

LINE JUDGE POSITION - OUTLINE GUIDE

1. PRE-GAME CONFERENCE :

- A. Have complete uniform. (warm & cold weather)
- B. In 5 man mechanics you will be responsible for game clock timing on the field.
- C. In 2, 3, and 4-Man Crews, you are responsible for all timing.
- D. Make sure that all officials leave the dressing room on time.

2. PRE-GAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD:

- A. You are responsible to assist game timing-coordinate with Back Judge to instruct timer.
- B. In 2, 3, and 4 Man Crews, locate the game clock operator and instruct him. Make sure you know where he is going to be the entire game.
- C. You are responsible for the captain and team opposite the chains. Make sure everyone is on the field at appropriate times
- D. 2-Man - Get Captain of the team on the side of the chains.
- E. Record results of toss; spot the ball of kicking team (2, 3, and 4 man).

3. KICKOFF:

Your initial position will be at the receiver's restraining line on the press box side of the field.

- A. Once you have counted the receivers signal to the Referee that you are ready by extending your hand over your head.
- B. You will start with both feet out of bounds near the end of the coaches' box.
- C. Be prepared to rule on kicks if they are kicked into the ground or in the air
- D. Do not leave the restraining line until the ball and members have both teams have passed.
- E. After both teams have passed loop into the playing field between numbers and hash until kick has ended—approx 10 yards downfield—observe action down the field in front of the action—watch for illegal blocks in the back from a chase mode.
- F. On-side kick situations. Have bean bag in hand. Be prepared to rule on first touching, etc. you must be positive if the ball has been legally touched.

On Side Kicks

- a. The Line Judge will move to K's free kick line
- b. The Umpire will move up to R's free kick line
- c. The Umpire and Head Linesman must stay on the receiver's restraining line until the ball has crossed the restraining line or been legally touched. Do not come forward to watch the action around the ball. Let the officials on the kicker's restraining line come up the field.

4. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS:

- A. At the start of every play be in a position outside the sideline. Continue to officiate all plays from on or outside the sideline until the play ends.
- B. Square up your movement to the ball to mark forward progress as you move up and down the sidelines (don't round off your movement)
- C. On sweeps move back into the offensive backfield and let the play go in front of you. Plays from B's 5 in, reverse this procedure and go to the goal line to observe the entire goal line plane when the runner arrives.
- D. You have man in motion away from you, even if he reverses direction.
- E. Give proper signal if widest offensive man on your side is in backfield.
- F. If the other flank official gives you the same signal, acknowledge it by pointing to him, also start

counting offensive backs. (might be 5).

G. Give proper signal if your man moves on line after he is signaled back.

H. Make these checks:

i. Are there 7 on the line?

ii. Who is eligible?

iii. Who can clip or block below the waist?

I. Never blow the whistle on runs in the middle of the field. Always see the ball before a whistle is blown.

J. On progress, hold your spot until the ball is spotted.

K. If the ball goes out of bounds on your sideline, get the spot and hold it. Do not shag the ball and lose the progress spot.

L. Show flankers and ends that your foot is the line of scrimmage and let them adjust. Let them know their position of asked but do not ask them to move.

M. You must know if the blocks on an end sweep that springs the runner is legal or not. This is the first thing that the coach can see.

N. 3-Man Crew - May use off or on mechanics, and you are responsible for the sideline opposite the Head Linesman on all plays.

Winding the Clock Signal

A. Eliminate winding the clock signal before stopping the clock on the play ending in bounds near the sideline when the line to gain is reached

5. PASS PLAYS:

A. On a quick stand up pass, you may have to rule on forward or backwards. You must signal if a pass is backwards. You will always signal if the pass is incomplete. You may also signal a pass forward

B. In 3-man and 4-Man mechanics release quickly downfield and stay with the receiver.

C. You must have a clear understanding of what is pass interference.

D. In 5-Man mechanics it is not necessary to go down field immediately if you read pass. If you pass on your side of the field, particularly when your sideline is threatened, you should move down with outside to inside pass coverage. Once downfield you should not come back toward LOS if the QB scrambles. In any case, you should consider down and distance and “read” the play. Do not officiate a pass play from the line of scrimmage—you are responsible for the pass receiver on your sideline to the goal line.

E. Once the Back Judge gives up the goal line the flank officials have goal line responsibility on all pass plays.

F. In 4-Man the Head Linesman can be off the line of scrimmage in off mechanics. The Line Judge is the only official to play off on kicks.

G. At the end of the half or game off mechanics may be used for obvious pass situations.

6. SCRIMMAGE KICKS/PUNTS:

A. 4-Man crew - You are off the line and deep with the receiver.

B. 5-man crew -

i. After assuring a clean snap you will leave the LOS as you watch for illegal blocks and potential blocking of players into kicker.

ii. HAVE 2 BEAN BAGS.

- iii. You will get all kicked ball out of bounds spots on your sideline that hit in the field of play. On kicks out of bounds in the air work with the Referee for proper mechanics and out of bounds spot
- iv. In case of an errant snap you will stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses.
- C. In 3, 4, man crews, take a position to the SIDE AND IN BACK of the receiver.
 - i. Fair catch and violations.
 - ii. Muffs or fumbles by the receivers. IMPORTANT: A member of K can advance a fumble.
 - iii. Blow ball dead when no one is going to play it. Avoid late hits.
 - iv. Stop the clock.
 - v. Use preventative officiating before the kick - remind the receiver to give a valid fair catch signal - in time to be seen by the tacklers.
- D. Inform the referee as to the situation - what happened, whose ball, state of the ball when foul occurred, if any. He may not have seen your signal or the play. Volunteer this information. Don't make him ask.

