraining line. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.

Enforce any penalties that are carried over to the kickoff or that occur during the kick that require the free kick down to be replayed. When this occurs, place the ball on the ground at the original free kick spot. Give the penalty signal. Walk off the penalty to the new free kick spot.

After the kick (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Be ready to rule whether the kick crosses the plane of the goal line. There is still a chance that the ball might be kicked deep. Move down the goal line slightly as necessary to keep distance from the receiving players and keep a good view of the ball. Wind the clock when the ball is first legally touched. Signal a touchback if the kick crosses the goal line. Remain on goal line until it is clear that the ball will no longer threaten it. If an onside kick occurs, move up field quickly to assist.
- **UMPIRE:** Ensure that the kicking team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Once the ball is kicked, watch for first touching or any illegal block. Be ready to assist with any piles that occur on your sideline. If the ball is kicked deep, move downfield to get the spot.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Once the ball is kicked, watch for first touching or any illegal blocks. Also, if the kicking team recovers the ball, note if the recovery occurred prior to the ball traveling 10 yards. Be ready to assist with any piles that occur on your sideline. If the ball is kicked deep, move downfield to get the spot.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Ensure that the kicking team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Also make sure to note whether the ball was grounded during the kick. Once the ball is kicked, watch for first touching or any illegal block. Be ready to assist with any piles that occur on your sideline.

### 8.1.4 FIVE-PERSON ONSIDE KICK DIAGRAM (SECOND HALF)



### 8.1.5 FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY

A free kick after a safety will occur after a safety has occurred. The kicking team will have the option to put the ball in play using a place kick, drop kick, or a punt.

Initial Position (assuming a kick from the kicker's 20-yard line):

- **REFEREE:** Take position at least ten yards deeper than the deepest receiving team player and in the middle of the field. Mark the ball ready for play once all officials are in position and have signaled that both teams have the proper number of players. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position on the home team's sideline and even with the REFEREE.
- **WING WITH CHAINS:** Take position on the visiting team's sideline and even with the REFEREE.
- **WING OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Take position in the middle of the field on R's restraining line until there are 11 players on both the receiving and kicking team. After the count has been confirmed, jog to take position at the intersection of the home team's sideline and R's restraining line.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position on K's restraining line in the middle of the field with the game ball in hand. After counting to ensure that there are 11 players on the field for the kicking team, hand the ball to the kicker. Jog to take position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and K's restraining line. Watch for any illegal kicking formations prior to the kick.

Enforce any penalties that are carried over to the kickoff or that occur during the kick that require the free kick down to be replayed. When this occurs, place the ball on the ground at the original free kick spot. Give the penalty signal. Walk off the penalty to the new free kick spot.

After the kick (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Wind the clock when the ball is first legally touched. Watch for a possible fair catch signal. Once the ball is being returned, move up field watching the blocks around the runner. During a long kickoff return, move up field and watch action of players that are behind the play.
- **UMPIRE & WING WITH CHAINS:** If the ball is kicked out of bounds, untouched by the receiving team, throw a flag and mark the spot where the ball goes out. Wind the clock if the ball is first legally touched in your half of the field. Move up field and watch the blocks around the runner. If the runner is returning the ball on your side of the field, keep an eye on the ball carrier. Continue to move up field with the runner until the play has ended. Get the dead ball spot all the way until the 1-yard line.
- **WING OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Ensure that the receiving team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving down field no more than 10 yards. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the UMPIRE to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Ensure that the kicking team does not cross its restraining line until the ball is kicked. Also make sure to note whether the ball was grounded during the kick. After the ball is kicked, watch the first wave of blockers while moving down field no more than 10 yards. Stay on the sideline. Be prepared to fade back to the goal line as the ball is returned. Watch the blocking in front of the runner as the play approaches. The most important line on the field is the goal line. Ensure enough space to get to the goal line prior to the runner. Allow the WING WITH CHAINS to get the dead ball spot up until the goal line.

### **8.1.6 FREE KICK AFTER FAIR CATCH**

After the completion of a fair catch or an awarded fair catch, the receiving team may elect to attempt a free kick.

The mechanics are the same as a regular free kick, except:

- **REFEREE:** Take position behind the upright on the visiting side. Blow one loud blast on the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line. If the ball does not cross the goal line, do not blow the whistle. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with UMPIRE. Use simple words like “Yes-Yes” or “No-No” to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the UMPIRE. Both REFEREE and UMPIRE should signal together at the same time.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position behind the upright on the home side. Rule on the upright and crossbar. Be vocal and communicate with REFEREE. Use simple words like “Yes-Yes” or “No-No” to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the REFEREE. Both UMPIRE and REFEREE should signal together at the same time.

## 8.2 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

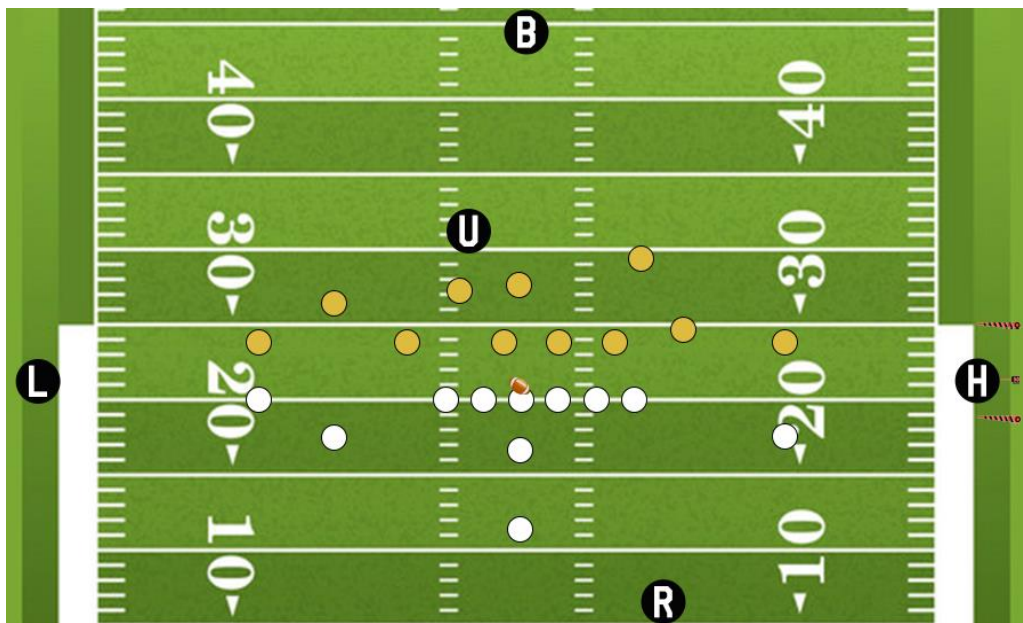
A scrimmage down is the time between when a legal snap occurs to the time that the ball next becomes dead by rule.

### 8.2.1 CREW POSITIONING

The following are the general starting positions of officials during scrimmage plays (except for scrimmage kicks).

- **REFEREE:** Line up 12-15 yards deep and outside the TE (or where the TE would be) to the side of the passer's throwing arm.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position 6-8 yards from the line of scrimmage, preferably opposite the REFEREE and just inside the offensive tackles shoulder. Try not to interfere with player movement.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position 25 yards beyond the line of scrimmage and deeper than the deepest defensive back. Take a lateral position considering the lateral spot of the ball, the position of eligible receivers, and the strength of the offensive formation. No wider than the uprights.

### 8.2.2 FIVE-PERSON SCRIMMAGE PLAY DIAGRAM



### 8.2.3 PRIOR TO THE SNAP

- **REFEREE:** Check that all officials are in position and the chains are set. Announce the down verbally and with a visual signal. Take position 5-8 yards behind the neutral zone and clear of players when giving the ready for play signal. Mark the ball ready for play. Count offense while in the huddle and signal to the UMPIRE when the huddle is broken. Signal this by holding one arm straight out, perpendicular to your body, with the fist closed. If the offense has fewer than 11 players, get the attention of and signal to both wing officials. Signal this by holding both hands in front of your body



with hands open. Watch for any last second substitution issues. Watch the opposite tackle and any backs located between the tackles for possible false starts.

- **UMPIRE:** Spot the ball and remain over ball until the REFEREE gives the ready for play signal or indicates that you should move (40 sec silent ready). This is especially important if the team is in a hurry-up offense. Note the field location of the ball in relation to the hash marks. Count the offense as the huddle breaks and signal to the REFEREE. Signal this by holding one arm straight out, perpendicular to your body, with the fist closed. If the offense has fewer than 11 players, get the attention of, and signal to, both wing officials. Signal this by holding both hands in front of your body with hands open. Check to ensure that there are 5 players, numbered 50-79, on the offensive line. Watch for center and guards to ensure the legality of the snap and watch for false starts. Make sure that the defense does not use disconcerting words or signals that interfere with the snap.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Verbalize the correct down to the person operating the down marker. Be alert for illegal substitutions. Watch for false starts and encroachment. Be alert for players in motion towards your sideline. Watch for illegal formation. If the player closest to your sideline is off the line, signal by extending one arm with an open palm toward the offensive side of the ball. Drop the signal once acknowledged by the LINE JUDGE.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Check that the down marker number is correct. Count the defense and signal to the BACK JUDGE to confirm the count. Signal this by holding one arm straight out, perpendicular to your body, with the fist closed. If the defense has fewer than 11 players, Signal this by holding both hands in front of your body with hands open. Be alert for illegal substitutions. Watch for false starts and encroachment. Be alert for players in motion towards your sideline. Watch for illegal formation. If the player closest to your sideline is off the line, signal by extending one arm with an open palm toward the offensive side of the ball. Drop the signal once acknowledged by the HEAD LINESMAN.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Check that the down marker number is correct. Once the REFEREE has marked the ball ready for play, time the 25-second count. When the offensive huddle breaks, count the defense and signal to the LINE JUDGE to confirm the count. Be aware of possible substitution infractions.

### 8.3 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – RUNNING

This section covers mechanics and keys that are specific to running plays.

#### 8.3.1 RUNNING KEYS

- **REFEREE:** Observe the block by the opposite side tackle. Delay moving immediately and then move behind play to cover runner and action around runner. If play is between the tackles, do not move. If play is outside the tackles, run parallel to the line of scrimmage. Watch for any illegal blocking around the runner. Once the runner is outside the tackles, watch for any illegal blocking at or behind the runner.
- **UMPIRE:** Observe the blocks of the center and guards. Watch for any illegal action at the point of attack. Attempt to stay still and pivot with the flow of the play. Move slightly if threatened by players. As play passes or gets outside the tackles, observe action behind the runner. Hustle to the dead ball spot when the play ends and assist in retrieving the ball. Continue to dead ball officiate. Take dead ball spot from the wings and spot the ball for the next down.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** Look through to tackle to read whether it will be a run or pass. Be alert for quick plays into the line. Mark the dead ball or progress spot.

- When ball comes to your side:
  - Be alert and move back into the offensive backfield if the play comes wide. Keep a safe distance and prepare to trail the play.
  - Cover sideline and watch for block coming back towards the runner.
  - On option plays towards you, observe the pitchman, the ball, and the possible runner.
  - Observe blocks around the runner.
  - Watch the runner and action against the runner.
  - If the ball goes out of bound, blow the whistle and signal. Mark the spot where the ball crossed the sideline. Turn with players that go out of bounds and watch action after the play.
  - If the ball becomes dead in the side zone, assist in relaying the ball to the UMPIRE or BACK JUDGE.
- When the ball goes to the opposite side:
  - Observe action occurring at the backside of the play. Watch for personal or safety fouls.
  - Try to mirror the opposite wing official on spots.
  - Get a cross-field spot when progress is ruled on that side.
- **BACK JUDGE:** First step should always be backwards. Watch the blocking of the strong side end. On plays up the middle, stay deep and watch action in advance of the play. On runs to either side, move to keep the runner between you and the wingman while observing action ahead of the play. Stay far enough away to keep the play boxed in. Also, do not let players get deeper than you. Be conscious of the goal line and be prepared to cover when threatened. On plays out of bounds, move towards the sideline and dead ball officiate. Maintain order in the bench area. Assist in relaying the ball back into play.

## 8.4 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – PASSING

This section covers mechanics and keys that are specific to passing plays.

