Kern County Officials Association Football Unit

2023 Mechanics Manual

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**Purpose of This Manual**

Since the founding of the KCOA in 1939 when Kern County high school football was only in its 44th season, various philosophies were passed down by word-of-mouth and through experience that were a staple of football officiating from the bygone era of the run-oriented offenses that featured, *3-yards and a cloud of dust,* pass it only on 3rd down and long, and huddle-up after every-play tactics that dominated the game since it’s birth in 1876, through the inception of Kern County’s first high school football team in 1896, and all the way through the 20th Century. Many of these philosophies have been forgotten or not instructed to a new crop of officials in the past few seasons due to various factors, particularly caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since 2010 the game has seen some radical rule changes and offensive styles, particularly the pro-style RPO offense and the new 40-second play clock rules, that affect how the game is played and requires officials to adjust, amend, and create new philosophies on officiating and even create new mechanics. We even have to change some of our age-old terminology to fit some new rules.

This manual is a combination of mechanics from the KCOA’s past as well as from CIF directives, the *California Football Officials Association* that governs high school officiating in Southern California, the *Southern California Collegiate Football Officials Association* and their NCAA-based college football mechanics, the *Arizona Interscholastic Association*, the *Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association,* the *Colorado Football Officials Association,* and the *National Federation Football Game Officials Manual.*

It is my desire to ensure our association is at the forefront of cutting-edge mechanics and philosophies by combining the best of these other manuals, as well as our own experiences as an association, and for you to gain an understanding of what other associations are doing when we work with them. With us depending on a vast amount of newer officials to fill in Varsity assignments, it is vital that the knowledge normally gained through years of experience and instruction is acquiesced much sooner with this manual.

We perform at our best to serve the student-athletes of our community with the values of sportsmanship and the ideal that the development of the student’s *mind, body, and spirit* are all equal and integral to building strong adult citizens. The unbiased arbiter that we are with *fair play* within the rules of the game, indeed, allows for a positive outlet for the physical prowess of these young student-athletes that molds young students into strong adult men and women.

The game of football is unique and ancient. A descendant of Greek and Roman army exercises first played around 2400 B.C., with its many forms now played around the world, the American game is a specialized version of *Rugby Football Union*. First distinctly organized in 1876, our *Great American Game* builds character, overcomes fear and intimidation, and shows young students how to become leaders in life. When the game is respected, it is the most important part of the scholastic experience that is non-academic, allowing the most students to participate. Football, in its various forms, was stressed in schools in the 1800’s in Europe, Australia, and North America as an academic reform movement championed by school masters to allow for *hooligans to become heroes* so that *the strong would stand up for the weak*. Football was the game of choice to develop boys into fearless men who worked for something greater than themselves alone to succeed. The development of football championed in this international academic reform movement led directly to the creation of the modern Olympics in 1896 by Pierre de Coubertain! Our role is to see our football rules are fairly applied and the traditions of the game continue.

The *National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations* provides the rules, clarifications, and interpretations, the CIF adds their own spin on them from time-to-time, then experienced officials make heads-or-tails on how to apply them!

This manual and everything that we discuss in our meetings is considered to be the intellectual property of the *Kern County Officials Association.*

*-Brian Landis, KCOA Football Instructional Director*

*-“****For you to achieve greatness, it requires of you responsibility, integrity, and mental toughness!”***

**New for 2023**

1. We will not start *floating goal line mechanics* at the B20-yard line anymore. We will go back to starting *floating goal line mechanics* at the B15-yard line. However, the Flanks will now go into *full goal line mechanics* at the B7-yard line. This is so we will be in line with current State-wide practices. In 4-man, we will still do *floating goal line* from the B10-yard line but will also do *full goal line* at the B7-yard line.
2. The Referee will be encouraged to be wider, about 10-yards wide of the ball, so that they can see all interior linemen, Tackle-to-Tackle, and the entire backfield around the Quarterback. You’ll remain at 12-to-15 yards deep from the line of scrimmage depending on the formation. Then, adjust to the play after the snap. —When the ball is on the inbounds mark and that positions you near the sideline, your pre-snap position will be outside of the numbers about halfway between the numbers and the sideline.
3. Last season, it was noticed that some of our less experienced officials were over-hustling on plays, especially Flanks, that then put them out of position too far downfield. Perhaps it was because they believed that they *can’t get beat* to the goal line? ——When we say “don’t get beat to the goal line,” that’s for those officials who have the goal line, particularly the BJ and Referee on returns. On all plays from scrimmage not in *goal line mechanics*, the Flanks are expected to trail the play from about 7-to-13 yards, even in 4-man, whenever they are unable to keep squared to the play, chest to the ball.
4. An emphasis for this season will be for Flanks to keep their chest “squared to the ball” as much as possible, especially on running plays in the middle of the field or on the opposite side of the field. This will require you to shuffle-step rather than turn your body downfield and walk or jog downfield while looking over your shoulder. Staying squared not only looks better, it keeps you in position to move quicker in either direction because you’re on the balls of your feet which also helps prevent injuries to your knees and ankles. There is also less strain on your eyes which allows you to evaluate the entire play around the ball comfortably. Of course, when the play is coming directly at you, stay back and then trail the play.
5. With the new rule where Team A fouls behind the line of scrimmage are previous spot fouls, the Referee will need to change their verbiage on those fouls to say that foul is *enforced from the previous spot*.
6. One thing many within our unit have struggled with was the unnecessary declination of fouls committed by Team K on kicks prior to Team R possession or Team B on scores. *Under NFHS rules, you almost never have to decline a foul to accept the play, particularly on these two types of plays!* Team K fouls that occur on a Free Kick or Scrimmage Kick *before* Team R gains possession are an option of a previous spot or succeeding spot (tack-on) enforcement. Fouls by Team B on a Team A score are either a *Carryover option* (On the Try or Kickoff) on a Touchdown or if on a Field Goal or Try, the enforcement is down is replayed with the penalty enforced from the previous spot or it’s enforced on the subsequent Kickoff as a succeeding spot foul.
7. Prior to every game at *every level,* part of our pre-game duties now will be writing down uniform violations on a card and then present these to each Head Coach just before the coin flip. This is now a Statewide practice and expectation and serves as our official warning.
8. Part of our expectations with chain crews, particularly on all high school games with student volunteers, is that they are to have their cell phone off and put away or we will replace them.
9. A team walking out in unison onto the field to the numbers or the inbounds marks during the coin toss is an Unsportsmanlike Conduct act as defined by the NFHS. Because some officials have allowed this at Golden Empire games this practice has now trickled into Frosh-Soph high school games. It’s your job to prevent acts of Unsportsmanlike Conduct and to call those you can’t! Do not allow this act! A youth league does not dictate what the rules are, particularly at the high school level!
10. Some of our newer officials don’t understand the importance of record keeping on a game card. Every game you must have a game card, or substitute an index card, to keep track of the winner of the coin toss, their choice, time outs, unusual plays, Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls, time & game score after each change of the score, the Head Coach’s and “get-back coach’s” names, the ball boy’s name, the Long Snapper’s number (R & U), if an ambulance is on site, the Head Coach verifies that his players are “properly & legally equipped” (R & U), chain crew’s names (HL), & the down, distance, yard line, line to gain, and clip location on a end of quarter flip of the field. This is required and must be done accurately, *there is no excuse to not do this*.
11. BJ (R in 4-man), be sure to show in the pre-game conference each team’s Head Coach and Quarterback what your play clock countdown signals look like at 10-seconds remaining and then your 5-seconds remaining countdown. They will want to know when to call a time out in some scenarios.
12. Not only is your crew’s pregame important, before the game, so is your post-game debriefing with the crew after the game, especially for the development of newer officials. After each game, be prepared to cover 10-to-12 minutes, or more, the unusual plays or questions that you might have of each other with the Crew Chief. This is an important learning tool for all of us. Our unit has gotten away from this and it needs to be re-embraced for the important tool that it is. If it’s hot in Dodge City and you need to get out of town, then get out and conference call each other over the phone as you’re driving away.
13. We enter the field as a crew and we leave the field as a crew. We do the same with the locker room after a Varsity game, we leave together! This is both an image thing and a safety-in-numbers thing. We also always go to the bathroom while in uniform on the field with at least two of us. We owe this to each other.

*——Rule Changes for 2023——*

1. *Rule 10-4 (Basic Spots)— The basic spot for the majority of fouls committed by either Team A or B behind the line of scrimmage will now be a previous spot enforcement. Fouls that occur in the end zone by Team A will continue to result in a Safety scored to Team B. Also, certain fouls by Team A will be enforced from the spot of the foul, these will be clarified in July.*
2. *Rule 2-32-16 (Defenseless Player)— The definition of a defenseless player has been expanded with a list, in particular, a Team B interceptor is also a defenseless player when trying to secure possession of the pass.*
3. *Rule 7-5-2 Exception (Intentional Grounding Exception)— When trying to avoid a sack, only the Team A player who originally receives the snap (usually the Quarterback) is allowed to throw the ball away from outside the width of the Free Blocking Zone and the pass must cross the line of scrimmage. Last year, any Team A player could do this and not be penalized for Intentional Grounding. This new rule is now inline with both the NCAA and NFL rules.*
4. *Rule 2-29-1 clarifies when a player who steps out of bounds is considered to be back inbounds. We will have to wait for the Rules Book this summer to see that clarification.*
5. *Rule 1-5-3 states that towels with a manufacturers logo can not have the logo exceed 2-1/4 inches square. Also, towels must continue to be one single solid color, but, teammates are no longer required to wear the same color as everyone else. Towels still can’t be brown or penalty flag colored and need be not smaller & not larger than the dimensions of the rule.*
6. *Intentional Pass Interference* has been *removed* from the Unsportsmanlike Conduct provision that used to be a part of Rule 7-5-10 Penalty.
7. POINTS OF EMPHASIS— 1. Helping the Runner; 2. Communication Between Head Coaches & Game Officials; 3. Game Management. —These will be clarified once the Rules Books are received this Summer and at the C.I.F. Meeting.
8. —Clarification: In regards to Team A blocking downfield within the 2-yards Neutral Zone Expanded on a forward pass play, **Rule 7-5-12** states that only ineligible linemen may go not more than 2-yards downfield to block prior to the pass being thrown. *This does not apply to eligible receivers.* Keep this in mind when Team A receivers block on a quick out pass that is a designed receiver screen play.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

**I. Knowledge of the Rules:**

a. Rule mastery will be perfected over time and must be supplemented by the ability to learn

and interpret rules and editorial changes correctly. These abilities are acquired through

devotion of time and study throughout the year, not just before your tests.

**II. Physical Condition:**

a. Football officiating is a difficult and exhausting endeavor which requires 100-percent

efficiency of mind and body. An annual physical examination should be a personal requisite to ensure your health, thus allowing you to assess your ability to officiate.

**III. Mental Reactions:**

a. Decisions must be instantaneous, and rulings made without delay but not too quickly, either. To ensure improved instinctive reaction during play situations, continue to review the different game situations and play scenarios which may occur.

**IV. Duties and Responsibilities:**

a. Each official must have a thorough knowledge of the duties of their own position as well as

a general working knowledge of the duties of each of the other officials. They must be

prepared to assume any one of the other positions whenever circumstances require

rearrangement of assignments.

**V. An Official Must:**

a. Know the down and yardage prior to each snap.

b. Be ready to assist any official that is temporarily out of position or had an obstructed view

of a play.

c. Observe erroneous procedures or rulings by other officials and attempt to prevent and

correct in an expeditious and diplomatic manner, whenever possible and, under no

circumstances, should an argument develop on the field between officials (Say: “*Check that!”* if you think something is wrong).

d. Know the correct signals and their proper use.

e. Secure a new ball when appropriate after all dead-ball action has ceased and to handle and underhand toss the ball properly without letting the ball touch the ground on your relays.

f. Be alert to action away from the ball when play has left your immediate area.

g. Call time-out for any player who is obviously injured or disabled before the snap or after play is over. Never rush the treatment of an injured player. Recognition of injured players is the concern of all game officials.

**VI. Signals:**

a. All signals should be given promptly, distinctly and conspicuously as they are the nonverbal communication tools, we use to inform both the crew, game management, participants, and spectators alike.

**VII. Enforcement:**

a. All rules should be strictly yet fairly enforced within the spirit of the game. Follow the rules of the NFHS and the interpretations of the NFHS, the CIF, and the accepted philosophies of officiating them.

**VIII. Hustle:**

a. Keep the game moving smoothly from start to finish. Yet, do not permit haste to interfere

with duties or correcting obvious errors.

**IX. Boxing In (Containing the Play):**

a. Smart officiating requires keeping the players “boxed in” or “contained,” and avoidance of officials being “sucked in” too close. Our concept of a crew coverage is for play to be contained, or boxed in, between the Flanks and a middle officials as much as possible. Avoid passing players except in the rarest of cases that demands your presence inside the players when a play is over. The ultimate goal is to have each play and dead ball action viewed from more than one direction by the crew so we have a 360-degree coverage of each play.

**X. Off-The-Ball Officiating:**

a. Officials should not be ball watchers (a.k.a. “ball hawks”). Only at particular times during types of plays do particular officials focus on the ball carrier as their primary coverage. The remaining officials will focus on the immediate players around the play, particularly at the players between themselves and the ball looking for unsportsmanlike acts and personal fouls. The officials will work using “*concentric zones of coverage*” to cover the area around a play. The closer you are to the ball, the smaller your coverage around the play is.

**XI. Cooperation:**

a.Team work is essential amongst a crew of officials. *You are the third team in the game!* We are there to help each other succeed! This is not achieved by doing your crew mate’s job for them or arguing with them! Continuous verbal and non-verbal communication between all officials during the game is essential for effective game administration.

b. Never issue direct or indirect media interviews, statements, respond or initiate comments on social media regarding games worked by you or a KCOA crew. If needed, the Football Director will be a media contact for controversial incidents.

***KCOA POLICY*—Officials shall not post anything on Social Media regarding Games they worked between the particular teams, nor criticize or respond to Schools, Coaches, Players, Spectators, and other Officials. This includes interviews, editorials, or responses on social media or websites without the involvement of the KCOA administrative leadership. Specifically, the KCOA bylaws prohibit its members from posting on any *social media* the particular teams they are working on a given game and from contacting, reacting, or interacting to or with players, parents, fans, school personnel, or anyone else regarding the particulars of a game or the criticizing of an official.**

**XII. Your Roles** Each crew member fulfills a vital role that supports the entire crew and ensures the integrity of the game. The job of the crew is to make the Referee’s job “look easy.” The BJ is the “Captain” of the defensive secondary. Own it and support the Flanks on sideline plays. The Umpire is the “spoke of the wheel” that the crew is centered around. You set the pace of the game and ensure the information that gets to the Referee is correct. Your *positive verbal support* ensures the Referee and crew are doing what they need to do and keeps the players of both teams focused on playing the game. The Flanks are the “workhorses” of the crew. Your hustle ensures things that are needed to be seen and called are done. Referee, you are the representative of both your crew and the association. Ensure all fouls reported to you are properly applied and enforced and communicate, as needed, to each team’s Head Coach with a professional decorum. **XIII. Game Awareness** This is a knowledge that comes with experience and learned instincts. They include: When a team might call a time out; When a particular play is designed to entice you to call an unjustified foul; Checking the game clock between plays; Checking the down on the Down Box between plays; Checking the Chains; When a team is running the clock down just before the play clock expires; Action around the Play. ——Clock status and the down number should be the two most constant things nagging at you between plays. Internalize these thoughts so that they become second-nature as you work your game.

**SECTION 2: STANDARD UNIFORM**

**I. The KCOA Uniform:**

**a.** It is essential that all KCOA football officials dress in a consistent manner on the field. All members of a crew must be similarly dressed. For all games the uniform worn by all officials shall include: i. **SHIRT – VARSITY ONLY-** Position Placard Sublimated into the Shirt with 2-inch vertically striped long and short sleeve shirts with pocket on the left breast, U.S. Flag above the left breast pocket, WITHOUT the CFO logo on the sleeve. Short and long sleeves. Smitty is the recommended brand to buy from [ump-attire.com](http://ump-attire.com) or [fifthregionsofficials.com](http://fifthregionsofficials.com).

ii. **SHIRT - For all games that are Non-Varsity (JV/Frosh-Soph/Youth) -** The “California” Referee shirt with 2 1/4-inch wide stripes and U.S. Flag sublimated above the left breast pocket, short and long sleeves. Short and long sleeves. Smitty or CliffKeen are the recommended brands to buy.

iii. **SHIRT - PLAYOFFS ONLY -** CIF Sublimated or patch logo sewn on the right breast of a 2 1/4-inch stripe width California-Style shirt with a sublimated US Flag above the left breast pocket, short and long sleeves. Short and long sleeves. Smitty is the only brand that sublimates the CIF logo. These will only be worn when working with split-crews with members of other units in playoffs.

b**. Undershirts** will be solid black. Underarmour Heat Gear, or a similar brand, is highly recommended to deal with the heat. Never wear a long sleeve undershirt under a short sleeve uniform jersey.

c. **PANTS** - The pants shall be full length black football officials pants and must include a 1¼-inch wide white stripe on the seam of the leg, must not be cuffed when hemmed, and must continue to the shoe without a break. These will need to be tailored when you receive them. It is recommended that you wear full length black tights such as Underarmour Heat Gear and/or Compression Shorts for comfort under your pants. Pants will be worn by the entire crew for ALL HIGH SCHOOL GAMES regardless of the level or position.

d. **SOCKS** – When wearing approved pants, officials will wear solid black socks of a length that do not show your skin when you run. Two socks are recommended to prevent ankle rolls, a small anklet inner liner then a crew style sock over it. When wearing shorts, wear a sock that covers your ankles.

e. **SHOES AND BELT** – Athletic officials shoes that are predominately black (white and/or gray trim is OK) with black laces and appropriate soles or rubber cleats. New Balance or Smitty brands are recommend but Adidas and Reebok are good, too. Good luck finding an available pair of Nike officials shoes! Buy a comfortable and effective shoe of your preference. Always walk onto a field with clean and/or shined shoes! Clean them between games with spray-on dish soap and water and cool air dry them. *Do not wear football player cleats!* If your feet hurt, especially from plantar fasciitis, an aching arch, or turf toe, consider purchasing custom made space-age foam orthotics from [prosupportsystems.com](http://prosupportsystems.com), you’ll be glad once you did! —A black leather belt, a minimum of 1¼-inches and a maximum of 2-inches in width shall be worn. A patent leather belt is recommended, it looks better and lasts longer.

f. **CAP** – Officials, other than the Head Referee, shall wear a sized *form-fitted* or *flex fit* football official’s cap that is black with white piping on the seams (no plastic tab adjustable caps!). Underarmour or Richardson are recommended brands. —The cap shall be oriented with the bill facing forward and squarely covering the forehead of the official. —You will need to occasionally clean your cap from sweat salt stains or dirt from sweat. Wet it, spray *Spray N’ Wash* on it, let it soak in, place it a cap caddy or cap holder, and rinse it in cool running water for 15-minutes. Air dry under a ceiling fan overnight. Lightly scrub with mild soap if needed. If your hat becomes too faded or worn out, then you’ll have to buy a new one. —Only the Head Referee shall wear a solid white cap.

—You may wear an absorbent cloth skull-wrap underneath your cap to soak up sweat. It must be completely unseen and under the cap.

g. **FOUL MARKER** – All officials shall be equipped with two yellow foul markers, 15” x 15” and weighted in the center with pebbles, sand, or beans bought from an official’s supplier. —The main penalty flag shall be tucked in the waist band in the front or side waist of the official with only the weighted part of the flag visible. —The backup penalty flag shall be completely placed in the back pocket so it is unseen.

h. **BEAN BAGS** - All officials will be equipped with two bean bags, one blue and one black, for marking spots. —The Referee and Umpire will use one blue bean bag and keep a black bean bag in their pocket as a back up. —Bean bags will be worn draped over your belt in the front or side. —The HL will supply a white bean bag to the chain crew’s clip monitor to mark the down box in goal-to-go situations in case the down box moves when it shouldn’t.

i. **SHORTS** - Solid Black Officials Shorts with belt loops, such as those made by Smitty, shall be worn for all high school scrimmages and youth games (unless it’s really cold). —When wearing shorts, wear solid black athletic-style socks that go above the ankle or crew socks that reach to the bottom of your calves. Wearing two pairs of socks is recommended. —Never wear long sleeve shirts with shorts, this isn’t soccer.

j. **TOWELS**: Only the Umpire will use a towel. The towel shall be plain solid black of an absorbent material and be between 4x12-inches and 18x36-inches in dimensions, just like the players are allowed to have. —No golf-style towels with clips (a player can get their finger mangled in them!). —The CIF embroidered towels shall be used for all high school games by the Umpire. Get one from the Instructional Director if you need one.

—If you sweat a lot, put a small rag or handkerchief in your pocket to dab yourself during a time out.

k. **COLD WEATHER**: Gloves, when worn, shall be predominantly black. Neuman brand with insulation and tackified palms is recommended. —A pull over type of hood worn under your hat is permitted if it’s solid black as is a neck gaiter. —Underarmour Winter Gear, a Wind Stopper, long johns, turtle necks, fleece sweater, or similar products are recommended to wear under your uniform in cold weather. These must be worn completely under your uniform (except for the turtle or mock necks). —Jackets are not required, nor will they be worn during play, but may be worn during warmups before the game, during halftime, or by a crew mate working the down box. Jackets shall be either traditional referee stripes or a solid black official’s style. —A windbreaker-style shell may be worn under your normal uniform for rainy or windy weather. —We never wear long undershirts under our short sleeve uniform! Get the long sleeves uniform!

l. **SWEAT:** You may wear solid black wrist sweatbands on one or both wrists to wipe your sweat away. It must be on your wrist and be 3-inches in length (the same as the players are allowed). —You may wear a solid black skull cap or a cooling towel under your cap if it is completely covered when you place your cap on to soak up sweat. If you sweat a lot, place a Mission-brand towel in your pocket and wipe your face as needed during a time out. —Do not wear a scarf-like cooling item around your neck when officiating.

m. **SUNGLASSES:** All crew members for all games, regardless of level, may wear sports-style black framed sunglasses such as those made by Oakley or Underarmour. —After sunset, sunglasses are to be placed in your pocket. —Prescription eyeglasses may be worn as needed. —If any Section Semi-Finals or Finals, or State Playoffs are played during the day, it is up to those Assignors if you are allowed to wear sunglasses. n. **Time Pieces:** All crew members will wear a digital wristwatch that features a countdown timer which will be used as a back up should the game clock or play clock fail.

—Timex Ironman or CASIO are good brands.

—The BJ in 5 or 7-man, and the Referee in 4-man, will use a ReadyRef or SmartRef 25/40-second play clock vibrating timer to be worn on their belt.

o. **Reputable Sports Officials Vendors**: [www.ump-attire.com](http://www.ump-attire.com), [www.gerrydavis.com](http://www.gerrydavis.com), [www.honigs.com](http://www.honigs.com), [www.cliffkeen.com](http://www.cliffkeen.com), [www.fifthregionofficials.com](http://www.fifthregionofficials.com), [www.distinctiverecognition.com](http://www.distinctiverecognition.com) (D1 Sports Apparel), and [www.purchaseofficials.com](http://www.purchaseofficials.com) are all good sources. —Ump-Attire is where I recommend you buy from, they also have a 10% NASO member’s discount. Smitty brands are the best quality products at the moment. Sublimated Smitty-brand uniform jerseys can only be bought from [ump-attire.com](http://ump-attire.com) or [fiftheregionofficials.com](http://fiftheregionofficials.com).

p. **All officials** shall only wear items or apparel that are approved in the mechanics manual or face reprimand, reassignments, and/or game suspensions. —In a rare circumstance, in the event of a televised game, internet broadcast, news coverage, or accredited documentary approved by the CIF and/or involved schools, an official may have a remote microphone and/or camera to broadcast or record the game for those services only and never for their own personal use. *This item will be personally approved by the Instructional Director in writing or e-mail for every single occurrence.*  —Officials, on their own, may have someone record them on video from outside the playing field.

q. **Education & Insurance:** Your dues pay for Rules Books, your instruction, and liability insurance. It is recommended that you also join NASO ([www.naso.org](http://www.naso.org)) where you can purchase additional officiating material at a discount and also receive greater liability insurance coverage that includes lost fees and attorney’s fees.

—The KCOA dues fees are non-negotiable and must be paid by the first August meeting or face a fine.

**II. ARRIVING & LEAVING A GAME:** REMEMBER, SOMEONE IS ALWAYS WATCHING YOU FROM THE MOMENT YOU DRIVE IN TO THE MOMENT YOU DRIVE OFF, THESE PEOPLE ONLY KNOW YOU AS ***MR. (or MISS) OFFICIAL***! BE THE EXAMPLE FOR THEM!

a. If arriving to a game where you *don’t* dress in a locker room, partially wear your uniform to the game site: —Leave your jersey and hat off until you arrive in the parking lot. Park together where you can stretch, get fully dressed, and do your pregame. —When leaving your car for the field, be fully dressed, shirts tucked in and cap on your head properly. —When you leave the field and return to your car, keep your jersey tucked in and your cap on until you reach your car. Take your jersey off before you leave so some clown isn’t enticed to follow you home. —*Accept your role as “Mr. Official” and represent yourself and each other with dignity and pride!*

b. When arriving to a game where the crew *dresses in a locker room* where they conduct their pregame meeting: —You must wear a collared shirt of some kind, a polo, full button business-type shirt, or Hawaiian-style shirt is what is expected. No T-shirts. —It is preferred that you wear slacks but nice jeans without holes or bling are acceptable until playoffs. No shorts! Clean/shined shoes, no sandals. —A nice formal dress hat such as a Panama, Stetson, Calypso, or Scally is permitted. No sports team ball caps, no berets, no sombreros, no sailor caps, and no bucket/boonie hats. —When you leave the locker room after the game after your post-game debrief and shower, look just as nice, if not, nicer as when you arrived. We may not always arrive together, but it is safety-in-numbers & security issue that we all leave the locker room *together*.

**SECTION 3: OFFICIATING PROCEDURES**

**BEFORE ENTERING THE FIELD ALL OFFICIALS:**

**A.** All members of the officiating crew shall arrive in the locker room 1-hour and 15-minutes prior to the scheduled start of a typical Lower-Level/Varsity double-header (usually this is 3:45 p.m.). —For a Varsity-only game (including playoffs), arrive in the locker room 1-hour and 30-minutes prior to the kickoff (arrive at 6:00 p.m. for a 7:30 p.m. start, arrive at 5:30 p.m. for a 7:00 p.m. start) unless instructed differently by your Crew Chief. —For Frosh-Soph or JV-only games, arrive no later than 50-minutes before game time (4:10 p.m. for a 5:00 p.m. start). Be on the field 30-minutes prior to game time. —For Youth League games, arrive in the parking lot 30-minutes prior to kickoff. —If you are unable to arrive within these time frames before a game you must contact your Crew Chief and explain to them when you will be there so they can adjust their pre-game.

**B.** If working a Frosh-Soph/Varsity or JV/Varsity double-header on a **Thursday night**: —We will not use the locker rooms in this situation unless the Crew Chief asks for it. —Each crew will arrive partially dressed about 60-minutes before their scheduled start. Meet in the parking lot and do your pre-game there. —Make sure you have enough time to dress, stretch, mentally prepare for the game, and to participate in the Pre-Game Conference. The only acceptable excuse for being late for this Pre-Game Conference is in the case of an Emergency, provided the official has given notice to the Referee/Crew Chief. —If leaving work on time or road construction on the way to the game is an issue, talk about this with the Assignor and your Crew Chief before every game. You might have to be rescheduled to a different site or you may simply have to be late but don’t decline the game! —It is expected that the Crew Chief leads a pregame the night before via a conference phone call or computer teleconference followed by an abbreviated pre-game before you hit the field in cases where crew members know they’ll arrive late.

**I. Back Judge (Line Judge in 4-man)**

a. In the absence of the Referee, you are responsible to ensure that a pre-game conference is conducted.

**II. Back Judge**

a. Make certain you have the correct time in synchronization to the official time of the Atomic Clock (all broadcasts are based on this time). Go to “[www.time.gov](http://www.time.gov) for the official time and set your watch to it the night before a game. Other officials in your crew will coordinate their watches with yours or with time.gov. —The BJ will keep the 25/40-second Play Clock using a ReadyRef or SmartRef timer on their belt with a digital wristwatch countdown timer as a back up. ***In 4-man, the Referee keeps the 25/40-second Play Clock.*** —Every Varsity game is broadcast on the internet. A few teams still do radio broadcasts. The correct starting time is pertinent for them as sponsors and paying online viewers are involved. Let’s make sure we respect that by not starting a Varsity contest *before* the scheduled start time. —Do your best to ensure that the game starts at the scheduled start time! —If the game is televised live by a major broadcaster, a television assistant producer (the “red hat”) will control the length of time outs and when the game starts.

**III. Referee** —Conduct a thorough Pre-Game Conference outlining individual and crew duties. The purpose of a Pre-Game Conference is to prepare the crew mentally. It is important to solidify the thinking of officials in regard to procedures, rules, interpretations, philosophy and enforcements. **Umpire-** Be sure to always ask the Referee before you leave for the field: “Do you have your coin/flipper?”

**IV. Back Judge (LJ in 4-man)**

a. Instruct the clock operator in the Press Box. Go through scenarios that might occur. Have the game clock countdown so that the clock reaches 0:00 precisely at the scheduled kick off time.

**V. Referee and Umpire**

a. Visit each team 20-to-30 minutes prior to kickoff. —Umpire has final authority on all uniform and equipment issues. Ensure that the crew is ensuring that there are no uniform violations. Inspect all equipment issues: braces, casts, visors, tape jobs.

**SECTION 4: PRE-GAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD PROCEDURES**

**I. All Officials:**

a. Arrive on the field as a crew 30-minutes before kickoff, or as soon as the crew is able to.

b. Inspect the field for possible hazards and for correct markings. Notify game management of hazards and incorrect field markings. Hazardous situations must be resolved to the Referee’s satisfaction before kickoff.

c. Once you have completed your assigned responsibilities, visually prepare yourself during team warm-ups by watching player actions similar to those you will see during the game. Make sure at least one official is standing at mid-field between the teams to prevent or penalize any Unsportsmanlike Conduct during warmups.

d. Look for any illegal equipment and bring it to the attention of the Umpire so it can be corrected before the game. Make sure pant legs and jersey are not bloused so that knee caps are covered and jerseys do not show skin below the shoulder pads and all hard plastic pads are covered.

e. **NEW FOR 2023:** The HL & LJ will be in charge of filling out the pre-game uniform violations form for each of their respective teams. The crew will notify them of the offender and their offense and be reviewed by the Referee and Umpire. This will then then be presented to each Head Coach before the coin toss by both the Referee and each respective Flank to their team. This serves as a warning for the Head Coach to correct their player’s uniform violation or that player will be removed from play until they fix their issue.

f. Do not allow any non-approved or non-NFHS game balls to be used (Youth Leagues has their own football).

g. In playoffs, ensure that the proper CIF sanctioned official ball brand is used. Report the use of any non-sanctioned brand directly to the Instructional Director as soon as your game is finished.

**II. Referee**

a. With the Umpire or another official if the Umpire is not available, locate and meet each Head Coach separately. This may also be done one-hour and fifteen-minutes prior to game time in the locker room or take place on the field during your On-Field Pre-Game duties.

b. Give the Head Coach the correct time-of-day and discuss the game timeline (coin toss, kickoff, halftime).

c. Obtain information on Captains and verify that all players are *properly and legally equipped.* Ask about unusual plays or formations.

d. Explain the sideline policy and introduce the Flank official that will be on his sideline.

e. Check to see that an ambulance with paramedics, or a certified E.M.T., or and M.D. or O.D. is present.

f. Youth leagues (1st & Goal from the B10) and Varsity games-only (1st & 10 from the B25) use an Overtime procedure. *No Overtime Period is used for Frosh-Soph or JV levels!*

g. Just before the coin toss, present the uniforms violations form to each respective Head Coach and instruct him that those players must fix the issue or they will not be allowed to play.

**III. Umpire**

a. With the Referee, locate and meet each Head Coach separately.

b. Check player equipment and bandaging to ensure compliance with the rules. Especially scrutinize visors to ensure that they are completely clear without any tint, polarization, or of any kind or mirror-like reflection.

c. Weather conditions may require a closer coordinated effort by you, the Flank officials, and the Back Judge in putting a new ball in play. It is OK to switch a ball out as much as needed and is feasible between plays due to wet weather.

d. Ball persons are to remain off the field, except to retrieve the “old” ball on long incomplete passes. They will always underhand toss a new ball to the closest official (usually the Flank) from the sideline.

e. Umpire: Check and mark for game approval only *Official NFHS* game balls with a readable *NFHS logo*, the white stripes are not faded, the leather/seams/laces are not worn out or bursting at the seams, and the ball *feels* like it is inflated to 13-psi. Get it inflated if it’s too flat. —Do not allow a special “kicking ball” except for an approved legal ball for kickoffs that you specifically approve that meets this criteria.

f. Ask the Head Coach and write down the number of the Long Snapper on punt and field goal formations.

g. Ask the Head Coach if they run a Swinging Gate Formation, if they do, then remind them of the Numbering Requirements Rule if the Long Snapper is not numbered 50-79.

**IV. Head Linesman**

a. Locate the members of the Chain Crew, the chains, and the down box. Proceed with them to the sideline *opposite* of the press box. —***Chains, with the Head Linesman, will always be located on the sideline that is opposite of the press box regardless of which sideline the home team chooses to be on!***

b. Make sure that the chain has a fresh white athletic tape mark halfway between the stakes (5-yards) to assist with measurements.

c. Review responsibilities with the chain crew and Down Box operator, write their names down. Remind them they will be operating six-feet back from the sideline on the restraining line at all times and that they are to drop the stakes and move away when players come towards them on a play.

d. Introduce yourself to your ball persons, write their name down, and reinforce the LJ’s instructions that the LJ gave to him.

e. Provide a white spare beanbag to the clip monitor to mark the Down Box for *goal-to-go* situations.

f. *The chain crew is to NEVER have their cell phones out let alone use them during the game.* If they can’t control themselves and keep them put away, replace the individual(s).

**V. Line Judge**

a. Instruct ball boys for both teams and help inspect the field. b. Ensure that the goal posts are properly padded and the seam faces away from the field. c. Ensure that the end zones have six pylons each (goal line, corners, and inbounds marks), and that the goal line pylons are properly placed out of bounds but directly adjacent to the plane of the inbounds edge of the sideline and the plane of the front edge of the goal line, that the corner pylons are out of bounds so that the plane of the sideline and end line intersect at the pylon’s “inbounds corner,” and that the inbounds line pylons are three-feet off the end line. d. Move the yard line number pylons back off each sideline so that they’re on or outside the restraining line. Try to move them as far back as you can, ideally to the back of the team box or near the track. The “G” at the goal line should be at the curb or as far back as possible to prevent you from tripping over it.

e. 4:00 before kickoff, get the Captains for the home team. The coin flip will be at 3:00 remaining in the countdown to kickoff.

**VI. Back Judge (LJ in 4-man)**

a. Instruct the timer as to starting and stopping the clock properly in the Press Box. Instruct them to turn off any horns or buzzers on the scoreboard and to disable the one-tenths feature of the game clock. The one-tenths countdown is not for use in football. b. Tell them that the duration of a timeout will be kept on the field, don’t use the scoreboard to time the timeout. c. Review signals that start and stop the clock, key on the Referee’s signals to start the clock or not following a gained 1st down.

d. Confirm with the timer as to how time will be added to or taken from the clock if it doesn’t stop or runs when it’s supposed to.

e. Check for a phone or radio connection, or if an A.D. will call on a cellphone to the press box for communication with the clock operator. f. The LJ will keep the game time on their digital wristwatch if the crew is forced to keep time on the field in all situations.

g. Review timeouts and be prepared to discuss media timeouts if the game is televised.

h. Inspect the field and players. Review with the Umpire which balls they approved. Use only legal and Umpire-approved NFHS game balls and don’t allow a “kicking ball” to be used on kickoffs unless the Umpire tells you he approved it because it meets NFHS requirements. —Sometimes, illegal balls designed for only use in practices without the NFHS logo, sneak their way into a game, especially at lower levels. Don’t allow this!

g. If time allows, get behind the defense of each team in their warmups and watch them so you can practice your reads.

i. Inform each Flank of any uniform violations and review them with the Referee and Umpire.

**VII. Head Linesman and Line Judge**

a. Identify who the “get back coach” is for your respective teams before the game to avoid sideline problems and warnings and write their name down.

b. Write down the names of the ball person on your sideline. Remind them of your expectations of them. Remind ball persons they are to remain off the field and supply a ball to the nearest official as requested. You will not replace the ball after each play except in foul weather when it won’t delay the game.

c. Inspect the field and players. Fix uniform issues before the game. Watch each team in their warmups and get some practice reps in. d. Fill out the uniform violations card during warmups for the team on your respective sideline, review it with the Referee and Umpire, you and the Referee will present it to your Head Coach before the coin toss.

**SECTION 5: COIN TOSS**

**COIN TOSS PROCEDURE**

a.The coin toss is normally conducted in the center of the field on the 50-yard line 3:00 before the game. —The Referee escorts the home team Captains to the middle of the field and will always face the scoreboard. Most of the time, the home team will be on the press box side. If the home team is opposite of the press box, stay with the home team. —The Umpire escorts the visiting team Captains. Center the captains on the 50-yard line. Have the spokesman on the same side as the Referee when the players come out. The Umpire will walk out on the side opposite of the Referee so that the Umpire’s back is to the scoreboard when he arrives at the middle of the field. —The Referee and Umpire will ask their respective spokesman what they will do if they win the toss *before* walking out onto the field. Make sure they correctly reply their option as to “*receive*” or to “*defer.*” Don’t let them screw this up! —Raise your hand to indicate that you are ready as a signal to the the opposite sideline, then proceed when ready telling the captains, *“OK, Captains, here we go!*”

b. The LJ will be on the Press Box sideline, regardless of whom the home team is, holding that team’s game ball and standing on the 40-yard line to his right of the 50-yard line. —When the Captains walk out, the LJ will also walk to the top of the numbers and observe who wins the coin flip and make sure the team on his sideline stays on the sideline during this procedure. —Never allow a team to walk out to the hash marks on a coin toss! It is Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

c. The BJ **(HL in 4-man)** will be on the sideline opposite of the press box, regardless of whom the home team is, with the HL. —The BJ will have that team’s ball in their hand and will walk out to the top of the the 40-yard line to their right of the 50-yard line when the captains walk out from the sideline. —The BJ will ensure that his team stays on their sideline and does not come out to the hash marks. It is Unsportsmanlike Conduct if they come onto the field during the coin toss.

d. The HL, in 5-man, if they are done instructing the chain crew, will walk out to the top of the 40-yard line to their left of the 50-yard line on the same sideline as the BJ, opposite of the press box, regardless of whom the home team is, when the Captains walk out from the sideline. —The HL will make sure that his team stays on their sideline and not allow them to walk out to the hashmarks. It is Unsportsmanlike Conduct if they come out onto the field during the coin toss.

**e. To the Flanks and BJ: *Do not allow your sideline’s team to walk out en masse from their sideline to the top of the numbers or hashmarks during the coin toss*. Only Captains are allowed onto the field during a coin flip, unless a team is still warming up, and this process *will be respected!* It is Unsportsmanlike Conduct for a team to walk off their sideline onto the field during a coin flip, especially in a choreographed display walking out in unison from the sideline! Keep your teams in their team box during the coin toss if they’re on the field! It doesn’t matter the level!**

f. As the captains come together, the Umpire will loudly announce for all Captains to hear: *“Captains, your Head Referee tonight is \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!”* The Referee will then say: *“Captain’s, come in and shake hands.”* Then go into your sportsmanship and leadership talk to the Captains.

**—NOTE: If Captains refuse to shake hands. Tell them to stay there. The Referee will direct both Head Coaches to then come out and join the Captains. The Referee will then talk about the importance of sportsmanship and how the Captains are expected to be team leaders. This is displayed through the traditional coin toss handshake. Then, redirect them to shake hands. If they refuse, still, then penalize an Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul assigned to the Head Coach. If they both refuse, penalize both Head Coaches with their first Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul and offset the enforcements. *—This is an approved CIF interpretation.***

g. The Referee will show both sides of the coin to the Captains (it is recommended that you use a Silver Dollar, 50-cent piece, or a large commemorative coin), identifying which side is heads and which is tails. —Ask the visiting team Captain spokesman to call *heads or tails* before the coin is flipped. —The Umpire repeats the choice loudly enough for all to hear and writes that choice down. —The Referee will say beforehand if he will allow the coin to land on the ground or if he will catch the coin in the palm of the hand(s) then shown it without flipping it onto your wrist (if this option is used and you drop it, announce that you will do it again). **—NOTE: The catching of the coin in the hand technique is to simulate the coin hitting the ground and is intended for fields that are muddy or uneven to where the coin won’t land flat.**

h. Once the winner is determined, only allow the winner the choices of *“receiving or deferring to the second half.”* —If the choice is to defer, the Referee immediately faces the press box, taps the shoulder of the deferring Captain and signals the declination while facing the press box. If a team defers, make sure that the losing team will receive the opening kick off. —If the winner of the coin toss chooses to receive, ask from which end of the field the other team wants to kick from (usually it will be from the clock). Have each set of Captains put their back to their respective goal lines and only signal who is receiving. Tell them, let’s play football and tell them to shake hands.

i. When the coin toss is completed, the other officials jog into the Referee and Umpire in the center of the field and record the results of the toss. All officials will then break simultaneously (in a spinning starburst) move to their kickoff positions following the post-coin toss joke or anecdote.

j. If the national anthem is done just before the coin toss, or after the coin toss, stand together, shoulder-to-shoulder, at the 50-yard line in the middle of the field. —Stand at “military attention” facing the flag, with your cap covering your heart. *If you’ve served in the military you may choose to render a military salute with your cap on per the U.S. Armed Forces Code of Conduct.*  —If a Color Guard is used, move away from the center of the field away from the Color Guard, stand at military attention facing the color guard as they enter the field with your hat over your heart until the national anthem is completed. —Stay in position until the last note of the national anthem is completed. If a prayer is said, stand with your cap off and your hands either together at your waist or at your side. Everyone is expected to do this together in unison.

**—NOTE: The National Anthem is not a political statement or a loyalty of oath to a President or political party, it is played at sporting events to remind us we have have the freedom to enjoy our *pursuits of happiness* because men and women suffered and died in war for our freedoms! *It is a freedom we enjoy purchased with suffering and blood!* We honor those men and women with our respect for the flag and the anthem! If the national anthem of Zimbabwe, Liechtenstein, or any other nation is played with that nation’s flag displayed, you will be expected to act in the same respectable manner! *Respect one, respect all!***

k. We don’t get the teams to bring them onto the field. Teams are expected to be on the field in time for the coin flip and before the end of halftime. —It is Unsportsmanlike Conduct charged to the Head Coach if a team is not back on the field after one minute (this is how the KCOA will enforce it) when the countdown to start the half expires unless a delay is caused by extenuating circumstances. Only the Referee will make this call.