Blocked Punt Mechanics (5 Man)

- A. The flank official opposite the Referee goes back to cover the play. The Line Judge is to stay on the line of scrimmage until the punter successfully catches the snap.
- B. Box in this play with the remaining line of scrimmage official to rule on any subsequent kick or pass in relation to the LOS.

7. GOAL LINE PLAYS:

- A. Be at the goal line when the runner and the ball break the plane.
- B. If you know the ball was dead before it crossed the goal line, do not allow a score to stand.
- C. Do not give the TD signal unless you see the ball in possession break the goal line play.

8. OFF MECHANICS:

- A. The position of the ball determines whether the HL or LJ is off.
- B. Both flanks are eligible to play off in 4 or 5 man mechanics.
- C. Being off may be just for one play or during an entire series.
- D. The line to gain is the key on how far down field you normally play off the line.
- E. If a run develops into your side zone, stay to the outside and let the R cover the action until it gets to you.
- F. The Referee will always be on the side of field that official is off.
- G. Make sure you have communicated with the Referee and other Flank Official if you are going to be off. Remember the other Flank Official has to be aware that he has the entire line of scrimmage when you are playing off.

9. MEASUREMENTS;

- A. Establish a spot at right angles to the line for the HL clip and chains.
- B. Observe for any kinks in the chains.
- C. 3-Man Crew - Take forward stake.
- D. 2-Man Crew - Take chains, use clip. If 1st down, mark new spot for box.

10. TIMEOUTS:

- A. You time all timeouts (3 and 4 man - BJ in 5 man) notify the Referee when there is 15 seconds left in timeout.
- B. Stay with your team's huddle, facing your team's sideline.
- C. 3-Man and 2-Man crew - with your team.
- D. Check team A for nine yard line rule.

E. Coaches Timeout Mechanics

- a. The Referee, in the pre-game conference, will instruct coaches to come out onto the field in the direction of the line of scrimmage to be recognized while calling a timeout.
- b. Officials across the field must recognize this action by the coaches.
- c. This will help coaches in critical situations when the play is down in the “red zone”.

11. BETWEEN QUARTERS:

- A. Double check the Head Linesman in his duties, note the yd line, down and distance.
- B. Time the intermission (3 and 4 man - B.J. in 5 man).
- C. During the intermission after the 1st and 3rd quarters notify the Head Coach on your side how many time outs his team has remaining.
- D. Notify the Head Coach on your side when he is to be back for the second half. Personally send out captains and the team 5 minutes before second half kickoff. Ensure team is on field for 3 minute warm up.
- E. Check Team A for nine yard line rule.

12. TRY AND FIELD GOALS:

A. 4-Man Crew -

- i. On ALL FG and trys take a position 6 feet or less behind the goal post on your side of the field to rule on the success or failure of the kick. If a FG is obviously short and is a touchback by rule give only the ‘touchback’ signal and do not give the ‘not good/incomplete’ signal (signal #10).
- ii. Responsible if ball goes over or under the crossbar.
- iii. Communicate with other official verbally on a close call.
- iv. Move to the end line and give the hand signal and continue to officiate. Only if wide on your side do you give a pointing signal following the incomplete.

B. 5 Man crews -

- i. You will be on the line of scrimmage in your normal scrimmage play position and will be responsible for line of scrimmage when you are facing the referee in position.. In case of a fake or broken play you will be responsible for runner progress, pass coverage, sideline coverage, goal line/pylon coverage, etc.
- ii. On kicks where you are facing the back of the referee you will be under the goal post with the back judge. Take a position opposite Back Judge behind the upright and rule on success/failure of kick. If a fake or broken play, cover your sideline/pylon and if possible get to the goal line on plays starting outside the 15 yard line.

C. Blow your whistle only when the ball is dead. Missed field goals often are alive.

D. 3-Man and 2-Man Crew -

- i. Alone under the bar to rule on the kick. In 3-man crew, the Referee has the option to rule on the kick.

Swinging Gate (5 Man)

Once the formation is shown the flank officials stay in position. The Umpire moves back under goal posts and watches center. If the team then shifts flank officials stay in position and the Umpire moves up.

13. COUNTING PLAYERS:

- A. Responsible for counting team Defense/Receiving Team players on each down
- B. If in doubt as to the correct count and you want to indicate to the crew to recount, use the squirrel cage signal with your index fingers for this purpose.

14. FIRST DOWNS AND CHANGE OF POSSESSION:

- A. Stop the clock at the end of the play when it is definitely a 1st down.
- B. Close plays - CALL OUT, "Close, close". Referee to stop the clock. You are the communicator for the crew on first down situations.
- C. Communicate what the state of the clock should be on any 1st down play or any change of possession. Be alert to:
 - i. Give cross wrist or wind the clock signal on any play out-of-bounds
 - ii. Repeat the signal until the Umpire or Referee acknowledges.
- D. Clearly inform the Referee as to what has happened on a long gainer or change of possession.

15. PENALTIES AND INFORMATION:

- A. After all foul information is reported, the Line Judge will stand at the spot where the enforcement spot starts. This is the same spot the Umpire or Referee will begin penalty enforcement.
- B. Relay information to the coach on your sideline about all penalties.
- C. If a player on your side is disqualified, you must tell the Head Coach.
- D. Scrimmage line fouls - give no signals. Move in and discuss with crew.
- E. If a receiver catches a pass inbounds and is driven back and out-of-bounds, wind the clock providing progress is not a 1st down.