### 8.4.1 PASSING KEYS

- **REFEREE:** Observe the blocks by the opposite side tackle. Observe all blocks behind the line and then key on the QB if he becomes threatened. Main responsibility is the QB when threatened. Must rule on fumble/forwards pass, intentional grounding (did passer leave the original free blocking zone), and roughing the passer. If the QB is under pressure, do not watch the ball in flight after the pass. The safety of the QB is the primary responsibility on all passing plays. After the QB has thrown a forward pass, loudly verbalize that the “ball is gone.” Follow the QB towards and into the sideline zone if attempting to roll out to pass.
- **UMPIRE:** Observe the blocks of the center and guards. If the linemen show pass, slowly move to the line of scrimmage. Watch for any illegal action on the line of scrimmage. If the QB approaches the line of scrimmage and passes the ball, judge whether it was from behind or beyond the line. Give the tip signal if necessary. Pivot and assist on short passes. Do not watch the QB or judge pass interference.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Look through to tackle to read whether it will be a run or pass. Determine strength of formation by number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the formation. If there is no strong side, the strength is declared to be on the side of the LINE JUDGE.
  - Observe the eligible receivers that are your responsibility:

- If trips formation to your side (three eligible receivers on your side), watch the outside receiver on your side.
- If formation is balanced, watch all receivers on your side.
- If formation is unbalanced to the opposite side, watch all receivers on your side.
- If formation is unbalanced to your side (more eligible receivers on your side), watch the outside receiver on your side of the field.
- After reading pass:
  - Hold your spot on the line of scrimmage until the ball is released. If the play turns into a run be prepared to come back and trail the play.
  - Watch for offensive pass interference and defensive holding.
- When the pass is thrown:
  - Move downfield and get in position to rule on a catch or pass interference. Give enough time to become *stationary* prior to the pass coming down.
  - Watch for pass interference on either team.
  - Be ready to rule on whether the ball reaches the neutral zone and any potential catch occurs in your area.

If the pass is complete in your area, trail the play and mark the dead ball spot. If the pass is incomplete in your area, give the incomplete pass signal and help in the retrieval of the ball.

- **LINE JUDGE:** Look through to tackle to read whether it will be a run or pass. Determine strength of formation by number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the formation. If there is no strong side, the strength is declared to be on the side of the LINE JUDGE.
  - Observe the eligible receivers that are your responsibility:
    - If trips formation to your side (three eligible receivers on your side), watch the outside receiver on your side.
    - If formation is balanced, watch the outside receiver on your side. If there is only one receiver on your side, watch for backs coming out of the backfield.
    - If formation is unbalanced to the opposite side, watch all receivers on your side.
    - If formation is unbalanced to your side (more eligible receivers on your side), watch the outside receiver on your side of the field.
  - After reading pass:
    - Hold your spot on the Line of Scrimmage until the ball is released. If the play turns into a run be prepared to come back and trail the play.
    - Watch for offensive pass interference and defensive holding.
  - When the pass is thrown:
    - Watch for pass interference on either team.
    - Be ready to rule on whether the ball reaches the neutral zone and any potential catch occurs in your area.
    - Move downfield and get in position to rule on a catch or pass interference. Give enough time to become stationary prior to the pass coming down.

If the pass is complete in your area, trail the play and mark the dead ball spot. If the pass is incomplete in your area, give the incomplete pass signal and help in the retrieval of the ball.

- **BACK JUDGE:** Determine strength of formation by number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the formation. If there is no strong side, the strength is declared to be on the side of the LINE JUDGE.
  - Observe the eligible receivers that are your responsibility:
    - If trips formation (three eligible receivers on one side), watch the inside two receivers on that side.

- If formation is balanced, watch the inside receiver on the side of the LINE JUDGE.
- If formation is unbalanced (more eligible receivers on one side), watch the inside receiver on that side of the field.

In addition to focusing on starting keys, be alert for receivers who move to the middle of the field or run deep routes.

- When the pass is thrown:
  - Watch for pass interference on either team.
  - Be ready to rule on whether a catch occurs in your area.
- If the pass is incomplete:
  - Signal incomplete (primary) or give the stop the clock signal (secondary).
  - Scan the field and dead ball officiate.
  - Check the game clock.
  - Assist with retrieving the game ball.
- If the pass is complete:
  - Keep a deep position, favoring the center of the field.
  - Do not let players get behind you.
  - Be aware of the goal line.
  - Observe action around the ball carrier.
  - Watch for illegal blocking ahead of or around the ball.
  - Move towards the ball at the end of the play.
- If the pass is intercepted:
  - Be aware of the goal line.
  - Use a beanbag to mark momentum (if applicable).
  - Stay behind the play.
  - Clean up action behind the play, if returned.
  - Stop the clock and signal direction if interception ends in your area.

## 8.5 SCRIMMAGE KICKS

A scrimmage kick is any legal kick in or behind the neutral zone. A place kick, punt, or drop kick may be used. For a place kick, the ball must be controlled on the ground or on a legal kicking tee by a teammate. Scrimmage kicks include punts, field goals, and a kicking try. A scrimmage kick formation is one in which no player is in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs, and at the snap, either:

1. A player is 10 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage and in position to receive a long snap.
2. A player is in position with a knee on the ground 7 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage, in position to be the holder and receive a long snap, with another player 3 yards or less behind that player and in position to attempt a place kick.

### 8.5.1 REGULAR PUNT

A scrimmage kick in which the offense lines up in a punt formation (example #1 above).

Initial position:

- **REFEREE:** Take position on the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS side of the field 1-2 yards behind the kicker and wide enough (8-10 yards) to see all eleven players, while having a 45-degree angle on the kickers leg.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position about 5-7 yards from the line of scrimmage, on the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS side of the field, and in position to see action against the snapper. Instruct the defense not to rough the snapper.

- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Take position on the sideline and even with the BACK JUDGE.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position toward the sideline of the Official with the Chains, about 10 yards wider and 5 yards deeper than the deepest returner with a beanbag in hand.

After the snap (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Watch to ensure possession of the ball by the kicker or possible knee on the ground. Once the ball is kicked, shout, “ball is gone.” Stay with the kicker and be prepared to rule on possible roughing or running into. Stay on the kicker until the action is cleared. After the kick, move towards the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS’s sideline and be prepared to fade to goal line if the kick is returned. You are responsible for the goal line on a return.

For kicks that go out of bounds in the air, note the position of where it crossed the sideline (protecting the kicker is primary). If you know where the ball crossed, hold one arm high up into the air. When the LINE JUDGE or BACK JUDGE reaches that point along the sideline, bring that same arm down and point at that official. If you do not know where the crossing spot is, point at the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS or BACK JUDGE from the start. This will tell them that they must find the spot.

- **UMPIRE:** Watch for any illegal action against the snapper. Observe blocking on the line of scrimmage. Watch for touching of a low kick at the line of scrimmage and signal if applicable. Once the kick is away, and the line play has disintegrated, turn and drift slowly downfield. Observe blocking as the play comes towards you. Let the play pass clean up dead ball action behind the play.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Make sure that the kick crosses the line of scrimmage and does not come back. Stay on the line of scrimmage until it is clear that the ball will stay across. Move slowly downfield and along the sideline. Watch for illegal blocks. Also, watch for illegal blocking after a fair catch signal is given. Prepare to fade back to the goal line if the kick is returned. You are responsible for the goal line on a return.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Watch the “gunners” (players coming down to tackle the return man). Watch for possible blocks in the back that occur. Do not watch the ball. (**NOTE:** If the punt is going to land outside the numbers on your sideline, change responsibilities with the BACK JUDGE) Once the ball starts to be returned, watch the runner and blocks out in front of the runner. Take responsibility for the runner and the spot as the ball is advanced downfield. You are responsible for the spot. Move down the sideline and trail the play as necessary.

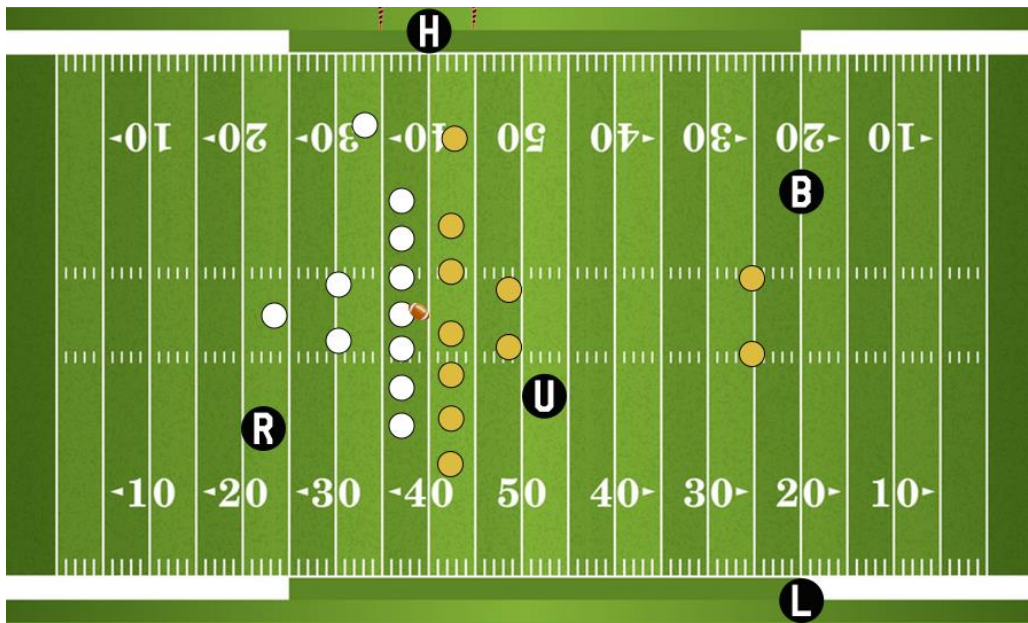
If the ball is kicked out of bound in the air, on your side, move down the sideline and slightly beyond the point where you think it crossed the sideline. Watch the REFEREE. Put one arm in the air and start to move back down the sideline. When you reach the point where the ball crosses, the REFEREE will bring his arm down and point at you. If the REFEREE is pointing at you from the start, make a best guess about where the ball went out and mark that spot.

- **BACK JUDGE:** Watch up field to make sure that ball is kicked. Be aware of any fair catch signals. Watch for first touching by the kicking team (mark with bean bag). Ensure that the receiver is given an opportunity to complete the catch. Once the ball is in player possession, mark the end of the kick with

a beanbag. (**NOTE:** If the punt is going to land outside the numbers on the sideline near the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS, change responsibilities with the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS) Once the ball starts to be returned, move toward the sideline of the WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS. Watch the runner and blocks out in front of the runner. Take responsibility for the runner and the spot as the ball is advanced downfield. You are responsible for the spot all the way up to the goal line. Move down the sideline and trail the play as necessary.

If the ball is kicked out of bounds in the air, on your side, move down the sideline and slightly beyond the point where you think it crossed the sideline. Watch the REFEREE. Put one arm in the air and start to move back down the sideline. When you reach the point where the ball crosses, the REFEREE will bring his arm down and point at you. If the REFEREE is pointing at you from the start, make a best guess about where the ball went out and mark that spot.

### 8.5.2 FIVE-PERSON PUNT DIAGRAM



### 8.5.3 PUNT FROM INSIDE THE 50

If the offense is attempting a punt and the ball will be snapped from inside the 50-yard line, the mechanics will be the same as above, except:

- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Take position behind the pylon at the intersection of the home team’s sideline and R’s goal line. Be ready to rule on whether the kick crossed the goal line.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position behind the pylon at the intersection of the visiting team’s sideline and R’s goal line. Be ready to rule on whether the kick crossed the goal line.

### 8.5.4 FIELD GOAL

A scrimmage kick in which the offense lines up in a field goal formation.

Initial position:

- **REFEREE:** Take position to the non-kicking leg side of and 1-2 yards behind the kicker, while being wide enough (8-10 yards) to see all eleven players and have a 45-degree angle on the kickers leg.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position about 5-7 yards from the line of scrimmage, on the LINE JUDGE side of the field, and in position to see action against the snapper.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline. Responsible for pre snap line of scrimmage fouls.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Beyond the end zone and behind your upright, even with the BACK JUDGE.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Beyond the end zone and behind the WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS's upright, even with the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS.

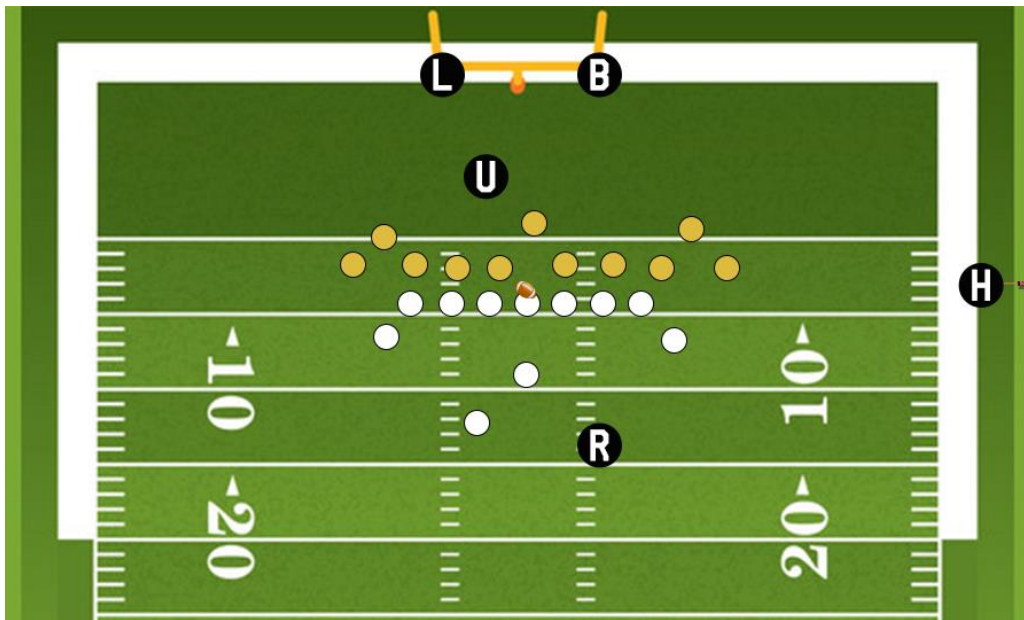
After the snap (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Watch to ensure possession of the ball by the holder. Watch for any trick plays where the knee of the holder could be in question. Once the ball is kicked, shout, "Ball is gone." Stay with the kicker and holder and be prepared to rule on possible roughing or running into. Stay on the kicker and holder until the action is cleared. After the kick, get a visual signal from crewmates and give a signal to the press box (depending on result of the play). Do not blow whistle after the kick.
- **UMPIRE:** Watch for any illegal action against the snapper. Observe blocking on the line of scrimmage. Watch for touching of a low kick at the line of scrimmage and signal if applicable. Once the kick is over, make sure that the line play has stopped. Be vocal if necessary.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Make sure that the kick crosses the line of scrimmage and does not come back. Stay on the line of scrimmage until it is clear that the ball will stay across. Watch of illegal blocks. If the ball has no chance of being returned, come onto the field and watch dead ball action around the line of scrimmage. Be vocal if necessary. If the ball is returned, move slowly downfield and along the sideline. Watch for illegal blocks. Also, watch for illegal blocking after a fair catch signal is given. Prepare to fade back to the goal line if the kick is returned. You are responsible for the goal line on a return.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Make sure that kick is away cleanly. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with BACK JUDGE. Use simple words like "Yes-Yes" or "No-No" to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the BACK JUDGE. Both WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS and BACK JUDGE should signal together at the same time.