**SECTION 6: GENERAL GAME DUTIES**

**SUBSTITUTIONS AND COUNTING PLAYERS**

a. All Officials are responsible for the legality of substitutions prior to *every single play.* —On all regular plays from scrimmage, the Referee and Umpire are responsible for the correct number of players on Team A. The Back Judge, Head Linesman and Line Judge are responsible for the correct numbers of players on Team B including on scrimmage kicks. —These responsibilities are the same in 4-man without the BJ. b. The Referee and the Umpire are responsible to ensure that there are at least five Team A linemen numbered 50-through-79 on the line of scrimmage or that the *numbering exception rule* is being properly used in a scrimmage kick formation by Team K. —Each Flank official is responsible to ensure the Team A/K has not more than four offensive players in the backfield on every play and that the linemen, with either a hand or a foot while facing forward, are at or within one yard of the line of scrimmage and not off the line of scrimmage and in the backfield.

**I. Free Kicks**

a. The Referee, Umpire, and Head Linesman are responsible for ensuring that Team R has precisely eleven players before the Ready for Play signal. b. The Back Judge and Line Judge are responsible for ensuring that Team K has precisely eleven players before the Ready for Play and that those Team K players stay within the 5-yard belt (usually the K35-yard line an the K40-yard line) before the ball is kicked. c. The BJ and LJ, and the Referee, and Umpire if Team K is in a bunch formation, are all responsible to ensure that there are at least four Team K players on either side of the kicker when the ball is kicked.

**II. All Officials Counting Players Before Each Play**

a. The closed fist signal, extended out in front of you or slightly to your side at a 45-degree angle, will be used when the team you are counting has 11-players on the field. b. Use two open palms held against your thighs to signal that the team you are counting has *fewer* than 11-players on the field. c. For too many players, circle your two index fingers in a mini-squirrel cage motion in front of your chest.

**OTHER GENERAL GAME DUTIES – ALL OFFICIALS**

a. Make a written record of all charged team time outs. Write down the quarter, time remaining, the down/distance/yard line. At the end of the 1st and 3rd quarter, the position of the ball, including down and distance, yards to go, the line to gain, and the lateral position of the ball.

b. Convey any message you have for other officials promptly but *you are not a messenger boy for a coach to complain about holding!* Avoid any position that suggests a huddle of officials unless necessary. Flanks, please bring water out to the middle officials or have a *hydration specialist* bring water to the middle officials.

c. Be alert for players being out of bounds before a snap or free kick.

d. When a foul occurs, be certain to know: —the status of the ball (live or dead ball, loose ball or post possession, etc), —the spot where a run or scrimmage kick ended, the spot of a foul, —the position or number of the offending player, —make sure that the clock is stopped and mentally note the time.

e. Be ready for any type of play or unusual development. —Always be prepared to rule on fumbles, illegal forward passes or handoffs, and know which team possessed a fumble or backward pass before it went out of bounds between goal lines. —On recovered fumbles, interceptions, and kicks, the official nearest to the recovery must rule on possession and promptly award the ball to the recovering team with a First Down signal or signal the number of the upcoming down if Team A recovered their own fumble short of the line to gain.

f. Be alert to rule on a dead ball behind a goal line. Indicate your ruling with a prompt but un-rushed signal. —Signal time-out (S3) when the rules provide for stopping the clock or when a time-out is charged to a team or is an official’s time out. —Only mirror any time-out signals from other officials. Do not signal time out following the signal of any score.

g. Covering officials will use the dead ball signal (S7) and whistle when the play ends inbounds and is not an obvious 1st Down and there is no other reason to stop the clock. —This signal is to verify that the play is dead and for the 40-second play clock to start.

h. On a fumble short of the line to gain, never signal to stop the clock until you see Team B possession and the player is down. —On a fumble *beyond* the line to gain, do not signal to stop the clock until you see a player from either team clearly in possession and whom is down. *Do not whistle until you see possession and that player is down!*

i. A “winding” signal (S2) may be used when the ball becomes dead within a yard or two of the sideline and the covering official rules that the ball remained inbounds unless it is an obvious 1st down, then simply signal to stop the clock only. Otherwise, use Signal 7. j. On an obvious gained 1st Down, only signal to stop the clock (S3). Then, after the Referee has signaled 1st Down, indicate to him if the game clock is to start on the “Ready for Play” by you spinning your index finger in front of your body or if the game clock is to start on the snap because the play ended out of bounds by you signaling with you crossing your wrists at your waist.

k. Indicate, by a Touchdown signal (S5), when the ball is legally in possession of a player who is breaking the plane or beyond of the opponent’s goal line. Referee, check for any foul which might affect the ruling, if none, then relay the Touchdown signal without a whistle to the Press Box.

l. Both Flanks and the Referee and Umpire: Check for False Starts, Legal and Illegal Shifts, Legal and Illegal Motions. Do not allow Unfair Acts (**Rule & Case 9-9:** the “wrong ball” or “where’s the tee?” or “what's the play? …these plays are all Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls!).

m. Leave no doubt in the minds of players or other officials, as to any ruling you make. Be deliberate and demonstrative with your signals, hold them for about three seconds. Be particularly alert for acts of misconduct, especially behind the play. *Be an excellent dead ball official!* Observers see your hustle after the play is over as much as during play.

**PRE-SNAP DUTIES**

**I. All Officials**

a. Before each play, each official shall work through their individual pre-snap duties. These duties include knowing the down and distance on each-and-every play and ensuring that the game clock is correctly running or correctly stopped. Additionally, individual officials are responsible for specific pre-snap duties that include, but are not limited to:

**i. Referee**

1. Count Team A/K players before every snap and ensure that five players numbered 50-through-79 are on the line of scrimmage for all plays with the Umpire that are not in scrimmage kick formation. Ensure the legality of all scrimmage kick formations with the Umpire when the numbering exception rule is used.

2. Line up on the Quarterback’s throwing arm side, about 10-yards wide of the spot and about 12-to-15 yards behind the line of scrimmage so that you’re at an approximate 45-degree angle to the snap. —Your position should be wide and deep enough to see all five interior linemen and the Quarterback in your field of vision.

—When the ball is spotted on the inbounds marks and puts you near the sideline, stand about halfway between the top of the numbers and the sideline. —Keep in mind that the distance from the sideline to the inbounds marks, and the distance between each set of inbounds marks are exactly 15.1-yards apart. Use that knowledge to correctly position yourself 10-yards wide of the ball. —If a team uses multiple Quarterbacks who throw either right or left handed within a series, then simply stay on the right side of the formation. —Identify the Team A Tackle on the far side of the formation as your initial key for blocking after the snap. —Be in a position to clearly see the exchange on a hand-to-hand snap with a back or to see that the snap clears the snapper’s hand/rear-end area and is never received by a Team A lineman unless it first hits the ground or a Team A back and is not an Illegal Forward Handoff to a lineman or a Planned Loose Ball Infraction. —Always know where the width of the Free Blocking Zone is so you can correctly rule if a passer makes it outside the width of the FBZ so that they then can legally ground a forward pass to avoid a sack.

3. Remember, legal blocking below the waist can only be done at the immediate motion, without delay, of the snap by linemen upon linemen who are directly lined up over or in the gap next to their opponent from either team.

4. Identify any numbering issues in the backfield, as in a Team A running back wearing a jersey numbered 50-through-79 that cannot be eligible for a forward pass but may run with the ball or even may throw a forward pass.

**ii. Umpire**

1. Cover the ball to prevent a snap prior to the ball being *Ready for Play* following any change of possession; On a gained 1st Down, don’t allow the ball to be snapped until the Down Box has reached the new line of scrimmage. Once it gets there, say loudly, “OK!” and point at the Center. —If the game clock needs to start following a gained 1st Down, circle your index finger at the Referee as you are backing out to your position, otherwise cross your wrists at your waist to indicate that the play went out of bounds and the game clock will start on the snap.

2. Count Team A/K players before every snap and ensure that there are five Team A players numbered 50-through-79 on the line of scrimmage with the Referee on regular scrimmage plays. Ensure the legality of scrimmage kick formations in regards to the numbering exception rule.

3. Identify formation and strengths, make sure that you are in a position, 5-to-10 yards deep (this distance is the NFHS recommendation, in most cases, the KCOA recommends 6-to-8 yards) and either positioned directly over the Center or *preferably* to the opposite side of the ball from the Referee, no wider than the Tackle or Tight End so that you see the Center’s entire arm and the entire ball to ensure that the Center doesn’t flinch his arm in an attempt to create an Encroachment foul against Team B. —Your position either in line with the Tackle or over the ball is entirely dependent upon Team B’s defensive alignment which you have to adjust to. Move so that you have a clear view of the ball and the Center. If Team B shifts into your line of sight, then you move so you can see again. —Do not move up to the line of scrimmage on a pass play. The deep drop pass is a thing of the past. Moving up will only get you ran over on a designed Quarterback draw. *Only move up to the line of scrimmage when the Quarterback runs outside the numbers*.

4. Use your down indicator to mark the *lateral position* of the ball on the field as you face the ball for the previous spot on your fingers: —**Middle finger=middle of the field; —Index & ring finger= left or right uprights; —Thumb & pinky=left or right hash marks; —Use any two adjacent fingers for the in between spots. —These are also called “Position: 1-press box side hashmark, 2-press box side uprights, 3-middle, 4-opposite upright, 5-opposite hashmark”}.**

5. After leaving the ball spot prior to every upcoming play, signal at the Down Box the number it displays as an upcoming down. If it is incorrect, be adamant that it gets changed to the correct down immediately but without delaying the upcoming snap. *We don’t ever want to lose a down!*

6. If on a typical running 40-second play clock between plays, hustle to get the dead ball and spot it as-soon-as-possible and immediately move to your pre-snap position while checking the Down Box and counting Team A players without hesitation except on a gained 1st down. —Don’t wait at the hash mark and expect the ball to be relayed to you, go get it and hustle back to the new spot and get the ball down quickly! —Signal the down as you’re getting to your pre-snap position and then your 11-count *after* you reach your pre-snap position.

7. In all scenarios from scrimmage, once the snapper’s hand is on the ball, you will focus your eyesight on the ball and see the entire ball and the entire snapper’s arm (whenever possible). *Do not avert your sight until after the ball is snapped.* —Get your “11 & 5” count of Team A and the Team A linemen done before the Center touches the ball. If you’re unable to because they are running a hurry-up offense, then trust that the Referee has the counts. —Teach yourself to count your players in pairs, threes, or fours, as you spin away from the ball after spotting it facing Team A’s sideline as you first spin and then Team B’s sideline as you complete your spin. You can complete your 11-count in less than two seconds when you get good at it.

**iii. Head Linesman**

1. Ensure the correct down is always on the Down Box. Ensure that the Down Box is corrected immediately when a crew mate indicates to you that the wrong upcoming down is being displayed!

2. Count Team B/R players before every snap with the LJ and BJ. Always signal “11” with fist into the defensive side of the field at a 45-degree angle with a bent elbow. —Get your count done before Team A/K lines up at the line of scrimmage. Count the Team A/K backfield to ensure that have no more than 4-players in the backfield off the line of scrimmage.

3. Identify the eligible receivers and keys on your side of the football. —Make sure that there are four or fewer offensive players in the backfield. Five players in the backfield means both Flanks should have a flag thrown at the snap! —Focus on the ball and see player movement and the LJ’s signals with your peripheral vision.

4. Identify if you have an *unbalanced line*, signal the Line Judge if you do.

5. Rule on the forward pass eligibility of the Team A players on the line of scrimmage on your side of the football, watch for “cover-ups” (eligible numbers but ineligible by position) who go down field on a forward pass that crosses the line of scrimmage.

 6. Take a position out of bounds and off the sideline with the line of scrimmage running between your legs while standing fully erect, knees slightly bent with your weight slightly on the balls of your feet and ankles slightly flared outwards.

7. Never turn to look behind you for the line to gain stake after a play. Trust the LJ (The U will help, too) to see if the line was made or not. —Keep looking at players after a play, then look at the LJ to see if they’re releasing you, if it’s the upcoming down, or if it’s “close! close!” —If it is a “close! close!” situation on your half of the field, hustle into the field to the spot the ball exactly where it became dead at, the Umpire will hand you the ball and you will set it down on the ground where it became dead.

8. Key on the players between you and the Team A/K Tackle, including the Tackle, when the ball is snapped, then adjust your coverage as the play develops.

9. If the Down Box is close to the 5-yard tape mark on the chains and is either on or beyond the tape, signal and say either “fifty-one” to the Umpire, or signal with your index finger pointing downfield and say “short side!” or “We’re on the tape!” —If the ball has not reached the tape, then say, “Long side!” and hold your open palms about shoulder width apart. Be aware that other units may use different verbiage and signals when you work with them. Use whatever the Referee is familiar with in those cases.

**iv. Line Judge**

1. Ensure the correct down is on the Down Box and know the status of the clock.

2. Count Team B/R players before every snap with the HL and BJ. Always signal “11-players” with a fist held into the defensive backfield at a 45-degree angle with a bent elbow. Get your count done before Team A/K lines up at the line of scrimmage.

3. Identify the eligible receivers and keys on your side of the football by number.

4. Identify if you have an *unbalanced line* (more or less than three on your side of the center), signal the HL and indicate the amount.

5. Rule on the eligibility of the lineman on your side of the football, watch for a “cover-up” on passes. Key on the Tackle and players between him and you on your side at the snap, then adjust your coverage as the play develops.

6. Take a position out of bounds and off the sideline with the line of scrimmage running between your legs.

7. On any play close to the line-to-gain (less than 1-yard away), come into the middle and say “Close! Close!” to indicate to the Referee to come look at it. If the “close! close!” spot is on your half of the field, hustle into the dead ball spot and the Umpire will hand the ball to you so you can set it down on the ground at the dead ball spot. —If it is obvious that the ball is at or beyond the line-to-gain, then stay at your sideline position and signal to stop the clock, yell loudly, “First Down! First Down!” and signal to the HL with either a “one” index finger directly above your head and use the other hand of your index finger to point downfield or point directly at the HL with a “1st Down” signal mechanic.

8. On a play that is very close to the line-to-gain, you are expected to come crashing hard to the spot that the ball became dead at. Sometimes, even if the spot is past the crown of the field, you will physically spot the ball down on the ground at the exact spot that it became dead at.

**v. Back Judge**

1. Always know the game clock status and ensure the play clock is started and stopped appropriately.

2. Count Team B/R before every snap and signal the HL or LJ as appropriate. You must never allow Team B/R to get away with participating with 12-or-more players!

3. Identify the receivers and strength of the formation based on your keys. Communicate your pass coverage keys before the snap with the Flanks on the radio set if using one.

4. Take a position approximately 20-25 yards from the line of scrimmage always directly in the middle of the field, regardless of the lateral position of the ball, and always behind the deepest Team B player. —Always contain the play, face the ball with your chest (never turn your back to the ball), maintain a live ball cushion, move towards the sideline for dead ball support as needed. Don’t get straight-lined, maintain a 45-degree angle as much as you can to the play as you contain it.

5. If positioned near or in the end zone when the ball is snapped from the Team B20-yard line or less, either stand on the goal line or on the end line depending on the situation and the Team A offense. —Keep in mind that it’s easier to work forward from the end line than it is to work back towards the end line! —Until the ball is snapped from the B15-yard line, the goal line is yours and any run, or catch & run that then crosses the goal line is your call from the goal line itself!

6. If you’re the covering official, signal to stop the clock, incomplete pass, or use a dead ball signal as appropriate and blow your whistle. —On all changes of possession (interception/fumble/punt recovery) in your area signal 1st Down and spot the ‘old’ ball at the spot the ball became dead at so the Umpire can properly spot the ‘new’ ball.

**REFEREE**

The Referee will move to an appropriate position where he can observe the Team A huddle to its side and rear if there is a huddle. —The Referee will check the down and distance with the Line Judge and announce and indicate the new down after every play from scrimmage. —If the play clock is to be started on the Referees’ signal, the Referee shall then declare the ball *ready for play* by sounding his whistle and giving the *Ready for Play* signal or to wind the clock only with a *Wind and Whistle* signal if there’s a hot clock. —*Any start the clock signals need to be done without turning to face the press box, keep your eyes on the players! —*The Referee should only go to the line of scrimmage for non-routine events such as clean up duties or a close measurement. —Under unusual circumstances the pace of the game may vary and require discretionary slowing or speeding up action by the Referee which will be done in fairness to both teams. —The Referee will be vocal and demonstrative as to the number of the upcoming down before every play. —**Remember, in a running 40-second play clock situation, the Umpire’s act of moving away from the ball is the *de facto* “Ready for Play signal” in regards to establishing the neutral zone, when substitution rules start for Team A, and sets the chains and line to gain on a gained 1st down so that if Team A is assessed a dead ball foul *after* the Umpire moves away from the ball, only then will it be a *1st & 25* situation.** —On gained 1st Downs that ended in bounds, start the game clock as soon as the Umpire sets the ball down. If within the last 2:00 of either half in a close game or a team is trying to score just before the end of the half, hold the Umpire over the ball until the Down Box reaches the new line of scrimmage, then release him and start the game clock.

**SECTION 7: TIMING PROCEDURES & INSTRUCTION**

**GAME TIMING**

*Correct timing of the game is the responsibility of every official, its importance cannot be overstated!* All officials have equal responsibility for stopping the clock when it’s supposed to stop as well as keeping it running when it is supposed to. These responsibilities must remain consistent throughout the entire game. *—It is also vital that anytime a player’s helmet comes off not caused by a foul and he is removed from the game that we signal to stop the clock, inform the Referee that a player is being sent off for his helmet coming off and is being replaced, that the crew sets the appropriate play clock for the upcoming snap (25-seconds if a Team A player’s helmet comes off, 40-seconds if a Team B player’s helmet comes off), and then the Referee whistles and signals a Ready for Play signal based on the status of the ball! —*In any injured player or helmet-less player scenario, always wait to start the Ready for Play signal until that player in question has been replaced properly. —Under no circumstance is it acceptable for us to force or allow a team to play with less than 11-players because a player has to be replaced due to injury or their helmet coming off.

**I. Referee (In 4-man, the Referee is in charge of the 25/40-second play clock and time outs)**

a. You must be on the same page with the Back Judge at all times in regards to a hot clock or a simple chop following an official’s time out and if the play clock is a 25-second or 40-second play clock on any whistles and chops on a *Ready for Play* signal. —Use the one handed or two handed pumping motion mechanics to communicate what the proper time is on a play clock as needed. —On charged team time outs, the Back Judge will time the 60-second time out and signal the Referee after 45-seconds have expired with three short blasts of their whistle. At 60-seconds, if the *Ready for Play* hasn’t been blown, the BJ will signal three short blasts twice and point at the Referee to indicate the full time out is over. —Wait for both teams to be ready before you blow the *Ready for Play* signal. —Do not give the *Ready for Play* until each team has 11-players on the field after all charged team time outs, after any officials time out that lasts more than one minute, or following an injured player/helmetless player being replaced.

b. Resetting the 25-second clock is both your job and the BJ’s when the ball hasn’t been set by the Umpire by the time the 40-second play clock reaches 25-seconds remaining. —BJ, use the raising and lowering open palm pumping motion to indicate to the Referee that a reset is necessary. The Referee will acknowledge it and the BJ will either restart the play clock at 25-seconds once the ball is set silently and the game clock is stopped; or if the game clock is running you will signal to stop the game clock, signal a reset to 25-seconds, and then do a “whistle and wind” to start the play and game clock simultaneously.

c. Should you be facing the game clock at the end of a quarter, do not allow a play to begin if time expires before the ball is snapped.

d. In the event of a game clock malfunction, the LJ will time the remaining game time on their digital wristwatch until the game clock is repaired. He will relay the time to the Head Coach on his sideline and to the crew who will also keep the other Head Coach informed.

**II. Line Judge**

a. Know the time on the game clock; even though the clock is stopped, it may be incorrect and may require adjustment. —Ensure the Referee is aware of any timing errors and that you are prepared to correct it. b. Always correct the game clock when it was not running and started in error. —The general rule of thumb is any timing error of more than five-seconds outside of five-minutes of each half shall be corrected and *any* timing error inside the five-minute mark shall be corrected. Any timing error under 5:00 of a half will be corrected by-the-second. —After enforcement of a penalty, ensure that the clock remains stopped or is started according to the status of the ball when the clock was stopped. c. If the game clock malfunctions, you will keep the game clock on your digital wristwatch. It is both your’s and the BJ’s primary responsibility to always be aware of the approximate time remaining on the game clock at all times.

**III. Back Judge**

a.You must have a digital wristwatch and a ReadyRef or SmartRef timing device capable of properly timing the 25/40-second play clock. —All timing of the play game is your primary responsibility. Keeping track of the game clock and always knowing the approximate time remaining (clock awareness) is both your’s and the LJ’s primary responsibility. —Should the game clock malfunction, the LJ will keep the game clock on their digital wristwatch. b. When 10-seconds remains on the play clock, raise your hand directly over your head. When 5-seconds remain in the play clock count, lower your hand to your chest and begin a second-by-second count from your chest out to your side to count these last seconds down. —If the snap doesn’t get off by the time you reach zero then throw your flag up in the air while blowing your whistle and signal to stop the clock. Then, signal and/or tell the Referee you have a Delay of Game.

c . **(Umpire in 4-man)** If you are facing the scoreboard at the end of a quarter, it is your responsibility to see that Team A/K does not snap the ball after time expires and to blow your whistle when the clock reaches 0:00 before the snap or after a play in progress ceases where time expires during the play.

d. On all charged team timeouts, notify the crew when 15-seconds remain in the 60-second timeout with three short blasts of your whistle. —When the 60-seconds has fully expired, if the *Ready for Play* has not been signaled yet, then blow three short blasts twice and point at the Referee to indicate the full 60-second time out is over. —Upon hearing the 45-second notice, the Flank Officials will notify their teams that the 25-second play clock is about to start and indicate the upcoming down while ensuring that exactly eleven players leave their sideline for the upcoming play. —The Referee will signal the ball *Ready for Play* once the full 60-seconds have expired provided both teams are ready with 11-players each. —The Referee will signal the *Ready for Play* before the full charged team time out has expired if both teams are ready to go.

e. Know the time on the clock; even though the clock is stopped, it may be incorrect and may require adjustment. —Ensure the Referee is aware of any timing errors and that you are prepared to correct it with the scoreboard operator.

f. Always correct the clock when it was not running or started in error after a charged team time out. —After enforcement of a penalty, ensure that the clock remains stopped or is started according to rule. —Signal to the Referee with a spinning index finger if the clock is hot or with crossed forearms at your belt line if the clock is to stay stopped from the previous play being out of bounds, a change of possession, an incomplete pass, or following a charged team time out.

g. **25/40-second play clock:** Start the play clock immediately upon the Referee’s whistle and chop or their whistle and wind when they indicate the *Ready for Play* signal. —Following an injured player timeout be sure to indicate before the signal with a “bump” or “double bump” signal to display that the Referee’s ready for play signal is a 25-second or 40-second play clock so that everyone knows how much time Team A has to snap the ball. —When a play is over and the 40-second play clock is to start, upon seeing the dead ball signal or stop the clock signal at the conclusion of a play, count “one-thousand-one” to yourself and then start the 40-second play clock. —If you’re the official making the call complete your signals first until fully completed, then smoothly move your hand to start the timer. —If at the end of a quarter see if there is less than 40-seconds left on the running game clock when you start the play clock so you can tell the Referee if Team A has to get the snap off or not.

**TIMER INSTRUCTIONS (BJ in 5-man, LJ in 4-man)**

The official in charge of timing (Back Judge in a crew of 5 or 7, LJ in 4-man) will:

➢ Meet the clock operator in the press box approximately 30:00 before the game. The game clock is supposed to start its pregame countdown no less than 30:00 prior to the scheduled kickoff so that the clock reaches 0:00 at the scheduled time of the kickoff. Write the clock operator’s name on your game card in case you need to get their attention later on.

➢ Discuss coordination of starting and stopping clock, review the signals and what they need to key on to both start and stop the clock appropriately.

➢ Determine how the clock will be reset and if it can be reset to an exact time.

➢Have any 1/10ths of a second feature disabled if you are able to and disable any horns or buzzers if you’re able to. Their use is not a part of the football rules book. —Discuss with the clock operator that if the clock is started with 0:02 remaining in a quarter, via a whistle and wind, silent wind, or is started on the snap, that it must run to 0:00 no matter what. —Explain on a Free Kick that at least 1-second must go off the clock for any immediate possessions by either team except for a cleanly caught fair catch in which no time will expire off the clock. —Explain that on Free Kicks that the clock will start when the ball is touched by Team R or legally touched by Team K.

➢ Discuss the length of halftime and let the clock operator know that you will signal them when to begin it. —Halftimes for all high school games and levels will be the standard 15:00 length plus the 3:00 warmup period unless instructed different by the A.D. or both Head Coaches before the game. **NOTE: *This length of time is a physiological safety issue so players can rehydrate properly. Reducing the halftime duration of a high school game on your own could place you at risk of liability should a player become ill from not being properly rehydrated or properly cooling down at halftime! Those three to five minutes that you are trying to save on your own could cost you in an indefensible lawsuit!***  —The home team Site Administrator may request before the game to have the halftime length extended to 20:00 plus the 3:00 warmup for special events such as Homecoming or Senior Night. —The only time that halftime may be reduced to less than 15:00 is if both Head Coaches ask before the start of the game or upon Administrative approval, we don’t ask them! If they both ask you, then it can be reduced to no less than 10:00 in length plus the 3:00 warmup. They are assuming the liability risk that we are trying to avoid! —Youth Leagues will always be a 10:00 halftime without a warmup period. In excessive heat, it is OK to extend this a little longer. —BJ (LJ in 4-man) start the halftime period immediately after the expiration of the 2nd quarter except for Varsity games where you will wait until both teams to completely leave the field or settle into their halftime area on the field before you start it. **—*>>>Exception: When a Homecoming Varsity game is scheduled, the halftime length of the lower-level game before the Varsity game shall be 10:00 in length plus the 3:00 warmup, this is a pre-arranged agreement with the A.D.’s.***

➢ All Youth, Frosh-Soph, and JV games will have 10:00 quarters. Varsity games are 12:00 quarters. —At the end of a quarter, the clock operator will reset the clock only after the Referee holds up the ball at the end of a quarter. If the period is extended for an untimed down, keep the clock at 0:00. *—Youth Games will use “old timing rules” following changes of possession depending if the previous play ended in or out of bounds. Only the Referee will need to be concerned about this. The Referee will also institute a running clock when it is obvious in the 4th quarter that a game needs to get over soon regardless of the score when a team has a big lead.*

➢ Remind the clock operator any official may stop the clock and that they always need to be ready to stop or start the clock appropriately. —Remind the clock operator that a Point-After-Try is an untimed down. Review the untimed down signal with them.

➢ On plays near the boundary line the clock will continue to run unless the official signals incomplete or to stop the clock (out of bounds, first down, runners helmet came off, etc.).

➢ After a play in which the clock has been stopped following a gained 1st down, the Referee may or may not signal to start the clock again. —If no *ready for play* or start the clock signal is given by the Referee, then the clock will start on the subsequent snap.

➢ The clock stops following a score or touchback after the appropriate signal has been made.

* For Overtime, there will be no game clock, keep the clock at 0:00.
* **CIF Running Clock Rules for all high school levels:**  1) If both Head Coaches agree, a running clock may be instituted at any point in the game regardless of the score; 2) Once a team has a 35-point lead at any point in the 4th quarter the running clock will automatically be instituted; 3) Once a running clock is instituted, it will remain for the duration of the game regardless of the score; 4) The running clock will stop only for any charged team time out, for an officials time out that is not for a gained 1st Down, and on any score; 5) Following a score, the clock will not start until the Referee signals the *Ready for Play* on the kick off; 6) When signaling to the press box to stop the clock, be sure to stop and face the press box and whistle double-blasts five times as you signal to stop the clock as an official’s time out.

**SECTION 8: USE OF BEAN BAGS**

**PROCEDURE**

a. The bean bag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, which may later be needed as a reference point. —*Each crew member is to have one blue and one black bean bag. —*The Referee and Umpire will wear their blue bean bag only on their belt and keep their black bean bag in their pocket as a back up. The rest of the crew will wear both bean bags on their belt. —We use two colors to differentiate on plays that involve *First Touching* or a *Post Scrimmage Kick Foul* spot versus a fumble with the other color. —Use your blue bean bag as your first marker, your black bean bag as your second marker. —The Down Box Attendant will be given a white bean bag by the HL as a back-up marker to help mark Down Box position in goal to go situations. Have the clip monitor place the bean bag in this scenario after every goal-to-go play.

b. Bean bags are not to be thrown overhanded, they are to be dropped or underhand tossed to either the spot of *First Touching*, or the *Post Scrimmage Kick* spot of possession, or the spot of possession for the *Momentum Rule*, or the yard line of a fumble, depending on the play.

c. On all Free Kicks, all officials who are at or within either team’s restraining lines (usually the BJ & LJ in 5-man, the HL & LJ in 4-man), shall have their blue beanbag out and in their left hand before the kick to possibly indicate a spot of *First Touching* by Team K on an onside kick attempt.

d. On all punt formations, the HL, LJ, & BJ shall have their blue beanbag out and in their left hand before the snap to indicate a possible spot of *First Touching* by Team K and/or a Post Scrimmage Kick (PSK) spot upon Team R possessing the kick.

e. Under no circumstances should the beanbag be used as a substitute for hustle. —One common example of lazy officials using the beanbag instead of proper mechanics involves a play in which the runner is downed near or past a sideline. Some flank officials have been seen to approach the players, throw their beanbag toward the spot and then retrieve the ball from the runner without ever marking the spot. *This is sloppy and a very bad look! NEVER DO THIS!*

f. In the rarest of circumstances, it is acceptable for a Flank official on plays downfield to get to the sideline dead ball spot, then drop their bean bag at the dead ball spot as they stand over it, and then go into the sideline to separate players and escort them back to the field. —A hustling Umpire and BJ will also be there to support you both in cleaning up and recognizing the dead ball spot. —The offside Flank will use *cross field mechanics* to approximately mark the yard line of forward progress on play that go out of bounds on the opposite sideline. This sometimes helps the Umpire with the spot. In rare circumstances, the offside Flank may need to move into the middle of the field to have a presence if the Umpire has to go into a sideline area and clean up players.

f. Do not drop a beanbag at the spot that a Team B player intercepts a pass. This is an NFL enforcement spot, we don’t do that. —If a loose ball (interception/fumble/kick) is caught/recovered by an opponent between their own 5-yard line and the goal line, then drop your bean bag on that yard line due to the Momentum Rule (**Rule 8-5-2a Exception)** taking effect.

g. On any fumble that is at or beyond the line of scrimmage, drop your bean bag on the yard line that possession was lost. —If the fumble is behind the line of scrimmage, then you don’t need to drop your bean bag as the previous spot is the enforcement spot for fouls that occur before or during the fumble.

**SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE BEANBAG SHALL BE USED**

**I. Fumbles (Rule 10-3-3)**

a. The spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs before or during the fumble and that spot is needed to determine where the run ended. —Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the line of scrimmage but many officials “bag” all fumbles out of habit.

**II. First Touching (Rule 6-1-6,7 & 6-2-5)**

a. During both free and scrimmage kicks, there are times when it is improper for Team K to

touch a ball that has been kicked. That is known as *“First Touching”* or, in some circumstances, Kick Catching Interference.

b. On Free Kicks, if Team K touches a grounded kick before the ball crosses Team R’s free-kick line and before it is touched there by any Team R player, the spot must be marked with your blue beanbag. Team R has the option of gaining possession at that spot or accepting the results of the play if not fouls occurred. —If Team K touches, under any circumstance, a Free Kick inflight that is not touched by a Team R player first, then it is Kick Catching Interference. Throw your penalty marker for that. c. For a scrimmage kick (punt or short field goal attempt), the spot of First Touching is the spot where any Team K player touches the ball *beyond* the neutral zone or neutral zone expanded before a Team R player has muffed the ball. This must be marked with your bean bag, Team R can choose to take possession at that spot if there are no fouls on the play. —If Team R touches a punt inflight that a Team R player is in the immediate act of trying to catch, it is Kick Catching Interference. Throw your penalty marker for that. If no Team R player is in position to catch the inflight kick, then it is simply first touching, drop your bean bag. —Team R may choose to take possession of the ball at the spot of first touching closest to the line of scrimmage or accept the results of the play if there is no accepted foul on the play. Drop your blue bean bag first on this play, black bean bag second if Team R takes possession after first touching. We don’t drop your bean bag on a muff by Team R.

c. These spots must be marked with a bean bag because Team R has the option to take possession of the ball at this spot or the closest first touching spot towards the line of scrimmage.

d. No bean bag needs to be dropped/tossed when Team K immediately downs a punt whereupon they immediately possess the ball or when they catch a punt inflight without a Team R player in the area.

e. Keep in mind that if Team R possesses a ball after Team K “first touches” it, it’s like a free play for Team R. If they fumble the ball and lose possession on the play they will regain possession at the spot of first touching as long as there are no accepted fouls on the play.

**III. End of a Scrimmage Kick With Team R Possession (Rule 2-16-2h & 10-4-3)** a**.** Once any Team R player possesses the scrimmage kick beyond the line of scrimmage the covering official must mark the spot of Team R’s possession with their beanbag. —The kick is not over until it is *possessed by Team R*, it goes out of bounds, becomes a Touchback, or is downed or possessed by Team K*.* —A muff by Team R or *First Touching* by a Team K player is not *possession*! Don’t drop your bean bags on these occasions! —This end of the kick spot is a *Post Scrimmage Kick* enforcement spot (PSK Spot) for fouls that occur by Team R beyond the *Neutral Zone Expanded* and before Team R possession or the kick ends if the kick crosses the neutral zone expanded. b. When any Team R player possesses the scrimmage kick, drop your bean bag on the yard line he possesses the ball on. Then, keep officiating. —You must know if a foul that you call on Team R occurred downfield of the *Neutral Zone Expanded*, if the kick crossed the line of scrimmage, and Team R has possession at the end of the play. When all three of these things occur, you have a PSK enforcement if Team K accepts the foul. —Any other foul by Team R will either be before the kick and at or behind the line of scrimmage (Previous Spot Foul) or it will be a foul that occurred after Team R gained possession of the ball (Post Possession Foul). c. Any foul by Team K on a scrimmage kick that occurs *before* Team R’s possession will be enforced with the option to be enforced on the Previous Spot or the Succeeding Spot (tack-on enforcement). All Team K fouls *after* Team R possession are regular end of run enforcements.

**IV. Momentum Exception (Rule 8-5-2a Exception)**

a. The momentum exception allows a defender or kick receiver to make a play without fear

of giving up a Safety when they recover a loose ball between the their own goal line and their own 5-yard line.

b. When any player of the team that is not in team possession of the ball gains possession of any loose ball between their goal line and their own 5-yard line, and their *original momentum* carries him into the end zone where the ball is then declared dead 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 possession of the loose ball was initially gained.

c. This *momentum rule* bean bag spot might also be used to enforce a penalty that occurs after possession was obtained.

**V. Out of bounds.** a. The beanbag is useful when certain players go out of bounds during a play. —If a player of Team A or Team K goes out of bounds on their own (without being pushed out) before a change of possession, the spot they stepped out of bounds at will be marked with a bean bag. It is not a foul until that player then returns inbounds. —A penalty marker will be dropped on the spot they reenter the field for an Illegal Participation foul, regardless if they touch the ball or not. The beanbag will demonstrate the covering official was on top of the play and that the player stepped out without any help from the opponent. This is the NFHS version of the NFL’s Illegal Touching Rule. b. If a Team A/K player is pushed out by a Team B/R player they must reenter the field of play immediately. There is no bean bag or foul of this when they immediately reenter the field.

—If any player goes out of bounds on *purpose* to influence the play, or doesn’t immediately return inbounds during play, it is a foul for Illegal Participation when they influence the play or eventually return inbounds *during* the play.

**VI. Inadvertent Whistles (Rule 4-2-3)**

a. When an official inadvertently blows their whistle causing the ball to become dead the covering official(s) must drop their beanbag at the spot of the ball when the whistle was blown. b. The down may be replayed from the previous spot or the team in possession at the time the whistle was blown may choose to accept the result of the play and will have the next upcoming down from that bean bag spot when the ball became dead. c. If this occurs on a fumble, then the team last in possession can replay the down or take possession at the spot the ball was fumbled.

**VII. The Most Unusual Penalty Enforcement Spot (Rule 2-33-1d, 10-2-3, & 10-4-4)** a. There is a scenario where a backwards pass *beyond* the line of scrimmage on a play will have a penalty enforcement spot that will need to be marked by a bean bag. b. Should a foul occur downfield *beyond* the line of scrimmage against Team B, whereupon you then throw your penalty marker to the spot of the foul, and then there is a backwards pass, that backwards pass marks the spot of the penalty enforcement should Team A accept the foul. You will need to mark that spot of the backwards pass with a bean bag, too. —It is very unlikely to ever happen, but, it could happen, in theory.

**SECTION 9: USE OF WHISTLE**

**ALL OFFICIALS**

a. Each official will wear a primary whistle on a neck lanyard or as a finger-whistle and keep a backup whistle in their pocket as part of your required game equipment. —Officials shall use a black *FOX-40 Classic* whistle on either a black lanyard or black finger whistle (veteran officials with over 20-years experience may continue to use their pea whistle if they already use one).

b. The Referee, Umpire, Head Linesman, and Line Judge are instructed to have their whistle in or near their their mouths prior to the snap in case a dead-ball foul occurs or a team’s timeout request is granted before the snap.

c. Once the snap occurs, these officials shall drop or remove their whistle from their mouth and hold it in their hand during the play. This is to prevent an inadvertent whistle from occurring during a play. —Officiate all live ball action with your whistle *out of your mouth*! If you use a lanyard, use a long-enough lanyard so you can hold your whistle in your left hand as you run.

d. An official’s whistle mechanics will be evaluated on the ***“Two-Second Challenge.”*** That is, officials will see the ball down in player possession, arrive at the yard line in question, raise their hand to signal dead ball and then blow their whistle, or signal to stop the clock as they blow their whistle. —***Do not be in a rush to blow your whistle!*** Blowing your whistle early will NOT prevent an injury! —Remember that, by rule, the whistle rarely causes the ball to become dead. Blowing the whistle only *confirms* that something has happened to cause the ball to become dead. —If the ground caused a fumble, blast your whistle repeatedly and point at the ground repeatedly to indicate that the ball carrier was down. If forward progress was stopped and the ball is then fumbled, blast your whistle repeatedly and point at the spot of forward progress repeatedly and say “*Progress was stopped here!*” three or four times.

e. At the end of a down, any official who threw their penalty marker will alert the crew by giving five short blasts of the whistle until they have the Referee’s attention while signaling to stop the clock. That helps ensure the Down Box and the chains are not moved until after the penalty is sorted out.

f. The Referee uses the whistle to indicate the ball is *Ready for Play* signal, if there is a charged or officials timeout, there’s a player injury, and to prevent the ball from becoming live due to a dead-ball foul before the snap. Be *demonstrative & deliberate* when giving these signals.

g. When a charged team time out is signaled by you, give five short double-blasts of your whistle while indicating to stop the clock in order to get everyone’s attention and then use both arms to indicate which team called the time out.

h. Very rarely will the Referee use the whistle to confirm that the ball is dead after a play. If they do, it is for a play that ended in the offensive backfield or between the Tackles on the line that they have a clear view of.

i. It should be even rarer for the Umpire to blow their whistle to stop a play. The Umpire NEVER has forward progress. —The only time the Umpire is authorized to blow their whistle to acknowledge that the ball is dead is when a ball carrier was clearly down and the ground caused a fumble, between the Tackles if the ball carrier is down on the ground between the Umpire and the line of scrimmage and the Flanks haven’t blown their whistle after two-seconds have gone by, on an incomplete pass, or when a scrum occurs and the Umpire can clearly see that the ball carrier is down or is being controlled and driven backwards after an opportunity for the team in possession to push the pile was given. —Other than that, the Umpire whistles to indicate a timeout, dead-ball foul that prevents the snap, and a player injury. —Never mirror another official’s whistle when a play is dead with your whistle, you either have the call or you don’t blow your whistle at all. —**NOTE:** There is no such thing as a “back-up whistle!” *If you back-up your whistle enough eventually it will be blowing out your ass!* So, only blow a play dead if you have primary coverage!

j. Flank officials should not blow their whistles to mark the end of a play between the Tackle positions except for players *obviously* down or momentum is *obviously* stopped. —If the Umpire (between him and the line of scrimmage) or BJ (between him and the Umpire) notices that the Flanks have not blown their whistle for a ball carrier that is obviously down or their momentum has been stopped in-between the hash marks, they can then blow their whistle if no whistle has occurred by the Flanks after two-seconds or more have gone by.

k. The covering Flanks are encouraged to blow their whistle after change of possession at the end of a down, a ball carrier clearly down but the ground caused a fumble or forward progress was stopped before a fumble occurred, to report a foul, a *ball carrier* losing their helmet during play, a Touchdown when they have the goal line, an injury after the play, a team calling a time out before or after the snap, or to report a foul after the play.

l. The Back Judge uses the whistle to indicate timeouts, injuries, the end of a quarter, touchback, the ball is dead in his coverage area, to report fouls, and Touchdowns when he is the covering official.

**SECTION 10:** **DECLARING THE BALL READY FOR PLAY**

a. Communication with the Quarterback regarding the status of the game clock at the *Ready for Play* signal is important during many intervals of the game. It is up to the Referee to use good judgment in keeping the Quarterback informed in this regard and *over-communicate* if there is any doubt. —In particular, *the Quarterback and both Head Coaches will need to know if we are using a 25-second or 40-second play clock on any Ready for Play signal given by the Referee*. Let them know verbally and with a single pump or double pump signal prior to the *Ready for Play* signal if there is a chance they don’t know. —The entire crew needs to know which amount is being used and Flanks must communicate this information with their respective Head Coaches. BJ (R in 4-man) communicate this to your crew!

b. The Umpire should see that the ball is playable in wet conditions. —The Umpire is instructed to carry a solid black towel looped over their belt that is within the same size parameters allowed for use by players. —In wet/muddy conditions you may hold the ball and not place it down until Team A comes to the line of scrimmage. If you request a new ball, it will be relayed to you by a Flank Official and/or the Back Judge, keeping the ball persons off the field.

c. In a hurry-up or no huddle offense, the officials need to hustle but not to allow it to take over the pace to where they’re unable do their pre-snap responsibilities. —With a running 40-second play clock the Umpire will hustle as best as they can to get the ball and get it spotted appropriately and then back out to their position without delay. The rest of the crew will adjust to the pace of the Umpire without delay. —On a gained 1st Down, the HL will do their best to get the chains and Down Box moving to the new line of scrimmage. This is the only time that the Umpire will prevent a snap with a running 40-second play clock if a team is running a *hurry-up offense*. Once the Down Box reaches the new line of scrimmage, the Umpire will point at the snapper and say loudly, “OK!” as they back out to their pre-snap position. —If there’s a hot clock, the Umpire will signal to the Referee to start the clock with a silent wind by spinning their index finger. If the play ended out of bounds, the Umpire will cross their forearms at their waist and say to the Referee, *“No! No! We’re out! No Signal!”* while shaking their head *“no”* as they move to their pre-snap position.

d. With a running 40-second play clock, the act of the Umpire moving away from the spot of the upcoming down is the *de facto* *“Ready for Play”* signal. —The Umpire moving away from the ball establishes the Neutral Zone, it’s when Substitution Rules for Team A start, establishes the *line-to-gain* at the start of a new series, and tells Team A that they can now snap the ball. —The Umpire is instructed to set the ball at the new spot and move away from the ball as quickly as possible except in a gained 1st down scenario as described in subsection “c” above.

e. Should a dead ball foul occur against Team A *before* the Umpire backs away from the ball following a gained 1st down, this means that the chains have *not* been officially “set” that establishes the line to gain. The penalty will be marked off and the chains will reset on the new spot after the enforcement. —*After* Umpire has backed away from the ball and *then* there is a dead ball foul against Team A, the chains have been “set” establishing the line to gain by the act Umpire backing away from the ball. Therefore, the foul will be enforced with the new line to gain having already been established resulting in a rare 1st & 25 scenario for Team A.

