

# REFEREE POSITION - OUTLINE GUIDE

## 1. PRE-GAME CONFERENCE AND DUTIES:

- A. Arrive more than an hour and a half before the game. Have BOTH uniforms. If there is a dispute as to the uniform to be worn the Referee will make the final decision. Start the pre-game conference 60 minutes before game.
- B. If afternoon game, still have a pre-game conference, even if on the field.
- C. Referee's pre-game check list:
  - i. Unusual plays or formations from coaches' visitation along with captains.
  - ii. Referee must check for overtime procedures and league rules
  - iii. Referee must check for appropriate medical personnel as it relates to the concussion rule
  - iv. Review for crew rules and interpretations, ask for their questions.
  - v. Review mechanics for kickoff, time-outs, running plays, forward passes, punts and runbacks, man in motion, goal line plays, side line plays, out of bounds and winding the clock, try's and field goals.
  - vi. Discuss procedures in calling fouls and running off penalties.
  - vii. Review signals for double stakes, out of bounds, in bounds, progress, winding clock near sideline, touchdown, fumbles, incomplete pass, and use of whistle on kicks and method of signaling an official up or back on kicks out of bounds.
  - viii. Method to use in rechecking officials decision on the field.
  - ix. Stress communications, close, half the distance, etc.
  - x. Have coin and check correct time.

## 2. PRE-GAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD:

- A. Arrive on field 30 minutes before kickoff.
- B. Physically check the field. Split up the crew, half goes one way and the other half the other way.
- C. Return to home team bench following inspection of field.

## 3. COIN TOSS CEREMONY:

- A. Escort home team captains.
- B. The Referee is on the field at the 50 facing the clock.
- C. Have the captains with their backs to their own sideline at the 50.
- D. Have the captains introduce themselves to each other. Be brief in your instructions don't give a speech but remind each team about sportsmanship.
- E. Tell visiting captain you will catch the coin or allow it to drop **VERBALLY CONFIRM THE CAPTAIN'S CHOICE BEFORE YOU TOSS THE COIN.**
- F. Point to the winner and give him his option to defer. If that is his choice, point to him again and give the incomplete pass signal toward press box.
- G. The choices are then kick, receive, or defend a goal. Opposing team gets remaining choices.
- H. Have captains put their backs to the goal they will be defending and visually indicate the receiving team win.
- I. Double check toss information with crew. Break for positions about 1 minute before the kick-off.
- J. We will not use a captain's conference for the second half
- K. For overtime this procedure is repeated after coach's conference but the choices to the winner of the toss would be-offense-defense or defend a goal.
- L. These choices are alternated after a full over time period is finished and the score is still tied.

#### **4. KICK-OFF:**

- A. Your initial position will be at or near the receiver's goal line on side of the field opposite the press box. Ensure that the sideline and coaches area are clear. Please check the new mechanics manual for correct coverage. You will be positioned near the chain side hash mark
- B. See that the opening kickoff and the second half kickoff are on time.
- C. Once you have counted the receivers and verified with the Line Judge, check with the Back Judge for his readiness and mark the ball ready-for-play.
- D. Be prepared to rule on kicks at the sideline and goal line. Know when it's OB, in the field of play, or a touchback. When in doubt it's a touchback.
- E. The goal line is yours from your sideline to sideline (in bounds). If the kicked ball breaks the plane of the goal line, it is dead. Sound your whistle and stop the play.
- F. You have your sideline from the goal line out to around the 20-yard line where the L will pick it up. If the kick and subsequent return threaten your sideline, you will be trailing the play with an outside-in look.
- G. Kicks into your 2/3rd's of the field (sideline to the far inbounds) that don't threaten your sideline require that you adjust your positioning to place yourself behind the play at an angle with the inside-out look. The ball carrier and action around him is your responsibility until he reaches the L (around the 20-yard line) at which time Head Linesman will pick up the runner and you will now switch to blocking around the ball and any late action.
- H. Don't be in a hurry to get to the dead ball spot. The exact spot is not as important as keeping the action around the ball clean.

#### **Free Kick alignment**

- A. Referee starting position is on receiver's goal line at the numbers on the Linesman side of the field (opposite the press box). The Referee is responsible for noting whether Team K has at least 4 players on either side of the kicker.

#### **5. SCRIMMAGE PLAY MECHANICS:**

- A. Positioning in various crews for a scrimmage play:
  - i. 5-Man Crew - On both on and off mechanics always on the side of the passer's throwing hand, and approximately 12-14 yards off the LOS. Don't get caught inside too close. We suggest approximately as wide as the normal tight end position. On punts be on kicking foot side 3-5 yards behind and outside of the kicker
  - ii. 4-Man Crew - Same as 5 Man-Crew(except punts-be on LJ side).
  - iii. 3-Man Crew - Offensive backfield opposite and facing the HL. The R is no longer responsible for the sideline opposite the Head Lineman on running plays. This is the Line Judge responsibility
  - iv. 2-Man Crew - on the line of scrimmage, opposite the down box.
- B. Things to do and look for:
  - i. Have a good view of the center, the ball and the "T" Q/B's hands.
  - ii. Have the tight backs in your view in a 5 or 4 man crew.
  - iii. 3 MAN - Line Judge has movement of flanker and the Referee will assist in calling holding. (Remember there is no Umpire).
  - iv. In 2-man game you move on line outside the widest player on your side.
  - v. Be alert for back in motion, false starts, illegal shifts and motion, illegal blocks, and holding by backs, roughing the passer and kicker.
  - vi. Count the offense.
  - vii. Protect the passer especially after the pass has been thrown. Do not get caught peeking downfield. Always know what happened to the QB.
  - viii. Talk to charging Def. players to prevent roughing of kicker or QB
  - ix. Go into the side zone on option runs or passes, the side line still belongs to the flank official.

x. Stick with action behind the line when a pass or kick is in the air. You are the sole observer of the action behind the line.