If the ball is kicked short and might not reach the goal line, be prepared to move to the goal line and judge whether the ball crosses.

- **BACK JUDGE:** Make sure that kick is away cleanly. Blow one loud blast on the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line. If the ball does not cross the goal line, do not blow the whistle. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS. Use simple words like "Yes-Yes" or "No-No" to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS. Both WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS and BACK JUDGE should signal together at the same time.

### 8.5.5 FIVE-PERSON TRY/FG DIAGRAM



Note: the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE THE CHAINS will be the “L” in the diagram above.

### 8.5.6 TRY

A scrimmage kick in which the offense lines up in a field goal formation after a score.

Initial position:

- **REFEREE:** Take position to the non-kicking leg side of and 1-2 yards behind the kicker, while being wide enough (8-10 yards) to see all eleven players and have a 45-degree angle on the kickers leg.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position about 5-7 yards from the line of scrimmage, on the LINE JUDGE side of the field, and in position to see action against the snapper.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline. Responsible for pre snap and line of scrimmage fouls.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Beyond the end zone and behind your upright, even with the BACK JUDGE.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Beyond the end zone and behind the WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS’s upright, even with the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS.

After the snap (Read & React):

- **REFEREE:** Watch to ensure possession of the ball by the holder. Watch for any trick plays where the knee of the holder could be in question. Once the ball is kicked, shout, “ball is gone.” Stay with the kicker and holder and be prepared to rule on possible roughing or running into. Stay on the kicker and holder until the action is cleared. After the kick, get a visual signal from crewmates and give a signal to the press box (depending on result of the play). Do not blow whistle after the kick.



- **UMPIRE:** Watch for any illegal action against the snapper. Observe blocking on the line of scrimmage. Watch for touching of a low kick at the line of scrimmage and signal if applicable. Once the kick is over make sure that the line play has stopped. Be vocal is necessary.
- **WING OFFICIAL WITH CHAINS:** Make sure that the kick try crosses the line of scrimmage and does not come back. Stay on the line of scrimmage until it is clear that the ball will stay across. Watch for illegal blocks. After the kick, come onto the field towards the action and dead ball officiate around the line of scrimmage. Be vocal if necessary.
- **WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS:** Make sure that kick is away cleanly. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with BACK JUDGE. Use simple words like “Yes-Yes” or “No-No” to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the BACK JUDGE. Both WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS and BACK JUDGE should signal together at the same time. Hold your signal until the REFEREE begins to signal the press box. Following the try, move to take your initial free kick position.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Make sure that kick is away cleanly. Blow one loud blast on the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS. Use simple words like “Yes-Yes” or “No-No” to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS. Both WING OFFICIAL OPPOSITE CHAINS and BACK JUDGE should signal together at the same time. Hold your signal until the REFEREE begins to signal the press box. Following the try, jog up the sideline opposite the Line Judge and stop where the team is huddling. Following the official’s timeout, inform the team to take their free kick positions. Move to take your initial free kick position.

### 8.5.7 SWINGING GATE

The swinging gate formation is occasionally used on try plays. The offense lines up with the snapper, holder, and kicker between the hash marks and the majority of the remaining players in a side zone. In order for the formation to be considered a swinging gate, the snapper must have his hand on the ball and a player must be in position to receive a snap. Because this formation presents several options for scoring, the officials must position themselves to maximize coverage.

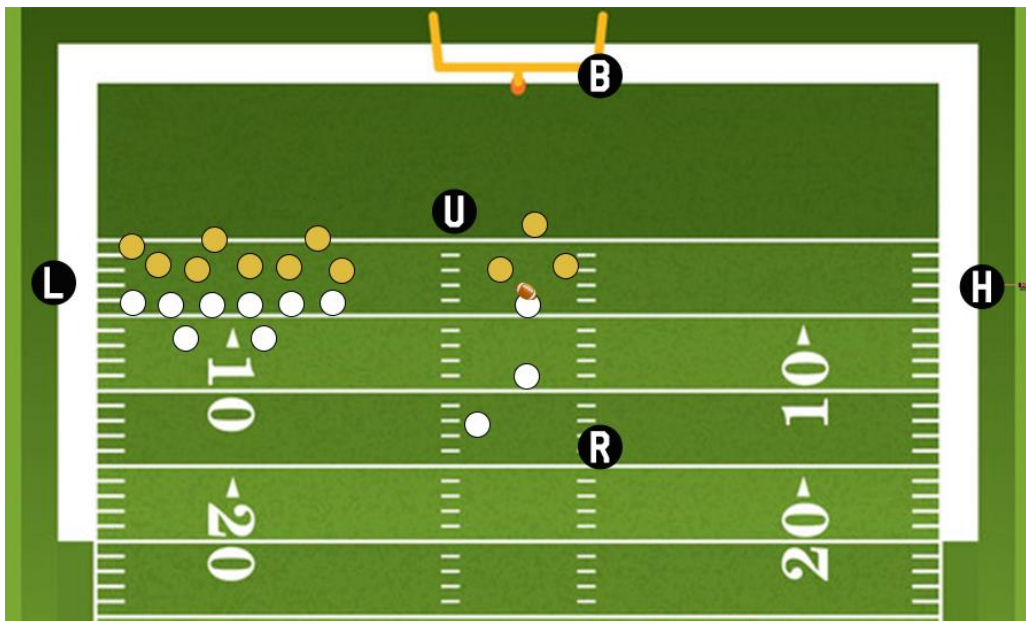
Officials will need to adjust their positions and some duties to effectively cover the swinging gate formation and the multiple plays that can be run from it.

- **REFEREE:** Take position on the non-kicking leg side of the field 1-2 yards behind the kicker and wide enough (8-10 yards) to see all eleven players, while having a 45-degree angle on the kickers leg.
- **UMPIRE:** Take position 6-7 yards beyond the neutral zone and favoring the L’s side of the field. Watch for any illegal action against the snapper.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take your standard scrimmage play position. Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline. Responsible for pre snap and line of scrimmage fouls.

If the offensive team shifts out the swinging gate formation, then hustle into position under the upright opposite the BACK JUDGE. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with BACK JUDGE. Use simple words like “Yes-Yes” or “No-No” to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the BACK JUDGE. Both LINE JUDGE and BACK JUDGE should signal together at the same time. Hold your signal until the REFEREE begins to signal the press box.

- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position beyond the end zone and behind the HEAD LINESMAN's upright. Make sure that kick is away cleanly. Blow one loud blast on the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line. Rule on your upright. Be vocal and communicate with the LINE JUDGE. Use simple words like "Yes-Yes" or "No-No" to communicate. Step up to the end line and signal in conjunction with the LINE JUDGE. Both LINE JUDGE and BACK JUDGE should signal together at the same time. Hold your signal until the REFEREE begins to signal the press box.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Take your standard scrimmage play position. Straddle the line of scrimmage two yards off of the sideline. Responsible for pre snap and line of scrimmage fouls.

### 8.5.8 FIVE PERSON SWINGING GATE DIAGRAM



## 8.6 GOAL LINE

This section describes specific mechanics for officiating run or pass plays when the ball is snapped near the goal. These mechanics are additions to the general mechanics described for all plays from scrimmage.

### 8.6.1 GOAL LINE MECHANICS

Goal line mechanics are used when the offensive team snaps the ball inside their opponent's 15-yard line. The mechanics are adjusted again if the snap is made at or inside the opponent's 5-yard line.

When the offense snaps the ball from inside their opponent's 15-yard line, officials should use the standard scrimmage play mechanics except as noted below:

- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** When the ball is snapped, stay well ahead of the runner so you can be at the goal line to observe a possible scoring play when the runner gets there.

**DO NOT TRAIL THE RUNNER. BE AT THE GOAL LINE FIRST.**

If the runner is threatening your goal line pylon, get to a position at least 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended. Be prepared to back up even further if necessary. Work your way back along the sideline to mark the dead ball spot if the play ends short of the goal line.

Be alert for pick plays on passes. Watch for players going out of bounds voluntarily and returning to the field of play. Be ready to assist the BACK JUDGE in determining whether passes are completed in the corner of the end zone. If you see the receiver is out of bounds on the sideline or does not have control of the ball before going out of bounds, immediately signal the pass is incomplete. If neither you nor the BACK JUDGE rules incomplete, make eye contact and then give the touchdown signal simultaneously with the BACK JUDGE.

If the ball is marked short, but very close to the goal line, wing officials should come in quickly and spot the ball instead of the UMPIRE. This action helps to sell that that official definitely had the ball short.

If the play ends very close to the goal line in the middle of the field (a dive play), and it is unclear about whether there is a score or not, wing officials should move quickly in (crash) to determine the result of the play. Officials should not signal or blow their whistle until the result of the play is clear. A small delay is far better than an inadvertent whistle.

*EXCEPTION:* If the ball is to be snapped from 1-2 yards inside the 15-yard line **and** the line to gain is within 2 yards, the BACK JUDGE may keep goal line responsibility. If a pass occurs and players force the BACK JUDGE back onto the end line, then be prepared to assist in goal line coverage. The crew should communicate prior to the snap if this exception is used.

- **BACK JUDGE:** Primary responsibility is the end line. Prior to the snap, position yourself on the end line and between the uprights. Be alert for pick plays on passes. Watch for players going out of bounds along the end line voluntarily and returning to the field of play. Watch for players who touch the goal posts or pylons and also return to play. On passes to the corner of the end zone, coordinate judgments about whether the pass has been caught with the covering wing official. If you see the receiver is out of bounds on the end line or does not have control of the ball before going out of bounds, immediately signal the pass is incomplete. If neither you nor the wing official signals incomplete, make eye contact and then give the touchdown signal.

*EXCEPTION:* If the ball is to be snapped from 1-2 yards inside the 15-yard line and the line to gain is within 2 yards, the BACK JUDGE will keep goal line responsibility. If a pass occurs and receivers run into the end zone, move back to and cover the end line. Do not let players get behind you.

When the offense snaps the ball from at or inside their opponent's 5-yard line, officials should use the mechanics noted above, except:

- **UMPIRE:** Never mark the progress spot near the goal line. Never give the touchdown signal. Only give the wing officials verbal signals to help determine if there is a score if there is no doubt the ball was in. If there is any doubt, do not provide any signal. Communicate verbally with wing officials when possible.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** At the snap, move immediately to get to a position at least 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended. Do not trail the runner. Work your way back along the sideline to mark the dead ball spot if the play ends short of the goal line.

### **8.6.2 REVERSE GOAL LINE MECHANICS**

Reverse goal line mechanics are used when the offensive team snaps the ball inside their own 10-yard line. The mechanics are adjusted again if the snap is made from inside the 5-yard line.

When the offense snaps the ball from inside their own 10-yard line, officials should use the standard scrimmage play mechanics except as noted below:

- **REFEREE:** Responsible for the end line behind the offense. Also responsible for the goal line along with the wing official that the REFEREE is facing. Be alert for ball becoming dead in the end zone or behind the end line. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the possession of the offensive team, give the safety signal. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the possession of the defensive team, give the touchdown signal.
- **WING OFFICIAL that REFEREE is Facing:** At the snap, retreat towards the goal line pylon to determine if the ball gets completely out of the end zone before it becomes dead. Stay towards the goal line until it is no longer threatened. Pinch in on the field of play to mark progress or look for the ball near the goal line. Pinch in in the end zone to signal safety or a touchdown by the defensive team. Work back toward the line of scrimmage and square off to identify the forward progress spot if the ball becomes dead in the field of play away from the goal line.
- **WING OFFICIAL that REFEREE is Not Facing:** Run standard scrimmage play mechanics.