**SECTION 11: BALL HANDLING**

**SCRIMMAGE PLAYS**

**I. Back Judge, Head Linesman, and Line Judge**

a. Meet and instruct Ball Person(s) during the on-field pre-game period. —Ball Persons are to remain outside the field of play at all times and be at least six feet off the sidelines unless relaying a replacement ball or retrieving a deep incomplete pass that is being replaced. —The LJ will be the primary instructor with the HL and BJ adding their instruction just before the coin toss. —Always have a positive and encouraging rapport with the ball persons, they are usually children of a coach, staff member, or booster, or the sibling of a team member. Their parents will always ask them how they were treated by you after the game!

—**NOTE:*****Game officials are solely responsible for transferring the replacement ball to the Umpire for placement at the succeeding or previous spot. The Flanks are directed to move to within 12-to-15 yards and underhand toss all relay throws to the Umpire. The BJ can also help with relay throws as a go-between from the Flanks as needed. Any relay throw shall not touch the ground! (unless accidentally dropped). Look good doing it!***

b. Ball Persons shall be instructed to pay attention to the official on their sideline and stay on the upfield side of the LOS behind the restraining line. —Instruct the Ball Persons to carry a towel for drying the ball from both rain and sweat.

c. For Field Goal or Kick Try attempts, instruct the ball persons to place their spare ball behind the post of the uprights and go stand back beyond the uprights to catch the kicked ball.

**GENERAL BALL HANDLING**

**I. Relaying Ball**

a. Relaying or transferring of the ball should be done quickly and efficiently. —The Flank is instructed to run into the field to underhand toss the new ball to the Umpire from a distance of 12-to-15 yards distance. Do not wildly throw or toss the ball at him. —Good accurate relay tosses look good for all parties and avoids a “Keystone Cops” scene of chasing after a poor toss.

**II. Tossing Ball**

a. All tosses shall be underhanded, with a spiraling motion, and on a generally flat trajectory to chest level of the person receiving the ball. —Do not toss the ball over players. —A crew proficient in ball handling in dead ball intervals will not allow the ball to fall to ground while handling and transferring it! *They look sharp and efficient!*

**III. Start of Each Half or Extra Period**

a. Flank officials are responsible to get the correct ball to the Back Judge to begin the second

half or subsequent extra periods. —BJ **(LJ in 4-man)**: Do not allow a special “kicking ball” to be used on free kicks unless it meets all NFHS specifications and is formally approved by the Umpire. —Only the official NFHS game balls approved by the Umpire shall be used!

**IV. Spotting Ball**

a. Spotting the ball for the succeeding down should be done with one placement. The official that spots ball should do so as quickly as practical, yet assuring the ball is placed correctly when first spotted. —Any official that has positive knowledge that the ball is not spotted correctly shall take necessary measures, including stopping the clock, to get the ball located correctly. —An effective crew of officials will monitor the dead-ball action of the players while retrieving and placing the ball for the succeeding play. ***Remember, players first, then the ball second!***

b. To provide better dead-ball coverage and better player safety, the Referee, Back Judge, and Flanks (when away from the dead-ball spot) will focus more of their attention of the action of the players than on retrieving the dead-ball. —Being an excellent dead-ball official is both taking care of the ball and players as each end-of-play scenario dictates. Sometimes, you have to entirely forget about getting the ball spotted and, instead, go separate players. —While this represents a shift from traditional ball mechanics, the increased emphasis on player safety demands an approach based on effective coverage as well as efficiency.

c. The Umpire will retrieve and spot the ball in most situations. —There will be situations when the Umpire goes outside the hash marks or even into the sideline to retrieve the ball. The Umpire is instructed to go get the ball and not expect it to be tossed to him at the hash marks as was common in the past before the addition of the 40-second play clock and today’s hurry-up RPO offensive schemes. —At the same time, the Flank officials should get the ball and toss it to the Umpire if it is resting near their feet. The Umpire already has your spot as does the off-side Flank in these situations.

d. When only one game ball is being used, on a long incomplete pass, both Flanks will run into the middle of the field to form a relay chain. The closest Flank will get the ball in 4-man. The Umpire will go downfield to get the relay from the Flanks, the Referee will spot the ball at the Previous Spot.

e. Fluid coordination and communication between the Referee and Umpire will ensure the most efficient way of spotting of the ball. —In cases where the Umpire relays the ball to the Referee, the Umpire will tell the Referee what the lateral position of the ball was for the Previous Spot on the yard line and then should move into position for the next play.

**WHEN THE BALL IS DEAD:**

Generally, the Umpire will retrieve the ball used on the previous play and place the ball at the

appropriate spot except on incomplete passes that are not near him. —Nearby officials may be in a position to assist if doing so does not take them away from their yard line spot or away from any dead ball issues with players that demands their immediate attention.

**I. Umpire**

a. When there is no further threat of a dead ball foul, hustle to retrieve the ball and place it at the succeeding spot as quickly as you can. —The Umpire must be prepared to retrieve and spot any dead ball when the ball becomes dead in player possession.

**II. Referee**

a. When there is no further threat of a dead ball foul, and conditions permit, move to signal the upcoming down and only assist with retrieving the ball and delivering it to the Umpire if it is practical for you to do so. —Generally, you will only help with ball relay when a new ball is relayed in on an incomplete pass if you have no more contain responsibilities. b. Your primary dead ball responsibility is to contain and observe players, ensure your crew is doing their job properly, and start your pre-snap routine as quickly as possible.

**III. Back Judge** a.Maintain depth and monitor players away from the ball. You are essentially the spotter for dead ball nonsense! Sprint in quickly and separate players as needed after the play. —The Back Judge will only rarely be involved in retrieving the ball, except in situations where an incomplete pass is in his proximity. Your primary job is to contain and observe players but also have a dead ball presence in the area that the ball carrier was tackled in, especially if the play ends out of bounds. b. Separate and escort players as needed back onto the field when they go out of bounds. Ideally, your dead-ball presence will prevent penalties from being called. —*Be extremely proactive in this regard rather than reactive.* ***An ounce of sweat saves a pound of dead ball fouls!*** This means be on your horse once the play is over as is needed and let players know that you’re there which then prevents you from having to penalize their conduct as much as possible! c. Never chase after an incomplete pass that leaves the playing field. Let the ball persons get those.

**IV. Flanks** a. Indicate the dead-ball spot and mark the foremost point of the ball with the edge of your downfield foot while standing with your feet are together. —Your eyes should not be looking at the dead-ball spot or open space, rather, they must be up and looking for illegal action by the players after the play. —Any official who signals any dead ball signal when the play is over needs to turn and face players as they go behind them, particularly into the sideline or into and out of the end zone.

b. Be prepared to assist the Umpire in retrieving the ball, especially if the ball is near you and the Umpire tells you that he has your spot. —Observe the proper placement of the ball at the succeeding spot. If the Umpire’s spot is incorrect, then correct him!

**WHEN THE BALL IS DEAD OUTSIDE THE NUMBERS OR OUT OF BOUNDS:**

A. On long plays into the secondary and near the sideline area the BJ must be prepared to assist in relaying the ball to the Umpire unless the BJ decides to spot the ball within the inbounds marks before the Umpire arrives. —If this happens on a play that ends within the inbounds marks, the BJ will stand over the ball they just spotted and stay there until the Umpire arrives at it, whereupon the Umpire will stand over the ball to ensure that the ball is not snapped until the Referee starts the game clock or motions for him to move away. B. If the play ends *outside* the inbounds marks or out of bounds, then the BJ will either hold the spot and then relay the ball to the Umpire to be re-spotted inside the inbounds marks, or the BJ will move the ball to the spot within the inbounds mark nearest to him. —Once the Umpire spots the ball or arrives to the BJ’s spot, the Umpire will wait for the Down Box to arrive to the new yard line unless the Referee first chooses to start the game clock or directs him to move to his position.

**I. Referee**

a. Move to an open area between the inbounds line and the nine-yard marks. Observe and signal the upcoming down. Move in for dead ball support as needed.

**II. Umpire**

a. When the ball is dead following a play that ends outside the nine-yard marks, and there is no

further threat of foul, retrieve the ball and hustle to get it spotted at the new line of scrimmage as quickly as possible. —The Umpire’s goal is to get the Referee to start the game clock as quickly as possible on a gained 1st Down inbounds!

**III. Back Judge**

a. Maintain a cushion to observe dead-ball action and the off-the-ball action of players as you determine to be appropriate. —Have a dead ball presence on plays that end near the sideline and be prepared to escort the ball carrier or any opponents of the team on that sideline back onto the field. —Following plays that go past the Umpire, be prepared to assist in retrieving the ball and relay it to the Umpire.

**IV. Flanks**

a. Indicate the dead-ball spot and mark forward progress. —Your eyes should not be looking at the dead-ball spot, rather, should be up and looking for illegal action by the players. —Always turn and face the ball carrier who goes out of bounds. If necessary, leave your spot and go get players out of an opponent’s sideline. The Umpire and Off-Flank will have your spot for you if this happens. b. You can also drop a bean bag in this rare scenario to mark your spot if you have to go get opposing players out of a team box area. Observe the proper placement of the ball at the succeeding spot.

**WHEN A FORWARD PASS IS INCOMPLETE:**

**I. Flanks**

a. If an incomplete pass ball can easily be retrieved and re-used, when there is no further threat of a dead ball foul, retrieve the ball and relay it to the Umpire. b. If the pass fails in such a manner that the ball can not easily be re-used, then the Flank Official on Team A’s sideline will obtain a new ball from the Ball Person and relay it to the Umpire.

**II. Umpire**

a. If a forward pass is incomplete in such a manner that that same game ball can easily be re-used, when there is no further threat of a foul, retrieve the ball and either place at the succeeding spot or relay it to the Referee. b. If the forward pass is incomplete in such a manner that the game ball cannot easily be re-used, then the Flank official on Team A’s side will obtain a new ball from the Ball Person and relay it to the Umpire. —Point at that Flank, run towards them, and say “Ball! Ball! Ball!”

**III. Back Judge** a.Assist as necessary in getting the old ball to the appropriate Ball Person. Never chase after a ball that goes off the field. Ask someone on that sideline to please get it for you if needed.

b. In the case where a team doesn’t have a back up ball available, the crew will have to use old school ball relay mechanics from the days when each team was only allowed to use one game ball. The BJ will get the incomplete pass. —The closest Flank will then run into the middle of the field to receive the toss from the BJ. The Umpire will run towards that Flank and receive that Flank’s relay toss, the Referee will then stand at the previous spot and receive the Umpire’s relay toss. The Umpire will tell the Referee the lateral position of the ball when this happens. —If the Flank is the first to grab an incomplete pass, then the BJ will get between that Flank and the Umpire to be a part of the relay tosses back to the previous spot. —In these scenarios it may be necessary for you to reset the play clock to 25-seconds because it may take more than 15-seconds to get the ball set. Inform the Referee with your “bump” signals when this occurs.

**IV. Referee** a.Be prepared to receive a relay from the Umpire and place the ball at the previous spot at the appropriate lateral position. b. Be aware that these long incomplete passes may have to cause you to reset the play clock to 25-seconds if the ball isn’t spotted after 15-seconds expiring off the 40-second play clock. Be aware of this situation with your BJ and signal appropriately.

**FOLLOWING A PUNT OR MISSED FIELD GOAL:**

**I. Back Judge** a.After a Missed Field Goal: When there is no further threat of a dead ball foul, secure the ‘new’ game ball from the Ball Person of Team R and relay it to the Umpire. —After relaying the ball to the Umpire, assist in getting the ‘old’ ball to the appropriate Ball Person but never chase after the ball outside of the playing dimensions. b. On a punt, be sure to tell the Umpire and Referee the status of the ball after the play is over: *Fair Catch and an upcoming Free Kick Option Down, Downed or First Touching by K, or recovery and a run by Team R*. —Be sure that you spot the ball at the exact dead ball spot, not just on the yard line, wherever the ball became dead at in your area, and signal 1st down for Team R. If a muff or fumble occurred and Team K recovers, then you’ll signal 1st Down for Team K. —No matter what, on any punt you will signal to stop the clock and signal 1st down for either team once the play is over, and then, physically spot the ball where it became dead!

**II. Flanks** a. If you have forward progress and when conditions permit secure the ‘old’ ball being replaced and place it at your foot marking the forward progress, or get a ‘new’ ball from the Ball Person if practical. —This is to be done only if there is no threat of a dead ball foul by any player and if it doesn't distract any official from performing essential dead ball duties. —Assist as necessary and practical in getting the ‘old’ ball to the appropriate Ball Person.

1. LJ (and sometimes the U): Once the play is over, signal to the HL that you have his spot thus releasing the HL to go get the chains set up on the new yard line.

**III. Referee**  a. You will hustle downfield once the play is over after ensuring that there are no fouls and signaling for the chains to move. b. Signal the result of the play (1st down) at the dead ball spot or at the Team R20-yard line if a touchback occurred. —If first touching changes the spot of the ball for Team R you will signal First Touching, point at the spot the ball is being placed, and then signal 1st down. c. If a scrimmage kick is fair caught, or there is an Awarded Fair Catch due to Kick Catching Interference, keep in mind that Team R has the option for lateral position within the inbounds marks anywhere along the line of scrimmage along with a Free Kick Field Goal option. —You will spot the ball where it became dead until Team R tells you these options. —These options must occur before the *Ready for Play* signal, be sure to allow time for Team R to decide. If their Quarterback isn’t coming out to tell, that’s generally a clue. —If you believe that you didn’t give them enough time to express their option, then grant the option and reset the play clock with a new *Ready for Play* signal.

**IV. Umpire**

a. Move towards the sideline of the team now in possession, when there is no further threat of a dead ball foul, signal to have the new ball to be relayed to you by the Flank by holding your hands out in front of you ready to catch the ball. —Spot the ‘new ball’ at both the proper yard line and the proper lateral position on that yard line. —On all Touchbacks, always spot the ball in the middle of the Team R20-yard line unless you are asked to move the lateral position of the ball somewhere else on the Team R20-yard line.

b. After a punt, ask the BJ for the status of the ball. *Is it a fair catch, recovery and returned by Team R, first touching or downed by Team K?* **—>Tell the status of the play to the Referee when he gets to the spot:*****->>>****“We have a Fair Catch-Free Kick Down coming up at this spot* (Team R has the option for a Free Kick Field Goal and lateral positioning of the ball on this type of play, the Referee will simply signal 1st down for Team R);” **->>>**or, *“We have a recovery and return to this spot* (whereupon the Referee simply signal 1st down);” **->>>**or, *“We have First Touching at this spot* (whereupon the Referee will turn to the Press Box, signal First Touching, point to the spot, and signal 1st down), **->>>**or, “*Team K downed the ball right here* (whereupon the Referee will simply signal 1st down for Team R).”

**SECTION 12: FREE KICKS**

**I. Referee**

a. Starting position is on the goal line and positioned approximately in-between the upright on the HL’s side of the field and the HL’s side inbounds marks (opposite side of the Press Box). —**(In 4-man, you may stand on the R10-yard line or adjust back to the goal line to contain the deepest returners while positioned between HL’s side upright and inbounds marks)**. —You share responsibility with the BJ and LJ **(LJ and HL in 4-man)** for determining whether Team K has at least 4-players on each side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. —This positioning of the Referee near the HL’s side’s upright is the NFHS mechanic.

b. The Referee counts with the Umpire and HL the number of Team R players.

c. Once the rest of the crew raises their hand to indicate that they are ready for the kickoff the Referee will loudly, and for about 3-seconds, blow their whistle and give the ready for play signal. —The Referee has the option to signal by pointing at the kicker or using a “bring it down here” motion when they blow their whistle on the Ready for Play.

d. If the kick challenges the plane of the goal line the Referee will judge if a Touchback occurs or if the Momentum Rule applies if a receiver possesses the kick inside the Team R 5-yard line.

e. On any Free Kick that challenges the sideline between the pylon on the HL’s sideline and the HL’s position, the Referee will adjust to the sideline and/or pylon and officiate the sideline as a modified Flank.

f. Ideally, once the kick is possessed by Team R, unless the sideline is threatened, the Referee will move to the middle of the field and do their best to stay in-between the hash marks for an inside-out look of the return. —Stay within the hash marks as best as you can during the return and contain the play. —Make sure any backwards pass and handoff attempts are indeed backwards and all blocks at the point of attack are legal. —You also have the Team R goal line if a fumble is returned by Team K. —If the sideline is threatened by the kick, the Referee will stay along the sideline if the return goes up that sideline and clean up the play.

g. Never signal the *Ready for Play* on a Free Kick until each team has 11-players! Wait until your crews signals that they are ready for the kick off by raising their hand above their head.

**II. Umpire**  a. Starting position is on the Line Judge’s side of the field on the Press Box sideline on Team R’s 20-yard line in both 4 and 5-man. Count Team R Players with the R and HL. —When in position and ready for the kick, raise your hand above your head as a ready signal for the Referee. —Adjust to the kick if it is deep or short so that you are trailing the returner as much as possible. Any kick that threatens the sideline/pylon on your sideline towards the goal line, get upfield and to the goal line to judge the play accordingly. —Be prepared to judge if any Team R backward passes or backward handoffs are forward or not. —Remember, don’t just stand there. Get even with the ball as best as you can like a Flank would from the line of scrimmage as the kick goes downfield. b. Prior to the kick, if Team K is in a bunch formation, stand at the top of the numbers to help judge if Team K has 4-players on either side of the kicker if they kick from a bunch formation. When they widen out, then you get to the sideline. c. On any short or onside kick, get on your horse and hustle as hard as you can into the pile and start digging. Try to be the first one there! d. On a regular return, you have the returner up to the R35-yard line whereupon the LJ has the returner and you then focus on clean up. e. If the kick is to the opposite third of the field, or the returner takes the return up that far sideline past the R20-yard line, you are instructed to run into the middle of the field and do an inside-out coverage of the back side of the return. —If there is a fumble or players doing nonsense behind the play, then you are now that much more closer to where you need to be and you will often be the first official on the spot (Be “*Johnny On-The-Spot!*”). —If the returner reverses-field back towards you before he reaches the R35-yard line, then simply adjust back to your sideline. —On any return past the R35-yard line that is either up the middle or goes to the far side of the field, you must then move aggressively into the middle so that you can have a presence. —If the return is on your side of the field past the R35-yard line, then stay on your sideline. d. On Touchbacks, run into the middle of the field and yell out “OK! OK!” to prevent unnecessary contact that might lead to shenanigans and a dead ball personal foul. e. On returns down your sideline or up the middle up to the 35-yard line, stay on the sideline and mark the dead ball spot. —Once a return along your sideline goes beyond the R35-yard line come slightly onto the field for a better angle and support the play. Get the ball from the returner or escort him or the tackler back onto the field if they are out of bounds on their opponent’s sideline. f. Following Team R possession, if there is a fumble that is recovered and returned by Team K do your best to cover your sideline and Team R goal line as the play dictates. —The LJ now has progress on a fumble return down to the Team R 1-yard line, try to beat the returner to the goal line if you can while covering the immediate action around and ahead of the play. Coordinate your signal with the Referee between the goal line and R1-yard line.

**III. Line Judge**

a. The Line Judge will stand on Team R’s restraining line (usually the 50-yard line) on the press box side of the field and will come to the top of the numbers to show Team R where their restraining line is. —**(In 4-man, the LJ assumes the BJ’s responsibilities on a Free Kick and stands on Team K’s restraining line but will stay on the sideline. In 4-man, the LJ has the returner and sideline from the R35-yard line-and-on and shares the goal line with the HL)**. —The LJ will then count Team K players with the BJ, signal to the BJ as the BJ hands the ball to the kicker, and then backup to the sideline. —Do not let Team K kickoff until they have exactly 11-players! —Ensure that Team K players are within their 5-yard belt and there are at least 4-players on either side of the player who kicks the ball before the kickoff. —The LJ will then get their blue bean bag out and hold it in their left hand and then raise their right hand above their head to indicate that they are ready for the kickoff.

b. On a regular deep kick, you will have blockers ahead of the returner. Focus on the Team K *wedgebusters* for legal blocks by both teams. —As you’re observing blocks, run down to the R35-yard line and observe from there. Once the returner reaches the R35-yard line then you have his progress and he is now your primary focus. —If the returner is running right at you, then back peddle ahead of the play along the sideline to avoid getting ran into.

c. On an onside kick, make sure that there is no *First Touching* by Team K (drop your bean bag on the yard line of first touching by Team K if they touch the grounded ball before it travels 10-yards). —***Any type of touching of the Free Kicked ball in-flight by Team K at any time, before it touches a Team R player or the ground, is a foul for Kick-Catch Interference.*** —If the ball is legally touched by Team K after the grounded ball traveled 10-yards or is touched at anytime by Team R (without being pushed into the ball) signal to start the clock. —Once the ball is recovered, blow your whistle signal to stop the clock. Don’t be in a hurry to signal this, ***remember Oklahoma and Oregon!*** (Youtube: Oklahoma vs. Oregon onside kick). —See the ball in possession before you make any signals or blow your whistle! Hustle in and start digging. Signal 1st down for whomever recovers the ball.

d. On pooch kicks, observe for Team R players signaling a Fair Catch. —No time shall run off the clock if a Free Kick is cleanly fair caught by Team R. —Any contact by Team K into a Team R player who is attempting to catch a Free Kick in flight is Kick Catching Interference unless the Team K player is pushed into the Team R player by another Team R player.

e. Make sure there are no *popup kicks*. Shut it down if it happens. —Watch for any Personal Fouls on a *defenseless player* from either team who is trying to secure possession of the kick.

f. If the Free Kick goes out of bounds *untouched* by Team R, throw your penalty marker at the spot that the free kick went out of bounds. —If the Team R Head Coach is on your sideline, ask him what he wants to do for an enforcement.

**IV. Head Linesman** a.Stand at the R30-yard line on the sideline opposite of the press box. Count Team R players with the R referee & Umpire. **—In 4-man, stand at Team R’s restraining line, usually the 50-yard line, and assume the LJ’s 5-man responsibilities. —Count Team K players and ensure their formation is legal. —The Referee has kicks that threaten your sideline up to the R35-yard line, but on kicks into the middle or to the other sideline you have the entire sideline plus Team K’s goal line with the LJ. —Blue bean bag is in your left hand.** —When in position and ready for the kick, raise your hand above your head as a ready signal for the Referee. b. You have your entire sideline except: —On a short kick near the sideline the BJ will help you, on a deep kick near the sideline the Referee will help you. c. On a deep kick, move downfield to the R15-yard line **(In 4-man, move down to the R35-yard line).** Focus on blocking against the “Off The Ball Defender (the closest defender to the returner). —Make sure any backwards passes or handoffs by Team R are indeed backwards. —Make sure all blocks by both teams are legal particularly focusing on Illegal Blocks in the Back and Illegal Blindside Blocks. d. Pick up the returner as he reaches your position and focus on his progress as your primary coverage. Shuffle-step even with the returner as best as you can keeping your chest centered to him until you begin to trail behind him. —Do your best to stay even with him, especially on returns up the middle or on the opposite side of the field. —On a return near your sideline, trail the returner no more than 7-to-13 yards behind if you can help it. e. On a Touchback, run into the field to the inbounds marks on your side of the field yelling *“OK! OK!”* as you signal to stop the clock to make sure no dead ball personal fouls occur. —Once Team K and R players have separated themselves, then go get the chains set up on the R20-yard line. —Relay a Team R ball into the U if necessary. —Don’t just stay glued to the sideline on a touchback! Hustle to prevent dead ball fouls! f. On a pooch kick, observe for any Fair Catch signals by Team R. —If the kick is muffed with a subsequent pile up, or it’s an onside kick attempt, get on your horse and hustle in and start digging. —Don’t ever let the Umpire beat you to this type of play! (he’ll embarrass you, and rightfully so!). g. If you observe Team R touching/muffing/possessing the kick, signal to start the clock except on a cleanly caught fair catch. h. If the Free Kick goes out of bounds *untouched* by Team R, throw your penalty marker at the spot that the Free Kick went out of bounds. —If the Team R coach is on your sideline, ask him what he wants to do for an enforcement: 1. *5-yards and re-kick; 2. or at the spot where it went out of bounds plus 5-yards tacked on; 3. or at the R35-yard line (if kicked from the K40) —Ask him the best two options*.

i. Particularly watch for any illegal contact fouls on a defenseless player who is trying to secure possession of the kick by either team and blindside hits on returns that “reverse the field.”

**V. Back Judge (LJ in 4-man but stay on your sideline after the kick) a. *Ensure that there are no Carryover or Succeeding Spot Fouls to enforce on the Free Kick!* —**The BJ will time the duration of time from the end of a Try or Field Goal as a 60-second official’s time out. —During this time, after you get the kick off ball from the ball person at the Team R end zone, the BJ will jog up Team K’s sideline to the Team K40-yard line and wait there (get a drink if needed). —Once the officials time out reaches 45-seconds expired (started once the Referee completes his signal after the Try, successful Field Goal, or Safety) the BJ will then give three short blasts with his whistle and lightly jog out to the middle of the field and hand the ball to the kicker. —The BJ will also tell Team K *“Here we go! Time Out’s over!”* to encourage Team K to hurry up. Ideally, at 60-seconds, the BJ will signal to the LJ their 11-count, instruct the Kicker to wait for the Referee’s signal, and then jog to their sideline. —Make sure that the tee is inside of the line that makes the inbounds marks. If the kicker is not standing with the BJ when 60-seconds has expired but Team K has 11-players, set the ball down in the middle of the K40-yard line and jog off the field so that the Referee can signal their ready for play. —Always wait until Team K has precisely 11-players! b. In normal situations before you jog to the sideline remind the kicker not to kick the ball until the Referee has sounded his whistle. —Turn toward the LJ and signal that you both have 11-Team K players. Then, jog off to the HL’s side of the field at the Team K restraining line (usually the Team K40-yard line). —Pull your blue bean bag out and hold it in your left hand. Make sure that Team K, other than the kicker, are within their 5-yard restraining belt and at least 4-players are on either side of the ball at the moment that the ball is kicked. —Make sure Team K is properly lined up before you signal that you’re ready for the kick off.

c. When in position and ready for the kick, the Back Judge will raise their right hand above their head to indicate to the Referee that they are ready for the kickoff. —If the football falls or blows off the tee just prior to the free kick the Back Judge will blow their whistle and signal to stop the clock to prevent action. —You may stay on the sideline as the kicker resets the ball. —If the ball falls off the tee a second time, then the BJ will instruct a Team K player to hold the ball on the tee or on the ground.

d. On a regular deep kick, move into the middle of the field and stand on the 50-yard line (or Team R’s original restraining line). —Observe and contain the play focusing on the closest blockers to you. —You have the goal line on all returns. —Most importantly, you must ensure that the Kicker is not blown up with a flagrant unsuspecting blindside hit by a Team R blocker, or blocked at all before the kicker advances 5-yards downfield unless the kick is grounded or touches any player before he’s gone 5-yards downfield, or the kicker otherwise moves to participate in the play (see **Rule 9-3-4**).

e. If a short kick threatens your sideline, then stay on the sideline and observe and officiate the play as needed. —Stay on the sideline if a short kick is returned up your sideline and stay ahead of the play as you backpedal towards the goal line. —If the returner moves towards the middle of the field or the other side on a short kick and return, then go into the middle of the field and contain the frontside of the play ahead of him.

f. On an onside kick, observe for Team K first touching the *grounded* kick before it travels 10-yards and for Team K “shepherding” the ball in the neutral zone. —If a Free Kick *inflight* is touched in any manner by a Team K player before a Team R player touches it, then it is a foul for Kick Catching Interference regardless of where on the field it is touched.

g. **Shut down the play if:**  —Encroachment by Team K occurs; —A pop up kick occurs; —The ball is kicked with less than 4-players on either side of the kicker (the player who actually kicks the ball) when it is kicked; —If a Team K player, other than the actual Kicker, starts from behind or steps on/behind the 5-yard restraining line in the action leading up to the kick off after the Ready for Play signal. **—NOTE: Call Encroachment on Team K on a deep kick only if a player has a foot down across the restraining line when the ball if kicked. On a short/onside kick, treat the restraining line exactly like a plane and make sure that all players are behind that plane when the ball is kicked.**

h. Watch for a Personal Foul for a hit on a Defenseless Player when any member of either team is trying to possess the loose ball or is obviously away from the play and not expecting to be hit.

1. It is absolutely vital that you observe that the Kicker is not contacted with a rough hit or block until he has moved at least 5-yards downfield on a free kick. —It is also vital that we pick up a frontline Team R blocker coming in from the side and “ear hole hit” the kicker, thus committing an Illegal Blindside Block, or even a Targeting foul on a Defenseless Player. —Containing the Kicker and ensuring contact against him is legal is more important than you getting to Team R’s restraining line to watch front line blockers!
2. Direct the LJ, in your pre-game, on kicks that occur towards your sideline to keep an eye out on the kicker to make sure there is not a cheap blindside hit made upon him. —*Every-so-often, an assistant coach will direct the widest frontline blocker to come into the side and hit an unsuspecting Kicker as hard as they can from the blindside in an attempt to take them out of the game. —As a crew, you can’t let such an egregious illegal act go unpunished, let alone, be unseen by you!*

**FREE KICK AFTER A SAFETY**

a. All crew members take up the same positions and assume the same responsibilities as you would for a regular kickoff, except you’re just moving the free kick line 20-yards upfield to the Team K20-yard line. —Everyone will simply move up 20-yards from their normal positioning. b. Following the score of a Safety is the only time Team K may use a punt on a Free Kick. —Yes, Team K may recover the free kick punt as an onside kick if it travels 10-yards and is grounded or is muffed by Team R.

**FREE KICK FIELD GOAL ATTEMPT AFTER A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH**

a.The HL will set the chains up to mark the 10-yard neutral zone from Team K’s free kick line. b. The BJ and LJ will take their normal positions on each team’s restraining lines and ensure neither team encroaches before the ball is kicked. —The HL will be positioned on the Team R goal line in case the kick is short and challenges the goal line for a possible touchback. —The Referee and Umpire will position themselves under the uprights and rule on the kick, the Referee has whistle and crossbar. —Don’t forget to signal the *Ready for Play* before the kick. c. If the kick is short of the goal line, it’s just like a regular kick off and can be returned by Team R or recovered by Team K like an onside kick. —Neither team can cross their restraining line until the ball is kicked.

**—In 4-man, the LJ and HL will be on the restraining lines. If the kick is short, the Referee and Umpire will need to hustle out to the goal line and rule on a possible touchback.**

**ONSIDE KICK MECHANICS**

a. If you anticipate an onside kick, the BJ will be in their normal position. —The Umpire will push the LJ up to Team K’s restraining line and the Umpire will stand on Team R’s restraining line. —The HL will move up to Team R’s restraining line across from the Umpire. —The BJ and LJ are on Team K’s restraining line and the Umpire and HL are on Team R’s restraining line. b. Have your blue bean bags out and in your hand! —Be sure to signal 1st down for whomever recovers it or drop a bean bag for First Touching if Team K first touches the kick. c. The Referee will move to the middle of the field and move up as far as he can without passing the deepest returner. **All officials:** Watch for any illegal contact fouls on a Defenseless Player who is trying to secure possession of the kick by either team. **—In 4-man: The Umpire will simply move up to the Team R restraining line across from the HL.**

**SECTION 13: KEYS**

**There are two basic types of *Keys:* “Situational “and “Positional” Keys**

**I. *Situational Keys***

a. Situational Keys are based on the down, distance, score, time remaining, offensive and

defensive formations and actions of players at the snap.

b. In addition to down, distance and other game factors, offensive and defensive formations

provide hints as to what type of play an official can expect in a given situation. —Most teams using the double-wing or single-wing formation, for instance, are predominantly running teams.

—Teams using four-receiver sets and shotgun formations pass the ball just as much as they run, if not, more. —In particular, the “RPO” offenses that are popular today tend to throw short passes that might result in plays with Offensive or Defensive Pass Interference, Defensive Illegal Use of Hands, or Ineligible Receivers Downfield.

c. Linemen often provide Situational Keys at the snap. —Key on their blocks as you read the play. —Pulling linemen indicate a sweep or trap block which the defense might commit an Illegal Block Below the Waist upon. —Retreating linemen indicate a pass or a draw. —Charging linemen typically indicate a running play between the Tackles. —When offensive linemen provide only passive resistance, allowing defensive linemen to penetrate the neutral zone, a screen pass often follows. —Adjust your keys as you read the play. The official that is quick to react is usually in position to officiate the play with ease because they’re in perfect position instead of being out-of-control to catch up to the play to get into position!

**II. *Positional Keys***

a. Positional Keys are predetermined by the position you are working in the game.

b. Positional Keys deal more with the ***Back Judge*** **&** ***Flank Officials*** and only in the first few split moments after the snap. —*Focus first on your initial keys, then adjust to your area of zone coverage second.*

c. The BJ’s main Positional Key is the inside-most eligible receiver on the strong side

of the formation. —At the snap, the BJ first observes the strong-side Tackle to see if he’s run blocking or pass-blocking, then observes the actions of his key receiver. —If that Positional Key moves into another official’s coverage area, the BJ then shifts his attention to players who have entered his coverage area or assigns priority to a receiver he feels needs his attention. —The BJ will shift this *priority of coverage* throughout the play based on tight pass coverage or a receiver intersecting the position of a defender, particularly on crossing patterns.

d. For Flanks & the BJ: *Receivers, who are closely defended, always have priority coverage!*   ***—Man coverage = Priority. —Zone coverage = Priority only when opponents cross paths. —Paths about to cross = Priority.***

e. In order to determine Positional Keys, the officials must recognize the strength of the

formation (strong side vs. weak side) —**NOTE: It is vital that you use your radios to communicate strength side before the snap! BJ, be in charge of this!)** —The **strong-side** is the side on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackle; —or, if there are equal numbers of eligible receivers on both side of the ball, then the strong side reverts to the LJ’s side of the ball.

f. A *balanced formation* is one in which there are the same number of eligible receivers outside the tackles on both sides of the formation.

g. An *unbalanced formation* is when one side has more eligible receivers on one side than the other.

h. The BJ has priority in determining keys, followed by the Flanks. —Flanks should not key the same player as the BJ unless they read danger at that immediate moment.

**—Eligible pass receivers are typically named by their position but:**

1. **If on the line of scrimmage they are either a Tight End if close to the Tackle or a *Split End* if they are closer to the sideline than the Tackle.**
2. **If off the line of scrimmage in the backfield and outside of the Tackle they are typically called a *Flanker* but might also be called a *Slotback* or *H-Back.* —Eligible receivers that are outside the Tackle at the snap are typically called *wide receivers* or *wide outs* regardless if they’re on or off the line of scrimmage.**
3. **If lined up between the Tackles and in the backfield they are typically called *Running Backs* (Tailback, Fullback, Halfback, Quarterback) or *Offensive Backs*.**
4. **There can be a maximum of six eligible receivers on a play. —Usually, one of them, the Quarterback, is the passer so most plays involve five eligible receivers in a pass pattern. —Any Team A player may throw a legal forward pass regardless of their position or number. —Don’t forget on all plays, to be an eligible receiver they must be in the Team A backfield or be an end on the line of scrimmage at the snap & they must be a number 0-49 or 80-99! —Eligible numbers that are on the line of scrimmage but are covered up by an end at the snap are ineligible by their position and are never afforded pass protection rules. —At *no time* is a Team A player numbered 50-79 *ever* eligible to either deliberately touch or catch a forward pass unless Team B touches it first.**

**III. Unbalanced Receiver Formation**

a. The BJ keys on the inside-most receiver on the strong side. b. The Flank Official on the strong side keys on the widest player of the formation, normally a split end. c. The Flank Official on the weak side keys the end nearest his side, normally a wide out.

**IV. Balanced Receiver Formation (Equal Strength)**

a. In a balanced formation, strength is considered to be to the LJ’s side of the field. b. The BJ keys on the inside receiver. c. The HL has all receivers on their side. —The Flank Officials key on receivers, other than the BJ’s key, and on any backs who move toward them at or after the snap.

**V. Three-Receiver (Trips) Formation**

a. The BJ keys on the two inside receivers. b. The strong side Flank Official keys on the widest receiver. c. The weak side Flank Official keys on the end nearest him.

**VI. Double Wing Formation (Equal Strength)**

a. Strength is declared to the LJ’s side. b. The BJ keys the inside receiver on the LJ’s side. c. The LJ keys the widest receiver. The HL has both receivers on their side.

—Flank Officials need to know that backs lined up between the tackle positions are the responsibility of the official whose side they come toward in their passing route.

**VII. Motion**

a. An offensive player in motion can affect positional keys. b. It is crucial that the BJ and Flank Officials know where the motion man is at the snap because the strength of the formation (and therefore the keys) may change and are ultimately determined by the positioning of the players at the snap.

c. **PLAY:** Team A lines up strong to the HL’s side, but the Flanker on the HL’s side goes in motion towards the LJ. **RULING:** If the motion man gets to the LJ’s side of the ball at the snap, then the strength of the formation is now on the LJ’s side and the keys change. —The BJ now has the motion man on the LJ’s side, the LJ has the widest receiver and the HL has the end on his side of the line. —The HL is responsible for watching this motion away from them to ensure the motion man does not cut up field before the snap. d. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving. —If the player doubles back and goes in motion toward his original position, the official originally watching him continues to be responsible for determining legality of the motion. **—However, *any obvious illegal motions shall be called by those who see it (R, HL, or LJ)!***

c. If the motion man does not get to the opposite side of the formation and outside the frame of the Tackle positions before the snap, the keys do not change because the strength of the formation has not yet changed. —Only once the back in motion gets outside the opposite Tackle position do the pass coverage keys change.

d. Any back coming out of the backfield towards you is always yours before or after the snap!

**SECTION 14: PLAYS FROM SCRIMMAGE**

**BASIC POSITIONS**

**I. All Officials**

a. Basic positions may vary, depending upon play situations, team formations, the field and weather conditions, and how an official determines to read a play. b. Always contain the play. c. Avoid positions that may cause scrambling to avoid interference with plays. —Do your best to maintain a 45-degree angle to the play, chest squared to the ball, as best as you are able to and not get straight-lined directly behind or ahead of the play. —Turn your chest with the ball. d. Flanks, shuffle-step to maintain your position until the ball turns you downfield.

e. Before any *Ready for Play* signal is to be whistled in by the Referee, the BJ, HL, and LJ will display the upcoming down on their fingers above their head until the Referee’s signal is given. —The Referee will confirm this with his own signal of the upcoming down before he whistles in the *Ready for Play* signal. f. After a typical play from scrimmage with the 40-second play clock running, after signaling the dead ball or incomplete signal, signal the upcoming down until the ball is spotted by the Umpire. g. The Umpire will signal the down that is displayed on the Down Box and correct it if needed. h. Signal “1st down” with your index finger, “2nd down” with your index and middle fingers, “3rd down” with your pinky, ring, and middle fingers, and “4th down” with a closed fist.

**II. Referee**

a. Be in a position 12-to-15 yards deep and 12-to-15 yards wide (outside of the Tight End position so you can see all five interior offensive linemen) of the lateral position of the ball, where you may comfortably see the ball in the snapper’s hand, see a legal snap clear the snapper in an immediate action of the snap, and see and contain all backs in the backfield between the tackle positions. b. Stay on the Quarterback’s throwing arm-side. —Exception: If a team substitutes in multiple Quarterbacks who throw right and left handed then just stay on the right side. c. Stand erect with your feet staggered on the balls of your feet shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent so that you can step backwards or forward quicker as needed and are less likely to injure yourself.

d. Check the offensive formation and count the Team A players prior to every snap (11-Team A players and 5-Team A linemen numbered 50-79).

e. Check the backs between the Tackles and the Quarterback for illegal motion or shifts, watch the ball at the snap, and assist the Umpire with false starts or illegal shifts of linemen.

**III. Umpire** a.Alignment is variable according to the formations of each team and in a position to avoid interfering with players. b. You must be in a position to clearly see the entire ball and arm of the snapper, and hopefully, his whole body, too. c. You will shift as needed depending on the defensive alignment and their shifting movements. —Preferably, you will be on the opposite side of the ball from the Referee approximately over the offensive tackle and your hands on your knees or slightly crouched on the balls of your feet with your ankles slightly flared out. —If your view of the ball and the snapper’s arm is blocked out by a defensive lineman or shifting players, then move to a position directly over the Center but never on the same side of the ball as the Referee. d. Be between 6-to-8 yards off the ball (the NFHS mechanic is 5-to-10 yards off the ball) if you can help it but always behind the defensive Linebackers so that you don’t interfere with their play. e. You have the 11-count with the Referee for Team A and the 5-count of five Team A linemen numbered 50-79 on *every* play and the numbering exception rule on scrimmage kicks for Team K’s linemen. —Get your counting done before they come up to the line of scrimmage or the Center ouches the ball. —Once the Center’s hand is on the ball, your eyes will stay on the ball until it is snapped, even if you haven’t had time to get your counting completed! —From time-to-time that means that the Referee will have to get all the counts done because you have to ensure that the snap is legal over anything else once the hand is on the ball. f. At the snap, your initial keys are the Guards and Center, then adjust as you read the play. g. Read point-of-attack and your interior linemen and adjust your coverage accordingly. i. Know the ineligible linemen by number & position and where a forward pass goes. j. Always turn with the pass and rule on it being a catch or no catch, and especially rule on any illegal touching of a forward pass by an ineligible lineman! —*Once the pass is thrown, that is more important for you to follow the play and rule on a catch or incomplete pass, or on a possible Personal Foul upon the Receiver than it is for you to be continuing to watch linemen who now have no further bearing on the result of the play!* k. Don’t worry about looking at linemen after the pass is thrown, follow the ball to your new priority once it is thrown or the runner passes by you! l. You can also rule on Defensive Illegal Use of Hands by Team B or a Personal Foul for an Illegal Blindside Block by the defense for blocking a receiver on his passing route if it is directly in front of you between the Tackle positions on obvious passing attempts. —*However, you’ll* ***never*** *have a Defensive Pass Interference call!* —You don’t have the perspective that the other officials do on that type of play. —You might have Offensive Pass Interference for blockers blocking downfield that prevent a Team B player from getting to the pass or even Defensive Illegal Use of Hands (the NFHS & NCAA’s version of the NFL’s no-contact rule), but never DPI. —**NOTE:** *If there is a potential OPI foul against Team A linemen for blocking beyond the neutral Zone Expanded (2-yards), call Ineligible Receiver Downfield unless the block prevents a defender from making a play on the ball on a pass that crosses the LOS; If eligible receivers are blocking downfield on a pass that crosses the LOS, then it’s always OPI. This is a nationwide interpretation at the NFHS & NCAA level.* n.Anytime before the Referee has to whistle & signal the *Ready for Play* signal, stand over the ball to prevent it from being touched by Team A until the signal or the Referee directs you away from the ball. —Turn and face the down box so that you can see the upcoming down displayed before the signal. —This allows you to side-step through defensive linemen who might be down in their stance once the signal is given or you’re directed to back out by the Referee. o. Once the Referee whistles in the *Ready for Play*, point at the Center and say loudly to him, *“OK!”* (This way there is no confusion on his part as to if he can snap the ball or not).