**C. Use of the whistle:**

i. We suggest spitting the whistle out of your mouth after the snap on all kicks.

ii. Be sure you see the ball in player possession before blowing it dead.

iii. Blow whistle every time in marking the ball ready for play.

D. Follow the ball up field. Never lead it.

E. In taking forward progress, look to the short side of the field first.

F. There is no need to go to the line of scrimmage to give the ready for play. Be in position to officiate.

G. If the offense is at the line of scrimmage make sure to allow your umpire to be in position before the ready for play.

**6. KICKING PLAYS:**

A. Signals to be used if kick out of bounds on the fly:

i. Open hand above the head = flank official moves toward you.

ii. Shoulder level with arm pointing = flank official man moves back.

iii. Chopping motion of arm in #1 or #2 = STOP WHERE YOU ARE.

B. If punter fakes being roughed tell him to get up using hand motion.

C. During a field goal and try you are responsible for roughing the kicker and holder. In 5, 4, 3, & 2 man crews repeat the signal of the officials behind the post, facing the line of scrimmage (not press box).

**Blocked Punt Mechanics**

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 (LOS) official to rule on any subsequent kick or pass in relation to the line of scrimmage.

**7. PASSING PLAYS:**

A. Stay with passer after pass is thrown, he is your sole responsibility.

B. If there is forward movement of the passer's arm with possession there can be no fumble.

C. Ask for help if in doubt about an eligible receiver being in the area.

D. Flanks may have to rule on forward or backwards on quick stand up pass.

**8. MEASUREMENTS:**

A. Use the flank officials who can see the football when progress is stopped or runner is downed (Cover in pre-game).

B. In moving ball to flank official's foot, have him place it down, not you. Do not allow the ball to leave the dead ball spot by throwing it to an official who has not pinched in.

**9. DECLARING THE BALL READY FOR PLAY:**

A. Always blow the whistle and look at the official responsible for the 25 second count, while giving either a chop or wind the clock signal.

B. Normally you will spend no more than 3 seconds before declaring the ball ready once the ball is placed on the ground.

C. Count the offense, but you are in a good position to count both teams.

D. Make sure HL is in position after moving chains.

**4-Man Mechanics - National Federation Mechanics changes**

The Referee provides a visible count for the last 5 seconds of the 25-second play count. (Open hand in air)

#### **10. PENALTY OPTIONS - MAKE THEM BRIEF:**

- A. Make sure all options are understood. Don't give ridiculous options.
- B. Give preliminary and final signal to press side of the field only.
- C. If penalty was called in error give disregard flag signal #13.
- D. Make sure ball is on the ground before giving options to captains.
- E. 4-Man or 5-Man mechanics - We suggest to have Umpire walk off penalties.
- F. If there is any doubt on an option check with offended teams coach
- G. There is no need for a preliminary signal on obvious dead ball fouls or live ball fouls where penalty options are obvious
- H. Let quarterback know if time is a factor and the clock will start on the ready,

#### **11. GOAL LINE PLAYS:**

- A. If a T.D. signal is given, don't repeat it until you check for a foul. A td signal by the referee is not needed on a scrimmage play if there are no fouls on the play.
- B. On goal line plays, ball not over, if flank official is moving toward you and can't help with progress spot, look to other flank official.
- C. 3-Man Crew - Line Judge is on the line before the snap from 5 yd line to goal line.

#### **12. DUTIES AT TIME-OUT:**

- A. Have all officials record the player's number, time, and what quarter he requested the timeout.
- B. 5 & 4 Man Crew = Out to the side away from the ball. 3 Man-Crew = Stand over the ball.  
(1) 2 Man-Crew = With the offensive team.
- C. Inform captains of down and yardage and number of T.O. remaining.
- D. Take over ball after 1 min. of T.O. and declare it ready 5 seconds later.
- E. Notify captains you are declaring the ball ready for play.
- F. After an official's T.O. the referee is the only one to wind the clock.

#### **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".

#### **13. COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- A. Anytime during the game (especially when it is near the end) make sure the captains and QB are aware when the clock will start (on the ready or the snap).
- B. Step into the open, away from a crowd to give penalty signals. Do not run into the middle of the field to give signals—everyone will find you where you are.
- C. Inform the head coach when he is out of timeouts.
- D. Hold the ball above your head at the end of each quarter.
- E. On running plays, go into the side-zone, clear to the sideline if necessary, rather than stop at the hash mark. If the runner is the QB who goes out of bounds the R should go out of bounds to protect the runner.

#### **F. On try's and FG**

- i. 5-Man - Line up in the offensive backfield facing the holder and rule on roughing the kicker or holder. Repeat signal from officials under the bar while continuing to officiate facing the line of scrimmage.
- ii. 4-Man - Same as 5-man
- iii. 3-Man - Same as 5-man and 4-man. You have the option to rule on the success or failure of the kick. If R chooses not to make the call, it will be the responsibility of the Line Judge.
- iv. 2-Man - on line. Referee rule on roughing, Line Judge makes call.