When the offense snaps the ball from inside their own 5-yard line, officials should use the standard scrimmage play mechanics except as noted below:

- **REFEREE:** Responsible for the end line behind the offense. Be alert for ball becoming dead in the end zone or behind the end line. If the ball becomes clearly dead in the end zone in the possession of the offensive team, give the safety signal. If the ball becomes clearly dead in the end zone in the possession of the defensive team, give the touchdown signal. If the ball becomes dead close to the goal line, let the wing officials make the judgment.
- **HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE:** At the snap, retreat to a position about 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended to determine if the ball gets completely out of the end zone before it becomes dead. Stay on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. Pinch in on the field of play to mark progress or look for the ball near the goal line. Pinch in in the end zone to signal safety or a touchdown by the defensive team. Work back toward the line of scrimmage and square off to identify the forward progress spot if the ball becomes dead in the field of play away from the goal line.

## SEVEN PERSON MECHANICS

The following mechanics are to be used when officiating all AIA games where there are seven officials. Responsibilities outlined in the five person mechanics are understood to still apply unless stated otherwise.

### 9.1 PREGAME

#### **9.1.1 BEFORE THE GAME**

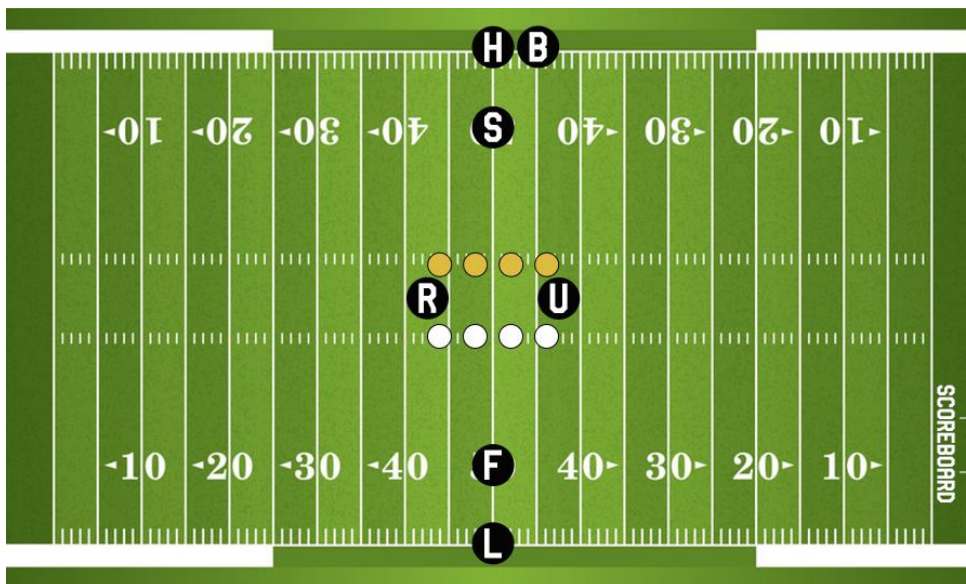
- **REFEREE:** Meet with each head coach, home team first, and complete the pregame conference. The HEADLINESMAN will accompany the REFEREE when visiting the home coach. The LINE JUDGE will accompany the REFEREE when visiting the visiting coach. After conferences, inspect the field to ensure that there are no potential safety hazards. Spot-check players for any illegal equipment or uniforms. Relay any useful information from the pregame conference to the other members of the crew.
- **UMPIRE:** Inspect the legality of the equipment of every player. Ask the Offensive Line Coach if it is permissible to talk to Center. If so, meet with both team Centers individually and discuss all aspects of the UMPIRE and snapper interactions. Watch lineman actions, steps, blocking techniques, sets, etc. during warm-ups for both teams.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Accompany the REFEREE and meet with the home coach. Check the sideline with the press box (home side). Move all yard markers at least two yards off the sideline. Move the G markers at least five yards off the sideline. Check the line to gain equipment and instruct the chain crew. With SIDE JUDGE, introduce yourself to both head coaches.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Accompany the REFEREE and meet with the visiting coach. Check the sideline opposite of the press box (visiting sideline). Move all yard markers at least two yards off the sideline. Move the G markers at least five yards off the sideline. Check the line to gain equipment and instruct the chain crew. With FIELD JUDGE, introduce yourself to both head coaches.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Meet with the official game timer. Confirm that the clock is running and set to hit zero three minutes before the scheduled game time.
  - The items to cover with the clock operator should include:
    - \* When to start and stop the clock
    - \* Official's signals to look for (stop, wind, ready for play)
    - \* Length of halftime
    - \* 42-Point rule timing
    - \* Find out how the crew can contact the clock operator if required

Accompany FIELD JUDGE and instruct ball personnel on procedures. With HEAD LINESMAN, introduce yourself to both head coaches.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** During pregame warm-ups, primary on "Guard Duty" at 50-yard line ensuring teams remain on their side of the field Get game balls from both teams. Instruct ball personnel on procedures. With LINE JUDGE, introduce yourself to both head coaches.
- **BACK JUDGE:** If applicable, review 40/25 Play Clock procedures with play clock operator. Check the end zones and end lines. Make sure that all pylons are in the correct positions. Inspect the area around the end zones for any safety hazards.

### 9.1.2 COIN TOSS

- **REFEREE:** Three minutes before scheduled game time, be at the center of the field with the UMPIRE. Signal FIELD JUDGE and SIDE JUDGE to escort the captains to the top of the numbers. Conduct coin toss.
- **UMPIRE:** Three minutes before the scheduled game time, be at center of the field with the REFEREE. Audibly repeat the captain's choice before the flip. At conclusion of coin toss, pick up coin for the REFEREE.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Remain on your sideline and ensure teams stay in their team box. Once the coin toss is completed, give ball to the BACK JUDGE.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Remain on your sideline and ensure teams stay in their team box.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Gather captains at midfield so they are ready for coin toss at three minutes before the schedule game. When REFEREE provides signal for coin toss to commence, escort the home team captain to the top of the numbers. Remain there to ensure teams stay on their side line.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Gather captains at midfield so they are ready for coin toss at three minutes before the schedule game. When REFEREE provides signal for coin toss to commence, escort the home team captain to the top of the numbers. Remain there to ensure teams stay on their side line.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Remain on your sideline and ensure teams stay in their team box.

### 9.1.3 SEVEN-PERSON COIN TOSS DIAGRAM



## 9.2 FREE KICKS

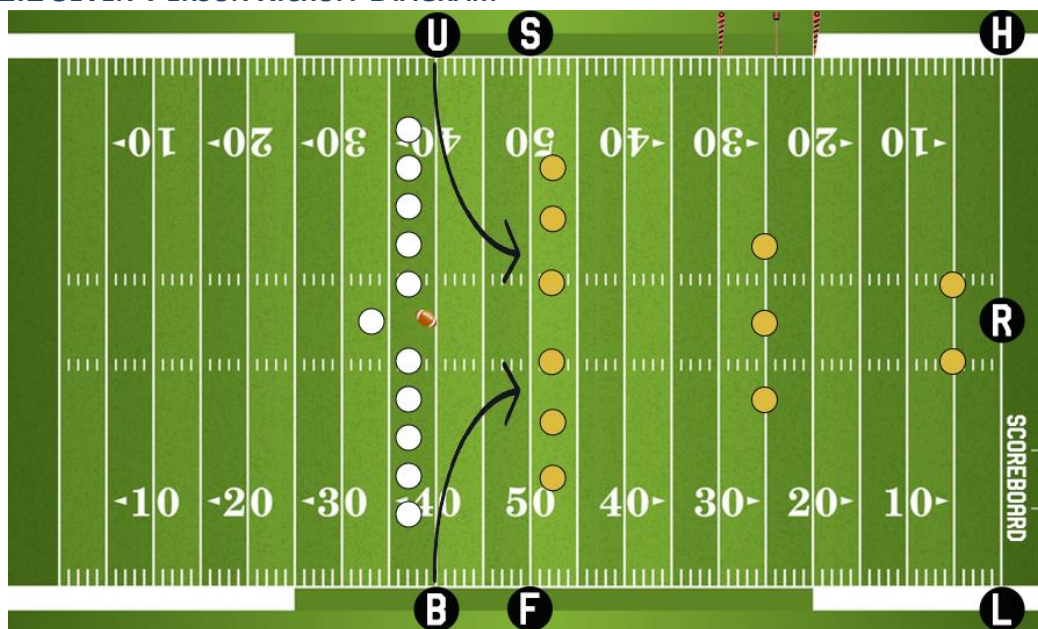
### 9.2.1 ZONES AND KEYS

- **REFEREE:** Line up in the center of the field behind deepest receiver, on the Goal Line. Be alert for ball crossing the Goal Line, and signal Touchback. Watch play clock and 4 on each side of the kicker. Count

and confirm number of Team R players with HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE. Obtain ready signal from BACK JUDGE.

- **UMPIRE:** Opposite Press box on K's restraining line. Key on players #4 and #5 on your side of the line. Watch Kicker for 5 yards after the kick. When colors merge, watch backside. Count Team K players and confirm with BACK JUDGE.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** First half: Press box, Second half: opposite Press box. Goal line and pylon responsibility. Secondary for four on each side of the kicker. Count and confirm the number of Team R players with the REFEREE. Rule on touchback and momentum as applicable.
- **LINE JUDGE:** First half: opposite Press box, Second half: Press box. Goal line and pylon responsibility. Secondary for four on each side of the kicker. Count and confirm the number of Team R players with the REFEREE. Rule on touchback and momentum as applicable.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** First half: Press box, Second half: opposite Press box on R's restraining line. Signal ready to BACK JUDGE when he points at you by raising one hand. Key on Team K players #2 and #3 on your side.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** First half: opposite Press box, Second half: Press box on R's restraining line. Signal ready to BACK JUDGE when he points at you by raising one hand. Key on Team K players #2 and #3 on your side.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Press box side on K's restraining line. Keep players inside 9-yard marks. Obtain ready signal from the SIDE JUDGE, FIELD JUDGE, and UMPIRE. After instructing the kicker, move to the press box side and raise hand when ready to signal to REFEREE. Key on Team K players #4 and #5 on your side. Watch team K within 5 yards of restraining line. Responsible for Team K's Goal Line on return.

### 9.2.2 SEVEN-PERSON KICKOFF DIAGRAM



### 9.2.3 COVERAGE

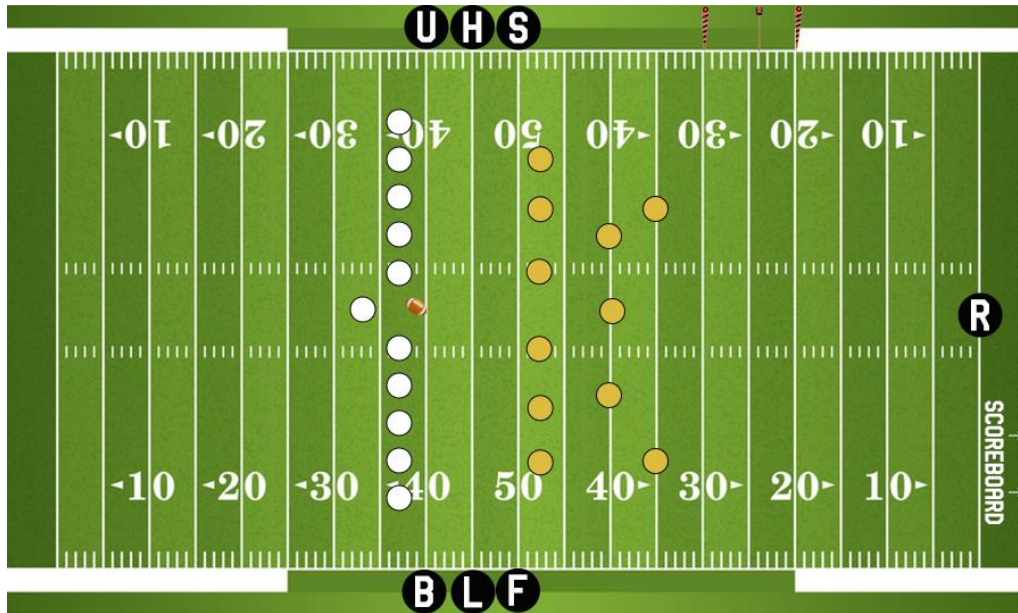
- **REFEREE:** Rule on touchback or momentum as applicable. Observe point of attack. Watch for handoff and reverse. Observe the action in front of the runner as he moves downfield
- **UMPIRE:** Move between the numbers and hash marks at a 45-degree angle, no more than 10-12 yards downfield. Depending on the kick, adjust coverage into the field.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Wind clock when ball is legally touched in field of play. Stay at goal line until it is no longer threatened. Watch frontside blocks in your area, and backside blocks when the ball go to the opposite side of the field. Responsible for the dead ball spot when run is up your half of the field.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Wind clock when ball is legally touched in field of play. Watch frontside blocks in your area, and backside blocks when the ball go to the opposite side of the field. Responsible for the dead ball spot when run is up your half of the field.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Know if the ball is kicked into the ground. Move no more than 10 yards downfield when the ball is kicked. Clean up out of bounds when the runner goes out on your side.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Know if the ball is kicked into the ground. Move no more than 10 yards downfield when the ball is kicked. Clean up out of bounds when the runner goes out on your side.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Move between the numbers and hash marks, no more than 8-10 yards downfield.