**IV. Flank Officials**

a. Straddle the line of scrimmage standing fully erect and be WIDE, out of bounds, just off the sideline. —Do not setup on the field of play except on a Kick Try where you will come to the bottom of the numbers. —Mentally adjust your initial keys according to the formation.

b. Get your Team B 11-count down as quickly as you can before Team A comes to the line of scrimmage before every snap. —Signal with the BJ and opposite Flank demonstratively and don’t assume that the other official got it.

—If a replaced player is leaving the field it is not a foul until the ball is snapped if he hasn’t left the field of play. —The only time we whistle a play dead before the snap for Illegal Substitution is when the replaced player hasn’t *begun* to leave the field after three-seconds of the substitute reaching their position. —All other forms of Illegal Substitution or Illegal Participation are fouls at the snap or the moment of the foul occurs after the snap and we continue play. —Always know when a Team B player is leaving the field if he is the “12th”-replaced-player and if he is touching the field of play at the snap it shall be a foul.

c. Indicate to the line of scrimmage to the wideouts by pointing at your Team A side foot, don’t exaggerate when you do. —You are encouraged to tell and affirm to them with a affirmative head nod or a *“no”* shake of your head if they are lined up correctly or not. *—“You’re on!*” with a head nod or “*You’re off!*” Is typical of a Flank before every snap. —It’s OK to correct them when they initially come to the line of scrimmage but make sure that your words don’t create a foul against Team A for an Illegal Shift or Motion! —This communication with the wide outs makes life easier on you and the players. —Only if a player is obviously in an Illegal Formation creating “5 in the backfield” at the snap will you need to call an Illegal Formation for an incorrect alignment. —If an eligible receiver by his number is covered up because he and the receiver outside of him are both obviously on the line of scrimmage will you then have a possible Ineligible Receiver Downfield foul if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage or an Illegal Touching Foul if the covered up receiver purposefully touches the forward pass at all or catches it. —**NOTE:** ***We will consider all Team A players on the line of scrimmage if either foot is on or within one-yard of the line of scrimmage if they’re in a 2-point stance, or if their hand is down on or within one-yard of the line of scrimmage in a 3-or-4 point stance****.* ***——Don’t allow Team A linemen, especially the Tackles, to “bow out” beyond one yard of the line of scrimmage before the snap. It is an Illegal Formation foul at the snap if they do for five or six players in the backfield.***

**b. Hand signals** between both Flanks shall be used to indicate when the Team A player closest to you is *off* or *on* the line of scrimmage. —If there are two or three wide outs on your side between you and the Tackle or Tight End, signal with your fingers the number of widest players that are either “on” or “off” with your signal.

c. If Team A has an unbalanced line, the Flank Official who has four (or more) linemen on his side of the ball will indicate this formation by putting his open hand to the side of his face and elbow flared out directly to the side. — With this type of formation it usually means that there is an eligible by number on the end on the other side, or to be aware that there may be a tight end *adjacent* to the snapper who can’t receive a forward handoff but may still catch a forward pass.

d. *Being responsible for legality of the motion man whenever he is on your side of the Center (in any direction), until the ball is snapped DOES NOT RELIEVE THE OPPOSITE OFFICIAL FROM MAKING AN OBVIOUS CALL FOR MOVING FORWARD TOWARDS THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE AT THE SNAP!*

e. Be aware of the importance of assisting the Referee in marking forward progress behind the neutral zone, particularly when the Team A goal line is involved and on sacks.

f. If you have 5-or-more Team A players in the backfield before the snap, signal to each other by waving your open hand to your side up-and-down twice while nodding in unison with each other, then place your hand on your flag and wait for the ball to be snapped. —Throw your flag upwards and onto the LOS at the snap in unison and continue to officiate the play.

**V. Back Judge** a.Take position always in the direct middle of the field approximately 20-to-25 yards beyond the line of scrimmage and always behind the deepest defender on all plays that are not scrimmage kicks. —The rationale for always starting in the middle of the field is that each side of the field deserves equal treatment and priority until the pass is thrown. —A single receiver on one side of the formation is just as eligible as three or four eligible receivers on the other side of the formation. —Starting in the center of the field places you on top of the crown of the field which means you will always run downhill when you adjust to a play. —This will also help prevent you from tripping or turning an ankle upon the crown of the field if you were to go from one side to the other if were to not start in the middle of the field. b. Just before the snap, stagger your feet with your knees slightly bent and on the balls of your feet so you can begin backpedaling sooner and not be flat-footed at the snap. —Take a few steps backwards on every snap so you can maintain your depth perception and cushion as the play develops so that a deep pass play won’t explode on you. c. Once the play develops, always stay within the inbounds marks and don’t get sucked in towards the sideline until *after* the play is over. d. Don’t straight-line yourself to the play! Maintain a 45-degree angle to the ball once it’s in the defensive secondary with your inside-out look as best as you can and always turn and face the ball. e. Never turn your back to the ball if you get spun around, always maintain visual coverage of the players in your coverage area, especially if they’re right on top of you. —Do your best to always stay ahead of the ball as you maintain you cushion and not get beat to the goal line. f. Once the play is over, if you have the spot on a deep play, go ahead and mark the ball for the Umpire after players have separated. —Remember, your first priority is to separate players after the play is over, especially on plays that end outside the numbers and along the sideline.

**VI. Crew: Spotting The Ball On A Yard Line**  a. On a well-marked field with yard line “ticks,” commonly referred to as “hash marks,” you are instructed to start every 1st & 10 series from a yard line hash mark or a 5-yard stripe on a field that doesn’t have hash marks as much as possible. b. If there is a half-the-distance to the goal penalty, or a turnover on downs that is less than a yard from the line to gain or goal line, then you will be forced to start a new series from a “half-yard line.” c. Flanks, on all plays from scrimmage, pick the closest yard line that the ball is at when the ball carrier is tackled or goes out of bounds. —*Exception: If the ball is less than one-yard from the line-to-gain or the goal line, then spot it exactly at that dead ball spot less than one-yard short of the line to gain or goal line.* d.On a field that is not marked with one-yard hash marks, then simply spot the ball as best as you can. e. Umpires: If a Flank has an incorrect spot, then put it on what you *know* the correct yard line is, especially on plays involving forward progress and a player being driven backwards. —If a Flank has an in-between yard lines spot that doesn’t involve the line-to-gain or goal line, then set the ball on the previous yard line. —The ball, when spotted on a yard line, shall have the plane of the foremost point of the ball touching the front plane of the yard line as you’re going downfield.

**SECTION 15: RUNNING PLAYS**

**I. Referee**

a. Is responsible for the ball and the runner and action around him in the backfield up to the neutral zone. —Pursue or contain the action as the play dictates, don’t pass players if you can help it except on a play near the sideline or to separate players. b. On a play that is clearly a run, maintain your inside-out look to the play. c. On a pass, adjust to the movement of the Quarterback and do your best to stay on the Quarterback’s throwing side at a 45-degree angle and behind him, even if it takes you to the sideline. d. Close in on the ball only when it becomes dead and only if it’s necessary to clean up players, to escort a player to his huddle or off the sideline, or if the ball is near the line to gain. —If the ball carrier is moving toward your position, be deep enough to allow necessary clearance while keeping your chest pointed at him, never turn your back to the ball.

e. When the runner passes the defensive end and begins to move downfield, he now belongs to the Flanks. —Even though Flanks, in some situations, will not blow a play dead behind the neutral zone, they are always responsible for marking all forward progress spot. —Quick handoffs that result in short yardage gains will be the “whistle responsibility” of the Flank Officials, and sometimes the Umpire, with the Referee concentrating on clean-up action behind the ball. f. When the Quarterback turns up field with the ball, the Referee will keep his eye on the quarterback/ball carrier and be aware of any contact against the running back “pitch man” in case contact is made against him before he gets the ball or still has a chance to receive a backwards pass “pitch” until there no longer a threat of a foul against that back. —Remember, the pitchman, and any other back in the backfield, can be legally blocked but not held nor receive a defenseless player type of hit. g. If the Quarterback pitches the ball to a running back, focus on the Quarterback to ensure no late hits/unnecessary roughness fouls occur on him. —The Flanks have the “pitch man” once the Quarterback releases the ball towards him.

h. On plays at or beyond the line of scrimmage, if the runner is driven backwards after

forward progress is stopped, retrieve the ball from the runner and relay it to the covering

official. —The Flanks have progress and the primary whistle, you have the secondary whistle if needed.

i. The Referee has the whistle for plays that end on the backfield, between the tackles that don’t gain yardage, and if forward progress is stopped at or behind the line of scrimmage. —Anything wide, the Flanks and the Referee share coverage of the whistle. Plays out wide are covered by the Flanks once they clear the defensive end.

j. On all plays from scrimmage, it is paramount that you keep eyes on the Quarterback to ensure that any illegal hits upon him in all circumstances are appropriately penalized. —On a turnover and return by Team B, you have the goal line, so now the U and/or BJ have “protection duties” on the Quarterback during the return. —Make sure you discuss this Quarterback duty in your pregame! Teams will take advantage of a defenseless Quarterback in an attempt to injure him to get him removed from the game!

**II. Umpire**

a. Your position prior to the snap is dictated by the defensive alignment formation. —You must be in a position to see the snap from opposite of the Referee’s position to Strat with and adjusting to directly over the center as needed. b. Never be on the same side of the ball as the Referee. c. You will also never take a snap from the offensive backfield. —Your positioning on the defensive side of the ball is strategic and important to prevent fouls, have a dead-ball presence, and keep up the pace & tempo of the game that is more difficult to do if you were positioned in the offensive backfield. d. The Umpire is responsible for the legality of the snap, with assistance from the Referee and Flanks.

e. Just prior to and at the snap the Umpire will be certain that the defensive team does not

use words or signals which obviously disconcert their opponents when they are preparing

to put the ball in play. f. The Umpire continues to observe his area of responsibility as long as there is a threat of action or until a forward pass forces him to now watch the action of a possible completed pass beyond the line of scrimmage and the actions around the catch attempt. g. *Penalize any-and-all illegal movement that’s associated with the snap!*

h. On run plays, focus on blocks, not the ball carrier. *Do not ballhawk! —*You only focus on the ball carrier when there are no blockers between you and him! i. *The only time you are encouraged to* *blow your whistle is on a ball carrier who is clearly down between you and the line of scrimmage and between the tackles as you apply the “2-second challenge” whistle mechanic or to sell the call on a ball carrier down whereupon the ground causes the ball to come out.*

j. When a play develops in your direction and a hole opens, move away from the Ball

Carrier while maintaining lateral position. —Turn your shoulder and hip towards the ball carrier and lift the leg that is closest to him slightly off of the ground so that your weight is now on the downfield foot. —If he were to actually hit you, bring your arms close into your chest and jump slightly a few-inches into the air as he hits you in the shoulder/side while you turn your chest towards the defensive secondary. —His contact will force you to move downfield a bit, but your feet will not get caught up underneath you resulting in you falling and hitting the back of your head and knocking yourself out, or getting your feet caught up in the turf resulting in torn ligaments.

k. The Umpire will key on the point-of-attack and ensure that blockers are moving their feet while engaged in a block and any attempts to grab and restrict illegally are worthy of a foul call because that action actually impeded the defender from the point-of-attack. —Focus on the defender losing control of their body, especially their shoulders, due to an illegal act by the blocker for holding calls. —The defender needs to fight through a hold and earn it unless the act of holding turns him or takes takes him to the ground! —Make sure every single block below the waist by either team, legal or illegal, is accounted for by you so you can rule on its legality or illegality!

l. As the play develops between the tackles, the Umpire’s primary responsibility is to cover

the action of players at the point of attack, then behind the ball and finally around the

runner. —Be ready to rule if a ball is fumbled or if it came loose due to contact with the ground.

m. When the runner or pass moves into the side zone, the Umpire first assist in any catch or incomplete pass rulings as well Illegal Personal Contact in the area of the pass, the he will clean-up the area between his position and the ball. n. Stay inside the inbounds marks during the play, don’t get sucked in towards the sideline while play is still going on. —Maintain your cushion to the play with your inside-out look and don’t over-hustle during the play (Positioning 10-12 yards behind at a 45-degree angle is more important!). o. On plays that end outside the numbers, the Umpire is highly encouraged to move in near the sideline when the play is over to have a dead-ball presence and clean up, then get the ball and get it spotted as quickly as possible. —Don’t expect the Flanks to relay the ball to you as you stand at the hash marks! —Mentally note where the yard line is that the ball became dead on as you go into the sideline area so you can simply spot the ball yourself at the inbounds mark once the sideline has been cleared. p. When the play is over, all officials have a shared responsibility to rule on late hits and other illegal acts, this is more important than getting the ball or standing on a spot to mark progress! —Players first, marking the spot and getting the ball come second!

q. ***Remember, all legal blocks below the waist must be immediate, without delay, at the snap only by linemen upon linemen of either team whom are positioned on the line of scrimmage and within the lateral width of the Free Blocking Zone at the snap at the snap, and either whom are positioned head-up or to the immediate diagonal gap next to the player that they block below the waist at the snap. —Umpires, this is your bread-and-butter! Know the rules around blocking below the waist legally and illegally and challenge yourself to account for the legality of every single block made below the waist!***  r. If you’re in a scenario where your initial positioning at the snap causes you to get into the way of a blitzing defensive back or their run coverage, instruct them to push you on your hip with their hand to let you know that they’re there as the play develops. —This will allow you to feel where they are and move out of their way accordingly so that you don’t unfairly influence the play and prevent a defensive play on the ball carrier.

**III. Head Linesman and Line Judge** a. Initial positioning will be out of bounds and off the sideline. On all plays except a sweep towards you, keep your shoulders squared-up to the play centering your chest on the ball and shuffle-step down the sideline until the runner turns your chest as he passes you. —Stay out of bounds during your live ball coverage unless you have to come into the middle to separate players on a play that’s on the opposite sideline. b. Mark forward progress standing with your feet together. —The outside edge of your downfield foot represents where the foremost point of the ball shall be aligned when it is spotted. —When marking forward progress, you only need to come in a few yards (no more than 5-yards into the field) off the sideline to be noticed by all, except on plays along your sideline, which is telling us that you have forward progress properly marked. c. ***However, there are a few times it is crucial that you hustle into the middle of the field past the numbers when the ball is dead to: 1) Physically spot the ball when there is a “close! close!” situation at the line-to-gain; 2) Spot all close plays short of the goal line or a close play that is a Touchdown call at the goal line; 3) Any piles for control of a loose ball; 4) After a play is over with a foul called to get information to report to your head coach from the Referee.***  d. Be alert to cover the forward progress spot when a runner has been *controlled and pushed back*, you have the whistle on almost all of these types of plays but you must be 100% certain that the ball carrier has the ball before you do blow your whistle! —If you’re uncertain, then don’t blow the whistle! Opposite Flanks and the middle officials should assist with the forward progress spot if the covering official is not in position, or is unable to see, if forward progress is stopped or not in a scrum. e. Always be ready to use “**Crossfield Mechanics**.” —If you are “giving up the spot” to the opposite Flank because you had a bad view of the play, turn your body and stand facing downfield and point at the opposite Flank to tell the Umpire to go off the other Flank’s spot. —If the opposite Flank has the ball go out of bounds on their sideline, do your best to mark the yard line where the player went out of bounds. This is an approximation but allows the opposite Flank to focus on the players who went out of bounds rather than stare at the spot while players may be committing fouls out of bounds. —On all kicks, once the play is over, the LJ will signal to the HL as soon as the LJ gets to the yard line that the ball is dead on and then signal that they have the spot, thus releasing the HL to deal with the chain crew.

f. On running plays, observe the initial charge of blockers on your side of your ball. —You are responsible for blockers and action on the defensive ends and linebackers on your side. —Pick up the runner when he crosses the line of scrimmage in your area. —If play goes away from you, observe action behind the runner and assist with action on the pitch man if he does not receive the ball. —Maintain a position in relation to the runner’s progress observing the play behind the Umpire and in front of the Back Judge. —Be alert for the runner returning to your area, if he does, focus on blindside blocks and blocking in the back.

g. On sweeps towards you, step back towards the offensive backfield, allow the players to pass

you and then follow the play down the sideline. —Key on any *crackback* blocks that might result in an Illegal Blindside Block and Holding against the defensive end. —Once the ball carrier clears the defensive end then pick up the ball carrier. h. If the play becomes dead along your sideline, stay behind the play as you make your signal. —There is no rush to mark the spot of the ball, don’t jump or step over players to stand on a spot that is not going anywhere. Players first, spot second! —On a play that goes out of bounds, turn your back to the field and face the players who have went out of bounds. —Worry about the action of the players first before you mark the dead ball spot! Go into the sideline area and separate or escort players out as needed. —Expect help on plays that go out of bounds from the Referee and BJ, and sometimes the Umpire. Your number one priority on all out of bounds plays is observing players first! —Once the players come back onto the field, then mark your spot which your crew mates have likely done for you (Umpire & Opposite Flank).

e. **After the play is over, be a good dead ball official:**

1. **Make sure players separate before you worry about the ball;**
2. **Then, assist the Referee or Back Judge in getting the ball back to the Umpire if it’s within your reach;**

**3) Stand at the spot of forward progress displaying the upcoming down on your hand above your head until the Umpire spots the ball, then step backwards to the sideline as you keep your eyes on players and begin your next *pre-snap routine.***

f. On plays where we are close to the line to gain, run into the field and stop at the pile/spot that the ball because dead. —The Umpire will hand you the ball and you will set it at the exact spot that the ball became dead at. Don’t expect the Umpire to bring the ball to you!

g. A good Flank official will have a solid “90-degree cut” once the ball is dead when they are marking progress when the ball becomes dead upfield or downfield of their position and not along their sideline. —Stay squared to the middle of the field and never round-off your spots!

**IV. Back Judge**

a. Cover plays always from behind the deepest defensive backs in the center of the field and adjust your coverage as the play develops. b. Watch for action by and upon your key(s). —Bracket the ball carrier/receiver between yourself and either Flank Official. —Maintain your cushion to keep players boxed in and always stay between the inbounds marks while the play is going on while at a 45-degree angle to the play as much as you are able to. c. Cover continuing action in advance of the runner/receiver. —If the runner/receiver threatens the goal line near the pylon at the sideline you may “close the distance” to get a better view but, in this rare instance, don’t get past the numbers so that you can maintain spatial awareness and also to prevent yourself from becoming a part of the play. d. Remember, to straddle the goal line for any run, or catch & run, that threatens the goal line.

e. On running plays ending out of bounds, especially in the team box area, move into the out of bounds-area and assist the crew in maintaining order. —**The presence of another official prevents most dead ball fouls, *this is your primary dead ball duty on most plays!***  f. Some out of bounds runs may necessitate you coming in full-speed into the sideline area while observing all dead ball action. —Observe the players, separate them, and escort them to their huddle area as needed, especially any player who goes into their opponent’s sideline area. —Anytime a Quarterback runs out of bounds on downfield plays you are required to escort him back onto the field.

**V. All Officials**

a. Watch for fouls by blockers ahead of the runner using the “Off the Ball Defender” concept and for fouls after the ball is declared dead. b. Be particularly mindful for late hits, for taunting, and excessive celebrations and have zero tolerance for them! —In the case of taunting and excessive celebrations, *have a proactive approach, rather than a reactive approach.* That is, get between players after a play, especially if you’re the middle officials (or deep flanks in 7-man) when you see something that might turn into a Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul after a play is over. —**It is better to prevent a foul like this rather than react to them and have a lot of 15-yard dead ball fouls that we could, otherwise, prevent with a little sweat and a positive dead ball presence!**

c. The use of signal #7 (Dead Ball) to indicate that the ball is dead shall be used on all plays that end inbounds and that are not obvious 1st downs. —This signal tells the BJ to start the 40-second play clock and the clock operator to keep the game clock running. —Integrate the use of Signal#7 into your whistle mechanics as part of the **“Two-Second Challenge.”**

d. On a Touchdown by Team A, The Flanks and Back Judge have both a call to make and clean up to do. — If the BJ is signaling touchdown, then the Flank closest to the BJ has clean up. —Come into the end zone, get the ball, encourage players to not celebrate excessively, make sure there is no taunting by either team or excessive celebration. —Then, once the opponents have cleared away from each other, give the ball to the Umpire. —If either Flank signals touchdown, then the BJ and U have clean up. Get between players! —If the Referee signals touchdown for a Team B/R return, then the Umpire and/or closest Flake has clean up. *—Get into the end zone and get some TV highlight time as your primary purpose of doing this is to prevent an Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul.*

**SECTION 16: FORWARD PASSES**

**BASIC POSITIONS AND AREA COVERAGE**

**I. Referee**

a. When the passer retreats, remain wide and deeper than the potential passer. If the

passer is not threatened, observe legality of blocks in the offensive backfield. — Key on the Center and the Guard and Tackle that is on the opposite side of the ball from your position, and upon a defender shooting a gap on a blitz as you look through the passer to see their blocks. —Step back or move to either side to maintain your 12-15 yard cushion as needed.

b. The Referee is solely responsible for: —All roughing the passer fouls. —Intentional grounding and should use a bean bag to mark the spot of the pass if they need to confer with other officials. —To tell if the passer is outside the *lateral boundary* of the free blocking zone in regards to intentional grounding (the Umpire can offer information if they happen to see this). c. The Referee, in most circumstances in regard to intentional grounding, is to consult with their crew to determine if there was an eligible receiver in the area of a forward pass or if the pass went across the line of scrimmage.

d. After the passer throws the ball, continue to observe him until there is no threat of a foul against him. —Ensure that the passer is not roughed or thrown roughly or unnecessarily to the ground. —Verbally alert the defenders when the passer has released the ball. —Continue to observe the offensive and defensive players action between you and the Umpire before moving out of the area. —Trust your crew to do their job and do your job in cleaning up linemen after the ball goes downfield! e. In most situations, the Referee will have no idea what happened down field, the Referee will depend on the Umpire to tell them what happened.

**II. Umpire**

a. Ensure that there are five offensive linemen numbered 50-79 at the snap. b. Focus on the center and the guards after the snap. —As the pass rush evolves, be sure to glance at the block made by the right offensive tackle to your left. c. Observe the action of players in, and directly behind, the neutral zone, any illegal advance downfield of the Neutral Zone Expanded (2-yards) by ineligible linemen before a pass crosses the line of scrimmage, and always turn with the ball once it’s passed. —*The catch or no catch status of the ball is more important than any block made by a lineman after the ball is thrown!* d*.* The Umpire will stay in the approximate area of their pre-snap position (you are free to get out of the way of players) as long as the passer stays between the tackles. —Only when the passer goes outside of the tackles will the Umpire move up to the line of scrimmage to observe if a forward pass occurs beyond the line of scrimmage and if linemen are downfield on a forward pass that crosses the line of scrimmage. ***—With today’s RPO offenses the Umpire must do this mechanic this way or he will get ran over by a Quarterback running a designed draw! The Umpire will still be able to observe linemen moving illegally downfield before a forward pass crosses it.***

e. After observing the play of the linemen and any-and-all contact upon a blitzing defensive back, pivot to assist on all passes across the line of scrimmage. f. Use signal #11 (tipped pass) on all forward passes tipped by any defensive player or by eligible receivers on offense beyond the line of scrimmage (*deliberately* touched passes by an ineligible receiver are a foul for illegal touching). —This tells everyone that P.I. rules are now off!

g. Once the pass is thrown, you will turn with it and help judge if the pass is complete and that there is legal contact upon the receiver and potential tacklers using the “Off the Ball Defender” coverage concept. —*The Referee will clean up the play of the linemen after a pass is thrown!* Umpire, don’t worry about linemen once the pass is thrown! Cover the area of where the pass goes! *This is a new point of emphasis. —The game has changed with more quick passes, how we officiate the game must change with it! —****The Umpire is now an essential part of pass coverage after the pass is thrown but will never have a P.I. call except for a Team A lineman blocking downfield against a defender who is prevented from making a play on the pass downfield.***

h. The Umpire, on passing routes that cross in front of him, can call a Defensive Illegal Use of Hands foul against Team B for blocking a receiver off his passing route, or turn that into a Personal Foul for an Illegal Blindside Hit on a Defenseless Player if the block is violent enough.

**III. Flank Officials**

a. Assist the Umpire and ensure that any ineligible receivers do not go downfield on a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage, especially if you’re the backside Flank. —Make sure that covered up receivers are accounted for and correctly call an Ineligible Receiver Downfield on a forward pass that crosses the LOS, or Illegal Touching should a covered up “receiver” catch or deliberately touch a forward pass. —Your first key after the snap is to make sure contact by the Tackle on your side is legal. Then, key on blocking at the point-of-attack if it is a screen behind the line of scrimmage and observe contact of eligible receivers and linebackers. b. When in doubt as to if it’s a pass or run play, key on the receiver’s passing routes. —Make absolutely certain that there are no “pick blocks” by Team A receivers (blocking downfield) before the pass is caught by eligible receivers on a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage! c. Eligible receivers may block all they want up to 2-yards downfield (Neutral Zone Expanded) and anywhere behind the line of scrimmage (coaches do teach their players to take advantage of this rule, be aware of it and rule accordingly). d. If the pass is tipped behind the line of scrimmage by Team B, then all pass interference fouls, ineligible receiver fouls, and illegal touching fouls are cancelled. —On a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage and is then touched by either team, only P.I. fouls *after* the touch beyond the line of scrimmage are cancelled. —After Team B touches the pass downfield, only then is Illegal Touching by Team A ineligible receivers cancelled if the touching occurs *after* Team B’s touch.

e. Be ready to rule on the direction, forward or backwards, of a quick quarterback pass towards your sideline. —The covering official, toward whom the ball is thrown, will signal by extending one arm horizontally with a closed fist in the direction of the offensive backfield if the pass is ruled backwards and keep officiating, even if it hits the ground. —We do not signal on a forward pass unless it’s incomplete. —If the pass is away from you, you may help by calling the pass incomplete if it is a forward pass and then hits the ground but is errantly called a backwards pass by the near-side official. —However, if the near-side official errantly calls a backwards pass incomplete, then we will go with an incomplete pass unless the Referee feels an inadvertent whistle call is warranted.

f. After reading pass, stay on the line of scrimmage and observe receivers in their passing routes. —Once receivers clear their short routes, or on an obviously long passing situation, you may drift downfield, shuffle stepping, for the first 5-7 yards making sure that you stay behind potential receivers until the ball is thrown. —If you read an isolated receiver who is on a streak pattern, you may begin to run downfield with him provided that the ball is then subsequently thrown to him. If the ball is no thrown to him, then hustle to get back upfield and position yourself even with, or behind the play. g. While the pass is in flight, move quickly to the most advantageous position along the sideline to judge the play, preferably at a 45-degree angle and about 7-to-13 yards away from the catch attempt. h. If a catch attempt is on the sideline, straddle the sideline and get in a crouch position to best judge the foot in bounds as you focus on the foot and see control of the ball in the hands with your peripheral vision. —Sometimes you will have to run as far and fast as you can and keep running at the catch to maintain the ideal 7-to-13 yard distance behind the play on a completed pass deep downfield. —i. If the catch along the sideline results in a push-out while the receiver is still moving forward where he first alights out of bounds, then it is an incomplete pass. —If the receiver’s forward progress is stopped mid-air whereupon he is then pushed-out sideways or backwards where he then first alights out of bounds, then it is a catch in bounds at the foremost point of progress provided he maintains the “process of the catch” when he hits the ground. —If the receiver is driven backwards after the catch, the opposite Flank Official should assist in marking the forward progress spot (Crossfield Mechanics).

i. Always be prepared to come back to rule on a play near the neutral zone or on a sack in addition to all sideline action on pass attempt. j. Observing the wide initial position is helpful in covering any pass. If a potential passer decides to run, you must cover him beyond the neutral zone just like a running play. k. The entire sideline is your responsibility, particularly for a Team A player stepping out of bounds and coming back inbounds for an Illegal Participation foul. —The challenge for you is to not get caught downfield with a scrambling Quarterback now running at you down your sideline. It is a bigger challenge to not get caught in this position yet still be able to cover a reception downfield. *Good luck!*

l. After an incompletion, obtain a ball from the ball person who should be at the line of scrimmage and form a relay to return the ball to the official nearest the previous spot (usually the Umpire). —If only one ball is being used by a team, run into the middle of the field and receive the relay throw from the BJ or opposite Flank who has run into the middle of the field to form a relay chain and then relay the ball to the Umpire.

f. If an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns to the ground out of bounds, after giving the incomplete signal, the covering official may, with both arms, give a sweeping motion pointing towards the out of bounds area. —If the receiver juggles the pass and did not complete the catch until they are out of bounds, then indicate incomplete and then a juggling motion with your hands.

**IV. Back Judge**

a. Cover plays from behind the deepest receivers and start in the middle of the field. Always start stagger-stepped and take three steps backwards initially as you read the play. —Follow your initial key coverage, then adjust and prioritize your coverage as the play dictates. b. *Man-to-man or opponents about to cross each other’s path are your biggest focus rather than a player with no one around them until the ball is thrown.* c. Bracket pass receivers whom are attempting a catch between yourself and the covering Flank depending on the location. —Always maintain your inside-out look of the play from between the hash marks and contain all players. d. Never run directly at a catch attempt or receiver after the catch. Maintain a 45-degree angle to avoid getting straight-lined. —A 45-degree angle gives you the best look possible while still containing the play.

**V. All Officials**  a. Be alert for an Illegal Forward Pass, especially after a completion of a forward pass behind the line of scrimmage. —Only one forward pass is allowed per down. b. Observe deliberate touching or catching of a forward pass by an ineligible receiver. c. Watch particularly for holding or illegally contacting eligible receivers (Defensive Illegal Use of Hands) and such contact that morphs into a Personal Foul for an Illegal Blindside Block before the pass is thrown and all contact beyond the neutral zone after the pass is thrown. d. Know the 6-forms of DPI and the 4-forms of OPI and what constitutes an Illegal Use of Hands Foul by Team B. d. All officials, except for the Referee, observe the attempted play on a forward pass when opposing players contest for the pass. —Focus not only on passing rules, but also on contact against a *defenseless player*. —The Umpire will never have DPI on a contested pass. —Remember, both Team A and Team B players have an equal right to the ball. e. When a potential receiver or defender goes up into the air to receive the pass, any legal contact that is otherwise legally rough or violent can only be done by the opponent if it is in a wrapping-motion *Rugby-style tackle* below the head/neck of the receiver. —**Any hits intended to *punish* the opponent who is in the process of catching a pass are a Personal Foul for Unnecessary Roughness against a Defenseless Player.**

**SECTION 17: GOAL LINE PLAYS**

**I. Referee**

a. Position and coverage are the same as for other scrimmage plays with the forward point of advancement usually determined by the Flank Officials. b. When the Flanks or BJ signal a touchdown, and there are no fouls on the play, only then you will signal an acknowledgment of the score to the press box without blowing your whistle only after you are positive that all requirements are met. c. If there is a big pile up at the goal line and the Flanks and U have to dig to find the ball, you will be the one who makes a signal based on their information unless you clearly see the play that they are unable to see. —If this scenario happens, give every opportunity for your crew to do their job first before you make any calls or signals. d. Be aware that when the passer runs towards the line of scrimmage rather or not if he threw the pass before or after he crosses the line of scrimmage because your Flanks will be going downfield and your Umpire will likely turn with the pass. (Pregame this type of play with your crew).

**II. Umpire** a.Adjust your position to account for your proximity to the goal line, but never directly on the goal line so the Flanks have a clear view of it. b. Make sure that you avoid being in the Safety’s way and get behind him or well to his side. c. The only time the Umpire will signal a touchdown is on a fumble recovery in the end zone. d. On regular plays that challenge the goal line, assist the Flanks verbally only once they reach the pile, *no “secret” signals*. —If the Flanks don’t know if it’s a Touchdown, then make them come into to you at the dead ball spot and tell them what you have. Your choices to say to them are: 1) “It’s a Touchdown!”; 2) “It’s short!” and then say the next down; 3) “It was a fumble before he reached the goal line” and then signal who has the ball; 4) or, “I don’t know, I didn’t see a thing!” —If necessary, move away from players to discuss this. —**NOTE:** ***If no one saw the ball break the plane of the goal line in player possession, then it is ‘short’ and it’s the next down! It can never be a Touchdown if you don’t visually see the ball break the plane of the goal line before the ball carrier is either down or his forward progress is controlled and stopped with 100% certainty!***  e. Whenever the ball is first spotted at, or within, or comes back into, the B15-yard line down to the B8-yard line tell the BJ, “We’re on/inside the fifteen, your goal line call,” whereupon he will announce if he is giving up the goal line to the Flanks or if he is keeping it. —If the BJ gives the goal line up to the Flanks, you will signal “goal line” and yell out to the Flanks, *“Float! It’s yours! Float! It’s yours!”* To signify that the Flanks are now in a *Floating Goal Line Mechanic*. —Whenever you spot the ball at or within the B7-yard line and down to the goal line, announce to the Flanks that they are in *full goal line mechanics* by saying, *“Full goal line, get there, full goal line, get there!”* while signaling “goal line.” —Do this before every play in these scenarios unless you’re reverted from doing this because Team A uses a hurry-up offense which causes you to keep your focus on the ball in the snapper’s hand. f. On a pass attempt, be aware of plays where the passer crosses the line of scrimmage before he throws a forward pass. —Yes, your priority is to turn with the ball and rule on a completion, but in most scenarios that involve this type of play you will be able to mentally note where the line of scrimmage is, if the passer crossed it or not before passing the ball, and if the pass was completed or incomplete.

**III. Head Linesman and Line Judge**  a. Your initial position must be wide, out of bounds and off the sideline as normal. —You may want to step a little further out of bounds if the ball is spotted on the inbounds marks nearest to you. —Make sure that the restricted zone between the sideline and the restraining line is clear and that there are no camera men or anyone else at the pylon and goal line extended. If there are, ask them to move away because you will be coming down there at the snap! (Be polite when you do). b. You will be in *Floating Goal Line Mechanics* for plays where the ball is snapped from the B15-yard line until you reach the B-7 yard line. —This means that you will shuffle-step downfield at the snap and stay ahead of the ball carrier on a running play and be sure to beat him to the goal line if he does reach it on his run. —If the ball carrier is tackled before the goal line, shuffle-step back field and make a 90-degree cut as you mark the spot of forward progress. —If the play turns into a pass attempt, keep floating down towards the goal line and do your best to observe the play. —In most scenarios, the BJ will give up the goal line when team A reaches the B15-yard line. —The BJ is instructed to always give the goal line up once Team A reaches the B12-yard line under all circumstances. Discuss this scenario in your pregame and be aware of this scenario in the game making sure that you communicate with each other. c. When Team A snaps the ball at or inside the B7-yard line you will be in *Full Goal Line Mechanics. —*This means that you will shuffle-step immediately to the goal line at the snap and be stationary at the pylon straddling the *goal line extended* so that the front plane of the goal line bisects your eyes *before* the ball carrier reaches the goal line. —If the play challenges your pylon, move back off the sideline while straddling the *goal line extended* as far is needed to both avoid being hit by a player and get a good look at both the goal line and the pylon. d. On a pass play in either Floating and Full Goal Line Mechanics, be aware of the possibility of the passer going beyond the line of scrimmage before he throws a forward pass and be ready to cover it if the play is not coming at you. —If you’re the off-side Flank, then you will have a better view of this type of play. —**In 4-man: The Flanks will do *Floating Goal Line Mechanics* from the B10-yard line to the B7-yard line. Flanks will do *Full Goal Line Mechanics* from the B7-yard line to the goal line. On pass plays, get to the goal line and do your best to judge if a player is inbounds or not along the end line from your perspective on pass plays. Adjust to a pass at the back of the end zone as best as you’re able to.**

e. Make sure the yard markers are well back near the track, or stands if there is no track, so that if a play threatens the pylon you can back up without tripping over the yard marker. f. There may be scenarios where both you and the BJ share a call at the goal line on a run or a short pass caught short of the goal line and then ran in or along the end zone’s sideline. —It is OK for both of you to signal Touchdown in these rare scenarios.

g. If you don’t see the ball, don’t guess! —Come in to the spot regardless of what you have to consult with the Umpire or opposite Flank if needed before you make your call. —Slow accuracy is better than guessing quickly which often leads to incorrect calls! —*It is better to to have a conference with your crew mates if you are screened out than to guess!* —Remember, if you don’t see a complete 100% touchdown, then don’t signal a Touchdown!

d. On any close play at the goal line, either short of the goal line or a Touchdown, crash hard to the spot and make your call. If you are 100% that the call you have is accurate, then sell it!

e. Any play stopped upfield of your downfield position, hustle back up the sideline and mark the spot of forward progress with a clean 90-degree cut.

f. In regard to forward progress being stopped or not, **the ball carrier must be *controlled by Team B and stopped* or *controlled by Team B and driven backwards****.* Simply being stopped or driven backwards *without* being controlled by Team B doesn’t constitute the elements needed to stop the play. —Allow the ball carrier every opportunity to renew their charge if they are not *controlled* by the defense or are otherwise down by rule. We follow this same philosophy on all other parts of the field!

g. On diving catches in the end zone that are coming towards you, away from the BJ, you will signal Touchdown if you have a catch by Team A.

**IV. Back Judge**

a. Start on the end line anytime that the Flanks have goal line coverage and be positioned directly underneath the center of the cross bar out of bounds. —Slap the padding on the post before every play when the crew is in goal line mechanics so that your subconscious will establish a mental reference of where the post is and the center of the end line is. b. When you do give up the goal line to the Flanks be sure that you tell the Flanks loudly and with an outstretched arms/palms up signal towards each Flank “It’s yours! It’s Yours! Goal line! Goal line!” c. ***It is highly recommended that you go into goal line mechanics once the ball is spotted at or past the B15-yard line towards the goal line. —The BJ will never keep the goal line once the ball is spotted at or inside the B12-yard line! —This allows you to maintain your 20-25 yard standard cushion and work forward, rather than work backwards which gets you caught out of position if you were to keep the goal line at or inside the B15-yard line.*** d. If you still have goal line but your pre-snap cushion places you in the end zone, position yourself on the goal line in the middle of the field adjust to the end line as the play dictates. —You will either start on the goal line or on the end line when your pre-snap position is at the end zone. Make sure that you contain the play as best as you can. c. On passes caught before or at the goal line, do your best to contain the play and still get to the goal line whenever you still have goal line coverage. d. Any pass caught in the end zone where you have goal line coverage you must adjust back to the end line and be at the end line to contain the play. —*Never get caught trailing the play from behind!* e*.* When you do give up the goal line to the Flanks, signal with an up-and-down brushing motion, both palms open facing your chest and then point at the goal line. —If the next play is back outside the B15-yard line, take the goal line back by saying to the Flanks, *“I’m taking it back! I’m taking it back!”* and signal with both index fingers pointing repeatedly at your chest.

f. Signal touchdown on passes caught in the end zone itself unless the receiver is diving away from you and you can’t tell if the ball was caught or not. —Confer with the covering Flank, and even the Umpire, in this scenario, or if a pass threatens the sideline in the end zone before you make a signal or concede the call to the covering Flank.

g. You have the authority to override a Flank’s decision on all potential passes caught or incomplete anywhere on the field but *only* if you are 100% correct! —This is in particular regarding the concept of the *“Process of the Catch”* and any Pass Interference calls.

h. For passes to a receiver on the end line, your focus is on the feet in or out of bounds, see ball control with your peripheral vision, the Flanks will assist with ball control. —On passes along the sideline on the entire field, the covering Flank focuses on the foot being inbounds, you assist on ball control. i. Remember, once the pass is thrown, your call regarding the status of a catch or no catch is the most important thing at that moment! —Redirect your attention to the play, rule catch/no catch, focus on legal contact against the receiver, and then apply the concept of the *Off The Ball Defender* if the pass is caught.

**V. Both Flanks** a. If the ball’s forward progress stops short of the goal line at or within the B1-yard line, move in on the ball (crash hard!), mark and hold the dead ball spot where the ball became dead until the Umpire spots the ball. b. Allow, in all aspects, the ball carrier to have a renewed charge as they fight to get out of the hold of a tackler. —***Forward progress being stopped is not an instantaneous act!***  —Team B must continue to control the ball carrier and show that they have him completely under control. *—In my opinion, the Flank official in the 2022 Music City Bowl between Purdue and Tennessee stopped the goal line play in Overtime too quickly and the incorrect call was made.—*

**VI. All Officials**

a. Indicate the score with the touchdown signal only when in position to determine that all requirements are met except for the Umpire who will only signal touchdown on a fumble recovery in the end zone. —Hold the signal for a count of “five” to ensure that the Referee sees your signal. b. Always turn with the players, facing them, and observe them for dead ball fouls as you signal. —Never allow a player to get behind without you turning, in kind, with them to observe their dead ball actions.

c. When the Flanks have the goal line, any running play or pass caught before crossing the goal line, or just as it crosses the goal line, is their Touchdown call.

d. When the Flanks have the goal line, and a pass is caught, or potentially caught in the end zone, this is the BJ’s touchdown call except on catches along the sideline, immediately at the goal line, or when the receiver is going away from the BJ towards the Flank on a diving or sliding catch. e. If a pass is caught along the sideline of the end zone, then the BJ and covering Flank will come together and ask what do you have, and then make the appropriate signal together, especially on a pass caught in the corner of the end zone. —On an obvious touchdown, the Flank will affirm with a finger point, nod, and verbal *“Yes! Yes!”* to tell the BJ to signal touchdown or he may signal it himself.

f. On a defensive Touchdown, the Referee has the goal line and the Touchdown signal. —The nearest Flank and Umpire has clean up. g. On an intercepted pass or fumble return by Team B, the BJ must account for any contact, legal or illegal, on the Team A Quarterback behind the play while containing all players during the return. —The Umpire can momentarily assist in this duty until he passes the Quarterback on the return. —In this scenario, Team B players will sometimes deliver a cheap shot to Team A’s “most important player” because they think we’re not watching. Be on top of it! —*YouTube search Bears vs. Packers Jim McMahon body slam that separated his shoulder and concussed him for reference as to the importance of watching a Quarterback after a turnover. That one dirty play is the main reason the ‘da Bears didn’t repeat in 1986!*

**Reverse Goal Line Mechanics**

**I. Referee**

a. Position yourself on the end line at your normal width to the Quarterback’s throwing arm side.

b**.** Look at the appropriate Flank Official for the forward progress spot or a Safety score signal. c. On an obvious score of a Safety, especially along the end line, whistle and signal a Safety.

**II. Umpire**

a. Continues to observe blocking as usual.

**III. Head Linesman and Line Judge**

1. Make sure that the entire ball gets across and outside of the goal line.
2. If the runner is clearly downed in the end zone in coverage area and the ball has clearly not made it all the way out of the end zone across the goal line, then hustle in and signal a Safety score for Team B.

**IV. Back Judge**

1. Observes action of players away from the pile.

**SECTION 18: FUMBLES**

**SIGNALS**

a.The closest official(s) who actually see the fumble lost by the ball carrier must drop/underhand toss their bean bag onto the yard line that possession of the ball was lost at or beyond the line of scrimmage. —NEVER throw a bean bag overhanded or toss it into a pile of players! b. If there is a change of possession, make sure to signal to stop the clock, and then signal 1st down for Team B. c. If Team A recovers it short of the line to gain, signal the dead ball signal and then signal the upcoming down and make sure that the game clock keeps running. d. If Team A recovers their own fuel beyond the line to gain, then signal to stop the clock and signal a 1st down for Team A. —The Referee will then signal 1st Down and start the clock when the Umpire spots the ball. e. The BJ will wait to start the 40-second play clock until possession is determined for Team A. —Don’t stop the game clock unless you have a clear Team B recovery or the Team A recovery is beyond the line to gain! f. Don’t be in a rush to blow your whistle on a fumble, especially within a pile of players. —That ball might still be bouncing around under all those players! —The loose ball might also squirt out the other side of the pile away from you where a player picks it up and will score a touchdown that you can’t see. ***If you don’t see it, don’t blow it!*** If you *thought* you saw it, then you didn’t *see* it! (Search on YouTube: bad call Georgia high school football)

**DIGGING OUT FUMBLES**

a. Should it become necessary to “dig out” a fumble from a pile of players, the official nearest to the ball should dig for the ball unless it’s the Referee. The Umpire will hustle in and dig for him. —Flanks, sprint in and help out as quickly as possible!

b. The Referee and BJ, unless the BJ is digging, are instructed to contain the play. —No more than two officials dig, and the third official helps move players away from the pile.

c. If the BJ has to dig into a pile, the furthest Flank will come in and contain the play for him. —The closest Flank will assist the BJ in digging or separating players.

d. The two containing officials will observe players and separate as necessary and will only signal to stop the clock and look to the clock to ensure it is stopped when they clearly see a defensive recovery or if the pile of players is beyond the line-to-gain and it is obvious that someone in the pile has possession.

e. When the digging official determines possession, they will verbally relay possession information to the nearest standing official who will then tell the Referee who has possession. —If there is no need for a “big dig” and the digging official determines possession, they may make the appropriate signal(s). —If it’s a “big dig,” then the Referee should be the only official signaling a 1st down on a change of possession, or signaling a Touchdown, touchback, or Safety if there’s a fumble pile up into an end zone.

**SECTION 19: SCRIMMAGE KICKS - PUNT PLAYS**

**BASIC POSITIONS AND COVERAGE I. Referee** a. Take position at the kicker’s kicking foot side at about 5-to-7 yards behind the kicker and 10-yards to the side so that you are at a 45-degree angle to the foot when it contacts the ball or if the punter’s knee is on the ground with possession on a low snap. —Be able to see the blockers to the other side of the Center and the backs in the backfield along with the kicker at the same time. Adjust your blocking coverage to observe all blitzes up the middle or to the side. —**In 4-man, the Referee will always be on the LJ side of the kicker because the LJ is downfield covering the punt.** b.If there is a Rugby-style punt, judge a Roughing the Kicker foul the same way you would a *Roughing the Passe*r foul based on a possible Personal Foul for a late hit or illegal contact, such as Targeting after the kick is away, based on the standard “step-and-a-half” distance of following-through on a tackle attempt that you use with a passer before the kick has ended or before the Kicker moved to participate in the play. c. A newer style of punting has become prevalent in the last few years that resembles a soccer goalie style of punting. —That is the punter will take a few steps to his kicking foot side that resembles a soccer goalie’s running of about five steps to gain momentum before punting the ball. —This scheme is designed to allow more time for the gunners to get downfield and cover the Team R deep returner which then forces the deep returner to fair catch and prevent a return. ——Keep in mind, in regards to any Team R contact upon the punter in these non-traditional methods of punting after he has legally kicked the ball, that you will have to judge if the punter is formally planting his non-kicking foot in a distinct kicking motion to determine *Roughing the Kicker* as we normally think of it or you will have to judge it is a Rugby-style kick on the run where you would then treat the punter the same as if you would a passer in regards to legal hits/tackles just as he releases the ball. ——For the purpose of argument, we will call this style of kicking a Rugby-style kick which means that the kicker can be contacted legally just as, or just after, he kicks the ball if a Team R player has committed to an otherwise legal charge or tackle into the ball carrier who then suddenly kicks the ball just before being contacted while behind the line of scrimmage on the run. Make sure you understand the definition of a kicker per **Rule 2-32-8** to help understand this.

d. Adjust to the situation; if a punter is kicking from their own end zone, warn the Kicker to stay off the end line prior to the snap. —This also reminds you where the end line is so you don’t confuse any end zone decor or a soccer line for the actual end line of the end zone.

e. Make sure Team K is in a *legal scrimmage formation* so that the *numbering exception rule* can be used and, *if it is used*, that the punter is lined up *directly* behind the long snapper, at least 10-yards deep, and the long snapper is covered up. —Use a squirrel cage signal at chest level and point at the long snapper to signal to the Umpire that we have a legal scrimmage kick formation.

— **In 4-man, signal “4” to the HL to confirm that you have no more than four Team K players in the back field. If you have “5” in the backfield, signal by waving your hand to your side and throw your flag at the snap together.**

**II. Umpire** a.Prior to the snap, the Umpire is positioned 10-yards beyond the line of scrimmage and either directly over the snapper or on the opposite side of the Referee inline with the Team A Tackle with a clear view of the ball and the snapper’s entire body. —Make sure that the snapper doesn’t flinch before the snap in an attempt to draw the defense into the neutral zone or throw off the timing of their blitz. b. **Umpire pre-snap procedure on punts:** **1)** Once it is apparent that Team A is going into punt formation, stand over the ball and count Team K players (You must complete your Team K “11 count” and count five players 50-79 or verify the legality of the numbering exception rule for linemen in a legal formation) and confirm your count with the Referee; **2)** Once Team K has 11-players, or at least enough players on the line of scrimmage to run a legal play, see if they are using the numbering exception and see what number the snapper is (be sure that you ask for, and write down the long snapper’s number in your coach’s pregame) so you can be on top of the numbering exception rule **(Rule 7-2-5b EXCEPTIONS**); **3)** When Team K has the correct number of players, or at least a legal formation of five linemen plus the punter, tell the snapper, “OK! Run your play!” as you point at him and get to your pre-snap position; **4)** Tell the defense loudly: *“Do not hit the snapper! Go through the gap by him!”*; **5)** Once Team K is set with a punter lined up 10-yards directly behind the long snapper, give a “squirrel cage motion” with your forearms at chest level and then point at the long snapper to signal to the Referee that we have a *legal scrimmage kick formation*; **6)** At this time the snapper is “protected” and a ***direct charge*** into him, or deliberately unnecessary rough contact, before he rises up from his snap will result in a *Roughing The Snapper Foul* and is an *Automatic 1st Down* for Team K. —If there is not a legal scrimmage kick formation and a long snapper is directly charged into, you can still call a Personal Foul for Unnecessary Roughness, it just won’t include an Automatic 1st Down provision. —Make sure your pre-snap actions with all of this don’t directly cause a Delay of Game Foul. c. If there is a bad snap or blocked kick, move up to the line of scrimmage and make sure no ineligible receivers go downfield if a pass is thrown across the line of scrimmage. —If Team K recovers the kick behind the line of scrimmage it is a live ball and they may advance it, kick it again, or throw a pass. Then, support the dead ball play if the ball becomes dead in the back field. d. On a short kick, be ready to drop your bean bag to spot First Touching by Team K or the Post Scrimmage Kick (PSK) Spot of possession by Team R.

**III. Flanks** a. Line up the same as for runs and passes but have your blue bean bag out and in your left hand before the snap. b. Check Team K linemen as to whether they are on or behind the line of scrimmage making sure that are not “five in the backfield”, and for an unbalanced line. c. Make absolutely certain that there are no more than four Team K players in the backfield. —Illegal formations for “five players in-the-backfield” happen a lot on punt formations, especially at the lower levels. Make them do it right! They won’t learn to do it right if you don’t hold them to it! d. **HL**: At the snap, hold the line of scrimmage until the ball passes across it on the kick, a run, or a pass. If there is a bad snap, you go back with the ball. e. **LJ**: As soon as you see the punter gain control of the snap, start running downfield to support the return coverage with the BJ. If there is a bad snap, stay at the line of scrimmage —**In 4-man, the LJ will assume the BJ’s punt coverage and position yourself in the field of play about 7-to-9 yards behind the deepest returner at about the hash marks or wider on your side of the field so that you can both see the returner and get to the sideline should the kick or return take you there. —LJ, remember, you still have to cover your sideline! —The HL, in 4-man punt coverage, must ensure that there are no more than 4-players in the offensive backfield at the snap. —If you have “five in the backfield,” wave your hand at our side to the Referee, then throw your flag together at the snap.** f.LJ, if the kick is to land in your one-third of the field (***Two-Thirds/One-Third Punt Coverage****)* between the hashes and your sideline, use the “Punch Off” Mechanic to indicate to the BJ that you are covering the ball and a potential returner. —This also means that BJ will redirect their key to pick up any blockers. — The “punch off signal” is done with your downfield fist held directly out in front of you and hold it for about three-seconds as you keep officiating. —Do not look at the BJ, he will see it and adjust to you. —If the returner crosses past the middle of the field to the HL’s side of the field, then pick up on blockers until you have forward progress, again. —The HL can also do this for short kicks only in his area of coverage. **—In 4-man: The HL will use punch off mechanics on kicks to signal to the LJ that he has the ball on punts that land or are caught by Team R in his one-third of the field. —The LJ will always cover the middle third of the field all the way to his sideline in 4-man.** g.Both Flanks must ensure before every play made from a Scrimmage Kick Formation that there are no more than 4-players in the Team K backfield at the snap! —Ideally, both of you will call a foul for 5-players in the back field simultaneously with the snap. —Punt formation is where an Illegal Formation for “five in the backfield” occurs the most! —If you have “five in the backfield,” wave your hand at your side before the snap to signal each other that you will both throw your flags together, in unison, at the snap for an Illegal Formation foul. h. *For any scrimmage kick that goes out of bounds inflight:*  —The BJ will mark where the ball goes out of bounds on any kicks beyond the line of scrimmage on the HL’s sideline. —The LJ will mark where scrimmage kicks go out of bounds along their sideline. ——When a scrimmage kick goes out bounds on the fly, signal to stop the clock and blow your whistle once the ball hits the ground. ——Run downfield along the sideline so that you’re now even with the spot where the ball landed out of bounds. ——Raise your hand and walk briskly back towards the line of scrimmage while looking at the Referee. ——When you have reached the new succeeding spot the Referee will signal for you to stop by a chop motion with their arm. When he signals that at you, stop at the new line of scrimmage and signal 1st down for Team R. —**NOTE: For all *grounded kicks* the covering official will simply mark the ball where they think it crossed the sideline. —In 5-man, the HL will spot any grounded kicks within 20-yards of the line of scrimmage. The BJ will mark anything else beyond that distance downfield. This will be called “20/20 Coverage.”**  **—In 4-man: The HL will have to spot all inflight scrimmage kicks out of bounds with the Referee.** i. LJ, after all scrimmage kicks that don’t end in a Touchdown or Touchback, after the play is over and the clock is stopped, signal *“Crossfield Mechanics”* to the HL by pointing at them with a “1st down signal” or signaling “one” on your hand held above your head to let him know that you have the new line of scrimmage spotted as soon a possible so that they know they can now get the chains for the new line of scrimmage.

**IV. Back Judge**

a. Have your blue bean bag out and in your hand to mark the PSK Spot upon Team R possession or for Team K First Touching. b. Take a position outside and behind the deep receivers, 7-to-10 yards to the HL’s side of the field and 7-to-9 yards behind the deepest receiver, so that you have a 45-degree angle to his front and have the best view on the catch, a muff, a knee down with possession, contact by Team K into the receiver, and the initial block by Team R on the Team K pursuit.

c. Be ready to adjust your coverage to the kick with a **“Two-Thirds/One-Third Coverage”** with the LJ. —If the punt were to land or be caught between the hashmarks and sideline on the LJ’s side of the field, and the LJ signals with a fist, then that means the LJ has the ball and the returner and you will pick up blockers. —Do not signal back at the LJ, simply adjust your coverage as the play dictates.

d. If the kick challenges the HL’s sideline, you will move to the sideline and cover it and judge if the kick or returner went out of bounds or not. —Once the returner possesses the kick and is no longer threatening the sideline, then move back inside the inbounds marks for an inside-out look whenever possible.

d. We do not do “Coffin Corner” Mechanics in 5-man mechanics anymore. —The goal line and both pylons are all yours! Be ready to move quickly and cover the entire goal line while containing the play! e. ***Remember that any kick, including a First Touched Kick by Team K and a muffed kick by Team R, that breaks the plane of the goal line is always an automatic touchback!*** —The relationship of a player to the goal line has no bearing on a punt being batted back from entering the end zone by Team K. —It is simply if the ball *breaks the plane* of the goal line on a kick, regardless of where a player is positioned in or out of the end zone, determines if the kick is a touchback or not. This is different than the NFL rule! —The kick is not over until it is possessed, breaks the plane of the goal line, goes out of bounds, or is laying still on the ground and no one is making a play on it.

f. You will cover the HL’s sideline on an initial return or a kick that bounces out of bounds, from 20-yards downfield and beyond. —We’ll call this a “*20-20 coverage*” because the HL will take the first 20-yards downfield of the line of scrimmage, you will take the second 20-yards downfield that makes up the usual 40-yards coverage between the line of scrimmage and where a Team R returner usually sets up. —However, a kick *inflight* out of bounds and downfield of the line of scrimmage will always be marked by you with the Referee lining the spot up with you.

g. Any scrimmage kick out of bounds on the *inflight* along the HL’s sideline: —Blow your whistle and signal to stop the clock once the ball hits out of bounds. —Then, run to the sideline and get even with the spot that the ball landed out of bounds at. —Raise your hand and briskly walk back upfield towards the line of scrimmage while looking at the Referee. —The Referee will have his hand raised and will signal you to stop at the new succeeding spot where the ball crossed the sideline inflight by his chopping motion with his arm. —When the Referee does signal you, stop and signal 1st down for Team R at that spot on the sideline. The LJ will do this for any kicks that go out of bounds inflight on their sideline.

**AFTER THE SNAP**

**I. Referee** a. Watch blocking and illegal action by players in the immediate area of the snapper and behind the line of scrimmage. —It has become popular in the last few seasons for the blocking backs of Team K to be linemen and for them to hold hands after the snap. —If these blocking backs engage an opponent while holding hands or with their hands placed on their teammate, it is a foul for Interlocked Blocking. b. Observe the action of and against the kicker, using Signal #11 (tipped ball) for any deflected/blocked kick, and observe players behind the play while proceeding slowly downfield if the kick remains inbounds. —Be sure to observe for any contact against the Kicker by Team R after the ball is kicked. —If a Team R player is blocked into the Kicker, then there is no foul. —Any contact into the Kicker’s plant leg shall be a Personal Foul for Roughing the Kicker as well any hard contact into him. —Any contact that simply displaces the Kicker by a Team R player who is not pushed into the Kicker shall be a Running Into the Kicker Foul. —If a Team R player tips or blocks the kicked ball, then there shall be no foul for contact made upon the Kicker unless the Team R player then renews his charge into the Kicker. —The player who is designated as the Team K punter does not become a “Kicker” until he actually kicks the ball with any part of his leg below the knee. Any contact upon him before he kicks the ball is not a foul because he is a runner until he actually kicks the ball. c. After the kick, move into the middle of the field and contain the play focusing on Illegal Blindside Blocks and Illegal Blocks in the Back. —Remember, you have Team K’s goal line on a return, *don’t get beat!*  d. If the flight of the kick is toward a sideline inflight, move quickly to the spot the ball was kicked from and get into a position in line with the flight with the ball and where it lands inflight and out of bounds. —Use the raised hand and chop signals to direct the official covering that sideline to the new out of bounds spot. —When correctly aligned to where the ball went out of bounds inflight, drop your arm in a chop motion as an indication that the covering official stop and hold their spot until ball is spotted for the next down.

d. If the kick is caught or recovered downfield, be conscious of coverage between you and the returner, particularly focusing on blindside blocks on returns that reverse the field.

—Be prepared to take over the runner once he clears Team K’s coverage. e. Any Fouls on Team K that involve a legal kick that occur before Team R gains possession are a “Tack-On Foul” option at the succeeding spot or may be enforced from the previous spot. —A “Tack-On Foul” means that Team R can either choose to enforce the foul from the previous spot and replay the down, or “tack-on” the penalty yardage from the end of the play as long as Team R has possession at the end of the down. —Whenever there is a “Tack-On Foul” option, *you will NEVER decline Team K’s foul.* It will always be enforced unless Team R also fouls for “offsetting fouls” or a “Clean Hands” option **(Rule 10-2-2)** occurs on the play!

**II. Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and Head Linesman**

a. Be alert for a blocked kick. Be alert for a recovery and advance. Signal any deflected/blocked punt with your hands above your head in a “tipping” motion (Signal 11).

**III. Umpire**

a. Scan the line between the Tackles at the initial charge, checking blocks by Team K and action by Team R players. —Make sure there are no “*Pull n’ Shoots”* by the defensive line. b. Observe Team R linemen “over center” to avoid a Personal Foul for Roughing the Snapper or any other serious injury to the snapper. —If you see a Team R player lined up directly over the long snapper before the snap be sure you tell them *“Do not hit the snapper, we’re in punt formation!”* You may need to lightly slap his hip to get his attention. Do what you can to prevent a foul upon the long snapper. c. After the snap and the snapper rises up, shift observations to Team R’s return blocks as needed. If needed, tell Team R players not to hold as they run downfield. **NOTE:** *A recent development in Team R punt return blocking schemes has Team R blockers initiating blocks well before the punt is possessed by the returner rather than go downfield and form a picket fence, watch the returner catch the ball, and then turn around and block. This is legal but may surprise some Team K players who don’t like getting blocked unexpectedly. You also have to make sure that this type of block doesn’t result in an Illegal Blindside Block by the Team R blocker. As the Umpire, you will usually see this better than anyone else on your crew and judge on the legality of these blocks.*

d. After the first wave of players advance down field (make yourself small to let them by you), move to the middle of the field and watch for Personal Foul Illegal Blindside Blocks and Illegal Blocks in the Back, especially on the second or third inidividual Team K players in the return area, using the “*Off the Ball Defender*” concept of blocking coverage.

**IV. Head Linesman and Line Judge** a.If the kick is short or partially blocked, know if it crossed the line of scrimmage or not or if it was muffed by Team R beyond the line of scrimmage. —Be certain of what can happen when either team touches or muffs the kick beyond the line of scrimmage versus behind the line of scrimmage. Scrimmage kicks are where the strangest rules of the game occur! b. Any kick recovered by Team K *behind* the line of scrimmage may be advanced, kicked again, or a forward pass thrown by Team K. —Observe for ineligible receivers for a pass across the line of scrimmage on a bad snap or fake and make sure that the long snapper never catches a forward pass without you penalizing it!

**V. Head Linesman**

a. You have primary responsibility to know if the kicked ball crosses the neutral zone and if a short kick is muffed by Team R or First Touched by Team K. —If the kick does cross the line of scrimmage and is then touched downfield by Team K, then this touching by Team K is *First Touching.* b.*There is no First Touching by Team K behind the line of scrimmage*! If it’s behind the line of scrimmage, then Team K can recover it and advance it, *it’s a live ball!*  —If Team K mistakenly “downs the kick” behind the line of scrimmage, do not blow your whistle! Yell out, *“That ball’s live!”* and keep officiating.

c. After the snap, observe Team K backs for holding and Team R holding on the gunners in the line of scrimmage area. d. When the kick has clearly crossed the line of scrimmage and will no longer threaten the neutral zone, release and move downfield until you’re even with the ball. —Focus on Team R blockers, especially for a Personal Foul for an Illegal Blindside Block *coming back towards the returner* and Illegal Blocks in the Back using the “*Off the Ball Defender*” coverage concept.

e. If the kick is short to your side, observe Team K First Touching, legal or illegal blocks, Team R muffing the kick, Kick Catch Interference, and Valid or Invalid signals for fair catch. —Maintain position to cover the area in front of the runner on the return after the catch or recovery of the kick. —Maintain coverage until the runner cuts toward the opposite side or, if on your side, is picked up by you one the runner is even with you. f. You have a “20-20 coverage” of your sideline with the BJ, meaning you have the first 20-yards downfield of the line of scrimmage on a rolling kick or recovery that threatens your sideline, the BJ has the rest of the sideline on deep kicks that threaten your sideline. —On a deep kick that doesn’t threaten your sideline, you have the entire sideline on a return.

g. Pick up the returner once he is even with you and mark his forward progress all the way to the Team K goal line. —The Referee has the goal line on a scrimmage kick return.

h. If Team R signals and fair catches a punt *behind* the line of scrimmage you will simply blow play dead upon Team R’s subsequent possession if it is within your area of coverage. —*Team R is not afforded protection or granted Free Kick or Lateral Spot Options on Fair Catches behind the line of scrimmage!*  i. Any hand gestures or signaling by a Team R player on any kick airborne or grounded, particularly the “get away” wave off signal that is common in the game, shall result in the play becoming dead without a foul and without any fair catch options. —This is both a NCAA & NFHS interpretation.

**VI. Line Judge**

a. After the initial line charge, observe Team A backs for holding, and Team B holding in the line area. b. After the snap is secured, do your best to get downfield and box in the punt return coverage with the BJ. —Ideally, you will 20-yards downfield upon Team R’s possession. c. Try to get even with the returner after Team R gains possession and officiate the return like a running play from scrimmage. d. If the kick lands or is possessed on your one-third of the field (between the sideline and closest inbounds marks), use the “Punch Off” mechanic to indicate to the BJ that you are picking up the ball and the returner, observe first touching, legal or illegal blocks, kick catch interference, or valid or invalid signal for a fair catch.

e. When the BJ has returner coverage in the middle-third of the field, or if you’re able to on a return that start from your third of the field, you will have the initial block made by Team R. —Blocks made in the HL’s third of the field will have to be observed by the HL/BJ/Umpire. f. Focus on an Illegal Block in the Back and Personal Fouls for Illegal Blindside Blocks on a punt return! —Once the returner makes it past the first Team K player, you now have the returner and the BJ will clean up.

c. You have responsibility for the entire sideline on your side of the field.

d. If the returner signals fair catch and then lets the ball hit the ground, the BJ stays with the ball, *you have to make sure that the returner does not block anyone after signaling for a fair catch.* It’s a 15-yard Illegal Blocking Foul if he does!

e. Any kick possessed by Team R in the middle of the field or in your third of the field, get a bean bag down along with the BJ on the yard line that Team R gains possession of the scrimmage kick to mark the possible PSK foul enforcement spot.

**VII. Flanks & BJ** a. During the kick, observe action on and by the “gunners” (Team A players on the ends who are charging downfield towards the receiver) and other receivers positioned close to the line of scrimmage. —If a Team R foul is to commit a foul on a punt downfield before the returner possesses the kick for a PSK Foul, then it is *most likely* going to committed against one of Team K’s gunners. —It is absolutely vital on any foul committed by either team on a scrimmage kick that you know if the foul occurred before-or-after Team R gains possession. Proper enforcements depend on your accurate information! b. When the ball is not in your area, take a position to observe action in your area ahead of the runner. c. If a Team K gunner steps out of bounds who is not *pushed out of bounds* by a Team R player before the kick is possessed by Team R, get a bean bag down at that spot, if he steps back in bounds, throw a flag at that spot for Illegal Participation. —*After* Team R gains possession, there is no foul for either team if any player *accidentally* steps out of bounds and then returns in bounds. —If any player from any team *purposefully* steps out of bounds to either influence the play or then comes back into bounds during the play, then it’s a foul for Illegal Participation. —It is not a foul if Team B/R *accidentally* steps out of bounds on a play and then returns inbounds. d. On the return, watch for any backwards passes or handoffs by Team R. —Signal all legal backwards passes/handoffs with a closed fist signal towards Team R’s end line. e. Due to the nature of punt returns, usually with a “*picket fence*” return blocking scheme, it is vital that you watch for Team R blocks as the returner comes around the corner of the picket fence! —Team R players, if they are to commit a Personal Foul for an Illegal Blindside Block or an Illegal Block in the Back, will commit these acts on Team K players as the returner is coming around the edge of the picket fence as he runs towards the sideline. —*You must be ready and be all over these plays.* ***This is your mother of all keys!*** *You must pick up all blockers coming back towards the ball on a return and account for their legal or illegal contact!* f. A Valid Fair Catch signal can only be made by any Team R player while the ball is inflight and with an arm extended in a side-to-side motion beyond the line of scrimmage. —An *Invalid Fair Catch Signal* is when any Team R player signals for a Fair Catch after the kicked ball has touched the ground in any manner or if their arm is not fully extended or does not signal side-to-side. —An *Illegal Fair Catch Signal* is only when the Team R player with the ball in possession signals a Fair Catch Signal. —By interpretation, if Team R signals for a Fair Catch *behind* the line of scrimmage they are not afforded protection but if a Team R player does subsequently possess the ball on the play, then the ball is dead and Team R will not be given a Fair Catch-Free Kick Option nor will they receive a Lateral Position of the Ball Option. g. By NFHS & NCAA interpretation: *Any arm/hand signals By Team R, other than shading the Sun from their eyes, that are not an attempt at a Fair Catch signal shall result in the ball becoming dead once Team R gains possession of the kick. There is no foul.* —These arm signals particularly include the “get away” motion/motion.

**When The Punt Play is Over I. All *Covering* Officials** a. Signal to stop the clock while blowing your whistle. b. The covering official(s), usually the BJ, will signal 1st down for Team R and physically spot the ball at the place it became dead at. c. Stay at that spot until the Umpire either releases you or spots the new ball appropriately. d. Tell the Umpire & Referee both as to the status of. —The play: 1) Recovered and returned here by Team R; 2) Fair Catch by Team R here; 3) First Touched here by Team K here; 4) Downed by Team K here; 5) Kicked out of bounds by Team K here. —This information is important as to Free Kick or Lateral Spot Options on the next down! **II. Head Linesman:** a. Once the play is over, come out towards numbers while looking at your chain crew and signaling them by holding up your arms to tell the chain crew to not move yet. b. Then, look at the Referee to point at you. —His pointing at you is his signal for you that there are no fouls on the play and that you are now cleared to move the chains to the succeeding spot. c. If there is a foul on the play make sure that the box and chains do not move! —This is very important so that we don’t lose the previous spot if a foul is a previous spot enforcement!

**III.** **Referee** a.Upon seeing that the punt is over, signal to stop the clock without using your whistle unless you’re the covering official. —Ensure that there are no fouls by the crew. b. Once you’re certain that there are no fouls on the play, start jogging downfield to the new spot and point at the HL and yell loudly, *“OK, move them!”* so they can then release and move the chains to the new spot. c. When you get to the new spot, ask the BJ or Umpire the status of the ball if they don’t tell you: *First Touching*, or downed, or returned, or fair caught? —If first touching, signal first touching, point to where the ball will be spotted, then signal 1st down for Team R. In all other cases, simply signal 1st Down for Team R. d. If there is a foul on a punt, make certain that the chains do not move after the play and then go find out what the call is. If they move too soon, hopefully the scoreboard will have the previous spot still displayed! e. Following a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch, the ball will be spotted as it normally would until Team R informs you of the place of their Lateral Option. —If Team R doesn’t tell you they want to use their Free Kick or Lateral Spot options before your upcoming Ready for Play Signal, then play normal. Don’t go asking them what their choice is.

**IV. Things for All To Know** a.Punt return is where most Illegal Blindside Blocks occur, be extra vigilant for them! We can’t miss a single one! b. Once Team R touches a punt *beyond* the line of scrimmage (except if pushed into the ball by a Team K player), the *line to gain* disintegrates and it will be a 1st down for the team in *team possession* after the play is over, unless a foul occurs against Team R before they gain possession. c. It doesn’t matter if a scrimmage kick stays behind the line of scrimmage, or if it is muffed by Team R back across the line of scrimmage, or just bounces back behind the line of scrimmage, if *First Touching beyond* the line of scrimmage is *not* involved by Team K, then Team K may recover the ball behind the line of scrimmage and run with it, kick it again, or throw a forward pass (make sure there are no ineligible receivers downfield if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage if they do pass in this situation). d. Keep in mind, that the “Clean Hands Rule” (**Rule 10-2-2**) also applies to Team K gaining possession following Team R muffing of the scrimmage kick beyond the line of scrimmage. e. When reporting fouls on a punt return, it is vital that the Referee is informed as to the status of the ball when the foul occurred: 1) Before the kick; 2) During the kick; 3) After the kick and during the return (aka post-possession). —It’s also important that you inform the Referee where on the field the foul occurred and by whom (the number and the position) so that the proper enforcement is applied. In particular, if it’s a Post Scrimmage Kick Foul (PSK Foul) by Team R or a foul by Team K before the kick was possessed by Team R. These all have particular enforcements that are separate of each other.

**SECTION 20: SCRIMMAGE KICKS - TRY AND FIELD GOAL PLAYS**

**BASIC POSITIONS AND COVERAGE I. Referee** a. On a Point After Try or a Field Goal Attempt, Referee’s position is 7-to-9 yards to the rear of the holder and 7-to-9 yards to the kicker’s side of the holder, facing the holder where you can see the ball when spotted for the kick. **—NOTE: If the kicker is right footed, then you will be on the left side of the kicking formation. If the kicker is left footed, then you will be on the right side of the kicking formation.** b. Cover, as usual, if the plays turns into a run or pass. —Assist in sideline coverage if a run develops to the vacated side. c. Signal a score after being positive that all requirements are met. d. You will solely rule on roughing or running into the kicker and/or holder. e. If the numbering exception is used by Team K, ensure that Team K is in a *legal scrimmage kick formation*. —If the holder is 7-yards directly behind the long snapper and on a knee, and the kicker is three yards directly behind or to the side and back of the holder, then Team K is an legal scrimmage kick formation. —Signal a squirrel cage at chest level and point at the Snapper so that the Umpire can see you. He will signal back to you.

f.***When it is obvious a kick attempt will take place and a potential holder and potential kicker are not seven or more yards behind the neutral zone, the Referee will place an open hand on his chest and shake their head “no” (Umpires, “echo” this signal back) indicating to the Umpire that Team K is not in a legal scrimmage kick formation*.**  —This means that the Long Snapper, if directly charged into by Team R, may have a Personal Foul called for any Unnecessary Roughness contact against him but it won’t result in an Automatic 1st down. —It also means that the *numbering exception rule* (Rule 7-2-5b Exceptions) is not allowed and would be a foul for an Illegal Formation if less than 5-players numbered 50-79 are on the line of scrimmage at the snap.

e. Signal “4” with your hand to the Flank on the LOS to confirm that Team K has 4-players in their backfield.

f. Only on a *Field Goal Attempt*, after the formations are signaled by you, signal a “high squirrel cage” signal high above your head to indicate to the entire crew that the ball is live and will stay live if the kick is blocked or is short of the goal line. The rest of the crew will signal this, too.

—On a *Kick Try Attempt*, anytime that the actual kicked ball is blocked or has failed (the kick clearly won’t go through the goal over the crossbar) it shall become dead at that moment. We don’t do a “high squirrel cage” signal on a Kick Try Attempt and Team B can never score on a Try. g. If Team K shifts out of a legal scrimmage kick formation while using the numbering exception rule, it would be a foul for an Illegal Formation at the snap. —If Team K is using the numbering exception rule, they may send a back in motion as long as the holder and kickers both maintain their position.  **(Note: In 4-man, the Umpire and one Flank goes under the posts and the Umpire assumes both their own role and the BJ’s role on Field Goals & on a Kick Try.** a. When you recognize Team A is kicking for a Point After Try kick or a Field Goal attempt, signal a “T” with your hands at the Flank who needs to go under the posts with the BJ. —Say loudly to the Flank that needs to go under the uprights, *“The Tee’s on! Go! The Tee’s on, Go!”* as you signal “T” and then point at the posts to get the Flank to go downfield. b. If the kicker is right-footed, then the Flank to Team K’s left goes under the posts with the BJ, if the kicker is left-footed, then the Flank on Team K’s right goes under the posts with the BJ. —Ask each Head Coach if their place kickers are right or left footed in your pregame conference with them. c. Then, signal in one fluid motion to the Flank staying on the line of scrimmage that they have the entire line of scrimmage by pointing at them, then down at your feet, then back at them and say, *“It’s your line!”* d. Stand over the ball, make sure Team K has the appropriate number of players and if the snapper is wearing an eligible number he is covered up. e. Once it is obvious Team K is ready, tell the snapper to *“Run your Play!”* on a Field Goal Attempt; *(If this is a Point After Try kick, then point at the Referee and make him signal and whistle the Ready for Play). —*Then tell Team B as you move to your position: *“Do not hit the snapper! Go through the gap by him!”*  f. If the numbering exception is being used by Team K, ensure that Team K is in a legal scrimmage kick formation per **Rule 7-2-5b EXCEPTIONS.**

g. If your view of the long snapper allows you to, adjust to favor the vacated Flank’s side to form a triangle with the Referee and Flank on the line of scrimmage. h. Signal a rolling squirrel cage at chest level and point at the snapper to indicate a legal scrimmage kick formation if you, indeed, have one. i. Be about 5-to-7 yards off the line of scrimmage and either head up over the snapper or to the side of the vacated Flank. —You have the Team K line from the snapper all the way to the end of the vacated side. —Try to see the long snapper’s entire body and the ball if the defense doesn’t block your view. Be sure to duck when the ball is kicked, just in case!

j. Be absolutely certain of your Team K 11-players count on a Field Goal attempt. —Every long once in a while, Team K might try a *hideout play* and sneak the 11th player onto the field at the sideline just before the snap. —This would be a foul for an Illegal Substitution if that 11th player snuck onto the field and was never within the 9-yard marks (the top of the numbers) after the *Ready for Play* Signal, or after the Umpire has spotted the ball and moved away on a 40-second play clock, or it is Illegal Participation if they feigned a substitution to hide this player on the sideline.

k. Focus on the linemen at the initial charge, checking blocks of Team K players and action by Team R players. —Make sure are no “*Pull n’ Shoots”* by Team R linemen trying to block the kick.

l. Observe Team R linemen over the long snapper to avoid roughing and any serious injury to the snapper. —If a defensive lineman is lined up over the snapper, remind them to not hit the snapper! m. Shift your looks to contact between offensive and defensive players after the snap. Assist in goal line coverage if a run develops to the Flank’s vacated side.

n. If Team K lines up in a *Swinging Gate Formation* while using the numbering exception rule, the formation will be illegal if the long snapper is an end and he is not numbered 50-79 and there are fewer than five players numbered 50-79 on the line of scrimmage. —The numbering exception rule (Rule 7-2-5b Exceptions) can not be used for a team in a Swinging Gate Formation because they are not in a *scrimmage kick formation* when the ball is snapped with the long snapper covered up, a holder on his knee 7-yards directly behind the long snapper, and a kicker positioned 3-yards behind the holder. —Unless there are five players numbered 50-79 on the line of scrimmage when a Swinging Gate Formation is used, then it is a foul for an Illegal Formation (numbering violation) at the snap. The Referee needs to help the Umpire on this play, too.

**III. Flank Official Facing the Referee** a.The Flank on the line of scrimmage is responsible for the legality of the snap and False Starts by Team K and Encroachment by Team R along the entire line of scrimmage. b. Once the ball is kicked on a Try, run all the way in to the area of the holder’s position and clean up and separate players. —If it is a Field Goal Attempt, hold your ground and read the play. —It is important that you hustle in on a Try because most of the cheap nonsense that occurs in the game occurs on a Try after the kick. c. Quickly move to the goal line if a run develops on a fake or broken play. —If the Field Goal kick is short or partially blocked, hold the line of scrimmage as you must know if the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. —Remember, an unsuccessful Field Goal is just like a punt so get a bean bag down on a Team R return or Team K First Touching. —On a kick Try that has the actual kick clearly fail to score, the play is dead. d. Make sure that Team K does not have five players in the backfield. —Don’t let the Tackles and Ends “bow out,” make them be on the line of scrimmage and facing forward or flag it! e. As the Team K formation is getting set on a Field Goal attempt, give a high squirrel cage signal to tell yourself and the crew that a blocked kick is still a live ball.

**IV. Flank Official on the Back Side of the Referee** a.You are under the goal posts with the BJ and have the upright on your side of the field. —Help the BJ with the crossbar as needed. The BJ has the whistle. **—In 4-man, the Umpire will be under the uprights with you. The Umpire has the whistle and crossbar.**  b. If a run develops to your vacated side, quickly move to the goal line pylon on your side as best as you can. —You may need to triangulate your view with the Referee’s view to determine if the goal line was made or not. c. If a run situation develops to the other sideline, move directly out to the goal line and make sure you don’t get caught up in the play, the BJ will stay on the end line —**In 4-man, the Umpire will move up to the goal line on a run or stay on the end line of there’s a pass into the end zone. On a Try, the Umpire will always stay on the end line**). —The opposite Flank has primary sideline responsibility with the Referee’s assistance.

d. If the kicking team’s initial formation is the “Swinging Gate,” remain on the line of

scrimmage until the team shifts into a *scrimmage kick formation* with an obvious kicker and holder directly behind the long snapper. —If Team K originally lines up in *scrimmage kick formation* and then shifts out to another formation, move to the end line corner of the end zone during the shift and then down the sideline toward your normal scrimmage play formation. Be ready to rule on the goal line as best as you can. —If using the numbering exception rule, Team K can’t shift out of a scrimmage kick formation or it will be a foul for Illegal Formation at the snap.

**V. Back Judge** a.You are responsible for your upright and judge if the ball passes completely within the inside edge of the upright and completely by and over the cross bar. If a run develops, move to the goal line to assist in rulings involving the goal line. If it is a pass, stay on the end line. On a Try, always stay on the end line. b. Remember, the entire ball must pass within the inside edge of the upright or upright extended. **-NOTE:** *If the ball hits the post that goes into the ground behind the crossbar after first crossing over the crossbar, then the kick is good.*  c. If a Field Goal Attempt is short of the goal line and the ball remains alive, officiate it just like a punt as a scrimmage kick. —Get a bean bag down if there’s a Team R return or First Touching by Team K. d. You have the whistle on all plays involving the goal. Sound your whistle when the ball passes through the uprights or when it hits the ground or an object out of bounds on a missed kick.