### 9.2.4 ONSIDE KICK POSITIONING AND ZONES

- **REFEREE:** Position slightly behind and to one side of deep receiver. Responsible for Team R goal line and ensuring four on each side of the kicker.
- **UMPIRE:** Same as regular free kick. Be prepared to rule on touching or blocks.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Midway between the two restraining lines. Secondary for four players on each side of the kicker.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Midway between the two restraining lines. Secondary for four players on each side of the kicker.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Same as regular free kick.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Same as regular free kick.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Same as regular free kick.



### 9.2.5 SEVEN-PERSON ONSIDE KICK DIAGRAM



### 9.2.6 ONSIDE KICK COVERAGE

- **REFEREE:** Start slightly behind deepest receiver and to one side. Responsible for Goal Line and End Line. Be prepared if kick is deep. Be aware of the clock once the ball is touched and downed.
- **UMPIRE:** Treat restraining line as a tight plane. If ball is kicked to your side, you have secondary for touching by either team. If ball is kicked to the other side of the field, you are responsible for blocking. Be alert for fair catch.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Observe blocking by both teams. Know if ball was kicked into the ground. Be alert for fair catch signal.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Observe blocking by both teams. Know if ball was kicked into the ground. Be alert for fair catch signal.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Know if the ball broke Team R's restraining line. Primary for touching by either team. Be alert for fair catch signal.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Know if the ball broke Team R's restraining line. Primary for touching by either team. Be alert for fair catch signal.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Treat restraining line as a tight plane. If ball is kicked to your side, you have secondary for touching by either team. If ball is kicked to the other side of the field, you are responsible for blocking. Be alert for fair catch.

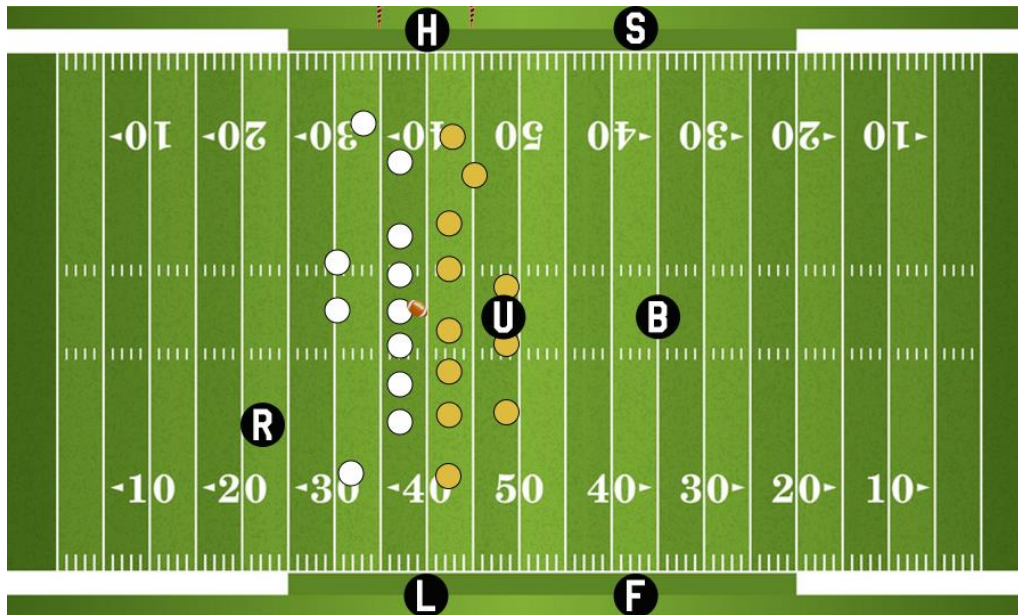
## 9.3 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

### 9.3.1 BEFORE THE SNAP

- **REFEREE:** Line up on passing arm of Quarterback, at least as wide as the Tight End and 12-15 yards deep. Count Team A and communicate with UMPIRE, HEAD LINESMAN, and LINE JUDGE. Watch for Illegal Motion and False Start by Quarterback or other backs. Identify the location of the backs. Take note of the play clock.
- **UMPIRE:** Count the offense and confirm with REFEREE. Note the lateral position of the ball. Know the five ineligible and their numbers. Rule on illegal movement by Center and both Guards. Set up in a safe spot where you can see areas of responsibilities.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Start just outside the sideline on the line of scrimmage. May pinch in depending on game situation. Be alert for movement by linemen, especially Tackles on your side of the ball. Indicate the line of scrimmage by extended foot, then straddle the line. Observe motion man on your side of the ball.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Start just outside the sideline on the line of scrimmage. May pinch in depending on game situation. Be alert for movement by linemen, especially Tackles on your side of the ball. Indicate the line of scrimmage by extended foot, then straddle the line. Observe motion man on your side of the ball. Assist Referee with game clock status.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Count the defense and confirm with BACK JUDGE. Basic starting position is approximately 22 yards from line of scrimmage on the sideline. If ball is snapped on or inside B's 25 to the 8-yard line, position on the pylon and maintain responsibility for goal line throughout play. From the 7-yard line to the 2-yard line, you have the end line. Monitor substitutions. Primary responsibility for game clock. Key receiver is the widest eligible receiver at the snap. If key goes in motion, the BACK JUDGE will take that player as key and the affected FIELD JUDGE/SIDE JUDGE will take the next receiver in. Responsible for action on or by key from the snap until it may be necessary to release your key so that you can cover normal scrimmage action in your zone. Keys are designated so that a set of eyes are on each receiver so that rulings on contact by A against B (clips, block in back, block below waist, hold, pass interference etc.) and contact by B on A (pass interference, illegal use of hands, holding etc.) are more easily detected. Keys are for every play, not just pass plays.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Count the defense and confirm with BACK JUDGE. Basic starting position is approximately 22 yards from line of scrimmage on the sideline. If ball is snapped on or inside B's 25 to the 8-yard line, position on the pylon and maintain responsibility for goal line throughout play. From the 7-yard line to the 2-yard line, you have the end line. Monitor substitutions. Key receiver is the widest eligible receiver at the snap. If key goes in motion, the BACK JUDGE will take that player as key and the affected FIELD JUDGE/SIDE JUDGE will take the next receiver in. Responsible for action on or by key from the snap until it may be necessary to release your key so that you can cover normal scrimmage action in your zone. Keys are designated so that a set of eyes are on each receiver so that rulings on contact by A against B (clips, block in back, block below waist, hold, pass interference etc.) and contact by B on A (pass interference, illegal use of hands, holding etc.) are more easily detected. Keys are for every play, not just pass plays.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Count the defense and confirm with SIDE JUDGE and FIELD JUDGE. Basic starting position is 25 yards from the line of scrimmage in the middle of the field, never between the 5-yard line and the goal line. Either start on the goal line or the 5-yard line. Start and monitor all 25/40-second count. Key receiver is the 2nd eligible receiver from strong side at the snap or the inside receiver in trips. If

receiver goes in motion, the BACK JUDGE will take that player as key and the affected FIELD JUDGE/SIDE JUDGE/HEAD LINESMAN/LINE JUDGE will take the next receiver in. Responsible for action on or by key from the snap until it may be necessary to release your key so that you can cover normal scrimmage action in your zone. Keys are designated so that a set of eyes are on each receiver so that rulings on contact by A against B (clips, block in back, block below waste, hold, pass interference etc.) and contact by B on A (pass interference, illegal use of hands, holding etc.) are more easily detected. Keys are for every play, not just pass plays. If the ball is snapped on or inside the 25-yard line position is on the end line.

### 9.3.2 SEVEN-PERSON SCRIMMAGE PLAY DIAGRAM



### 9.3.3 RUNNING PLAY COVERAGE

- **REFEREE:** Observe action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone. Watch action on the ball and the Quarterback on handoffs and backwards passes. Focus on point of attack blocks. Assist on spotting ball on plays into side zone. Stay with runner behind the line of scrimmage. If the Quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the Quarterback. Be alert for action on the Quarterback after a change of possession.
- **UMPIRE:** On plays between the Tackles, focus on the point of attack around runner. On plays outside the Tackles, slowly turn and watch the backside blocking for the runner. Watch for late action on the pile. It is ok to move inside the hashes to assist and retrieve the ball from the deep wing. Moving inside the hashes, banana out in front of the end of the play away from players to get ball and see action around the pile.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Know if your key is in press coverage. Observe point of attack blocking behind the line of scrimmage on runs to your side. Attempt to maintain a 5-10 yard separation from the runner. When the play is away from your side, clean up behind the play.

- **LINE JUDGE:** Know if your key is in press coverage. Observe point of attack blocking behind the line of scrimmage on runs to your side. Attempt to maintain a 5-10 yard separation from the runner. When the play is away from your side, clean up behind the play.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Watch the widest receiver to your side of the offensive formation. Watch for crackback blocks. Try to maintain 15-20 yard separation to goal line. Responsible for spots inside the two-yard line and the goal line. Watch the blocks on the second level. If play ends anywhere in your side zone, assist in getting existing or new ball to the UMPIRE for spotting. If play goes out of bounds on your side, HEAD LINESMAN or LINE JUDGE will have the dead ball spot. Go into out of bounds area and clean up or get opposing players back onto the field before retrieving a football.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Watch the widest receiver to your side of the offensive formation. Watch for crackback blocks. Try to maintain 15-20 yard separation to goal line. Responsible for spots inside the two-yard line and the goal line. Watch the blocks on the second level. If play ends anywhere in your side zone, assist in getting existing or new ball to the UMPIRE for spotting. If play goes out of bounds on your side, HEAD LINESMAN or LINE JUDGE will have the dead ball spot. Go into out of bounds area and clean up or get opposing players back onto the field before retrieving a football.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Observe actions of players ahead of the runner. Assist UMPIRE with second level blocking. Be prepared for breakaway runs. On runs out of bounds, cover the area around the runner. Be prepared to rule on goal line on long runs.

## 9.4 GOAL LINE

### 9.4.1 POSITIONING AND ZONES

- **REFEREE:** Same positioning as any scrimmage play. If snapped inside Team B's 7-yard line, responsible for knowing backward/forward pass.
- **UMPIRE:** Stay off the goal line. Primary for knowing if passer was beyond the line of scrimmage. Primary for whether ball crossed the line of scrimmage or not.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Responsible for goal line when snapped on or inside Team B 7-yard line. Be alert for line to gain before goal line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Responsible for goal line when snapped on or inside Team B seven-yard line. Be alert for line to gain before goal line.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Starting position on the goal line if ball snapped between Team B 25 to 7-yard line. Ball snapped on or inside Team B seven-yard line, position is on back corner pylon. Never take a starting position between Team B 5 and the goal line.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Starting position on the goal line if ball snapped between Team B 25 to 7-yard line. Ball snapped on or inside Team B seven-yard line, position is on back corner pylon. Never take a starting position between Team B 5 and the goal line.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Ball snapped on or inside Team 25, starting position is on the end line.

### 9.4.2 REVERSE GOAL LINE

- **REFEREE:** Be alert for positioning and coverage with the end line and awareness of Goal line as snap location moves outside the 10-yard line.
- **UMPIRE:** Primary for knowing if passer was beyond the line of scrimmage. Primary for whether ball crossed the line of scrimmage or not.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** If snapped on or inside the Team A three-yard line, move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If snapped between the Team A three-yard line and the 10-yard line, read the play and react to the goal line if necessary.
- **LINE JUDGE:** If snapped on or inside the Team A three-yard line, move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If snapped between the Team A three-yard line and the 10-yard line, hold the line of scrimmage.

## 9.5 FORWARD PASS COVERAGE

### 9.5.1 PASSING AND KEYS

- **REFEREE:** Primary key is opposite side Tackle. Unless Trips then key should be trip side Tackle Primary for any lineman who is a threat of a foul. Primary for the Passer. Assist LINE JUDGE with pass thrown beyond/behind the Line of Scrimmage. Officiate the biggest threat to Quarterback.
- **UMPIRE:** Be alert for incoming pass receivers. Assist LINE JUDGE with pass behind/beyond the line of scrimmage. Pivot to assist with "trapped" passes. Be aware of ineligibles downfield. On long passes, stay on the lineman action a little longer, then spin to see result of play. Let REFEREE know result of the play every play.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** When a pass is read, primary responsibility is to your receiver. Be prepared to move downfield only if your key takes you downfield, no preset distance. Rarely drift more than 5-yards downfield on passes. If your receiver is not threatened, assist with the tackle on your side or the receivers in the 10-yard belt area. Responsible for covering passes receptions between line of scrimmage and deep officials. Assist the UMPIRE with ineligibles downfield on passes thrown out of your area. Have goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line. If there is a change of possession during the down, you have now have the reverse goal line and the FIELD JUDGE or SIDE JUDGE will have the spot to the 2 yard line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** When a pass is read, primary responsibility is to your receiver or other receiver in the 0-10 yard belt. If your receiver goes downfield, he has priority over your Tackle. Primary responsibility for forward/backward pass ruling. Be prepared to rule on whether pass was thrown beyond/beyond the line of scrimmage. Provide information whether the pass reached the line of scrimmage. Assist the UMPIRE with ineligibles downfield on passes thrown out of your area. Have goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line. If there is a change of possession during the down, you have now have the reverse goal line and the FIELD JUDGE or SIDE JUDGE will have the spot to the 2 yard line.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Widest receiver to your side of the field. Cover sideline from original position to end line. If play ends anywhere in your side zone, assist in getting existing or new ball to the UMPIRE for spotting. If play goes out of bounds on your side, HEAD LINESMAN or LINE JUDGE will have the dead

ball spot. Go into out of bounds area and clean up or get opposing players back onto the field before retrieving a football.