**VI. Back Judge and Flank Under the Goal Post** a.Start about 10-feet behind the end line behind and in line with your upright, feet staggered and on the balls of your feet so can fluidly adjust your look. —Adjust to the kick as it comes towards the goal. You both will watch the ball as it may deflect off one upright and then suddenly challenge your upright or the cross bar. Be ready to help each other out. b. The entire ball must pass over the plane of the cross bar and entirely within the plane of the inside edge of the uprights to be good. —In situations with high winds, if the kick is blown backwards the kick shall be good if it clearly passes entirely past the rear edge of the cross bar within the inside plane of the uprights. c. Once the kick is good you both will acknowledge the other’s *“Yes! Yes!”* with a nodding head; If the kick is unsuccessful, say *“No! No!”* while shaking your head to each other as you step towards the end line to signal. —Hold your signal until the Referee acknowledges your signal with his own signal, then drop your arms in unison. This is so that the Referee has time to see your signal after he’s done dealing with the area around the kicker. d. If the kick is good, you both shall signal good. —If the kick is wide, you both will signal “no good.” —We do not signal “wide right” or “wide left!” —If the Field Goal kick attempt is short and enters the end zone on the fly, simply signal no good. —If the Field Goal kick attempt bounces into the end zone from in front of the goal line, then signal touchback. —If a Field Goal kick attempt is short and does not break the plane of the goal line, move to the goal line and get out your bean bag and mark the spot if Team R recovers it as you’re now in punt coverage. **—On all kick Tries, both you and the BJ (Umpire in 4-man) will always signal together that the Try succeeded or failed.** e. Upon a successful Field Goal, or after a Try, get the ball that the ball person placed behind the goal post, start your one-minute official’s time out timer, and jog up the sideline of the scoring team to the Team K restraining line. —Wait there until 15-seconds remains, give three short bursts of your whistle, then jog out to the middle of the field. —At 60-seconds, blow three short blasts a second time and go through your pre-kick mechanics with the LJ at Team R’s line. **—LJ will do this mechanic in 4-man. —NOTE: Our goal with this mechanic is to not waste time after a score. All official’s time outs following scores, or changes of possession, or on charged team time outs, shall take no more than 60-seconds. If both teams are ready to go before the 60-seconds expires, then get them going.**

**SECTION 21: TIME OUTS**

**Charged Time Outs & Official’s Time Outs I. Flanks** a. Be particularly aware of when a Head Coach or Designated Time Out Coach may want to call a charged team time out, especially at the end of a half or when the play clock is about to expire. —Remember, any player on the field may also call a timeout. —Always give them the benefit of the doubt in cases of a time out called simultaneously with a clock expiring. —As soon as you signal to stop the clock for the time out, instantly look at the game clock and ensure it stops at the precise time that you *intend* to stop the clock which should be the instant that you hear or see the the time out signaled or audibly called! b. A Flank who signals time out will run out to the top of the numbers as they whistle and signal to stop the clock and then point with both arms in a chop motion pointed in the direction of the team that called for the charged time out. c. If team has no time outs remaining and they then signal Timeout we will simply ignore it, there is no foul. —If we accidentally grant a fourth time out, then immediately signal the *Ready for Play* and either start the clock or simply chop the play in depending on the status of the clock. **II. Middle Officials**  a. The officials in the middle will simply whistle and signal to stop the clock. **III. Whistle Mechanics To Signal Timeout** a.The whistle sound for a time out signal will be double-blasts five times to get everyone’s attention. —The R, U, and BJ will *emphatically* announce to the crew and acknowledge to each other what the upcoming down will be after the time out! —If a down is errantly lost by a crew, it will happen on a time out or after a spike to stop the clock. *Don’t allow this to happen to your crew!*  **IV. During the Time Out** a. On a charged team time out with an “outside the numbers conference,” the Flanks will stand at the top of the numbers on the LOS as they write down who called the time out, when it occurred, and what the down, distance, and yard line is. b. Flanks, if the ball is inside either 25-yard line towards a goal line during the time out, stand at along the top of the numbers at the 25-yard line. —Flanks, ensure that your team stays between the 25-yard lines and are not out past the top of the numbers during a charged “outside the numbers” time out. c. If any coach chooses to come into the middle for a “inside the numbers” charged time out, then only that one coach, without using any headsets or electronics, and the 11-players in the game along with any water boys/girls are allowed. **—*It is always a 25-second play clock after a charged team time out.* V. Monitoring the Timeout Length**a.The BJ **(Referee in 4-man)** will time the charged team time outs. —The timeout length is 60-seconds. b. At 45-seconds expired, give three short blasts of your whistle. —Flanks and Referee say loudly, “Time Out’s Over!” and hold up the upcoming down on your hand fulling extended above your head and say, “second down coming up!” (or whatever number the down is). c. The BJ will sound a second alert at 60-seconds (three short blasts twice) whereupon the Referee will say, “*Here we go!*” and then do a whistle and chop to for the *Ready for Play* signal. —If both teams are ready to go before either alert by the BJ’s whistle, then go ahead and whistle and chop the play in. —In all situations, make sure both teams have 11-players each and are ready to go after a time out is over before you chop it in and allow them to correct themselves before the chop! **VI. Procedures** a. The Referee and Umpire will stay at the ball on a charged team time out (the Umpire will straddle the ball on any type of time out). b. All officials will write down the time of the charged team time out and the down, distance, and yard line on their game card. —They will then indicate to each other how many time outs each team has remaining with their digits (fingers). c. Each Flank will inform their respective Head Coach how many time outs that they have remaining plus how many the other team has. —When a team is out of time outs, the Flank will signal with a fist (knuckles pointing upwards) at the coach and say, *“Coach, you have no more time outs.”* Make sure he acknowledges you so there is no confusion about it. d. ***The Flanks are directed to ensure that their respective teams leave their sideline from any form of time out with exactly 11-players. We will hold up the Ready for Play signal, if needed, to make sure this happens!* VII. Official’s Time Out for an Injured Player**  a. When there is an official’s time out for an injured player, excessive heat, or any other prolonged delay of a few minutes where the players are sent to the sidelines, the players will stay on the field and the coaches need to stay off of it except to attend to an injured player. —Players may stand as close to the sideline as is possible and talk to their coaches as long as the coaches are off the field. —The Flanks will stand on the sideline near them to make sure this is followed. —Allow water boys/girls onto the field. b. If there is a long delay, such as an ambulance issue, allow players and coaches to do whatever they want. c. Anytime a player is injured and he is not getting up off the ground, the officials will direct both teams to their respective sidelines. d. A time out is a perfect time for the crew to hydrate! —Pound some water down so you don’t get 4th quarter heat cramps! —BJ or Flanks, be ready to bring some water to the Referee and Umpire. **VIII. Referee’s Discretion** a. The Referee is authorized to use their discretion to call an official’s time out to allow players to hydrate and are particularly encouraged and directed to do this on any changes of possession in weather that is **90-degrees or hotter**. —A two-or-three minute officials time out after about every four-to-five minutes of play to allow all participants, including the officials, to drink some water following a punt, interception, fumble recovery, or score is normal and expected under NFHS rules. b. The opinion of the NFHS rules panel is that heat stroke is 100% preventable! —When you call the officials time out, give double short blasts on your whistle as you signal to stop the clock and then indicate an officials time out and tell everyone “*Water break! Get some water!*”

**SECTION 22: MEASUREMENTS**

**PROCEDURE**

**I. All Officials**

a. When establishing forward progress or the end of the run, be sure there is no need for

measurement before announcing the down. —If in a close situation where a 1st Down is not gained, signal the next down and be alert for the offensive Captain or Head Coach to request a measurement (the defense is not allowed a request for measurement, once The Referee declares a 1st Down, it stays a 1st Down!). b. If you’re uncertain if the ball made the line to gain or is short, the Referee will call for a measurement without a Captain’s request. c. In typical circumstances, the Line Judge will determine obvious 1st Downs by stopping the clock and motioning for the HL to move with cross-field signals. —When a play ends close to the line to gain stake, the Line Judge can assist the Referee by indicating *“close! close!”*  —The Referee can then move to the spot to determine if a measurement is needed or if a first down will be awarded.

d. Flanks, in a *“close! close!”* situation, if you hear those words or determine that we are in a *“close! close!*” situation where the ball is within half-a-yard or less of the line to gain, run into the field to the exact spot that the ball became dead at. —The Umpire will hand you the ball whereupon you will set the ball down on the exact spot of ground that the ball became dead at. e. Flanks, do not make the Umpire come out to you with the ball. —It is a bad look and messes up the lateral spot of the ball. —Coaches do call their upcoming plays based upon the lateral location of the ball.

**II. Back Judge**

a. Will ensure the ball is not moved after being spotted for measurement by either squatting or kneeling on the defensive side of the ball and placing one hand on the ball to make sure it doesn’t move. —Turn and slightly face the Press Box and smile, the camera’s on you!

b. Clear the area of players so the Press Box to get a view of the measurement before you move to hold the ball.

**III. Referee**

a. When the ball becomes dead in a side zone or out of bounds and measurement should be at the dead ball spot, have the covering official place the ball down at the spot that the ball became dead at. b. Indicate to the Head Linesman and to the Press Box that a measurement is needed with an official’s time out signal and motion for the HL to bring the chains out.

**IV. Head Linesman**

a. Instruct the box operator to maintain the previous down on display and place the box directly behind the front stake. b. Then, go to the clip. —Ensure that it is properly placed on the frontside of the 5-yard stripe that was closest to the original line of scrimmage that wasn’t on the 5-yard stripe itself. —Then, grip the clip and the chain together in the palm of your hand making a closed fist. —Tell the box to stay there, and that the chains are coming out with you. —Lightly jog to the ball with the chain crew together with you (don’t just grasp the clip since the clip could detach as you bring the chains out).

c. Position yourself directly behind the ball on the 5-yard stripe that the clip was on. —(The LJ will place their foot where you’re supposed to place the clip, make sure it’s perfectly straight). —Hold the chains and clip in your closed fist and place your knuckles on the ground so that the clip is properly aligned with the back edge of the proper 5-yard stripe.

c. Hold firmly and call out *“ready”* to the Umpire to stretch the chain tight.

**V. Line Judge**

a. Go to the 5-yard stripe that’s nearest to the rear stake. Place your foot perfectly perpendicular to the ball so the HL will place the chain clip properly.

**VI. Umpire**

a. Take the forward stake. Check for kinks in the chain and be sure that the chain is taut and is lined up straight so that they are perfectly parallel with the sidelines. b. Wait until the HL calls “*ready*” then carefully tighten the chain only once. —Don’t pull or jerk it. Have the stake perpendicular to the ground at the HL’s side of the ball until the Referee announces his ruling, and then return the stake to the chain crew if a 1st down is ruled.

**VII. All Officials** a. If the measurement is short of the line-to-gain and the dead ball spot is outside the inbounds marks, the Referee will use the forward point established on the appropriate chain link when spotting the ball at the inbounds line by grabbing that point on the chain with your fingers. —If an alternate game ball is available following the measurement, leave the ball in the side zone until an alternate ball is placed at the corresponding inbounds spot. —HL will go to the inbounds marks with the Umpire and stretch out the chains again to properly place the ball. b. After the Referee re-spots the ball, the HL will jog with the chains back to the restraining line while still holding the clip and then place the clip on the appropriate 5-yard stripe and re-stretch the chains. —Once the chains are properly reset, the down box will be moved to where the ball is just shy of the line to gain stake and the next down will now be displayed. c. Once the HL has moved the chains and the down box to where they belong, indicate the upcoming down signaled above your head on your hand. —The Referee will whistle and signal the *Ready for Play* or whistle and start the clock according to the game clock status.

**VIII. Referee** a.If the measurement is short, the Referee will indicate how much distance the ball is short of the line-to-gain with their open hands apart from each other or the index finger and thumb apart from each other at head level so that the press box can clearly see, then indicate the upcoming down. —If there is no visible space between the tip of the ball and the inside edge of the stake, then it’s a 1st down. Don’t pull out a card to measure the space between the ball and the stake! b. It is an accepted philosophy to not have a measurement after a 1st or 2nd down play. —Instruct your LJ that if the spot is close to the line to gain to make it obviously short or call it a 1st Down. —If your Line Judge asks you to take a look at the spot, then you will follow this same philosophy of not measuring after a 1st or 2nd Down play and decide for yourself if it is short or a gained 1st Down. c. Remember, on a “*close! close!*” play that we will keep the game clock running until the Referee either signals that a 1st Down has been gained or until the Referee indicates an official’s time out for a measurement.

**SECTION 23: CALLING FOULS & ENFORCEMENT**

**PROCEDURE**

**I. All Officials** a. The calling official will drop or throw their penalty marker at the proper spot, mentally marking the yard line, if the foul was on Team A or B, and the number of the offending player. —If needed, move the marker to the proper spot of the foul after the play is over. —If it’s a live ball foul, then continue to officiate and hold your whistle until the ball becomes dead. b. After the play is over, the official who threw their penalty marker will signal to stop the clock and then repeatedly whistle in five short bursts repeatedly until making eye contact with the Referee. —The calling official(s) will then communicate to the Referee the status of the ball, what happened on the play, the foul, the number and team of the player who committed the foul, the yard line that it occurred on, and what they think the enforcement should be. c. For fouls before the snap (False Start, Encroachment, Illegal Substitution, or Delay of Game), visual signals without coming in to report a foul are acceptable if called by only one official. —If both Flanks have a *line of scrimmage foul* before the snap, they must hustle into the field and talk to each other and the Umpire to clarify their call. —The Umpire will then tell the Referee what their foul is. —If you are not using radios, Flanks are expected to hustle in and report the foul face-to-face, especially in 4-man mechanics.

d. Know the status of the ball if it’s in play. —***Make a mental note as to whether the game clock should be started on the Ready for Play signal or on the snap and tell the clock status to the Referee after their penalty announcement.***  *—*The Referee must know what to do after reporting the foul, you must communicate to him what to do because he will not know the status of the ball on most plays that go downfield. —This is also important information to relay to the Head Coaches so they know if they need to get the snap off in a hurry if it’s towards the ed of either half.

e. Do not place a hand on or point to the offending player. —The nearest official will notify, by number (if you don’t get the number, say the position), to the Head Coach of any non-disqualifying fouls by his team. —On fouls that multiple officials throw a flag on they must consult with each other to confirm that you have the same foul before your report your foul, especially involving a P.I. call. —Any disqualifying foul, the Referee will inform the Head Coach of that disqualification and why it was called.

f. After the play is over where you call a foul, it is your duty to hold the dead ball spot until you are relieved by another crew mate (except on an incomplete pass) who will say to you, *“I have your spot, go report your foul!”* then go to the Referee and report the foul fully as follows:

1. Offending team: offense/defense, or kicking team/receiving team.

2. Offending player’s number (or position if you didn’t get a number).

3. Spot of foul, previous spot, end of run or end of kick.

4. Status of the ball when foul occurred.

5. Clock status of both the game clock and play clock.

**—*Since 2015, the Referee is authorized to announce the number of the player who commits a foul in their penalty announcement to the press box.***

**II.** **Flanks- Sideline Warning** **& Live Ball Sideline Contact in the Restricted Area**  a. Drop your flag near the yard line along the sideline within the field of play when giving a Sideline Warning (A Sideline Warning is for team personnel being within the Restricted Area just prior to the play or during the play and there is no contact with you). —After the play is over, notify the Head Coach that this is a Sideline Warning and then go to the Referee and report the violation. b. Each official will write down all Sideline Warnings. The Referee will signal to the press box and then come over to tell the Head Coach face-to-face that he has a warning. —A second violation will result in a 5-yard penalty enforced as a succeeding spot foul. —A third violation is an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul assigned to the Head Coach enforced as a succeeding spot foul. —A fourth violation will result in a second Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul assigned to the Head Coach resulting in his disqualification. c. The Referee will then go tell the opposing Head Coach that the other team received a sideline warning and thank him for keeping his sideline clear. —If the Warning occurred in the 1st Half, remind the Head Coach of this Warning when they return from halftime. d. For *Contact in the Restricted Zone* between the Team Box and the sideline where you *collide* with any Team Personnel within the Restricted Area *during the play* is a special enforcement that is entirely separate from the Sideline Warning scenario. —The Head Coach will be assigned a Personal Foul enforced from the succeeding spot. —If this contact within the restricted zone occurs a second time, then the Head Coach will be disqualified from the game. e. You are expected to work with a team and not penalize them if they listen to you to get back and they get back upon your request, no matter how many times you have to do it. f. If contact occurs between the sideline and restraining line but not in front of the Team Box between you and anyone else then there is no foul to call. Instruct them to stay back, have the A.D. deal with it as needed.

**III. Head Linesman, Line Judge and Back Judge**

a. If the ball is not at the dead ball spot and you’re not covering the end of the run or spot of the foul, assist in getting the ball to the dead ball spot or to the Umpire.

b. If the foul is a spot foul, come into the field and cover the flag at the spot of the foul unless you have to hold the dead ball spot.

c. Observe the dead ball action of players and assist where needed.

e. **Flanks:** After the Referee gets the information about the foul, make sure you come in and get the foul information from the Referee or calling official so that your Head Coach knows what the foul is and if they want to accept or decline it or choose an option for the game clock, or tell them why the foul occurred on their team, what the player did, and give the coach that player’s number *(so he can yell at his player instead of you)*.

—Example 1: (Flag thrown on the play for DPI by B#22, incomplete pass): Signal the pass incomplete. Then signal to stop the clock while tweeting your whistle 5-short times repeatedly until you have the Referee’s attention, run towards the Referee after players have cleared themselves in your area or a crew mate is keeping an eye on them. Say: *“I have an incomplete pass on the play. During the play, I have pass interference, defense, number 22. We’ll enforce from the previous spot, 15-yards, this will result in a 1st down, 40-second play clock, no clock on the Ready for Play.*

—Example 2: (Flag thrown for an Illegal Block in the Back on a running play that ended in bounds with the foul behind the basic spot): Tweet your whistle while signaling to stop the clock. Hold the dead ball spot until a crew mate relieves you or the Referee gets to you. Say: *“The running play ended here at my spot, inbounds. I have an Illegal Block in the Back, offense number 85. We will go 10-yards from the spot of my flag, the B33-yard line, back to the B43-yard line and repeat 1st down. 25-second play clock, hot clock!”*

f. **Covering The Spot of The Foul:**

i. The Umpire will mark off all penalties and will always mark them off from within the inbounds marks. —The LJ will stay at the spot the foul is being enforced from, and the HL will mark off the yardage with the Umpire to ensure that the yardage is correct.

ii. The Umpire, before marking off the yardage with the HL, will signal “one” with his index finger for 5-yards, “two” with his index and middle finger for 10-yards, “three” with his pinky, ring, and middle fingers for 15-yards, and anyone of those plus crossing his wrists in front of him to indicate “half-the-distance to the goal.” —The HL will mirror the signal back to the Umpire and make sure the penalty is properly marked off with the Umpire, if it’s wrong, correct him!

iii. Umpire, mark off fouls by saying: *“We’re on the 16 and going to the 21.”* Do the math in your head before going there. —Don’t “step it off.” Know where you’re going to end up before you start.

iv. When Carryover or Succeeding Spot Fouls are committed that require enforcement at the spot of the next free kick, the Referee will give the preliminary signal and point to the next free kick spot. —The BJ will repeat the signal at Team K’s free kick line, and then mark the penalty off. —In this situation, dangle your down indicator off all of your fingers when you announce the foul as a reminder that you have a foul to enforce on the upcoming kickoff!

**v. It is absolutely vital that the crew does not lose the dead ball spot nor the spot of the foul on live ball fouls! —Don’t get happy-feet and move too soon to report a foul! —Wait until a crew member tells you that they have your spot and to then go report your foul!**

**IV. Referee**

a. When a foul is reported to the Referee, the Referee will only need to give a preliminary signal if they need to ask a coach if they want to accept or decline the foul. —Give the dead ball signal before giving the signal for a dead ball foul. —If it’s a dead ball foul before the snap, say: *“Prior to the snap…”* If it’s a dead ball foul after the play, say: *“After the play was over….”*

b. If a choice is obvious, announce it and proceed with enforcement or declination. —All choices for accepting or declining a foul will be made by the Head Coach when it’s *not obvious* they want to accept or decline a foul. —If the choice is not obvious, explain the foul or fouls and the options, state options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously. c. Say the number of the player in your announcement who committed the foul. —Make sure that the team who committed the foul knows the number, too. —Ideally, in most cases, you will only give one penalty announcement with one set of signals to the press box.

d. Don’t rush your signals. Be slow, firm, and deliberate in the use of your signals so that the old granny in the top row can clearly see what you’re doing. Announce all fouls, even if you’re not mic’d up. —If you’re mic’d up, clearly enunciate your words in a non-rushed manner of speaking and really demonstratively move your mouth, cheeks, tongue and lips as you pronounce your words. —If you say your penalty announcement quickly, then it will sound like one quick unintelligible slurred garbled sentence over the P.A. system.

**V. Line Judge**

a. Hold the enforcement spot until the penalty is completed and confirm with the Umpire that the

enforcement is correct before releasing the spot. (Exception: Penalties assessed on the Kickoff).

**VI. Referee**

a. When a penalty is to be enforced, confirm with the Umpire as to the point of enforcement and

yardage to be marked off. Say, “We’re going from the 35 to the 45!” or something similar.

**VI. Umpire**

a. Take a position near the Referee when he explains options to a Captain or Head Coach. —If a penalty is to be enforced, follow the Referee’s instructions in marking off the penalty. b. The Umpire will carry the ball and place it in position at the new spot when the penalty is enforced. —If “tick” (aka hash) marks are available, use them to assist in getting the correct yardage. Otherwise, mark off the yardage as instructed. c. Communicate the enforcement to the HL by signaling “one, two, or three” for 5, 10, & 15-yards or “crossed forearms” for half the distance. —The HL will mark off penalty yardage with the Umpire.

**VII. Head Linesman**

a. When the Umpire starts to mark off a penalty, be on or near the sideline and move to the succeeding spot with him. —Make sure that the chain crew doesn’t move unless you instruct them to. —Often, the chain crew thinks because you’re moving then they need to move. Unless it’s a new 1st Down series, instruct the chain crew by saying, *“Chains stay, box here with me.”* b. Check visually with the Umpire; Signal the “one, two, or three” for “5, 10, or 15-yards” signal back at the Umpire as you mark off fouls with him.

**VIII. Referee (Again)**

a. While the Umpire is marking off the penalty, take position in the clear where you can be seen. —If the game is televised, then give the signal wherever you are, the camera is always on you. b. Give the signal to the Press Box side of the field only and announce your foul so that anyone around you can clearly hear you explain the call (the team that’s opposite of the Press Box will have this information relayed to them by the Flank. c. Say the offending team as *“offense,”* or *“defense,”* or *“kicking team,”* or *“receiving team.”*  —Give clear “rule book image” signals and concise explanations if needed. —If a penalty mark off results in a 1st down, say “\_\_\_-yard penalty *results* in a 1st down!” and then indicate “one” with your finger, and then signal 1st down. d. **Example of a typical foul announcement**: *Holding, offense, number 52. 10-yard penalty from the previous spot, repeat 2nd Down.”* **Another example**: *Illegal Use of Hands, defense. Ten yard penalty results in a 1st Down.” —*Make sure that you announce while simultaneously signaling and signal the upcoming down as you finish your announcement. —We announce all fouls loudly and clearly when we’re not mic’d up to the P.A. System.

e. If the penalty is accepted, signal the foul and extend one arm in a pointing fashion (palm down, fingers pointing all together), horizontally in the direction of the offending team. —If the penalty is declined, signal foul, extend one arm in pointing fashion, horizontally, in the direction of the offending team and then give the penalty declined signal. (#10) Then signal the upcoming down.

f. If there is a “double foul” (aka “offsetting fouls”) without “clean hands,” signal one foul, extend one arm, in pointing fashion, horizontally in direction of offending team, repeat this procedure for the foul by the other team, then give the penalty declined signal. —Try to announce a double-foul in the order of occurrence. —Indicate the number of the next down (index finger for one; index finger & middle finger for two; pinky, ring, and middle fingers for three with your index finger and thumb touching each other; closed fist for four).

**IX. Umpire & BJ**  a. Umpire: Cover the ball after completing the penalty mark off and the Referee is in the process of giving the signal for the fouls. b. Both: Communicate with the Referee the game clock status and if it’s a 25-second or 40-second play clock for the *Ready for Play* signal. —Signal “hot clock” by spinning your index finger in front of you, signal “no clock” by crossing your wrists at your waist, signal a 25-second play clock with one hand doing a “bump” signal, signal a 40-second play clock with both hands doing a “bump” signal. —BJ, also signal the upcoming down to the Referee. —Umpire, say the upcoming down to the Referee. —If the foul occurred within the last two-minutes of either half, make sure you get the option to start the game clock on the ready for play or on the snap from the offended team only if you have a hot clock. **—*Note: The option to start the game clock after a penalty occurs with less than two-minutes in either half on the Ready for Play Signal or on the snap is only done when the game clock status is a hot clock. This option exists even if the foul is declined.***  —If there is a double-foul, even if either foul is declined, then go with the regular clock status from the end of the previous play.

**X. Referee**

a. Indicate if you have a 25-second or 40-second play clock with the BJ using the “bump” signals. —Then, declare the ball ready for play with a Ready for Play signal if the clock is not hot or, if the clock is hot, simply signal to start the clock while sounding your whistle. —A 40-second play clock shall be used following any *defensive-only* penalty, even if the foul is declined.

**XI. All Officials**

a. The official calling the foul is primarily responsible to see that the Referee and Umpire assess the penalty properly in all aspects. —Make corrections as needed for a proper enforcement. *Having said that, make sure you accurately report the foul!*

b. Ensure the Referee knows the game clock status and that we all know if we have a 25-second (fouls by Team A or on a double foul) or 40-second play clock (fouls that occur only by Team B either accepted or declined) on the upcoming ready for play signal. —Communicate the play clock status to the entire crew. —Referee & Umpire communicate to each team on the field. —Flanks must tell each each Head Coach so they know the play clock status and can make appropriate play calls.

c. With less than 2:00 remaining in either half, if the game clock is to *start* on the *Ready for Play* signal after a foul is called on one team, accepted or declined with a hot clock status, the offended team has the choice of starting the game clock on the Ready for Play whistle or on the snap. —*If the game clock is to start on the snap* (stopped clock status), such as after an incomplete pass, out of bounds play, or after a charged team time out, it shall *always start on the snap* regardless of who commits a foul with less than 2:00 in either half.

**SECTION 23: END OF A PERIOD**

**PROCEDURES**

**I. All Officials**

a. Near the end of a period, all officials must be aware of the approximate game time remaining before the start of each play. b. At the end of each half, it is important to know if we are inside 2:00 because timing rules apply on fouls by either team. —Signal “two” across your wristwatch/wrist to each other to show that we are inside two-minutes of a half. Middle officials, talk to each other *“Inside two minutes!”*  c. Flanks, be ready to talk to and listen to your Head Coaches in regards to starting the game clock on the *Ready for Play* or on the snap after a foul by their opponent when the game clock is on a *hot clock status* after enforcement. d. It is important that the BJ (Referee in 4-man) communicate with the crew if the 40-second play clock will expire before or after the game clock reaches 0:00. —Coaches need to know if they have to get a play off or not or they may want to call a time out to force Team A to run a play at the end of a half.

**II. Referee and Umpire and BJ**

a. All three keep each other informed of the remaining playing time. b. BJ, indicate that the previous play ended with less than 40-seconds on the play clock play clock or if Team A has to get a play off to avoid a Delay of Game by signaling with your hands: —If they don’t need to get a play off then repeatedly cross your hands over each other in a “mini-decline” signal slightly in front of your waist; —If they need to run a play, signal this by rapidly spinning your index finger above your head as you point at the Referee. c. BJ, (U in 4-man) inform the Referee at the end of the down if time expired while the ball was in play by double blasting your whistle three times, signal to stop the clock, and then point at the scoreboard and yell out “That’s the quarter! Quarter!.”

d. **When time expires**: Sound the whistle only after the ball is dead. —The termination of a period is then indicated by the Referee holding a ball over his head with one hand while blowing your whistle as you face the press box (if the ball is not available, use a dead ball signal and blow your whistle as you face the press box). —The Referee is primarily responsible for determining the end of any period but only after play is clearly over and there are no fouls to report. —Once the end of the 1st or 3rd quarter is indicated, the BJ will start the one-minute official’s time out. e. At the end of the 4th Quarter, or Overtime, upon the end of the game, the jurisdiction of the officials ends upon the Referee’s declaration that the period has ended. —The Referee will ensure that all continuous action has stopped and that there are no fouls to report before declaring a period is over.

**III. All Officials**

a. At the end of the 1st & 3rd quarters, see that the ball is not disturbed until the exact position for transfer has been determined and written down. —*Write down the team in possession, the upcoming down, distance to the line to gain, the yard line the ball is on, the lateral position of the ball (Position 1-5), the yard line of the line to gain, and the yard line that the clip is on.* b. The Referee will then indicate to the HL that they can now move the chains to the other side of the 50-yard line. c. Review team time outs once the ball is placed to start the next quarter. d. BJ (R in 4-man) time the quarter change as a 60-second official’s time out. —This length may be extended to ensure everyone hydrates properly in hot weather. **IV. Head Linesman Moving the Chains at the End of the Quarter** a. After writing down all the information on your game card, instruct the chain crew as to what they will do as you stand over the clip. —Tell each stake holder where they will go and tell the box holder to set up on the ball at the appropriate yard line. —Example: *“You will end up on the 25, you’ll end up on the 35. You follow the ball. Ready? Here we go.”*

b. Grab the chain and the clip in the palm of your hand and tell yourself which yard line you’re going to and have the stake that is the furthest towards Team B’s end zone lead the way down the field across the 50-yard line. —Jog just off the sideline to the new spot and set the clip on the appropriate yard line while positioned on the restraining line. —Tell the chain crew to stretch the chains taut and make sure that the down box is positioned on the ball. c. Check your game card to ensure that each stake, the clip, and the box are where they’re supposed to be, then signal the upcoming down.

**SECTION 25: ONE-MINUTE INTERMISSIONS (Following Scores)**

**PROCEDURES**

**I. All Officials**

a. Observe players as they move to their sides of the field following a score. b. Jog to your positions, if you walk five steps, that means you *start jogging on your sixth step*! (Evaluators look for this in all dead ball situations and this is how to get noticed for the right or wrong reasons! *Dead ball walking will kill your evaluation!*)

**II. Back Judge and Line Judge**

a. Move downfield assuming responsibility of respective teams after ensuring that the Referee doesn’t want to confer with you. —Following a score, the BJ (LJ in 4-man) will always jog down the sideline of the team that will kickoff.

**III. Back Judge**

a. Time the one-minute intermission between periods and the one-minute intermission after any score. b. When 15-seconds remain in the intermission, sound your whistle in three sharp blasts. —When the time out reaches 60-seconds, blow your whistle three times twice and point at the Referee to indicate that the official’s time out is over.

**IV. Referee & Umpire** a.You will write down the quarter, time remaining, and the new score after the Try, Field Goal, or Safety on your game card’s notes section. b. Feel free to confer for a little bit as needed. Ensure that there are no penalties to enforce on the kickoff. c. Referee: Inform the crew if you want to do Onside Kick Mechanics if it’s late in the game with a close score. d. Referee: Stand at the 3-yard line Try hash mark. After signaling 11-Team R players to the Umpire and HL, jog over to your Free Kick position and then signal the *Ready for Play* upon everyone’s raised hand ready signal.

**V. Head Linesman**

a. Ensure that the Referee has no messages for you or wants you in Onside Kick Mechanics before you move to your Free Kick position.

**VI. Back Judge**

a. Upon the official’s time out expiring, deliver the ball to the kicker between the inbounds lines, instruct the kicker to wait for the Referee’s signal, then quickly return to the sideline.

**SECTION 26: HALFTIME INTERMISSION**

**END OF SECOND PERIOD**

**I. Back Judge (LJ in 4-man)** a. **For Varsity Games Only**: Give the start the clock signal to the clock operator to start the halftime countdown only when each team’s players have entirely exited the field through a gate or tunnel. —For all other levels, start the halftime clock as soon as the 2nd quarter expires. b. 15:00 halftime length *for all high school levels* unless a 20:00 half for Homecoming which the A.D. will inform us of, plus the 3:00 warmup. —***Exception: When a Varsity Homecoming game is scheduled, the JV or Frosh-Soph game before it will be a 10:00 halftime plus the 3:00 warmup. A.D.’s want more time to schedule Homecoming events between games and have agreed to this time.***  —Both Head Coaches may ask us for a shorter half (no less than 10:00) plus the 3:00 warmup for all high school games. We do not ask coaches to shorten halftime on our own accord and we do not tell the clock operator on a game to shorten the halftime duration on our own, either! c. 10:00 halftime for all *youth level games* with no 3:00 warmup). d. Flanks and BJ, when teams are leaving the field and either have to cross paths to exit the field or go through the same exit in order to leave the field, hustle to get in-between the teams as they leave the field at halftime to prevent dead ball fouls as the teams leave the field.

e. Keep other officials informed as to time remaining in the halftime. If the crew leaves the field for the halftime, make sure the crew arrives on the field to start second half at least 2-minutes prior to the end of the halftime duration.

**PRIOR TO THE 2nd HALF KICKOFF**

**I. Flanks & BJ**

a. Check with the Head Coach on your sideline and confirm their second half options based on the decision made at the coin toss to start the game. —In most cases, the team that is kicking will want to kick from the clock. —If you hear nothing, then simply set up a Team K kickoff from the scoreboard end of the field.

b. Work to keep the teams separated when they re-enter the field if the field entrance is at the same location for each team.

**II. Referee and Umpire**

a. Check with other officials regarding second half choices. —When in doubt, the team with the option is receiving and the team that received in the game opening kickoff is kicking from the clock until they tell you different.

**III. Head Linesman**

a. Make certain your chain crew is ready and send them to the receiving team’s 20-yard line.

—Remind them to stay behind the restraining line during the kickoff.

**IV. All Officials** a. Arrive at your kickoff position no later than one minute prior to kickoff. b. There is no need for Captains to come into the center of the field or for us to huddle at the end of halftime unless the Referee tells you to huddle as a crew.

**SECTION 27: OVERTIME PROCEDURE (RESOLVING TIED GAMES)**

**END OF REGULATION PLAY**

**—High School— *Varsity Only*—*1st & 10* from the B25-yard line CIF Procedure for All Varsity Games (there is no Overtime for Frosh-Soph or JV level games).**

**—Youth Leagues— *1st & Goal* from the B10-yard line NFHS Procedure.**

**I. Referee**

a. Direct the teams to their respective team areas. b. Announce or otherwise notify the Press Box that: *“Regulation play has ended with a tie score and there will be a three-minute intermission followed by an extra period of play.”*

**II. All Officials**

a. Gather at the center of the field and review extra period rules and procedures. —Overtime procedures should also be reviewed during halftime if the game is close and there is a chance of the game ending tied after regulation. b. After the three-minute intermission, break to your positions for the coin toss. c. Regular NFHS rules in the CIF Overtime Procedure *(Team B can return an interception or fumble for a touchdown!)* except: **1) If Team A loses possession, then regains possession on a down, then the down will count and it is the next upcoming down unless the ball is dead beyond the line to gain; 2) One charged time out per team per Overtime period; 3) On the 3rd Overtime a team must go for a 2-point Try after a Touchdown.**

—In youth leagues, the ball is dead as soon as Team R possesses the ball. Also, there is no demand that a team has to go for a 2-point Try at anytime.

**III. Back Judge**

a. Ensure the game clock displays 0:00. Ensure the 25/40-second play clock is operational.

**IV. Head Linesman and Line judge**

a. Go to your sideline and remind the Head Coach of the extra period rules, particularly the coin toss and possession option procedures, any succeeding spot penalties that might carry over into Overtime, and having only one charged team time-out per Overtime period.

**COIN TOSS**

**All Officials**

a. After the three-minute officials time out following the end of regulation play, conduct the coin toss just like you would at the start of the game. —The Head Coach of each team has the option to come out on the coin toss with their Captains.

**II. Referee** a.Remind the Captains that the winner of the toss may not defer choice. —Their choices if they win the toss are: *1) being on offense first or second or; 2) which end of the field to use*. —The loser of the coin toss gets the other option. b. If multiple overtimes are used, the team that lost the previous coin toss gets first choice in the next Overtime meeting at midfield without any subsequent coin tosses. —This choice alternates with subsequent Overtime periods until a winner is determined. c. After the decisions are made, position the Team B Captains with their backs to the end of the field that will be used. —Place a hand on the shoulder of the Captain (nearest to the press box) of the team winning the toss. —Stand adjacent to the team (to press box side) that will be on offense first and signal 1st Down. Simultaneously, announce choices if equipped with a field microphone.

**III. All Officials**

a. Immediately move to scrimmage positions and begin play without delay after the coin toss procedure. b. All 25/40-second play clock options remain the same in Overtime.

**ADDITIONAL EXTRA PERIOD**

**I. Referee and Umpire**

a. After a two-minute intermission, bring the captains out again. The Referee obtains the first option from the Captain of the team that had second choice in the previous extra period (only one coin toss for all of Overtime), then gets the second option from the opposing Captain.

**II. Head Linesman, Line Judge, and Back Judge**

a. Perform regular coin toss duties. Immediately move to scrimmage positions and begin

play without delay after the Captain’s choices are made.

**SECTION 28: OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES**

**The following philosophies and practices we use regularly.**

**I. Ball Spotting**

a. As much as possible, on a field that is properly marked with yard-line “ticks,” or hash marks, place the nose of the ball on the front plane of a yard line to begin a new series, particularly after a change of possession.

—For example, if a punt return from the 50-yard line ends halfway between the K33 and K34-yard lines, move the ball back to the 34-yard line because the punt didn’t gain the K33-yard line. ——If the spot is within one-foot of the succeeding yard line, go ahead and spot it at the next yard line, in this example, this is the K33-yard line.

b. On a field marked with only 5-yard stripes, if the change of possession is within a yard of the stripe, then nose the ball onto the front plane of the 5-yard stripe.

**II. Line of Scrimmage (LOS)**

a. Officials will work to keep Team A linemen legal and will call an Illegal Formation only when a lineman is *obviously* in the backfield or where repeated warnings are ignored. —Don’t wait until the 4th quarter to enforce this rule if you let it go all game! b. **Our interpretation shall be**: *If a lineman, particularly the Team A Tackles in a 2-point pass blocking stance, have the toes of one of their feet touching at or within one-yard of the line of scrimmage, and his toes of that foot are pointing forward towards the line of scrimmage while his chest his also facing the line of scrimmage, then consider him to be on the line of scrimmage. If a Guard is in a 2-point stance, consider them on the line of scrimmage if their head is even with or ahead of the Center’s hip. If in a 3-Point Stance, the hand must be at or within one-yard of the line of scrimmage or the head of the lineman must be even with or ahead of the Center’s hip.*  c. If the foot of a Team A lineman, while in a 2-point stance, is more than one-yard behind the line of scrimmage, then it is an Illegal Formation Foul for 5-players in the Backfield.

b. Don’t be technical on a Team A wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off the line of scrimmage or on it to determine if there is a potential *cover-up* for a possible Ineligible Receiver situation or for an Illegal Formation for 5-players in the backfield. —When in question, it is NOT a foul. *If it’s obvious it is a foul, then it’s a foul and call it!*

c. Wide Receivers or Slot Backs lined up outside a Tight End will be ruled on the line of scrimmage and *covering* the Tight End if there is obviously no *stagger* between their alignments between them and the Tight End. —*If in question as to if there’s a stagger or not, then he is not covered up.*

d. Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and shall be completely legal. ***—*NOTE: *Trick Plays are intended to both fool the opponent and sometimes the officials because many of them are illegal! Don’t get caught off-guard! Our goal as officials is to stay mentally strong and not be lulled into not seeing what we must see! It starts with legal formations before every play and a legal snap, or a legal Free Kick, to start each play!***

**III. Bean Bags (Use your blue bean bag first, your black bean bag second)**

a. FUMBLES: Officials shall drop or underhand toss the bean bag only when they clearly see possession of the ball lost. —Flanks, place the bean bag on the yard line of the fumble. —If in the middle of the field, try to hit the spot of the fumble but never toss your bean bag at players, go to the side of them.

b. PUNTS: Officials shall drop/toss their bean bag at the spot the kick is possessed by Team R or the spot of First Touching by Team K. c. Free Kicks: Drop your bean bag on the yard line of Team K First Touching within the 10-yard Neutral Zone on a *grounded* Free Kick. d. Referee on Free Kicks and BJ on Punts, be aware that a Team R possession between the R5-yard line and their goal line is the potential for the Momentum Rule to be applied. —Be ready to rule and drop your bean bag as appropriate.

e. Be accurate. You are marking a potential enforcement spot or Team R’s spot of possession.

f. Do not drop your bean bag after an interception except when it occurs inside the 5-yard line for the Momentum Rule.

**IV. What is a Defensive “Redirect” and Defensive Secondary Play On a Pass Attempt?** a. Under NFHS passing rules, Team B player may legally block any Team A player *behind* the line of scrimmage, and vice versa, at any time under any condition before a forward pass is thrown and during the time the forward pass is in the air. b. Team B may also block any Team A player *beyond* the line of scrimmage, including eligible receivers, provided that it is not yet *apparent* that the Team A eligible receiver is attempting to run a passing route or that it’s not yet *apparent* that the ball carrier (usually the Quarterback) is looking for an open receiver to pass the ball to before the forward pass is thrown. c. If it is *apparent* that a pass attempt is occurring, then Team B may not block, or re-route, a potential Team A eligible receiver who is *beyond* the line of scrimmage. d. ***We must understand that, in both NFHS and the NCAA rules, there is not a “5-yard belt” from the line of scrimmage such as what the NFL has.***  e. To be legal, contact by Team B against a Team A potential eligible receiver must be done in particular ways that don’t violate **Rule 9-2-3d- *“A defensive player shall not: Contact an eligible receiver who is no longer a potential blocker.”*** f. Under NFHS rules, the Team B defender, once it is an apparent pass attempt, essentially must run with the Team A eligible receiver and the NFL concept of “bump & run” pass coverage is an idea that is rarely allowed under NFHS rules with a very limited exception as described in part “h” below. g. Contact of a Team A eligible receiver *beyond* the line of scrimmage is commonly called a “reroute” and must be a legal block per **Rule** **2-3-2.** h. To legally reroute a Team A eligible receiver downfield while Team A is using a *shotgun formation* the block by the Team B defender must occur *simultaneously with the snap* and *at the line of scrimmage* within a split moment of the snap, and *the block must end after one-yard of contact.* —Exception: If the Quarterback appears to run an option-type play to either side of the formation before he then steps back to throw a pass, or it’s a halfback option-type of play, then Team B gets more leeway as it is not yet apparent that a pass play is occurring at this moment. i. To legally block a Team A eligible receiver downfield when Team A is in a direct *hand-to-hand snap* the Team B defender gets more leeway as to how far downfield the “reroute” occurs until it’s *obvious* a pass attempt is occurring or it’s *obvious* the eligible receiver is attempting to run a pass route. —Once in a passing route, contact upon a Team A eligible receiver is allowable but this contact is subjective to the opinion of the covering officials and such contact must clearly not *impede the path or alter the eligible receiver’s stride or body control*, before the pass is thrown to be a foul for *Defensive Illegal Use of Hands*. —The general rule of thumb is: *If an eligible receiver is pushed or knocked off their stride or knocked down while they’re clearly trying to run a pass pattern, we better have a flag!* j. If the downfield contact upon a Team A eligible receiver before the pass is thrown is deemed to be violent enough, then a Personal Foul for an *Illegal Blindside Block* shall be warranted! **(Rule 9-4-3n)** —If the act of *Targeting* or *Spearing* occurs against a Team A eligible receiver while he is looking back at the ball **(Rule 9-4-3m & 2-20-2)** is judged to be *Flagrant*, or an *Illegal Blindside Block* upon the *defenseless player* is judged to be *Flagrant*, then the offending player shall be *Disqualified* **(9-4 Penalty)** k. ***Once it is obvious that a Team A eligible receiver is attempting to run a pass route, Team B is not allowed to “reroute.”*  —*Rule 9-2-3d******is the NFHS version of the NFL’s “Illegal Contact Rule.”***

**V. Defensive Pass Interference**

a. *We must assume that both the Team A and Team B players have an equal opportunity to catch a forward pass that is inflight*.

b. **Actions that constitute *Defensive Pass Interference* include but are not limited to the following categories:**

**i.** Early contact by either a Team B player who is not playing the ball that displaces or restricts the opponent, especially on a pass where the Team A receiver tries to come back to the ball. —**Note:** *Face Guarding* is simply a defender making a play or defending against the receiver without looking back at the ball provided that there is no physical contact that impedes the receiver’s ability to come back to the ball.

**ii.** Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to then make a play on the ball.

**iii.** Grabbing and restricting a Team A receiver’s arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass before the ball arrives.

**iv.** ArmBar where the Team B defender extends an arm across the body of a Team A receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of the fact of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball. **v.** Cutting off or riding the Team A receiver off of his path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.

**vi.** Hooking and restricting a Team A receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that is causing the receiver’s body to turn prior to the ball arriving (commonly called a “corkscrew”).

— *Face Guarding* is legal for a defender. However, any restrictive or blocking contact made by the defender against the receiver who is trying to make a play on the ball before either player touches the ball while the defender *is not looking at the ball*, including accidental tripping with the feet, shall be judged to be Pass Interference! *In particular, be aware of a receiver trying to come back to the ball and contacts the face guarding defender who is not looking back at the ball, this is DPI!*

**VI. Not Defensive Pass Interference:**

a. **Actions that *do not* constitute Defensive Pass Interference include but are not limited to**:

i. When there are tangled feet between both Team A and Team B players and both players are looking back at the ball or neither player is looking back at the ball. —If the receiver is looking back for the ball but the defender is not when their feet tangle, then it’s DPI. —If the defender is looking back at the ball but the receiver is not when their feet tangle, then it’s OPI.

ii. When two Team A and Team B players are making a legitimate play on the ball and they are both clearly focused on gaining possession *without* using the hands or arms to push off the opponent, or there is incidental shoulder-to-shoulder body contact from opposing players coming from different angles, except from contact directly through the back of an opponent.

iii. When the contact is so close to the touching of a pass that we refer to it as *bang-bang* play, pass interference will not be called.

iv. When a Team B defender simply places a hand on a Team A receiver’s body to feel where he is but *does not* initiate a turn or twist, nor a pull or push that restricts or impedes the receiver.

v. Any legal block by a Team B player made *behind* the line of scrimmage. —If Team B grabs, or otherwise tackles with a wrapping motion, a Team A eligible receiver behind the line of scrimmage, it shall be a foul against Team B for *Defensive Illegal Use of Hands*.

**VII. Offensive Pass Interference**

a. **Actions that constitute *Offensive Pass Interference* can only occur on a play when both a forward pass *crosses* the line of scrimmage and a Team A Player commits illegal contact *beyond* the line of scrimmage**:

i. Initiating contact with a Team B player by shoving, straight-arming, or pushing off, thus creating separation in an attempt to then catch a pass.

ii. Driving through a Team B player who has established their position on the field.

iii. An *ineligible receiver* blocking downfield of the Neutral Zone Expanded whose block prevents the Team B player from making a play on the pass.

iv. A Team A *eligible receiver* blocking downfield upon any Team B player on *any* pass that crosses the line of scrimmage *before* the pass is caught or touched. —This is usually on a “pick play” where a Team A eligible receiver blocks the Team B defender who is covering the intended Team A receiver downfield. —For Team A *ineligible linemen* blocking downfield on a pass across the line of scrimmage, we will only call a foul for *Ineligible Receiver Downfield* unless that block directly prevents a Team B defender from getting to the forward pass.

v. Any attempt to play the Team B defender rather than the ball to prevent him from intercepting a pass in flight. —This includes a feet-tangle trip from behind where the Team B defender has position and the Team A receiver is not looking back at the ball while the defender is looking back.

**VIII. Not Offensive Pass Interference**

a. **Actions that do not constitute Offensive Pass Interference include but are not limited to**:

i. A screen pass where the ball is overthrown with the intended Team A receiver behind the line of scrimmage but subsequently lands beyond the line of scrimmage and Team A players are blocking downfield unless such blocking prevents a Team B player from catching the ball.

ii. On a pick play if the Team B *defender* initiates the block upon the Team A *receiver*.

iii. *After* the forward pass has been touched by any Team B player beyond the neutral zone, or during any play in which a Team B player touches the forward pass *behind* the line of scrimmage, or after a forward pass has been touched *beyond* the Neutral Zone Expanded by an Team A eligible receiver all cause the conditions for Pass Interference to expire.

Iv. Any blocking by a Team A player *behind* the line of scrimmage. v. Any Team A ineligible receiver remains ineligible until Team B touches the forward pass. —The ineligible Team A receiver becomes an eligible receiver and may legally touch or catch a forward pass *only* after the forward pass is touched by a Team B player. —It is foul for Illegal Touching of a Forward Pass with a Loss of Down if the ineligible Team A receiver catches or deliberately touches a forward pass unless touched before by a Team B player.

**IX. Other Passing Situations** a. When in question on action against the Passer, it is a foul for Roughing the Passer if the Team B player’s intent is to *punish* as opposed to *tackle* with a wrapping motion to the Passer’s body if contact is made just after the release of the pass.

—Generally, the Team B defender gets a “step-and-a-half” when attempting to tackle the Passer just after the forward pass is thrown in regards to the timing of the tackle or it’s a late hit which results in a Roughing the Passer foul.

b. If an interception by Team B is made near the goal line (inside the one-yard line) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or in end zone and then the ball becomes dead in Team B’s end zone, make the play a Touchback. c. The Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul for “intentional” pass interference was removed in 2023.

**X. Backward Pass vs. Forward Pass**

a. A backward *pass* is any deliberate propulsion of the ball in player possession from the hand(s) that is at or behind a 180-degree perpendicular line to the sideline measured from the point of release of the ball carrier. —A forward pass would be at least 1-degree forward of 180-degrees, in theory.

b. When the passer’s hand starts forward with the ball, rule the pass forward even if he is contacted and the ball then goes backward and the passer is tackled while throwing. c. The original motion of the ball out of the hand is how we determine forward versus backwards passes, not where the ball ends up going. d. When in doubt, the pass shall be ruled forward. If it then hits the ground, we will call it an incomplete pass.

**XI. Catch**

a. If the *process of the catch* includes going to the ground, the receiver must maintain possession of the ball when he contacts the ground to be awarded a catch. —*This means that the ground can cause an incompletion!*

b. These requirements are the same for interceptions and fumble recoveries, especially if landing out of bounds after first gaining possession in bounds.

c. There is a difference in the ball moving in the hands within the receiver’s control and moving from a loss of control. —Understand the difference and apply each case fairly!

d. If the receiver is contacted simultaneously, or immediately after he controls the ball, with one foot down inbounds and he then loses possession, rule the pass incomplete. —This is in line with our classic interpretation of not allowing *cheap fumbles*.

e. A play that would be ruled a catch and fumble in the field of play would be ruled a catch and Touchdown in the end zone.

f. Employ the “*Survive The Stride*” concept to help ensure a pass is complete or incomplete.

g. ***DO NOT ALLOW A CHEAP FUMBLE TO OCCUR FOLLOWING A PASS THAT DIDN’T COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF THE CATCH! WHEN IN DOUBT, IT’S ALWAYS AN INCOMPLETE PASS!***

h. With today’s prevailing “RPO” (Run-Pass-Option) offensive schemes it is vital that officials understand and accurately enforce and apply the NFHS passing rules and interpretations!

**XII. Blocking**

a. Takedowns at the point of attack, those in the open field, within the Tackle Box, and/or affecting the result of the play should be called for Holding, but never behind the play or across the field from the play. —It is never a holding foul for simply laying on top of an opponent.

b. If there is a potential Team A holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no effect on the play, then Holding will *not* be called.

c. If there is a potential for Team B holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack or designed pass play and has no effect on the play, then Holding will not be called.

d. For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is an Illegal Block in the Back. —The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or simply displaces the opponent’s center of gravity which then prevents the tackle as the ball carrier is running by.

e. A grab of the potential Team A receiver’s jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet or shoulders away from him before the pass is thrown is Defensive Illegal Use of Hands. —If this occurs when the forward pass is airborne then this is Defensive Pass Interference.

f. Team A holding can be called even if the Quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of a double foul that causes the down to be repeated.

g. Illegal Block in the Back fouls can be called against Team R on a Scrimmage Kick Fair Catch only if the point of attack is involved or contact is ruled a Personal Foul for an Illegal Blindside Block.

h. Rarely should you have a hold on a double-team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is then pulled back. —Generally speaking, it’s very difficult to justify a holding call by you if the opponent is being driven downfield by the blocker(s)!

i. When in question as to if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the

field of play.

j. On plays downfield, it’s not a holding worthy of being called until the act occurs just as the ball carrier passes by the spot of the hold unless it’s a takedown hold or is overtly blatant before the ball carrier reaches that point. —If the ball carrier is tackled before that spot on the field is reached, then a foul is not warranted because they act had no bearing on the play.

**XIII. Free Blocking Zone (four-yards to either side of the ball & three-yards in front of or behind the ball)**

a. Blocking below the waist is permitted in the Free Blocking Zone when:

i. All players involved in the blocking are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.

ii. The contact is in the zone and is *immediate with the snap* without any delay of any kind, regardless of the formation.

iii. Any blocking below the waist must occur against the opposing lineman who is either directly lined up over the blocking lineman, or in the gap adjacent to him.

iv. Legal blocking in the back, legal blindside blocks, and legal horse collar tackles are allowed within the confines of the Free Blocking Zone if they meet the rules exceptions or interpretations for them. —Offensive linemen are also allowed to block an opponent in their blindside if it is along the line of scrimmage and between the Tackles such as on a “trap block.” —A horse collar tackle that occurs between the Tackles is considered to be legal.

v. Any type of high-low blocking by two blockers (one engaging above the waist and the other engaging below the waist) against an opponent is a Personal Foul for a Chop Block.

**XIV. Kicking**

a. The Team K restraining line for onside and short pooch kickoffs shall be officiated as a plane and any Team K player, other than the kicker or holder, breaking the plane before the ball is kicked shall be called Encroachment upon Team K.

b. For deep kickoffs, the foot of the Team K player shall be on the ground and beyond the line for Encroachment to be called.

c. When in doubt as it relates Team R gaining possession at the Team R goal line, it is a Touchback vs. allowing the runner to return the kick at Team R’s goal line.

**XV. Plays at The Sideline**

a. If *forcible contact* on a tackle attempt occurs *after* the majority of the ball carrier’s body has crossed the plane of the sideline, then it’s a Personal Foul for contact out of bounds.

b. If the whistle has blown and a runner continuing to advance down the sideline has eased up, contact by the opponent against the runner is a Personal Foul. —It won’t be a foul against Team B if the ball carrier who stepped out of bounds is still running downfield and is then engaged with an, otherwise, legal tackle.

c. If a Free Kick crosses the plane of the sideline when it is then touched by a Team R player who is also out of bounds, then it is a foul against Team K for a Free Kick Out of Bounds. —If the ball has *not yet* crossed the plane of the sideline when an out of bounds Team R player touches the Free Kick, then the ball is simply dead and it’s now Team R’s ball at that spot. d. If a Team R player *deliberately* goes out of bounds to then touch a Free Kick that’s inbounds, then it is a foul for Illegal Participation against Team R and is enforced from the previous spot.

**XVI. When in Doubt**

a. The runner fumbled the ball and was not down (if you didn’t see him down, then he wasn’t down).

b. The pass is incomplete vs. the ball was caught and then fumbled.

c. If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, it’s a legal hit.

d. Runner continuing down sideline: If the whistle has blown and player has eased up, it is a foul if contact by the opponent is flagrant enough. —Be alert and be sure any action is not part of the initial play before calling a foul.

e. A runner with a foot down inbounds while in possession with the ball crossing the plane of the *goal line extended* is a Touchdown.

f. When in question, the runner did not step out of bounds unless you *saw* him step out.

g. It’s not a foul unless you saw the entire act from *start-to-finish*.

**XVII. End of Game**

a. If Team A goes into a victory formation, officials should use common sense officiating and make every attempt to not call fouls that have no bearing on the outcome of the game.

b. Unsportsmanlike Conduct and all Personal Foul/Player Safety Fouls shall always be called regardless of the time of the game or the score.

c. If the Referee halts play for any reason, the game is *suspended* and not *over.*

d. The officials jurisdiction ends when the Referee declares and signals the game is over. —Be game aware, if the game ends on game-deciding play, we won’t penalize players for celebrating or coming onto the field as long as they don’t taunt their opponent.

**XVIII. Miscellaneous**

a. When issuing an official Sideline Warning, throw the flag during the play at the spot on the sideline the foul occurred and then continue to officiate. —Flanks, always try to give the Head Coach a prior verbal warning if possible.

b. Five-yard Face Mask Fouls are rare, but if it is a clear “grasp and then let go” without a pull of any kind, it can be called. —A straight-arm, without a grasp or hard blow, to the opponent’s head by the *ball carrier-only* is perfectly legal but can not be used by any other player.

c. When in question, it is a 15-yard Personal Foul for a Late Hit, Illegal Blindside Block, a Defenseless Player, Targeting, and Face Mask fouls.

d. In situations where the game clock fails to start or stop as directed by the officiating crew: -If the issue is a continuous problem, the game administration shall be contacted by the Referee and who will then tell the clock operator that they will be replaced if they do not do as directed; -If problems continue, the Referee is authorized to order the clock operator to be replaced. -In extreme circumstances, the game clock will be kept on the field with an official’s digital wristwatch. -If the P.A. announcer disparages the officials or opponent, or announces what is happening during the play, warn them or replace them based on the severity. —The LJ will keep the game time in these rare circumstances and relay the remaining time after every play.

**XIX. Chain Gang** a. The chain gang shall be a competent crew that is disciplined to await for the Head Linesman’s commands to move or change the Down Box, as well as being able to hustle downfield as needed when a new series of downs is established. —If needed, the Crew Chief will have any member(s) of the chain crew switched around or replaced if they fail to meet the expectations of the crew. b. The chain gang shall have their cell phones put away and the ringer off at all times except during halftime. —If they have their cell phones out during the game and refuse your request to put it away, then halt the game and notify the A.D. to replace that chain gang member. c. The chain gang shall always be positioned on the six-foot restraining line off the sideline out of bounds and always on the sideline *opposite* of the Press Box, regardless of which sideline the home team uses. d. The distance of ten exact yards is measured from the inside edges of each stake. —On a new series of downs, the inside edge of the front stake at the down box shall be lined up with the front nose of the football. —A piece of white athletic tape will be affixed around the chain at precisely the 5-yard mark. e. The HL must place their toe down for the front stake on a new 1st & 10 series and for the Down Box to be properly placed on every down. —Never assume that the chain crew knows what you’re thinking when it comes to spotting the line of scrimmage, ensure they do it correctly before every play! f. The Head Linesman will signal to move the chains by motioning with both hands slightly above their head, elbows at chin level, in a *“come down here”* motion with their open palms facing their head. g. To move the Down Box-only for the next down, the Head Linesman will, upon the signal of the upcoming down by the Referee and once all players are clear of each other, signal the upcoming down to the Down Box Attendant by turning to the Down Box and say and signal the upcoming down and point to where they need to move to. —Back-up to the sideline and place your toe on the ground to have the Down Box placed exactly at the proper spot. —While moving the Down Box or the chains before every play, signal the upcoming down on your hand above your head until the Down Box or chains are set. h. On a new series, the chain clip will be placed on the front plane of the closest 5-yard stripe to the front stake by a person dedicated to placing the chain clip or by the Down Box Attendant. i. If a play comes in the direction of the chain crew that passes the numbers, they are to be instructed to drop the chains backwards and move backwards to avoid being ran into. j. Remind the chain crew of the number one rule:***Never move until you instruct them to move!*** k*.* Following any scrimmage kick with a change of possession, once the play is over the Head Linesman will signal at the chain crew to hold their position. —The Head Linesman must wait for the Referee to point at them whereupon the Head Linesman will signal to release the chain crew to the new spot. l. For a kick off, the chain gang shall go down to the R20-yard line and wait there. m. In a goal-to-go situation, the chains shall be laid flat near the Team Box and well away from the sideline. —The Down Box Attendant or the “clip monitor” should place a white bean bag behind the Down Box stake as a back up marker should play force the Down Box to move. n. The Down Box Attendant, whenever possible, shall place layers of white athletic tape on the Down Box and use a ball point pen to write down the yard line of each down on the tape. —On a new 1st & 10 series, circle the yard line you write down to indicate that particular yard line was the start of a new series. —In rare, but crucial circumstances, this will help the prevent the crew from losing a down and for them to not lose track of the proper placement of the chains should the clip become detached or malfunction.

**Section 29 EXAMPLES, PHILOSOPHIES, & THE OFFICIAL’S MANIFEST**

**I. *25/40-Second Play Clock***

a. The use of the 25-second play clock demands that the Referee both “*chop and whistle*” the Ready for Play Signal. —The Referee will only “*whistle and wind*” or “*chop and whistle”* on a 40-second play clock after a defensive-only injury officials time out or following any foul called only against the defense only. —On a “wind and whistle” with a *hot clock* following an official’s time out, the Referee will simply blow his whistle and signal to start the game clock with Signal 2. This action will cause the play clock to start, too.

b. On all Free Kicks the 25-second play clock is used, the Referee will whistle and signal the Ready for Play with either the “chop motion” of Signal 1, or he has the option of signaling by aggressively pointing at the kicker or using both arms in a “bring it down here” motion.

c. The first play that follows any legal free kick, the first play that follows any scrimmage kick, or the first play that follows any changes of possession will always be a 25-second “chop and whistle” unless a defensive foul causes that down to be replayed.

d. On any Try or Untimed Down, a 25-second play clock will be used with a “chop and whistle” unless a defensive foul causes the down or Try to be replayed.

e. The 40-second play clock will be used on all scrimmage plays *after* the first play following the change of possession ends, unless an official’s time out occurs (other than for moving the chains on a gained 1st down) or a charged team time out occurs. —If the pass is caught or incomplete, if the ball stays inbounds or goes out of bounds, if a 1st Down is gained on a play or not, then the 40-second clock will start after the covering official(s) complete their signal (dead ball, incomplete, or stop the clock) and whistle the play dead. f. Once the calling officials complete their signal, the play clock operator will count “one-thousand-one” to himself and then start the 40-second play clock timer. *—When the 40-second play clock is running after a play, the Umpire moving away from the ball after spotting it constitutes the “Ready for Play Signal” in regards to substitution rules, the establishment of the Neutral Zone, and sets the line to gain following a 1st down for enforcement of a dead ball foul by Team A after this act of moving away from the ball.*

g. When counting down on the 40-second play clock, if the Umpire has not spotted the ball by the 25-seconds remaining mark:

1. If the game clock is stopped, The BJ will initiate a “silent bump” signal to the Referee who will return the signal to indicate that you are re-setting to a 25-second play clock count and will start the 25-second clock and lower their arm once the ball is set. —There will be no whistles, just a “silent bump” signal;
2. If this happens *while the* *game clock is running*, there are two ways to handle this— **a)** without stopping the game clock the BJ and R will signal a single “bump” to reset to 25-seconds without stopping the game clock if the Umpire is within few steps of getting the ball spotted and then start the new 25-second count once the ball is finally spotted; or, **b)** if the Umpire is clearly nowhere near getting the ball spotted when the 40-second play clock has reached 25-seconds remaining, and the Bj and/or Referee determine that an unfair advantage is being gained, then the BJ and/or Referee will blow their whistle and stop the game clock. —*Be particularly sensitive to this situation with less than 2:00 in either half and it is a tight game! —*You will signal with a single bump and say loudly two-times, “*We are re-setting to 25!*” —Once the Umpire gets the ball spotted, the Referee will then signal and whistle a “wind and whistle” to start both the game clock and the 25-second play clock simultaneously.

 **Note: Your SmartRef play clock timer will vibrate when the 40-second play clock reaches 25-seconds remaining.**  —It is important that both Head Coaches are told by the Flanks that the play clock is being reset so they can adjust accordingly!

**II. Play Clock Time Remaining Signals**

a. To indicate how much time is remaining on the play clock countdown, the BJ (R in 4-man) will indicate 10-seconds remaining by holding your open hand directly over your head with your open palm facing the QB. —The Referee in 4-man will say loudly “ten seconds!” loudly and keep holding your hand up. b. When there are 5-seconds remaining, lower your hand to your chest and begin a second-by-second count down by moving your hand, with the open palm facing down, from your chest to directly out at your side with your arm extended. —The Referee will say loudly “five!” When he starts the five-second countdown. c. Upon the count reaching “zero,” if the ball has not been snapped, blow your whistle, throw your flag straight up and slightly in front of you, signal to stop the clock, and then signal Delay of Game to the Referee who will announce the foul. —In 4-man, the Referee will simply announce the penalty from this point.

d. It is expected for all contests that the BJ (5 or 7-man) or Referee (4-man) use the ReadyRef or SmartRef play clock timers to be worn on their belt. —This will keep your eyes up on your pre-snap priorities while feeling the countdown vibrate rather than taking your eyes off your keys to see a wristwatch’s countdown display. e. All officials are expected to wear a digital athletic-style wristwatch that is predominantly black or gray with a black band that features a countdown timer as a back-up to the play clock and game clock should either fail. Casio or Timex Ironman are good brands.

**III. Referee *Ready for Play* Signaling**

a.***For the Referee, you will have one of only four things to do prior to any single play:***

1. ***Chop & Whistle*** *for any 25-second play clock when there is no hot clock or when there is 40-second play clock due to a defensive injury or defensive foul only and there is no hot clock;*
2. ***Wind & Whistle*** *for any hot clock following an official’s time out other than for moving the chains on a 1st down;*
3. ***Silent Wind (****no whistle) on a play that makes or passes the line to gain inbounds, signal 1st down, then signal to start the game clock without a whistle when the ball is spotted by the Umpire.*
4. ***The Upcoming Down Only, or Signal 1st Down On a Gained 1st Down Out Of Bounds (this occurs on the majority of your plays).***b. *In the case of a Team B injury, Team B helmet coming off, or a Team B-only foul that occurs, upon the official’s time out concluding, the BJ and Referee will communicate a double-bump (with both arms simultaneously) to show that we have a 40-second play clock and will “whistle and chop,” or “whistle and wind” the Ready for Play in when the time out ends depending on the clock status.* c.***It is vital that the Flanks communicate to each team, but especially Team A, if there is a 25-second play clock or a 40-second play clock following an official’s time out! —Their strategy and play calling depends on that information we give them!***d. *Don’t forget, with less than 2:00 remaining in either half, only if the game clock status is a hot clock*, *the team that was fouled upon has the option to have the game clock start on the Ready for Play signal or the snap!*

e.**Referee:** Be *demonstrative and deliberate* when you do have a “chop and whistle” or a “wind and whistle.” —Blow your whistle loudly for at least one full second in these situations. That way the clock operators know to start the clocks correctly and the teams know that the snap is about to start.

**IV. Points of Emphasis**

**1.1 Targeting & Dangerous Contact Fouls (9-4-3m)**

a. **Targeting** is defined as direct contact by a player into the head or neck of an opponent (any *forcible* contact above the opponent’s shoulders). —The offending player typically uses his helmet to commit Targeting but it may also occur with any other part of his body such as his shoulders, arms, elbow, hand, knee, fist, forearm, etc. b. Targeting is always a Personal Foul but not always worthy of a Disqualification under NFHS rules, this is different than the current NCAA rules. *—****A Disqualification for Targeting is warranted if the act of contact is done with such force it clearly endangered the safety, particularly if the offender took direct aim at his opponent’s head/neck area, of both the player being contacted and/or the player initiating the contact, or if the act of Targeting occurred on a Defenseless Player*. —Such force is considered *flagrant* which, therefore, is worthy of disqualification.** c. In the following cases, these will always result in *Disqualification* for illegal flagrant contact above the shoulders:

1. Clotheslining *with force* across the throat/neck or head;
2. Forcible blows to the throat or neck with the arm/hand or knee/foot/leg;
3. Punching with a closed fist (even if the strike misses);
4. Elbowing (even if the strike misses);
5. Kneeing (even if the strike misses);
6. Kicking/stomping (not stepping on someone but a forcible stomp or kick -even if the strike misses). —In all these cases, a closed fist punch, elbow, knee, kick, or stomp will result in disqualification if directed into or at any part of an opponent’s body, even if the attempted blow misses. d. Do not confuse these actions with the CIF’s added definition (2021) of a “fight.” A “fight” takes at least two participants, one from each team, engaged in *mutual combative strike attempts* against each other. —One player punching another is merely *combative striking* of an opponent and is not a “fight” under CIF definition.

d. “A *Defenseless Player* is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury.” —*The ball carrier, including the QB while he has the ball, is NEVER a Defenseless Player*. e. Examples of a Defenseless Player include: **1)** a Passer *after* he has released the ball -this includes other players who are not the QB who throw a legal forward pass (a player is not a *passer* until he has released a legal forward pass); **2)** a Kicker *after* they have clearly legally kicked the ball and have not yet moved to participate while the ball status is still a kick (or on a Free Kick, moved downfield 5-yards) in the play even if it’s a Rugby-style punt (a player is not a Kicker until they kick a legal Free Kick or Scrimmage Kick); **3)** a Receiver or Defender who is looking back at the Quarterback while running a passing route, or while in the act of attempting to catch a pass, or *after* a pass is either clearly uncatchable by the players involved or upon a receiver after the pass is intercepted by Team B; **4)** a Team R player trying to secure possession of a kick; **5)** a player on the ground including a sliding ball carrier; **6)** a player who receives an illegal blindside block; **7)** a player obviously out of the play; **8)** a ball carrier who is clearly stopped. **9)** A player who initiates a “missile-like” hit on an unsuspecting opponent where their body is horizontal to the ground in flight. **10.**An “upwards thrust” with the shoulder or head into the back or side of an unsuspecting player. **11.** An otherwise forceful shove or charge into a Defenseless Player is guilty of a Personal Foul for Unnecessary Roughness/Illegal Blindside Block. —Forceful blindside contact, such as a Trap block by a pulling lineman, is legal if it occurs “in-between the Tackles” on a play from scrimmage.

f. If the forceful act upon a *defenseless player* is deemed *flagrant* enough to possibly cause serious injury to either player, then it is worthy of a Disqualification. g. In the case of a Kicker who kicks a Rugby-style punt, treat him just like you would a Passer who has just released a pass. —He may be legally contacted if there is an immediate act to tackle him just as he is kicking the ball. —A kicker under this scenario, just a like a passer, loses his protected status once the kick is over because it is possessed or when the kicker moves to participate in the play. Only then is the special status of an *Automatic 1st Down* terminated for a roughing call.

h. A *Defenseless Player* or *Blindside Player* may be properly engaged with both an *open hand or closed hand blocking technique* per ***Rule 2-3-2a&b*** that stops an opponent in their tracks or knocks them down but not with such force that they go flying “ass-over-tea kettle.” —Such hits and blocks must be of a nature that they are not unnecessarily violent acts unto themselves per CIF Statewide directive. i. A receiver going up to catch a pass may also be properly engaged by a defender with a “Rugby-style” wrapping motion tackling technique into the body of the receiver no matter how much force is involved provided that the receiver is not subsequently driven into the ground. —A receiver is no longer a *defenseless player* once they have clearly gained possession of the loose ball and made a *football move.* j. Keep in mind, a player who delivers a “frontside block” to the frame of an opponent (Rule 2-3-2b(2)) with his shoulder/chest/arms to the chest or stomach of their opponent (a *chest-to-chest* block) may hit their opponent as hard as they can without a penalty being warranted, even on “crackback blocks!” —Any contact “in-between the Tackles” will never warrant an *Illegal Blindside Block*!

k. *Whenever proper blocking or wrapping tackle techniques are not used against a defenseless or blindside player, then our judgement must determine if the force used is worthy of a Personal Foul call by us.* l. *The player in possession of the ball is NEVER a defenseless player!*

m. **Illegal Helmet Contact (9-4-3i)** does not morph into *Targeting* unless the contact is made above the shoulders of the opponent. —Illegal Helmet Contact also involves contact to an opponent’s body (this is different verbiage than the NCAA’s definition of “Targeting”).

n. Under NFHS rules, there are three types of *Illegal Helmet Contact*, any of which can become *Targeting* if the contact is initiated above the opponent’s shoulders:

**Spearing:** Lowering the crown or top of the helmet into an opponent regardless if the player doing the Spearing has the ball or not. —Spearing becomes Targeting if the first point of contact is to the opponent’s head/neck.

**Butt-Blocking:** Lowering the top of the helmet into an opponent to deliver a punishing blow like a “head-butt.”

**Face-Blocking:** Driving the face mask while the head is positioned ahead of the offender’s body, or uses a head-butt-driving motion with the face mask into an opponent in an attempt to punish the opponent.

——*All these fouls not only can be called against a tackler or a blocker, but also upon the ball carrier as well!*

**NOTE 1:** You will often hear people demand that we throw our penalty markers because a “helmet-to-helmet” blow occurred. *Contact between opponent’s heads are a given in this sport, that’s why NOCSAE approved helmets are mandatory!*  —The discernment on your part must be determined by the thought *“was the head contact actually illegal and which specific illegal act was it?*” Don’t fall for the classic “appeal to pity” from the crowd or coaches when they cry out for a foul call by you! —***A foul call by you demands a specific discernible illegal act by the player!*** A mere coincidental “*clash-of-heads”* is not worthy of a foul call, even if players are knocked unconscious by this, otherwise, *incidental contact!*

**NOTE 2:** Another issue you have to be concerned about is was the player who made the contact initially in a motion to make an otherwise legal tackle? —If the opponent who is contacted suddenly *turns into the hit* after the hitter is already committed to his otherwise legal tackle or block, then you will ***not*** have a foul. You may have a knocked-out Quarterback on your hands but the act of a hit must specifically be illegal with a specific rule to warrant a foul call on your part! —*These explanations are an official NFHS rules interpretation!*

**NOTE 3: *The game has changed and it is of the utmost importance that these safety rules are stringently, but accurately, enforced at all levels! Yet, we must respect the inherent brutality of football and keep our individual feelings and emotions out of our decisions as officials! In other words, be specific and scientific!***

**1.2 Incapacitated Players and Medical Professionals (3-5-10)**

a. If a player is obviously experiencing symptoms of a concussion, then you will not allow that player to play the rest of the day. —This is for all levels of any game you officiate, *no matter what!* *A doctor can never clear a player who appeared to be concussed and then re-enter into the same game!!!*  b. This is Statewide CIF policy and the same policy the KCOA will enforce at the youth levels for both player safety and avoiding potential personal liability against any one of us in a court of law! c. Symptoms of a concussion include eyes fluttering into the back of the eyelids, dilated pupils, slurred speech, dizziness, very painful headache, a “deer in the headlights” look about them, being unaware as to where you are, and very slow reactions, amongst others. d. *If you happen to see these symptoms before medical help arrives, then you will decide that the player is done for the day, no matter what!* —If you are uncertain, call an official’s timeout and tell the Head Coach that the player in question needs to be examined by trained medical personnel and make sure that happens before play resumes.

e. You will not go out of your way to make this decision if medical aid is already on the scene. —If they are there, then they are the ones who make that call. High school staff are trained to handle this. f. If it is a youth game, use common sense and get the onsite medical help. g. *Remember, those parents expect their kids to walk into their home that night rather than have to go visit their kid in a hospital or worse!*  h. Write down on your game card the game time and time on your watch when a player is being removed for an apparent head injury and hold onto that game card in case there is a lawsuit. They happen from time-to-time.

i. You will not physically assist an injured player in anyway. This includes stretching a player who is having heat cramps. —You are not a medical professional. Your well-intended actions could cause an unknown injury to become worse than it already was. j. We are not allowed rebutton a player’s chin straps. If a chin strap can’t be properly buttoned after an immediate attempt, call an official’s time to prevent a snap from going off before the unbuttoned chin strap can be dealt with. —If it still can’t be fixed by the player after 25-seconds, then have the player replaced. k. You may help a player up off the ground with your hand if they’re asking or motioning for help up.

**1.3 Sideline Management (9-8-1k Penalty/9-8-2/9-8-3)**

a. Teams, coaching staff, and all training equipment, tables, and tents must be within the Team Box that extends from each 25-yard line and not within the 6-foot space between the Team Box and the sideline. b. The team is allowed up to three coaches who may enter the 6-foot space to call a play when the ball is dead but must go back into the Team Box once the QB begins to call signals “under center.”

c. It is entirely a safety issue for yourself and team personnel to keep your sidelines clear! —In the past, officials locally and nation-wide have collided with coaches, non-players, cameramen, and even Athletic Directors who were standing where they shouldn’t be resulting in fractured skulls, career ending knee surgeries, concussions, and broken bones along with civil litigation lawsuits. —Don’t be a “dick” about it but it’s your due diligence to make sure that 6-foot area in front of the Team Box is clear at the snap so that you have room to work without running into anyone or being visually obstructed by a non-player or coach. —Be polite and allow a team to work with you and remind them to get back as many times as it takes as long as they are actually getting back. It’s when they ignore you, are openly defiant of your requests, or you’re having to avoid people where they shouldn’t be that a sideline warning and/or subsequent sideline violation fouls are warranted.

d. If a non-player is on the field during play penalize him for Illegal Substitution which is enforced as a Succeeding Spot Foul unless that player influences or moves to participate in the play which you would then penalize as an Illegal Participation Foul penalized under the *All But One Principle*. e. If a coach is on the field during play it is Unsportsmanlike Conduct charged to that particular coach.

h. If someone not associated with the team (this includes A.D.’s or a school Principal) is standing where they shouldn’t, politely have game administration deal with it. —If they interfere with play on the field apply the Inadvertent Whistle Rule, or even award a Touchdown if their acts prevented a score, and have game administration remove them from entire facility. —If they are simply too close to the sideline and/or you run into them, simply call an official’s time out after the play and kindly remind them that they need to stay back and have school administration deal with them. There is no foul for this kind of scenario.

f. In the rare case, but it has happened, of an A.D. or Principal on the field complaining about the officiating, call an Official’s Time Out. —The official on that sideline and the Referee will address them and hear them out but with the caveat that you inform them that they are infringing on the Head Coach’s duties and if they do it again they will be removed from the entire facility by game administration. —This type of incident will be written up in an official CIF Game Report.

g. Flanks, do your best to keep a Head Coach out of trouble, especially if he’s mad at a call and is on the field after a play. —Go escort him back to the Team Box and do your best to placate his concerns. If you can prevent an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul then do so, but it will take good people skills and hustle on your part! —You often “lose” a Head Coach when you penalize them “instantly” when “all they want is an explanation,” and when you lose the coach, you often lose the team with him. —Also, work to make sure coaches are not coming out onto the field to call plays. Politely remind them to stay on the sideline. —If the coach is too far out, especially closer to the numbers than the sideline, please go over to him, let him call his play, and then remind him that he can’t be that far out. Go escort him back to the sideline if necessary. Work with them but not “for” them, you’re not their buddy.

h. We must have the attitude that we’ll listen to anything a Head Coach has to say to us provided that there are no insults of one’s character. i. When it comes to Assistant Coaches, we only listen to them ask technical questions. —We will not tolerate them arguing with us, pointing out what they think are missed calls repeatedly, or berating officials. —Warn as much as you feel is needed before you have to throw a flag. —Assistant Coaches are there to coach players, the Head Coach gets to argue with us and advocate for his team! —Remind a Head Coach that their Assistant Coaches are not allowed to argue with us whenever this issue arises. They can bring an issue up to the Head Coach and then the Head Coach can bring it up to us.

j. Flanks, anytime a Head Coach wants to hear an explanation from the Referee and the Referee comes to your sideline to give an explanation, you will be there with the Referee so you can both hear what he says to the Head Coach and be able to explain to the coach anything that may come up later regarding it, but also as a witness to what the Referee actually “said” versus what the Head Coach says they “heard.” —Some coaches want to hear something other than what they are being told. —Some will even purposefully not tell the truth, on occasion, regarding what they were told by you so that they can paint themselves in a good light and the officials in a bad light to media, administration, and even to the CIF office. It happens.

k. Keeping a good sideline is not the “Kern County way” of doing things, as some out of the area teams have infamously quipped to us in the past, it is the *National Federation* *& NCAA* way of doing things! —Flanks are expected to keep a good sideline no matter who the team or Head Coach is at all levels!

**1.4 Pace of Play**

a. The crew must be diligent and aggressive in their dead ball officiating to have a good pace of play. —If you’re standing around a lot after a play doing nothing, then chances are you’re hurting your crew’s overall performance! b. Flanks, get a fresh ball in on incomplete passes. Umpires, hustle to get the ball spotted. c. The ball should never touch the ground on ball relays. —Flanks and Umpires move towards each other to make an easier accurate underhanded throw from about 10-or-12 yards apart from each other, not throws from half-way across the field, and never throw overhanded. —If the Umpire is busy dealing with players then the BJ can come in on ball relays and assist or the Flank will need to run it into the Umpire. d. Wild relay throws look awful! Always throw underhanded! Overhanded throws or wildly inaccurate tosses will result in a downgraded evaluation! e. Remember, officiate the players until they separate after the play, then go get the ball.

f. If a team only has one game ball on incomplete passes, then the BJ needs to relay the ball to the Flanks who will come into the middle of the field then to the Umpire (the Referee can spot the ball from the Umpire if he chooses to), or if the Flanks have the ball after an incomplete pass, they will relay the ball to the BJ who is moving in towards the LOS, then the Umpire. —Flanks, don’t spectate once the ball is dead! Hustle into the field and participate with your crew on ball relays!

g. With today’s no-huddle quick tempo offenses it is pertinent that the Umpire get the ball spotted as quickly as possible and then move away from the ball immediately. —The action of the Umpire moving away from the ball when the 40-second play clock is running is, by NFHS interpretation, the *Ready for Play signal* in regards to substitution rules, establishing the Neutral Zone, and establishing the line to gain on a gained 1st down.

h. There are no “match up” substitution rules in NFHS such as there are for the NCAA and NFL. —As soon as the Umpire spots the ball with an running 40-second play clock, move to your pre-snap position immediately. —The offense can snap the ball at any point after the Umpire moves away from the spot!

i. **1st Down, move the chains:** —This is where we can stink or shine like a star as a crew. j. When it’s a gained 1st down in bounds, the Umpire will will hustle to get the ball spotted as quickly as possible. —If the play ends near the sideline, the Flank will tell and indicate to the Umpire and Referee what the status of the clock is. —As soon as the Umpire spots the ball he and the covering Flank will signal to the Referee to start the clock with a circular motion with his index finger and wrist, or signal that there is no hot clock by crossing his wrists at his waist. —The Referee will start the clock as soon as the Umpire sets it down, or, with less than 2:00 in either half, ensure that at least the Down Box is near the new line of scrimmage and then start the clock with a “Silent Wind” when the game clock is to start after a gained 1st down inbounds. k. With less than 2:00 in either half, the Umpire will stay over the ball preventing the snapper from touching the ball until the Down Box reaches the new line of scrimmage *(this is the only time with a running 40-second play clock that the Umpire will stand over the ball to prevent a snap—tell the offense “We have to wait on the chains!” as you are standing over the ball)* to ensure the ball is not snapped until the Referee signals to start the game clock with a silent wind or the Box arrives at the new line of scrimmage if the play ended out of bounds. —When the Referee starts the clock the Umpire will point at the snapper and say “OK!” as he is moving to his pre-snap position. —Referee, do not wait for the chains to get set to start the clock unless in an end of the hand scenario! If it is near the end of a half, then you can wait for them as needed if it’s a close game but normally you do not wait for the chains to get established to start the clock. The chains will get set up on the Down Box after you start the clock in most instances.

l. If the gained 1st down is *out of bounds*, the Referee will make no signals except for a 1st down signal.

**1.5 Unsportsmanlike Conduct (9-8-1)**

a. Taunting and excessive celebrations continue to be a topic of enforcement. —There is ZERO tolerance for these actions at the amateur level of football. b. Standing over an opponent while leering at him, holding the ball out at or waving at a pursuing opponent, pointing at the scoreboard, choreographed moves, gestures or taunting words directed at the opponent during or after a play are all warranted for an Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul. —Excessive celebration includes throwing the ball, tossing the ball up into the air, spiking the ball, holding the ball outwards in a pose and then dropping it, spinning the ball, taking the helmet off, diving or flipping *unnecessarily* into the end zone, using the pylons or goal post pads to celebrate, making demonstrative gestures that include posing, a *largesse* 1st down signal, throat slash (DQ), crotch grab (DQ), dancing, or six-gun shooting are all examples of Unsportsmanlike Conduct. —If you can get to a player and talk him down from his actions, then that’s good dead ball officiating. — However, there are some instances that every one of these acts must have a flag for, particularly taunting and using the ball to celebrate! —By rule, the player must either drop or set the ball down or hand it to an official when a play is over which you can turn into a Delay of Game rather than an Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul. Some acts are egregious enough to warrant a Disqualification. Know what is appropriate.

c. We expect players to celebrate plays with their teammates provided there are no choreographed actions or excessiveness that makes a mockery of the game. —Chest bumps, high fives, screaming and running, and even praying while kneeling or pointing up to the heavens are all acceptable forms of celebrating a play. —Whenever possible, allow a coach to correct his player’s behavior, particularly in minor instances.

d. In instances where you know a team member said an Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul but don’t know exactly who said it, it will go as an unassigned Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul. —Do not assign these fouls to a Head Coach! We want to get the person responsible whenever possible and not assign someone else’s illegal act to someone who had nothing to do with the act.

e. Never make a Personal Foul into an Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul. —This is an idea from the NCAA rules that is not in the NFHS rules. Personal fouls and Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls each have their own realm of enforcement that we can’t justify mixing together on our own.

f. Following a Touchdown, it is imperative that the non-signaling official (on plays not in goal line this is the nearest Flank’s responsibilities; in goal line, it is the BJ or even the U’s responsibility; if it’s on a defensive score the Umpire or closest Flank must do this) get to the touchdown scoring player to get the ball and tell them to go celebrate with their team. —This is called “the accordion effect” at higher levels which also involves the deep flanks in 7-man having a dead ball presence by moving into the field. —Ideally, your presence will prevent them from committing an excessive celebration foul! Hustle in and get some TV time!

g. On regular plays when the play is over it is imperative that the BJ and Umpire come support the dead ball area so the Flanks can hold their spot, moving in like an accordion to have a *dead ball presence!* Then get the ball and spot it.

**2.0 Unusual Passing Situations** a.On a regular play where the QB is not trying to stop the clock with an immediate spike, the QB can throw a forward pass anywhere when he is not under duress except spiking the ball straight down or to an obviously empty space of the field *unless* he has moved outside the width of the Free Blocking Zone and the pass crosses the Line of Scrimmage or the Line of Scrimmage Extended out of bounds. **NOTE:** Only the Team A player who receives the snap can legally throw the ball away to an unoccupied part of the field to avoid a snap. —Unless it’s obvious a foul needs to be called, give the QB benefit of the doubt in regards to if he meets the criteria or not. —The QB may spike the ball forward and directly downwards upon immediately receiving either a hand-to-hand or shot gun snap *without delay,* without hesitation, or without muffing the snap in order to stop the clock. b. The NFHS rules do not recognize an “uncatchable pass” in regards to disregarding P.I. —However, use common sense in applying PI rules. —If the receiver has no obvious reasonable opportunity to get to the ball, then don’t call PI. —You might call Defensive Illegal Use of Hands for a foul before the pass that might be justified and will seem like a reasonable call to the offending team if the foul happens when the ball is immediately passed. —Sometimes, though, we just need to eat an ugly no-call on these plays on passes that are clearly out of bounds or way beyond reach. c. The Passer may legally throw the ball away to prevent a sack provided he was the first Team A player to receive the snap and he goes at least 4-yards to either side of the the snapper before throwing the pass and the pass crosses the LOS or LOS Extended. —If the Passer is still “in the pocket,” he may throw an incomplete pass in the area of an eligible receiver without a foul being called. —Any backwards pass thrown out of bounds to stop the clock is a legal play. d. If the Passer is contacted as he is clearly in his passing motion and the pass goes nowhere near an eligible receiver, then there is no foul. —If the Passer is contacted, *then regains control of himself,* and then initiates a new motion to pass the ball and that pass is nowhere near an eligible receiver in order to avoid a sack, then it is intentional grounding if it doesn’t meet the above criteria of being outside the width of the Free Blocking Zone and across the line of scrimmage. **e. The concept of a “*Joust.*”**  1. Both teams have a right to the ball on a forward pass. 2. If a forward pass is up high in the air, and players from both teams are going up to catch or bat the ball, they are allowed to “out-joust” their opponent for the ball. —This means any incidental contact between the two of them with their bodies in their motion to reach for the ball will be ignored, except for a player who plays through the back of their opponent clearly *before* they then contact the ball. 3. Only in the “through the back” scenario is a Joust scenario worthy of a P.I. call. 4. Any bodily contact from the side or front by a player against their opponent as they are in the motion of reaching up for the ball, especially with both hands up in the air, shall be ignored!