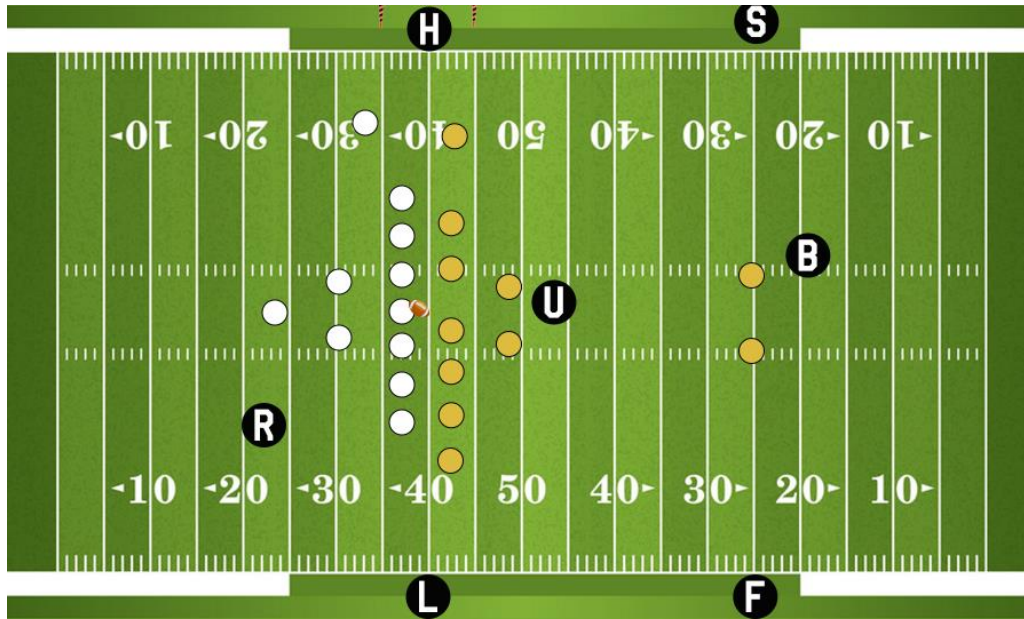
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Widest receiver to your side of the field. Cover sideline from original position to end line. If play ends anywhere in your side zone, assist in getting existing or new ball to the UMPIRE for spotting. If play goes out of bounds on your side, HEAD LINESMAN or LINE JUDGE will have the dead ball spot. Go into out of bounds area and clean up or get opposing players back onto the field before retrieving a football.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Responsible for your receiver from snap until you must release him to cover action in your area of responsibility. Player in motion is put into normal numbering of wide man and is determined at the snap.

## 9.6 PUNTS

### 9.6.1 POSITIONING AND ZONES

- **REFEREE:** Line up slightly behind and to the kicking leg side of the kicker outside the Tight End position. Be at a 45-degree angle when ball is kicked move to area behind kicker to assist with kicks out of bounds. Straddle end line if kicker is near the goal line and warn the kicker. Be able to see blockers and kicker at the same time.
- **UMPIRE:** Position is 10 yards off the line of scrimmage. Align over snapper to see the snap.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Take normal scrimmage down position. Hold the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the line.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take normal scrimmage down position. Hold the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the line.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Take a position on sideline no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver. Adjust position depending on weather and kicker's ability. When the ball is snapped inside the 50-yard line, line up on the pylon. If ball is snapped outside R's 50-yard line, position even with BACK JUDGE.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Take a position on sideline no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver. Adjust position depending on weather and kicker's ability. When the ball is inside the 50-yard line, line up on the pylon. If ball is snapped outside R's 50-yard line, position even with BACK JUDGE.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Line up no less than five yards behind and at the side of the deepest receiver, favoring the wide side. If this position takes you inside the 10-yard line, line up on the goal line. Maintain a 45-degree angle when the ball is in flight.

### 9.6.2 SEVEN-PERSON PUNT DIAGRAM



### 9.6.3 COVERAGE

- **REFEREE:** Watch action on the kicker and flight of ball off kicker's foot. Secondary for blocking on punt shield. Be aware if ball is kicked towards a sideline and move in position to line up. Know how you are communicating an out of bounds kick with your deep wings. Be aware of action on the kicker after the ball has been kicked as he is defenseless.
- **UMPIRE:** Pay attention to players over the snapper. Spin after first wave passes. Watch backside for illegal blocks. Transition/spin on returns that pass and watch backside for illegal blocks.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Hold line of scrimmage until ball crosses. Look for action in front of the runner if the SIDE JUDGE has the runner. Goal line responsibility on long returns.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Hold line of scrimmage until ball crosses. Look for action in front of the runner if the FIELD JUDGE has the runner.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Primary responsibility of the gunner on your side of the field. When it becomes obvious that the ball is not landing in your side zone, observe action in front of the receiver. If return is to your side, take over the runner as soon as he starts to advance. Offside official is responsible for blocking by fair-catch signaler. Follow the ball if receiver fails to field the kick in your area. If starting position was on goal line, remain there until it is not threatened.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Primary responsibility of the gunner on your side of the field. When it becomes obvious that the ball is not landing in your side zone, observe action in front of the receiver. If return is to your side, take over the runner as soon as he starts to advance. Offside official is responsible for blocking by fair-catch signaler. Follow the ball if receiver fails to field the kick in your area. If starting position was on goal line, remain there until it is not threatened.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Maintain 45-degree angle with the receiver. Be prepared to rule on status of ball into end zone and validity of fair-catch signal. Primary responsibility for kick-catch interference and legality

of handoffs. Bag the spot of the end of the kick, anywhere, sideline-to-sideline. If all deep officials are lined up on the goal line and the kick is short, you are primary for the ball and must leave the goal line if necessary.

#### **9.6.4 BLOCKED KICK OR HIGH SNAP**

- **REFEREE:** Retreat and box in the play with short wing opposite.
- **UMPIRE:** Maintain position. Look for ineligible downfield if passed.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Wing official on same side as REFEREE will hold the line of scrimmage until no longer threatened. Wing official the REFEREE is facing will retreat and box in the play.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Wing official on same side as REFEREE will hold the line of scrimmage until no longer threatened. Wing official the REFEREE is facing will retreat and box in the play.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Watch for illegal blocks beyond the line of scrimmage.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Watch for illegal blocks beyond the line of scrimmage.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Watch for illegal blocks beyond the line of scrimmage.

## 9.7 SCORING KICKS

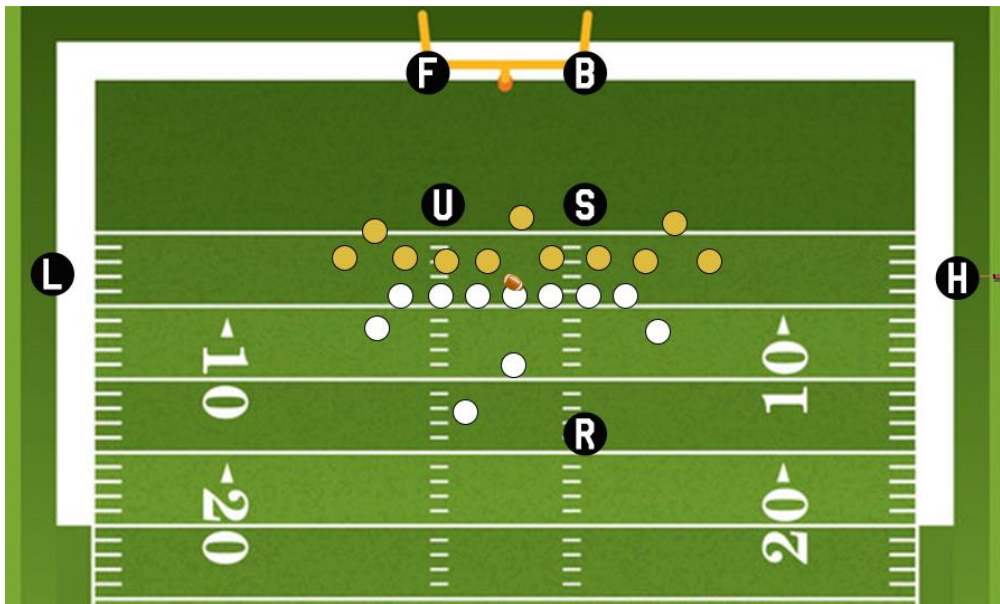
### **9.7.1 POSITIONING AND ZONES**

- **REFEREE:** Hold ready-for-play while standing between snapper and holder until crew is in place. When all is clear, move back into position and signal to clear the UMPIRE and blow the Ready for play. If no kicker or holder in position, take normal scrimmage position with the UMPIRE in position to prevent the snap. Starting position is approximately 10-yards wide of the potential kicker, facing the holder. Observe the motion of the backs in your vision along with action on the kicker and holder. Cover as usual if the play results in a run or pass. Only signal score when all requirements are met.
- **UMPIRE:** Spot the ball. Move back 5-7 yards off the ball other side of the SIDE JUDGE, keeping the Center in view. Primary for action on the snapper and action by/against the two guards. Remind defense to stay off the snapper and no leaping.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Take regular scrimmage position. Observe action by/against Tight End and Wing Back on your side. Be prepared to cover from line of scrimmage to end line on your side. Responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals. Do not leave line of scrimmage until ball has crossed the neutral zone.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take regular scrimmage position. Observe action by/against Tight End and Wing Back on your side. Be prepared to cover from line of scrimmage to end line on your side. Responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals. Do not leave line of scrimmage until ball has crossed the neutral zone.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Positioned 5-7 yards off the ball on the defensive side of the formation that has more players. Observe the action on/against the Tackle and Tight End on his side of the formation.



- **FIELD JUDGE:** Take position directly under the upright of the goal on your side of the field. Be prepared to move out into position to cover a play in the end zone on short field goal and TRY attempt.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take position directly under the upright of the goal on your side of the field. Be prepared to move out into position to cover a play in the end zone on short field goal and TRY attempt. If the ball strikes the cross bar, BACK JUDGE is responsible for the ruling.

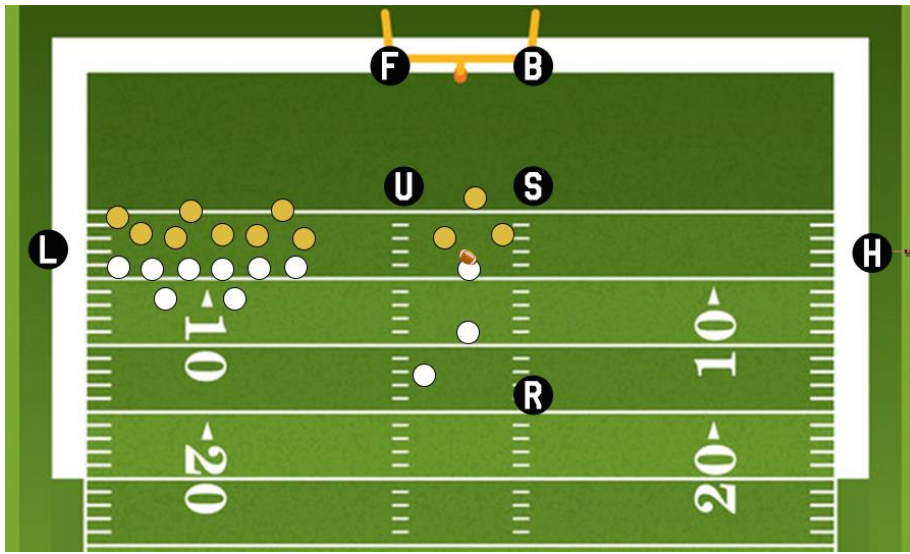
### 9.7.2 SEVEN-PERSON TRY/FG DIAGRAM



### 9.7.3 SWINGING GATE FORMATION (KICKER/HOLDER IN POSITION)

- **REFEREE:** Take usual scoring kick position.
- **UMPIRE:** Usual scoring kick responsibilities. Shade toward offset linemen to watch blocks after the snap. Look for ineligible.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Take usual scoring kick position.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Take usual scoring kick position.
- **SIDE JUDGE:** Take usual scoring kick position with the SIDE JUDGE adjusting to a wider position in front of the gate on their side.
- **FIELD JUDGE:** Take usual scoring kick position.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Take usual scoring kick position.

### 9.7.4 SEVEN-PERSON SWINGING GATE DIAGRAM



## 9.8 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

### 9.8.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

- **UMPIRE:** Meet with calling official to get foul briefing. Move with calling official to the REFEREE for foul details. If UMPIRE is the calling official, kill the clock when play is over and hustle to the REFEREE to explain the foul. If UMPIRE and other Officials have a flag down, meet up to discuss details, then 1 will report to the REFEREE. UMPIRE will mark off penalty with HEAD LINESMAN first then look to LINE JUDGE for validation enforcement is correct. If REFEREE has the flag, meet with him to discuss his foul and options. This gives him time to process his foul.

## OVERTIME

### 10.1 COIN TOSS

During the overtime intermission, all officials should meet in the middle of the field to discuss the overtime procedures.

The coin toss should occur in the middle of the field, on the 50-yard line, after the overtime intermission has ended. If multiple overtime periods are needed there should be no further coin tosses. The first option will simply rotate back and forth until a winner is declared.

- **REFEREE:** Once the overtime intermission has ended, take position at the center of the field and signal to the sidelines to have the captains brought out. Items to cover with the captains:
  - Have captains shake hands.
  - Sportsmanship.
  - Overtime rules.
  - Perform the coin toss. The team who wins the toss has the following options; the other option belongs to the team who lost the coin toss.
    - Offense or defense first.
    - The side of the field that the overtime period will be played on.
- **UMPIRE:** Once the overtime intermission has ended, take position at the center of the field. Listen to the REFEREE's conference with the captains and write down the decisions as it relates to the coin toss.
- **HEAD LINESMAN:** Once the overtime intermission has ended, be in position at the intersection of the visiting team's sideline and the 50-yard line. Observe the coin toss and assist the BACK JUDGE in keeping the visiting team off the field during the coin toss.
- **LINE JUDGE:** Once the overtime intermission has ended, take position at the intersection of the 50-yard line and the home team's sideline with the team captains. On the signal from the REFEREE, escort the captains towards the middle of the field. Stop at the numbers and allow the captains to continue on. Remain at the numbers until the coin toss is completed. Ensure that the home team remains off of the field during the coin toss.
- **BACK JUDGE:** Once the overtime intermission has ended, take position at the intersection of the 50-yard line and the visiting team's sideline with the team captains. On the signal from the REFEREE, escort the captains towards the middle of the field. Stop at the numbers and allow the captains to continue on. Remain at the numbers until the coin toss is completed. Ensure that the visiting team remains off of the field during the coin toss.

### 9.2 OVERTIME PROCEDURE

During an overtime period each team will receive one possession, first and goal, from the 10-yard line. All mechanics for plays during the regular course of the contest should be followed, except for the following:

- Both teams will advance the ball toward the same chosen goal.
- The line to gain is always the goal line. (Regardless of whether the ball has been moved due to penalty)
- If the defense gains possession of the ball, the play is immediately over, and the offensive series is ended.
- Each team gets only one timeout per overtime period.

*NOTE:* There is no overtime for any sub varsity contests.

## POST GAME

### 10.1 POST GAME

All officials should follow the following procedures after the conclusion of a contest:

- Leave the field immediately and together as a crew. Do not linger.
- Do not try to avoid or look for coaches.
- Do not discuss the game while still in public.
- Complete any required reports (Disqualification, Sportsmanship/Game Time). Submit these reports to the AIA office as soon as possible.
- Certified officials: submit evaluations for any sub varsity officials that worked on the same contest.

## PHILOSOPHY

The following philosophies shall be used in the officiating of high school football in the state of Arizona.

### 11.1 CATCH/NO CATCH

1. To be ruled a catch the receiver must be able to demonstrate and maintain firm control of the football. When there is doubt as to whether the player established firm control, he has not.
2. Catch – If the ball touches the ground in the receiver’s hands, any loss of control of the ball makes the pass incomplete; if there is no loss of control after contact with the ground, it is a catch.
3. If a receiver who is airborne controls the ball and is either contacted or falls to the ground on his own, whether in-bounds or out-of-bounds, he must maintain control of the ball through his fall to be awarded a catch. If the ball never touches the ground, the receiver can regain control as long as he remains inbounds.
4. Be definite on catch before giving catch-fumble ruling. If there is any question, rule incomplete.

### 11.2 PASS INTERFERENCE NOTES

1. If there is any question whether player contact is incidental, the ruling should be no interference.
2. Defensive players have as much right to the path of the ball as eligible offensive players.
3. Both players have a right to the ball and there must be “an obvious intent to impede” to rule pass interference.
4. There can be no pass interference at or behind the LOS, or if the pass does not cross the neutral zone, but defensive actions such as tackling a receiver can still result in a penalty for defensive holding.

### 11.3 NOT DPI/OPI

1. Incidental contact by a defender’s hands, arm, or body when both players are competing or neither player is looking for the ball. If there is any question whether contact is incidental the ruling shall be no interference.
2. Inadvertent tangling of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.
3. OPI will not be called on a screen pass where the ball is overthrown behind the Line of Scrimmage but subsequently lands beyond the Line of Scrimmage and linemen are blocking downfield.

### 11.4 OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

1. Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
2. Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.
3. If the pass has not been thrown and the block occurs anywhere downfield, call OPI if the pass subsequently crosses the Line of Scrimmage (except #4 below).

4. If the pass has been thrown and a block occurs in the same half of the field where the ball is thrown, call OPI.

## 11.5 PERSONAL FOULS

1. Contact with the helmet in an attempt to punish is always a foul whether by the offense or defense.
2. For late hits away from the ball near the end of the play, lean towards dead-ball rather than live-ball foul.
3. Obviously out of the play - Blocking an opponent 10 yards or more behind the runner shall be deemed unnecessary roughness.
4. When a player is hit after giving himself up, a foul is warranted.
5. When in doubt on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
6. For contact to the front of the passer, when there are more than two steps taken by the defensive player before contacting the passer, it is a foul.
7. Hits above the shoulder on the passer with anything, i.e. hand, helmet, etc. no matter how slight, is a foul.
8. 5-yard facemask fouls are rare but if it is a grasp and then let go, it can be called. If the head moves at all it is a 15-yard foul. When in question it is a 15-yard foul. Offensive facemask and dead-ball facemask fouls are always 15-yards.
9. If contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out-of-bounds, legal hit.
10. Runner continuing down sideline: If the whistle has blown and the player has eased up, then this is a foul. Be alert and be sure any action is not part of the initial play before calling a foul.
11. When in doubt, high contact against a player is targeting if there is a launch, thrust, or strike.
12. If a player commits to making a legal hit or tackle, and their opponent lowers their heads into this zone, no targeting foul will be called.
13. Contact against a defenseless player is not necessarily a foul. The contact itself must fall into the category of a personal foul.

## 11.6 HOLDING

1. Takedowns will be called anywhere on the field.
2. If there is a potential offensive/defensive holding but the action occurs away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, holding will not be called.
3. Feet/Beat/Jerk – the position of the feet is critical and there must be an effort to restrain an opponent.

4. A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet will be defensive holding and could also be DPI.

### 11.7 BLOCKING/ILLEGAL BLOCK IN THE BACK

1. Side block vs. IBB - When blocked in the back illegally, the player being blocked will fall or move in the same direction as his initial momentum. ( $\pm 15$  degrees) You must see the whole play! (Angle of block, spot of initial contact, did player turn.)
2. Exception to IBB philosophies is when a player is in the "chase mode".
3. Blocks in the back that are personal foul in nature will be called regardless of their timing relative to a runner being tackled. Note: Team B may legally block/push in the back while attempting to get to the ball carrier.
4. Contacting a receiver who does not pose a threat as a blocker, is an illegal block, illegal use of hands should be called. An eligible receiver does not pose a threat when: a) he does not face the defender b) he occupies the same yard line as the defender.
5. Blocking below the waist can only occur in the 'free blocking zone' and only if specific requirements are met. Therefore, any other block below the waist shall be deemed as a "block below the waist".

### 11.8 ILLEGAL MOTION/SHIFT - FALSE START

1. If the offense snaps the ball, prior to all eleven players becoming set for a full second, the play should remain live and flag for an illegal shift foul.
2. Once all eleven players have properly set, then any shift that "simulates action at the snap" should be a dead ball foul for a false start.
3. "Special shifts" which are clearly intended to cause the defense to encroach should be called false starts, i.e. QB head bob, RB going in motion abruptly, linemen abruptly shifting.
4. If the motion man is clearly angling forward while in motion at the snap, this is a live-ball foul unless there is an abrupt forward movement.

### 11.9 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE/FORMATIONS

1. Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call only when obvious, or when initial warnings are ignored. Don't wait until the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to enforce rule.
2. If the offensive player is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.
3. An offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back will be given leeway in determining if he is off the LOS, but to be on the LOS his feet must be within two yards of the neutral zone. Don't be technical. When in doubt, it is NOT a foul.
4. When the defensive player is in "press" position, wide receivers that are the end man on the LOS must be clearly on the LOS and break the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the snapper, or they will be ruled in the backfield.



5. Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be ruled on the LOS and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in question, he is not covered up.
6. Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.

### 11.10 KICKING

1. If the kicker runs out of punt formation prior to punting the ball he loses his roughing protection unless he re-establishes as a punter. A personal foul may still be called if warranted, but not roughing the kicker.
2. KCI - The receiver must be allowed an unmolested opportunity to “complete the catch”. Simultaneous contact is a foul, regardless whether or not the ball comes loose. Whether or not the receiver has signaled for a fair catch has nothing to do with this rule.
3. Illegal Kicking Formation (Timing) – Fouls for less than 4 K players on each side of the kicker will not be called until the ball is kicked. Until this point, the kicker has not yet been established. Fouls for K players being more than 5 yards behind the restraining line will be called during the “run up” if two or more players are beyond that point. When only one player is beyond that point, the foul will be called when the ball is kicked.

### 11.11 RUNNER DOWN/FORWARD PROGRESS

1. The ground cannot cause a fumble, but it can cause an incompleteness.
2. If only one player is holding the runner, let it play; if more than one player is holding the runner, rule forward progress stopped.

### 11.12 ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION

1. When in doubt, the player without a helmet did NOT participate in the play.

## **APPROVED SIGNALS**

The following are signals that are approved to be used when officiating AIA football contests. All signals serve a specific purpose and should not be used in an “over the top nature”.

### **12.1 COUNTING PLAYERS**

1. Eleven Players – Show fist with one arm extended.
2. Less than eleven players – Ten fingers extended with hands down on thighs.
3. More than eleven players – Roll fingers at chest height.

### **12.2 RECEIVERS ON/OFF THE LINE**

1. Widest player off the line – Extend arm with open hand towards the offensive backfield.
2. Two widest players off the line – 2 fingers in the air and sweep arm to offensive backfield.
3. Acknowledge signal – Extend arm and point at wing official across the field.
4. Backfield player shifts to a position at the end of the line – Arm across chest.

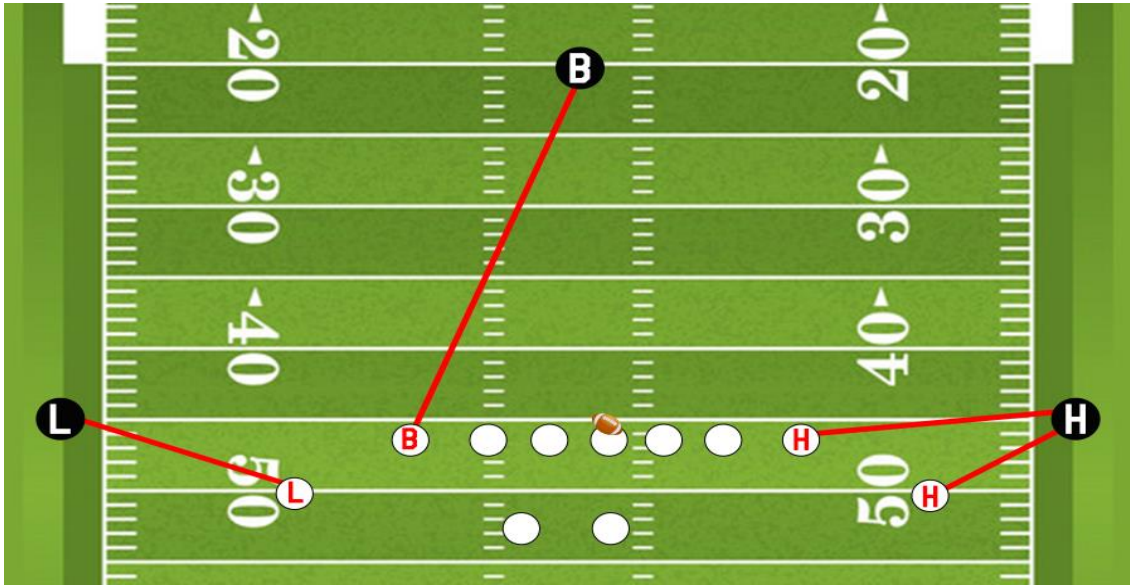
### **12.3 MISCELLANEOUS**

1. All NFHS approved penalty enforcement signals.
2. Double stakes – Pound fists on top of each other.
3. Previous play ended out of bounds – Cross arms in front of chest.
4. Backward pass – Punch and hold arm extended with closed fist in the direction of the pass.
5. Signals to sell close calls (Out of bounds sweep, juggling, tapping the ground).
6. Inside or Outside - Thumbs together or apart to indicate more or less than five yards to gain.
7. Dead Ball Signal - One arm straight up into the air with palm open.

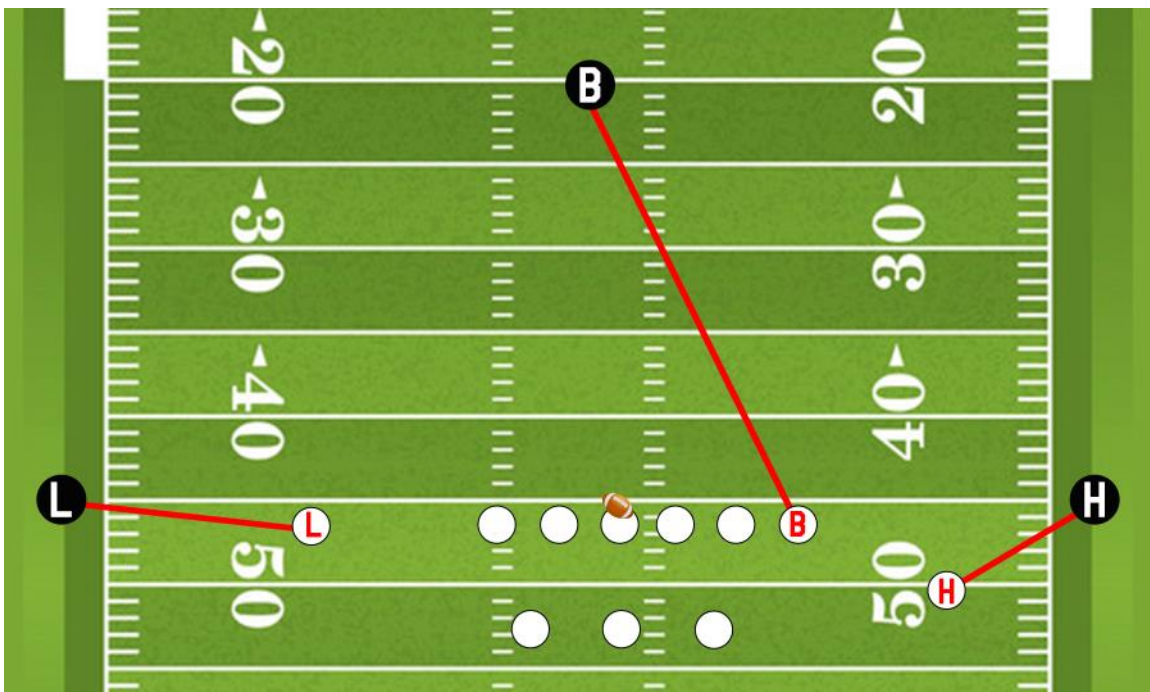
## 5-PERSON PASSING KEYS

The following are diagrams and images that illustrates passing keys, not starting formations.

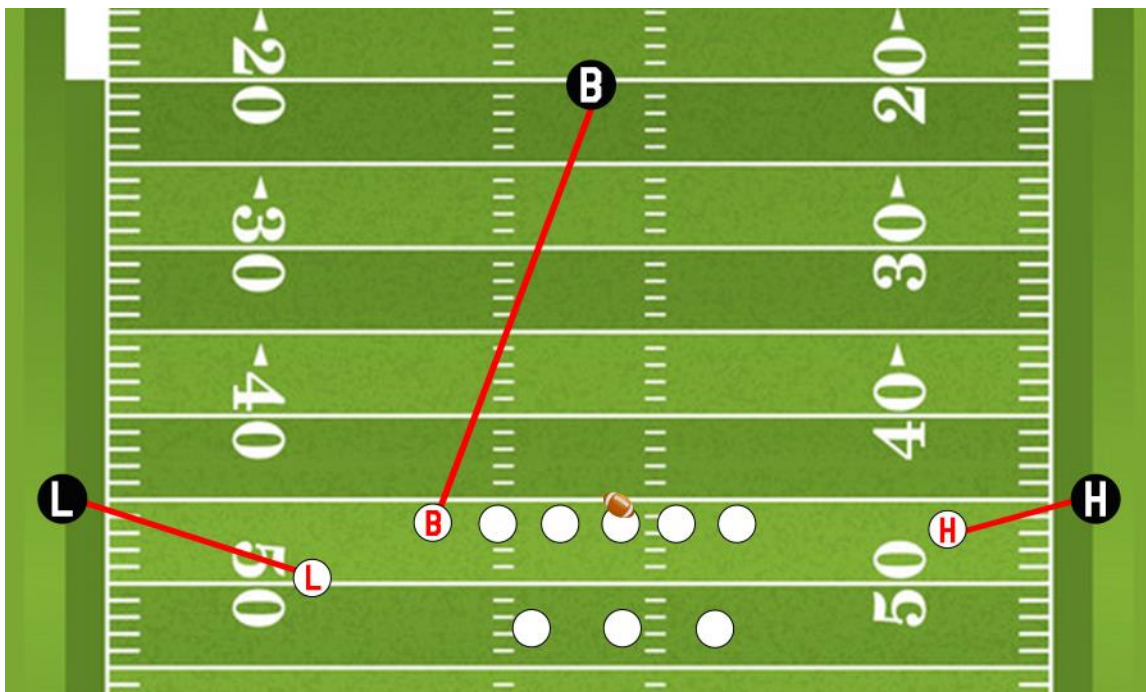
### 13.1.1 BALANCED FORMATION



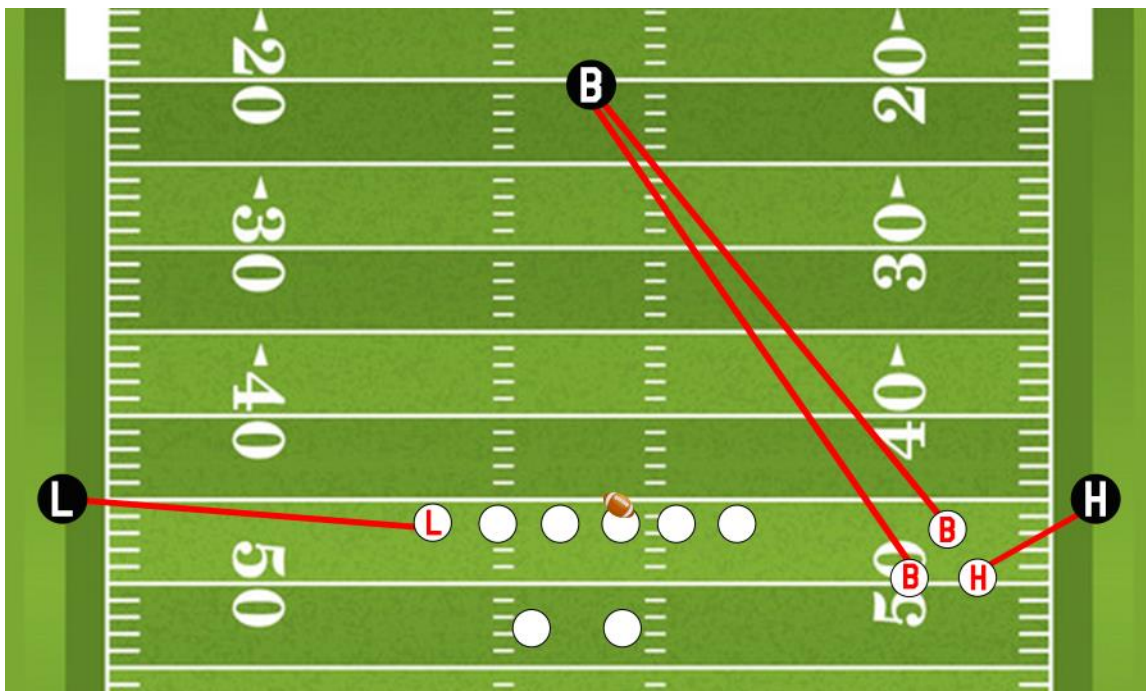
### 13.1.2 UNBALANCED TO HEAD LINESMAN'S SIDE



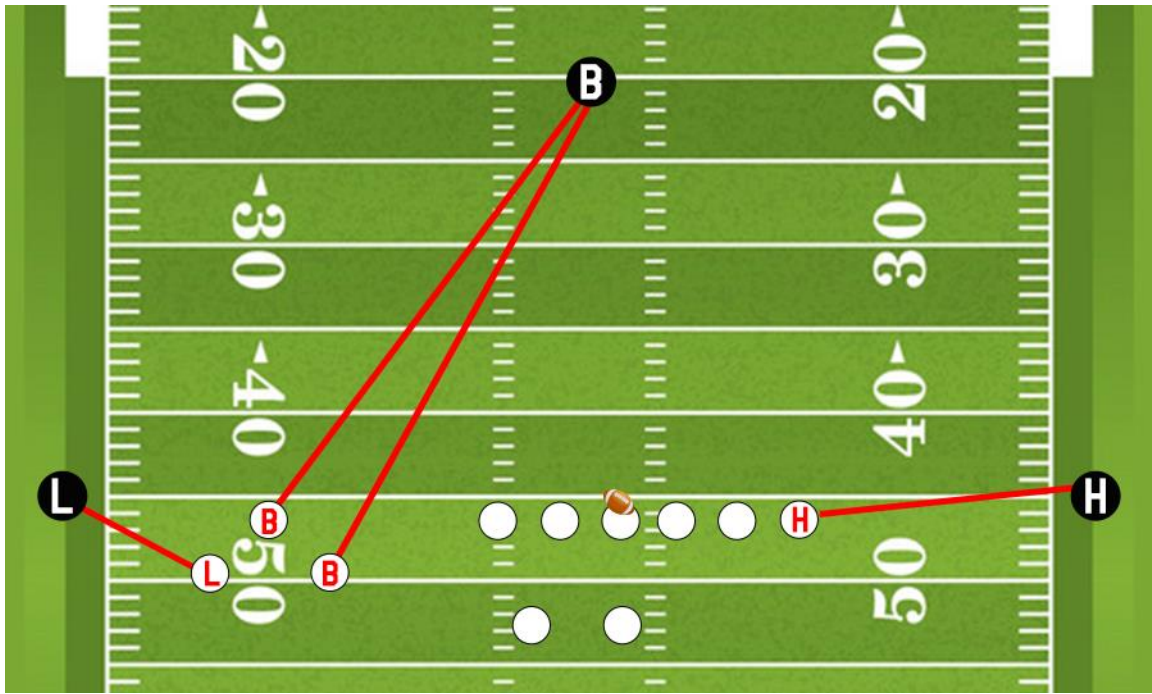
### 13.1.3 UNBALANCED TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE



### 13.1.4 TRIPS TO HEAD LINESMAN'S SIDE



### 13.1.5 TRIPS TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE



## FOUL CODES AND ABBREVIATIONS

### COMMON FOULS

Delay of Game (DOG)  
 Encroachment (ENC)  
 Equipment Violation (EQV)  
 Facemask (FMM)  
 False Start (FST)  
 Free Kick Out of Bounds (KOB)  
 Holding  
     Offense (OH)  
     Defense (DH)  
 Illegal Block in the Back (IBW)  
 Illegal Formation (ILF)  
 Illegal Free Kick Formation (IFK)  
 Illegal Forward Pass (IFP)  
 Intentional Grounding (ING)  
 Illegal Motion (ILM)  
 Illegal Participation (ILP)  
 Illegal Shift (ISH)  
 Illegal Snap (ISP)  
 Illegal Substitution (ILS)  
 Illegal Touching of a Forward Pass (ITP)  
 Ineligible Player Downfield (IDP)  
 Kick-Catch Interference (KCI)  
 Pass Interference  
     Offence (OPI)  
     Defense (DPI)  
 Offside, Kicking Team (OFK)  
 Targeting (TGT)  
 Unsportsmanlike Conduct (UNS)

### OTHER FOULS

Fighting  
     Fighting Before Game (FBG)  
     Fighting, First Half (FFH)  
     Fighting, Halftime (FHT)  
     Fighting, Second Half (FSH)  
 Illegal Batting (BAT)  
 Illegal Kick (KIK)  
 Illegally kicking the Ball (IKB)  
 Running into Kicker/Holder (RNK)  
 Sideline Interference – 5 Yards (SLI)  
 Sideline Interference – 15 Yards (SLM)

### PERSONAL FOULS

Blocking Below the Waist (LBL)  
 Chop Block (CHB)  
 Disqualification (DSQ)  
 Hands to the Face (HTF)  
 Horse Collar Tackle (HC)  
 Hurdling (HUR)  
 Late Hit/Piling On (LTP)  
 Late Hit Out of Bounds (LTO)  
 Roughing Kicker/Holder (RRK)  
 Roughing the Snapper (RTS)  
 Roughing the Passer (RPS)  
 Tripping (TRP)