**2.1 The Process of the Catch** a.There are multiple parts to the various factors that define a catch of a forward pass. 1. Catching a forward pass is different from gaining possession. 1a. To gain *possession* of a loose ball that is not a forward pass, an inbounds player simply can exert a controlled downward pressure on the ball into the ground with a firm control of the ball provided no part of his body is touching out of bounds. 1b. Possession of the ball, other than a forward pass, is simply displaying *control* of the ball inbounds. 2. For a forward pass to be considered a *catch* and in player possession, the receiver or interceptor must gain possession of the forward pass with at least one foot completely in bounds. 2a. He may also have a knee, elbow, hand, or any other body part in bounds provided no other part of his body is touching out of bounds when he first *alights* with the ground with the ball controlled in his grasp. 3. To be a “catch,” the receiver or interceptor must display and maintain firm control of the ball when they contact the ground, even if out of bounds if they first alight with the ground inbounds. 3a. If there is any doubt, then it shall be an incomplete pass if the ball then hits the ground, is juggled on the ground out of bounds, or the player goes out of bounds before securing possession. 3b. If an airborne receiver is driven backwards from the field of play and then out of bounds when he contacts the ground, then his *forward progress* is considered to be stopped inbounds and a catch is ruled if the ball survives the *process of the catch.* 4. As the player is bringing the ball down, no matter how many steps he may take with the ball in his hands, **the process of the catch is not complete until the player has brought the ball down into his side and the ball then *“survives the stride”* of the receiver’s running motion after he has regained full body control while the ball is subsequently in the player’s arm against his body.** 4a. If the ball drops down in front of the player or behind the player in the process of bringing the ball into his body, it shall be an incomplete pass. 5. If a player makes a firm hand grab and doesn’t bring the ball down, and it is obvious that he has held onto the ball without any ball movement within the hand(s) of any kind, and his foot is clearly down and inbounds, and he held onto the ball with ZERO movement of the ball in the hands, even if it is trapped against the body of the opponent or teammate, and it has survived the stride of the receiver by not dislodging in anyway, then a catch shall be called. 5a. On a receiver who keeps the ball in his hands out away from his body, if the ball survives a stride motion while the player has complete control of his body, then he has displayed control of the ball and it’s a completed pass. 6. If the player *has not regained body control* upon catching the ball, the catch must survive the player’s contact with the ground, no matter how many steps the player takes. 6a. If possession of a pass is lost when the player hits the ground prior to him regaining control of his body, then it shall be incomplete if the ball then contacts the ground. 6b. If the player subsequently falls out of bounds before completing the process of the catch and bobbles the ball upon hitting the ground out of bounds, then it shall be an incomplete pass. 7. Any time the ball touches the ground prior to the completion of the process of the catch it shall be a ruled an incomplete pass. 7a. **Any official**, regardless of their position, who *100% clearly sees* that the ball hit the ground or did not survive the process of the catch is hereby instructed to signal, with closure towards the play, and aggressively call the play an incomplete pass!

**2.2** **Blocking** 1.If a blocker commits an Illegal Block in the Back or commits holding, do not penalize that play if the player being illegally blocked or held then immediately makes the tackle. 1a. If there is a clear amount of time and space between the illegal act followed by the tackle, then you would be justified in throwing your flag. 2. Obvious and intentional takedowns by the interior linemen, at the point of attack, or downfield of the point of attack and the play gains yards past the line of scrimmage or spot of the foul must be called. 2a. Even take down holds committed by Team B must be called in these areas. 3. If there is a potential offensive or defensive holding that is nowhere near the point of attack or behind it, then you will ignore it, even if the players wrestle each other down to the ground. 3a. It’s nothing until either player commits a Personal Foul. 3b. Come in and separate the players as neither player gained an advantage, *they effectively cancelled each other out of the play, called a “stalemate”.* **NOTE:** *Remember, there is no such thing as a “back side hold!” There are times two players being stupid behind the play is simply ignored because their wrestling match has zero bearing on the play. We ignore their holding actions on plays like this until they start committing Personal Fouls against each other. Break them up, tell them “it’s over, next play!” If any of these results in excessive contact, only then it’s a Personal Foul.*  4. If there is the potential for a defensive holding foul (Illegal Use of Hands) but it is a run play nowhere near where the offensive player is being held, such as a cornerback holding a wide out, then you will simply ignore it as it has no bearing on the play. 4a. If it is *clearly a pass attempt* and the defense is holding or blocking a receiver before a pass play, then a *Defensive Illegal Use of Hands* foul would be justified unless it is a screen pass that is clearly not intended for that receiver being held away from the play. 4b. On *Defensive Illegal Use of Hands*, a late flag is justified for you to decide if a flag is appropriate as it may take you a little bit longer to process all that just happened. 4c. It is also OK to tell your Referee to wave it off because you realize after you threw your flag that the foul you were calling ended up having zero bearing on the play, particularly on a designed screen pass or draw. 5. For an *Illegal Block in the Back* foul (**Rule 9-3-5**), the foul must occur at the point of attack, the opponent being illegally blocked must be in a position to make a play, and the act must directly influence the play, just like holding calls do. 5a. Think “displacement” of the player being blocked, a simple push or small shoulder block into the back is all it takes to displace an opponent’s center of gravity and prevent him from making a tackle. 5b. Which side of the opponent a blocker’s head is when the block is made is not the determining factor if a block is legally into the side or illegally into the back! 5c. Initial contact must be clearly into the back of the opponent to be a foul. **EXCEPTIONS:** **(1)** If the player being blocked turns his back to the blocker, or the blocker clearly has *positional advantage* over the player being blocked, then there is no foul. **(2)** Also, any TEAM A lineman who starts in the Free Blocking Zone at the snap may block any Team B player who starts in the Free Blocking Zone at the snap if the ball is still in the Free Blocking Zone after the snap and the block occurs within the Free Blocking Zone (this requires a hand-to-hand snap). **(3)** A player from either team may legally block the opponent in the back while in *direct pursuit* of either the ball carrier or a loose ball, other than an untipped forward pass, in an attempt to recover it. 5d. Illegal Block in the Back fouls can be called on both teams but it is very rare to have to call it on the defense. 5e. A defender is allowed to push an opponent into the back if he is in the direct act of pursuing a ball carrier. 5f. On most plays where Team A or Team R is blocking, any type of push with the hands, forearms, or shoulder into the back at the point of attack that causes any type of displacement or unbalancing to the opponent is a foul for an Illegal Block in the Back. 5g. Illegal blocks in the back usually are committed by wideouts blocking downfield, on a crackback block, or on kick returns. 5h. If thedefender suddenly *turns his back, or presents his back, to the blocker at the last moment, then it is not a foul.* 5i. Think “**chase mode,**” that is, if the blocker is *chasing* the opponent, then he can’t contact the opponent’s back. A block into the side must clearly be in the side and not have any initial contact into any of the opponent’s back but a blocker can “peel” into the back of an opponent from the side. 6. *If it is an obvious* ***forceful shove*** *or* ***shoulder charge*** *into the back of the opponent that sends the opponent down hard into the ground, then it is a personal foul for an* ***Illegal Blindside Block*** *instead of an Illegal Block in the Back.* 6a.If the opponent simply loses their balance from being contacted in the back and falls, then it is simply a foul for an Illegal Block in the Back. 7. Blocks that start in the side of an opponent and then “peel” onto the back with continuous contact are legal as long as contact is maintained throughout the duration of the block. 8. A block in the back that occurs at the same time the ball carrier is being tackled will be ignored. 8a. A block in the back behind the play on a player who clearly has no chance to make a play will also be ignored, even if the player looses his balance and falls down. 9. Any type of grabbing that takes away an opponent’s feet away from them or they lose control of their shoulders has the potential for a holding call if it affects the play. 10. It’s OK to throw a flag for holding in the offensive backfield which then results in a sack if there is an element of time between the foul and the tackle. 11. If an opponent is receiving a double-team block, it is next to impossible to justify a holding call, especially if the opponent is being driven downfield. 11a. If the opponent breaks the double-team and then is subsequently held would be a scenario for a righteous holding call on a double-team or if a takedown tackle by a blocker were to occur in this scenario. 12. Blocking Below the Waist must occur immediately at the snap by *linemen-upon-linemen* only and only within the Free Blocking Zone, no matter if it is a hand-to-hand snap or shot gun snap. Either team can legally initiate a block below the waist in this manner. 12a. *The block must also occur on an opponent that is lined up directly overhead of the lineman or in the gap next to him. 12b. The block must occur without any kind of delay with the immediate action of the snap. 12c.* Blocking below the waist is never allowed by a Team A or Team B back or after the immediate action of the snap. 13. *A player on either team is considered a lineman if any part of his foot or hand is within 1-yard of the LOS at the snap.* 13a.The rule about only allowing linemen blocking below the waist is particularly intended to prevent any blocking below the waist by Team B on a pulling Guard or Tackle or upon the lead blocker who is a running back by an the Defensive End or Defensive Back. 13b. In legal scrimmage kick formations the same rule applies, any blocking below the waist must be done *without any delay, hesitation, or baiting* immediately at the snap. 14. A blocker is allowed to do a “slide block” down below the waist of an opponent anywhere on the field at anytime on any play provided the *initial contact* was *above the waist* of the opponent and contact is continuous with the opponent as the blocker slides down the opponent’s body into their legs. This is allowed on any play at any place on the field. 14a. ***Any direct initial contact, or renewed contact, directly into an opponent’s legs by a player on Team A or Team B, that doesn’t occur immediately at the snap, between the two opponents who are on the LOS at the snap and whom are lined up overhead of each other or in the adjacent gap from each other, and within the lateral width of the Free Blocking Zone is a Personal Foul for an Illegal Block Below the Waist.*** 15. Open handed blocks that result in a player’s hand or arm sliding up above the opponent’s shoulder/chest into their throat/neck/face/head where the player then *leverages* their hand/arm into the opponent’s throat/neck/chin/jaw/face/head are a Personal Foul for illegal contact to the head. 15a. If *incidental contact* is made and the player then corrects himself without a blow being delivered to the head or *leveraging* the opponent’s head, then there is no foul.

**2.3 *Officiating Axioms***

1. We want quality fouls. Don’t be a “gotcha guy!” and don’t threaten anyone with a foul. See the entire play but that doesn’t mean everything you see is a foul worth calling, especially in regards to advantage/disadvantage on holding calls, blocking in the back, and P.I. *Don’t be over-officious, let them play!* ***Catch the alligators and leave the lizards alone!***
2. Do not reach for your penalty flag unless you intend to throw it. See the foul, identify why it’s a foul, say the number of the player, throw your flag at the spot of the foul, and then keep officiating the play. *When you throw your penalty marker your integrity is linked to it!*
3. Always see the ball in possession, clearly stopped and on the ground, before you blow your whistle. Use the ***Two-Second Challenge*** to discipline your whistle mechanics. You will be graded on this! The ball is live for a relatively short amount of time in the span of the full time of a game, don’t be in a rush to end a play!
4. Be a good dead ball official. *This is where you stand out from others!* View all players until they return to their respective sides of the ball. Always keep an eye-out for that cheap-shot punch to the gut or groin as players pass by each other after a play! Middle officials, hustle and get between players as needed to escort them to their respective huddle to prevent dead ball fouls. Flanks, be ready to do the same as needed, this is one big reason why we use Off-Flank mechanics. ***Be pro-active, rather than re-active***, as much as possible, especially the BJ in 5-man & Deep Flanks and BJ in 7-man. The R and U in 4-man will have to move a lot to get between players after plays.
5. Be deliberate in ruling on a fumble or a strip, get that bean bag down! ***If you don’t know, then don’t guess!*** Trust that a fellow crew mate saw it from a different angle if you couldn’t tell what happened. Come in and ask your crew if needed! ***That means don’t blow your whistle when you don’t know!***
6. Crisp ball movement on ball relays—**keep the ball off the ground**; no committee meetings on a time out; during a dead ball if you walk 5-steps, start jogging on your 6th step.
7. Count players deliberately **before every single play**, don’t just go through the motions of making a signal for 11-players! ***In particular, count every special teams formation as if your life depended on it!***For kickoffs and after any Time Outs, never let a team go onto the field, and don’t signal Ready for Play, until each team has exactly 11-players on the field! Remember, we had a crew from a unit in the Central Section allow 13-players on defense for an entire late game drive where the offense needed to score a Touchdown to win. As you can imagine, the drive stalled out. This game determined the league title won by the team that Illegally Participated with 13-players for an entire series! On the video, you can see the BJ and Flanks were just going through the motions of counting 11-players and signaling without actually counting every single individual player! In a section final, another Central Section crew allowed an illegal offensive formation on a crucial *4th and 1* gain a 1st down on a fake punt with less than 1:00 left in the game because that crew didn’t count Team A players on punts. *Don’t be that crew! -*That one play the crew didn’t do their job allowed the offensive team to seal the win for the Division 1 Section title. In 2022 the same unit that allowed 13-Team B players allowed 12-players on defense for a crucial late game goal line series that stalled out that involved the same two teams! ***Counting players before every single play is the ultimate discipline of the mind for an official! Don’t fail at it!***
8. Have excellent communication with coaches, players, and your crew. Be courteous, always. Firm and fair when the situation dictates. Knowing what you’ll do and say ahead of time is a plus in doing this! That means you need to practice people-solving scenarios at home. As hard as it may be at times, we have to maintain a cordial relationship with the Head Coach.
9. If you miss a call, dwell on it after the game. Move on and officiate the next play. *We all make mistakes*, don’t make another one on the very next play, too!
10. Concentration. Give every play your best effort no matter the level, teams, or score. Your dedication can keep things positive for everyone and it shows everyone else “how it’s done!” Players and coaches, no matter the age or ability, really do notice these things and gain your respect which makes life easier for you in the coming weeks and years!
11. Use preventative officiating whenever possible as needed. This means talking in a positive manner to players and coaches without issuing threats. This, in turn, keeps the players focused, usually, and makes our experiences more fun!
12. Display integrity, courage, and poise. Let the “tight” situations *reveal* your true character. **“Adversity doesn’t build character, it *reveals* it!”** Have an unwavering attitude when things get tight so that others can depend on you for your character. Always be in control of your emotions, as tough as that may be sometimes, and never threaten or retaliate. There are times that no action by you is the best action.
13. Be physically and mentally prepared before you walk onto the field. Develop game day routines that enhance this where you can quietly get yourself “locked-in” to where you are noticeably calmer and focused at kick off. This allows you to mentally slow the game down, control your breathing, and focus on your keys.
14. Always hustle without “over-hustling,” set the example and your crew will rise up with you.
15. When being evaluated or mistakes you made are being pointed out to you, it is not a insult of your manhood or integrity. Take them with a *grain of salt* and try to understand what the person is saying to you from their point-of-view. Usually, they are correct about they are telling you and you must respect their input! Don’t be the *“yeah, but…”* guy!

16. You catch more flies with honey than vinegar. Treat others they way you want to be treated.

17. When separating players, never grab/pull or push/shove a player. Simply chisel in between players with your hands open and near your chest to protect yourself or hands down to your side.

18. Respect the game and ensure fairness within the rules and don’t make up your own rules or interpretations. Football is inherently brutal and is based on ancient maneuvers of war going back at least 2,400-years to the ancient Greeks as a test of stamina, strength, manhood, cunningness, and skill. Fairness within the rules sometimes means a butt-kicking but it’s still “fair.”

**2.4 Philosophies:**

1. **Defenseless Player (2-32-16/9-4-3i):** When in doubt, a player is *defenseless* and a foul is warranted. A *defenseless player* is: 1. A receiver or defender attempting to catch a pass before he can regain his footing and balance; 2. A passer or kicker after they have legally released the ball until they move to participate in the play or the pass/kick is over; 3. A Team R player attempting to secure possession of a kick; any player attempting to secure a loose ball; or a player obviously out of the play.
2. **Fair Catch (4-3-7/5-2-4/6-5-1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8):** BJ, covering Flanks, and sometimes the Umpire, be aware of signals on Free Kicks and Scrimmage Kicks. 1. Any type of hand signal by any Team R player, other than shading the eyes from the sun, will cause the ball to be dead once any Team R player possesses the kick. 1a. This includes the Team R player signaling to his teammates to “get away.” 2. Only throw a flag for an invalid fair catch if the signal is obviously not one hand side-to-side when a Team R player is attempting to catch a kick (be lenient if the player isn’t exactly “by-the-book”) and then stop play once the kicked ball is possessed by Team R. 3. If a fair catch is signaled *after* the kicked ball has struck the ground or after a player muffs possession of the kick, then it is also an *Invalid Fair Catch Signal* and is a foul enforced from the *Post Scrimmage Kick spot.* 4. NFHS rules will have all Fair Catches with the upcoming down at the spot of the Fair Catch or have yardage marked off from the spot of the *Awarded Fair Catch* following a *Kick Catching Interference* foul (15-yards). 4a. At the end of the play the BJ or covering Flank will signal 1st Down for the team in possession and tell the Referee that we have a *Fair Catch Free Kick Down* coming up because Team R has the option for a Free Kick Field Goal, the option to set the ball anywhere between the inbounds marks (a.k.a. *lateral position of the ball)*, and the right to to repeat these options should a foul occur on the next down. 5. For fair catch signals, *Invalid* is different than *Illegal*: An *Illegal Fair Catch* foul can only be committed by the *returner* but only after he has *possessed* the kick whereupon he then signals a Fair Catch signal, the ball remains live and it is a *post possession foul* enforced with the *All But One Principle*.
3. **Lateral Position of the Ball (4-1-4/4-3-6):** Following any **Touchback**, and during any **Try**, the team in possession has the option to have the ball placed anywhere between the inbounds marks on that yard line prior to the Ready for Play signal (the ball must be within these marks, not on top of them). 1. Unless we are specifically instructed to spot the ball in a specific spot by a coach or player prior to the Ready for Play signal, we will always set the ball in the middle of the field following a Touchback or on a Try, or on the first play of an Overtime Period. 1a. This option remains if the down is replayed but not following a charged time out after the Ready for Play Signal is signaled. 2. This Lateral Position Option also exists for any type of **Free Kick Down** and the first down **following a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch (**called a *Free Kick Fair Catch Down*) or if either of those downs are repeated because of a penalty enforcement, but we will set the ball where the play became dead unless otherwise instructed by Team A. 2a. On a Free Kick, the BJ (LJ in 4-man) will hand the ball to the Kicker anywhere between the inbounds marks. 2b. Once the Ready for Play is signaled then the Kicker must kick the ball from that spot on the Free Kick Line or it is a Free Kick Infraction Foul and the play is dead like it is a False Start when it is kicked after being moved from the original “spot.” 3. On a Free Kick Out of Bounds foul, the ball will always be spotted on the *inbounds mark* nearest to the sideline that the kick went of of bounds on. 4. It is up to the Flanks, or sometimes the Referee, to be aware that a Head Coach or Captain may ask for the lateral spot of the ball to be moved on a Try if a team is going for a 2-point Try.
4. **Unfair Acts (9-9-1,2,3,4,5):** Case Book Rule 9 has examples of illegal acts that bring an *unfair advantage* to a team. In particular, *acts, arm and hand motions, and verbiage* that make it seem that there is a problem and that *the snap is not imminent* are **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** by the individual doing the actand the play will be stopped immediately. 1. This includes, but is not limited to: **“You’re using the wrong ball”** (and the center then picks the ball up and hands it to the QB); **“Where’s the tee?;” “Coach, I don’t know what the play is!**;” **“There’s too many players, come over here!”** (and then a play is run to that player).” 2. Unfair Acts can also include applying sticky substances to a player, using a tee that is too tall, sticking the ball up a jersey, carrying an object that’s not a football in an attempt to deceive the defense, amongst others. 3. Some Unfair Acts have been banned with specific rules such as the *Hideout Play* with the Substitution and Participation rules as well as slapping the ball out of the snapper’s hand before he can complete the snap with an Encroachment foul. 4. Some acts are deemed unfair but have appropriate ways to rectify by the Referee starting the clock on the snap or Ready for Play Signal depending on a team’s foul at certain times of the game. 5. **It is your responsibility** to see that the game is fairly played within the rules and their interpretations. 5a. The Referee is given the authority to rule in fairness on anything not specially covered by the rule book (*The* *Elastic Clause* - **Rule 1-1-6**). This includes a team that is *obviously* faking injuries to stop the clock which could be deemed as Unsportsmanlike Conduct but must be *obvious and egregious and is only up to the discretion of the Referee.*
5. **Intentional Grounding (7-5-2d):** When in doubt, there was an eligible receiver in the area or the direction of the pass. When in doubt, the passer was outside the width of the Free Blocking Zone. When in doubt, the pass crossed the Line of Scrimmage or Line of Scrimmage Extended. 1. If it is clear and obvious that these things didn’t happen in their proper scenario, then a foul is warranted. 2. When a passer is contacted by a defender while that passer’s arm is moving forward when the contact is made, it shall be an incomplete pass if the pass hits the ground regardless of where the forward pass is thrown. 3. If the passer survives the initial contact, then starts an altogether new motion of a forward pass and that pass is nowhere near an eligible receiver or meets the requirements of the outside the Free Blocking Zone and across the line of scrimmage grounding rules, then it shall be Intentional Grounding.
6. **Pass Interference (7-5-10):** Is a physical act that prevents and hinders the opponent from going to the ball, takes control of the opponent’s body away from him, takes him off his pass route, or trips/knocks the opponent down while the player doing the tripping is not looking at the ball. 1. A “**Joust**,” the act of two opponents going up to catch the ball in the same spot at the same time with incidental contact, is not a foul. 1b. Don’t bail out a player who gets “out-jousted” with an unwarranted P.I. call that takes away from the competitive nature of two players going for a loose ball (in this case, a forward pass beyond the LOS). One of them has to win the ball! 1c. As long as there is no push off with open hands or *playing through the back* to then catch/touch the ball, be exacting and demanding of a justified P.I. call if two opponents are both going for the ball. 2. If there is any restraining (especially when not looking at the ball as the receiver is trying to get it), prevention of the hands to come get the ball, or pushing off, then nail it for P.I!
7. **Holding (2-3-1,2,3,4,5/9-2-1/9-2-3): Make the opponent of the blocker *earn* the call!** They need to fight through it to show that the possible *illegal blocking technique* is actually restraining them illegally! It also needs to occur at the *point of attack*. 1. Once the play passes by, or it is way off to the side, or downfield far enough that it hasn’t prevented the defender from getting to the ball carrier yet, then it is not a foul! 2. There must be an *unfair advantage gained* that clearly affected the play. 2a. Don’t flag for holding if the ball carrier is tackled at or behind the spot of the potential foul as no advantage was gained. 2b. But if 1-yard or more is gained due to the illegal act, then flag it! 3. If the blocker’s feet keep moving, he is in position between the opponent and the ball, and has “*leverage*” within the frame then he has *the advantage of the benefit of the doubt*. 3a. He would need to do something egregious (take down or grabbing and restraining) for a foul to be called on him. 4. *Essentially, if the defender is being driven backwards or the blocker’s frame is positioned between the defender and the ball, then the defender is not being “held!”* 5. **Leverage**: a full extension of the arm(s) with a noticeable kinetic displacement (aka: push) against the opponent. 5a. With pass blocking, the arm of a blocker must be the only thing between the defender and the passer that clearly impedes the defender’s progress to the ball or takes control of the defender’s body away from him. 5b. Key on if the defender’s positioning is clearly outside of the blocker’s frame and the blocker is failing to keep his feet moving to stay in position.
8. **Illegal Blindside Block (9-4-3m):** This is a foul for a big blow-up type of hit that is unseen by the opponent and either *from the side or the back* of the opponent usually with the blocker coming back towards the ball. 1. This hit has been banned as it clearly endangers the opponent from what has been defined as unnecessarily rough contact that sends the opponent flying forcibly to the ground with their feet losing contact with the ground in the process. 2. This has been determined to be dangerous as many concussions occur from the head snap of such an aggressive block often with the back of the player’s head hitting the ground very hard which also causes concussions. 3. Basically, if a player doesn’t see the hit coming, he has to be blocked “nicely” (this is the actual CIF quote!). 4. This means an *open handed or closed hand blocking technique* (2-3-2a,b) must be used on a blindside block to make the block a *legal blindside block* which simply impedes without *decleating* or *punishing* the opponent in his pursuit of the ball carrier, or the blocker can simply get into the path of the opponent without hard contact. 5. In particular, your keys to judge *excessive contact* for an *Illegal Blindside Block* will be: ***a “missile-like” launch that has the blocker’s body horizontal to the ground or any upwards thrust by the blocker’s shoulders, forearms, or head into the blindside of the opponent*.** 5a. These *upwards thrusts* can sometimes result in a *Targeting* foul to the head of the opponent. *You can’t miss these calls!* 5b.Be focused on plays that *reverse the field,* on *crackback blocks*, the blocker *coming back towards the ball,* or when a ball carrier is trying to get around a corner on a *picket-fence* blocking action during a punt return. 6. At the same time, aggressive hits that are not a “blindside,” as in they are on the “sightside” that s*quarely contact the player’s front, frame-on-frame,* still have a place in the game and are legal. 6a. Also, *any blocks between the Tackles can never be an Illegal Blindside Block*. 6b. Certain plays still allow for us to respect the *inherent brutality* that is still a part of the game that are, otherwise, *legal plays*. 6c. If an act is specifically not allowed by rule or official interpretation, then it’s game on!
9. **Offensive Players Getting Set (7-2-6):** Prior to any snap, all Team A players must be simultaneously “Set” for 1-second prior to the immediate act of the ball being snapped or before an end or back goes in motion and whom stays in motion at the snap. 1. *Being “Set” means that the entire offensive formation is not moving while in a legal formation (at least 5 offensive linemen legally numbered and no more than 4 backs in the backfield) and they are not moving for one full second.* 2. If a team “Sets” while in an Illegal Formation, it would be a foul for an illegal formation if they snap the ball in that illegal formation. *3. Any player(s) that appears to be in motion can re-set* ***and the “sequence of the final set” starts again.*** 3a. The Referee (watches the backfield and between the Tackles/Tight Ends), the Flanks (watches their entire half of the field plus the backfield), and sometimes the U (watches between the Tackles/Tight Ends) have to be all over this basic tenant of respecting the line of scrimmage. 3b. Don’t allow yourself to get caught by Team A getting a “quick snap” off before the entire team was set. 3c. Team A moving out of a huddle or getting back to their side of the ball in a no-huddle constitutes a shift. 3d. Any Team A member can shift at any time unless a player who is covered up and they have their hand on the the ground (it’s a False Start if a *covered up* lineman with his hand down then shifts). 3e. Regardless of how many Team A players shift or the amount of shifts before the snap, Team A must be fully in unison *simultaneously* *set* for 1-second with each otherbefore the ball is snapped or a player who stays in motion at the snap begins his motion. 3f.*Illegal Shift* or *Illegal Motion* are fouls that occur *simultaneously with the snap:* Throw your flag at the snap and let play go. **Scenario 1:** Team A is quickly approaching the LOS. The Center and the Quarterback are the first to arrive at the LOS and without pausing, nor allowing the rest of the team to get set as they are still moving towards the LOS, snap the ball in an attempt to catch the defense, and the officials, by surprise. **Ruling:** Illegal Shift. The Quarterback must clearly pause before the ball is snapped to him, and the entire offense was clearly not “Set” prior to the ball being snapped; **Scenario 2:** Team A approaches the LOS from their huddle. Receiver A81 is slowly going to his wideout position and his still moving when the running back, A44, goes in motion from the backfield. As A44 is in motion, A81 finally gets himself set. A44 is still in motion when the ball is snapped. **Ruling:** Illegal Shift because the entire team wasn’t *simultaneously set* at the same time prior to A44’s motion. If A44 had reset before the snap and after A81 set himself, then this would not be a foul; **Scenario 3:** Team A approaches the LOS from their huddle and the linemen all get into a 3-point stance upon reaching the LOS, except for Tight End A89. Tight End A89 is really slow getting to the line and in getting his hand set down into the ground. His hand is going down to the ground noticeably later than the rest of the linemen. The ball is snapped while A89 is still getting down into a three-point stance. **Ruling:** Illegal Shift. A89 was never set which caused his team to not be *simultaneously set* for 1-second prior to the snap; **Scenario 4:** Team A is in their formation at the LOS and have become initially “Set” with all linemen in a 3-point stance except for A66 at the Guard position. Back A88 is legally in motion when A66 decides to get into a 3-point stance from a 2-point stance. The ball is then snapped with A88 still in motion. **Ruling:** Illegal Shift because the shift into a 3-point stance by A66 at the same time A88 was in “motion” turned A88’s “motion” into a new shift which meant A88 had to reset before the snap. A88 would have to reset to make this a legal play at the snap; **Scenario 5:** Team A is set in the formation when the Quarterback moves from a shotgun formation to a direct hand-to-hand snap. He receives the snap without pausing for 1-second. **Ruling:** This is actually an Illegal Motion as the Quarterback was moving forward when the ball was snapped. The Quarterback must be set for 1-second under this scenario before the ball is snapped or before he sends a player in motion after his shift from a shotgun to a direct hand-to-hand snap; **Scenario 6:** The Quarterback is in a shotgun formation. The team is initially set when the Quarterback directs a player in motion. The Quarterback then takes one step forward as he signals “hike” before the ball is snapped. **Ruling:** Illegal Shift. The Quarterback is allowed some leeway with his feet as long as he stays in one spot. By moving forward with a player in motion just before the snap, he created a new shift which means both players must reset or it’s a foul at the snap. If the Quarterback does this step forward without a player in motion, then there must be clearly 1-second between the Quarterback’s step forward and the snap or it is a foul for Illegal Motion as the Quarterback would be considered to be moving forward at the snap; **Scenario 7:** Team A is on the LOS and only the Snapper has his hand down on the ball. The offensive line, in a 2-point stance, then shifts down into a 3-point stance. At that exact moment, back A45 goes into motion whereupon the ball is snapped. **Ruling:** Illegal Shift. For A45’s motion to be a separate action not related to the shift, he has to wait 1-second before he can go into “motion” legally. A45’s “motion” before everyone else was set means that Team A failed to have all players simultaneously set before the motion or snap; **Scenario 8:** Team A is on the LOS, the linemen are in a 3-point stance. Tight End A89 is on the right side of the formation and is uncovered. A89 gets up out of his 3-point stance and jogs to the left side of the formation and positions himself as a Tight End on the left. At the same time, A88 who was positioned as a Flanker on the right side, moves up to be on the LOS as a Split End and A87 who was initially a Split End on the left side of the formation, moves back off the LOS to be a Flanker and to make sure that the Tight End is not covered up. After a pause of a few seconds, Flanker A87 goes in motion and the ball is snapped. **Ruling:** Legal Shift. This is how it’s done. Everyone shifted and reset properly; **Scenario 9:** Team A is lined up in a Swinging Gate formation with most of the players on the left side of the field for an apparent 2-point Try. There are four linemen numbered 50-79 and these linemen are in a 2-point stance except for snapper A10 on the end with his hands on the ball, as if they are going for a 2-point Try. The Quarterback is in a Shotgun formation when he then signals for the formation to get into a legal Scrimmage Kick formation in the middle of the field to kick a 1-point Try. Team A shifts and becomes Set and then the ball is snapped for the kick. **Ruling:** Legal Shift. All is well. Team A shifted and reset properly. Had the ball been snapped from this formation it would be a foul for an Illegal Formation as there weren’t at least five Team A linemen numbered 50-79; **Scenario 10:** Team A is set in their formation at the LOS. Running back A22 mistakenly believes he is supposed to go in motion while A25 is in fact the proper player who goes in motion. A22 tries to stop himself and reset himself but A25 stays in motion whereupon the ball is snapped. **Ruling:** Illegal Shift. This is commonly called “Two Players moving in the backfield.” Regardless of who does it or how many, only one player can be in motion in the final sequence after a team gets set and then the ball is snapped. If both players rest before the snap, then the play would be legal. **Scenario 11:** Team K is lined up in a Scrimmage Kick formation for a field goal attempt. Team K has four players numbered 50-79 with number K45 as the long snapper in the middle of the line. Just prior to the snap, the holder stands up and goes in motion to his left. The ball is then snapped directly to the Place Kicker who is positioned 10-yards behind the line of scrimmage but not directly over the snapper because he kicks the ball soccer-style. **Ruling:** This is a foul for an Illegal Formation. If Team K would’ve had 5-players numbered 50-79 on the line of scrimmage at the snap then this would be a good play. This play is illegal because the Kicker was not lined up directly behind the long snapper. To use the numbering exception rules on a Scrimmage Kick without a holder 7-yards directly behind the long snapper at the snap, then the Kicker must be lined up directly behind the long snapper 10-yards off the ball. In this scenario, the Kicker was not lined up directly behind the long snapper. **Scenario 12:** Team K is lined up in a Scrimmage Kick formation for a field goal attempt. Team K is player number K45 as the long snapper with four linemen numbered 50-79. Team K then shifts out of the formation into a Shotgun formation with a single back and a wide receiver to each side of the field. The ball is then snapped. **Ruling:** This is a foul for an Illegal Formation at the snap because there are fewer than five players numbered 50-79 on the line of scrimmage and Team K is no longer in a legal scrimmage kick formation which allows for the numbering exception rule to take effect. 4. \***The Sequence of the Final Set:** No matter how many times a team shifts, it’s the ***sequence of the final set*** before the ball is snapped that establishes the legality or illegality of a shift. 4a. Every snap should have the Referee, Flanks, and Umpire silently saying to themselves, *“Set!” or “Good!”* when Team A gets into their initial set. 4b. Most offenses will snap or motion out of this initial set. Recognize any subsequent shifting and say to yourself, *“Reset”* when any legal shifts are completed. 4c. When a player goes in motion, Say to yourself *“We’re good,”* to ensure that the motion was done after all players became set. 4d. If another Team A player moves during that other player’s “motion” and then the ball is snapped, say to yourself, *“No!”* and flag the play and let it go, then report your foul when the play is over. 5. The verbiage you often hear at the higher levels is *“Two players were in motion and didn’t reset.”* 5a. If a team snaps the ball before you had the time to say *“Set!”* to yourself, rest assured, you should have a foul for an Illegal Shift!
10. **Legal Versus Illegal Motion (7-2-7):** The casual viewer of football often erroneously equates shifting with motion. ——Legal motions can be done only two possible ways: 1) After Team A is clearly set after their last shift, a back who is clearly off the line of scrimmage may move in a manner that doesn’t simulate a snap. —A back in motion must be moving parallel to the LOS or backwards to it *when the ball is snapped*. —If a player is moving towards the LOS at the moment the ball is snapped, or if that player was moving forward when the ball is snapped and didn’t “reset” themselves for 1-second before the ball is snapped, then it is a foul for Illegal Motion; 2) After Team A becomes set after their last shift, if a Team A end (a player that is clearly on the end of his line of scrimmage) goes “in motion,” that player must be a minimum of 5-yards behind the LOS if he is still in motion when the ball is snapped or it is a foul for Illegal Motion. —You will likely never see this second scenario unless a player who is supposed to be off the LOS accidentally lines up on the LOS which would likely create an Illegal Formation for a 5-man backfield.
11. **Legal Scrimmage Kick Formations (7-2-5):** A legal *Scrimmage Kick Formation* is the only way Team A/K can use the *“Numbering Exception Rule”* and have less than 5-players numbered 50-79 on the LOS, if they choose to use it. 1. Team A can kick from any type of legal offensive formation, it’s the *Scrimmage Kick Formation* that allows special enforcements for roughing the snapper/holder/kicker to be applied (Automatic 1st Down) and allows the numbering exception rule to apply. 2. Team A may choose to not use the *Numbering Exception Rule* on a Scrimmage Kick which means they must use five linemen numbered 50-79 which allows them to shift without restrictions and have the Snapper be an end with an eligible number.3. *If the numbering exception is used:* 1) Only the Long Snapper can be a player not numbered 50-79 on 1st, 2nd, or 3rd down kicks and the Snapper must be covered up; 2) On 4th down, any position may have any number on the LOS but if there are less than 5-players numbered 50-79, then the Long Snapper must be covered up and all interior linemen, regardless of their number, are covered up making them ineligible by position. 2a. Those players who have eligible numbers at linemen positions: Tackles, Guards, and Long Snapper, are all ineligible receivers by position. Once Team K shifts into a Scrimmage Kick Formation (with a punter 10-yards behind the snapper or a holder 7-yards directly behind the Long Snapper and on his knee and a kicker 10-yards behind the Long Snapper) while using the numbering exception rule, then Team K must run their play out of that formation. 2b. When using the numbering exception, Team K can’t shift in any manner once they are in *Scrimmage Kick Formation* but they may legally send a back in motion provided it’s not the holder or kicker in motion. 3. The Umpire will ask the Head Coach before the game the number of the Long Snapper and write it down on his game card specifically for this situation. 3a. *The Referee and the Umpire must be on top of the legality of every Scrimmage Kick Formation!* **Scenario 1**: Team K has five linemen numbered 50-79 with a holder and kicker positioned behind the Long Snapper. After being initially Set, the holder stands up in a position to receive a shot gun snap and the right wing back, K21, sprints out to his right. Both reset. The left Wing Back, A20, goes in motion when the ball is snapped. **Ruling:** Legal Play. Team K was able to shift out of a Scrimmage Kick Formation because they had five linemen numbered 50-79; **Scenario 2:** Team K is in a *Swinging Gate Formation* on a 2-point Try attempt. They have four linemen numbered 50-79 on the LOS out to the left. The Long Snapper is positioned as a Split End to the right in the middle of the field, he is numbered A85. The “holder” is standing up in a Shotgun formation directly behind the Snapper with the “kicker” behind him to his right. Team K snaps the ball from this formation. **Ruling:** Illegal Formation. Team K had less than five linemen numbered 50-79 in a Shotgun formation. For a *Scrimmage Kick Formation* to exist that allows the *numbering exception* to take effect, the holder must be on his knee 7-yards directly behind the snapper and the kicker 3-yards behind the holder in a position to kick the snapped and held ball; or, in punts, the potential kicker must be 10-yards directly behind the snapper). Furthermore, Snapper A85 was not covered up in this scenario. If less than five linemen numbered 50-79 are used in a Scrimmage Kick Formation, then the Snapper must also be covered up as an interior lineman regardless of his number.
12. **Pass Coverage:** In 4-man, the two Flanks have everything downfield, to their side of the field and in the middle as a shared coverage for both passes and run. 1. The Flanks are encouraged to *read & react* to the play, if no short pass patterns are on your side, float no more than 7-yards downfield taking large shuffle-steps until the pass is thrown. 1a. Both Flanks share coverage in the middle of the field. 2. Ideally, a Flank will be no closer than 7-yards to a play along the sideline and no further away than 13-yard from a play down the sideline. 2a. If you read a deep pass, then get on your horse and get downfield! 2b. **Read and React** to your pass coverage and do your best to not get caught downfield if a QB keeper or a short pass occurs behind you. 3. Ideally, you will always be behind the play, not downfield of it, as a Flank. If you do happen to get caught downfield in 4-man (it should never happen in 5-man), backpedal as if you are a Deep Flank staying ahead of the play along the sideline. 3a. The Umpire will assist with catch/no catch. The Umpire will never have any P.I. calls on the attempt to secure the pass but may call Illegal Use of Hands against the Team B pass coverage in front of him or an Illegal Blindside Block if a defender wipes out a receiver in a crossing pattern. 4. In 5-man, The BJ has all the inside receivers on the “Strong-side” of the field and the Flank on the Strong-side has the single outside receiver. 4a. The “Strong-side” for officials is the side that has the most receivers *outside of the Tackles* at the snap. 4b. If both sides are equal, then the BJ favors the LJ’s inside receiver while the “Weak-side” Flank will have to cover both receivers on his side. 5. **These are your *initial* reads at the snap. As the play develops, adjust your priorities and your looks as the play dictates.** 5a. All three officials (HL, LJ, & BJ) must account for any “pick” blocking schemes by Team A downfield of the line of scrimmage, that is blocking downfield on a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage before the pass is completed. 5b. All three have equal responsibility to ensure that any “Illegal Blindside Blocks” by Team B defensive backs on a receiver in a pass pattern are properly called! 6. Once the pass is thrown, all eyes of the crew, except for the Referee who has the only clean-up duty at this moment, must go to players around the attempted catch, particularly the Umpire who has the inside-out look on a trap or illegal contact upon the receiver.

 M. **—We count the eligible receivers that are outside the tackles at the snap to determine pass coverage formation in 5-man crews—**

**—1-receiver on each side of the formation:** If you have 4-backs inside the Tackles, the LJ has Strong-side coverage. The BJ will cover the LJ’s Tight End, the LJ will cover the widest back and the Tackle on his side. The HL has the Tight End and Tackle on his side. Both Flanks will cover any backs that come out of the backfield towards them after the snap.

**—2-receivers on each side:** LJ’s side has Strong-side coverage-The BJ has the inside receiver on the LJ’s side, the LJ has the outside receiver, HL has both receivers on his side.

**—2-receivers on one side, 1-receiver on the other side:** The Strong side is the side with 2-receivers: The BJ has the inside receiver, the Strong-side Flank has the outside receiver. The Weak-side Flank has the receiver on his side.

**—3-receivers on one side, 2-receivers on the other side:** The Strong-side is the side with 3-receivers. The BJ has the two inside receivers. The Strong-side Flank has the one outside receiver. The Weak-side Flank has both receivers on his side.

**—4-receivers on one side, 1-receiver on the other side:** The side with 4-receivers is the Strong-side. The BJ has the three inside receivers, the Strong-side Flank has the outside receiver. The Weak-side Flank has the one receiver on his side.

**—Motion by a back from the backfield to a side:** If a back goes in motion to one side of the formation before the snap, your coverage will change based on his position at the snap. If the back goes in motion to the Strong-Side, the BJ will simply pick him up in his coverage as most backs in motion usually never go outside the widest receiver. If the back in motion goes to the Weak-side, then that Weak-side Flank will pick that back in his coverage, too, unless we have double-slots or 1-receiver on each side of the formation. If the back in motion makes the coverage 3-receivers on one side, and 2-receivers on the other, or 2-receivers on one side and 1-receiver on the other, then that side with the back on it becomes the Strong-side. The crew will need to recognize this and adjust their initial pass coverage. Preferably, you will use radios to communicate this coverage of your initial reads.

**—Going in Motion from one side to the other:** If a back is positioned on one side of a formation and then goes in motion to the other side when the ball is snapped, the Strong-side will be determined by that player’s position at the snap in a formation that starts with one receiver on each side of the formation, a formation with 2-receivers on one side and 1-receiver own the other side, or with 2-receivers on both sides of the formation.

**—Backs going into the side zone after the snap:** Flanks, that back is all yours if he comes out to your side of the formation after the ball is snapped.

**2.5 Plays at the Sideline**

1. If legal contact that is not a Personal Foul for Targeting or a Horse Collar occurs inbounds before the ball carrier has either *stepped with a foot down out of bounds* or the majority of the body has not yet *crossed the plane of the sideline* then it is a legal hit.
2. If the whistle has blown progress dead or because of a ball carrier stepping out of bounds and the ball carrier has eased up as a result and then the opponent initiates a punishing hit or tackle, it shall be a Personal Foul for a Late Hit. 2a. If both players mutually initiate contact equally against each other in this scenario, then no foul shall be called 2b. *Continuity of the Play-* If both opponents equally thought a dead ball was live, then no foul is warranted and the ball is simply dead.
3. If there is any doubt as to if the ball carrier stepped out of bounds or not, then he did NOT step out of bounds! You must *see* them step out of bounds in order for you to call them out of bounds!
4. If *forward progress* is stopped so that the ball carrier’s forward momentum suddenly goes backwards beyond a perpendicular angle to the sideline that is measured at the point of contact and he then goes out of bounds, then his forward progress was stopped *inbounds* and the clock status is a “hot clock.” 4a. If the ball carrier is contacted and then continues at or forward of that perpendicular angle to the sideline and then goes out of bounds, his forward progress was stopped out of bounds and the clock will stop. 4b. If the ball carrier’s effort is to get out of bounds, and his own effort clearly gets himself out of bounds without losing control of his body which results in his forward progress being stopped in bounds, then we will stop the clock and call him out of bounds in every circumstance.
5. If an airborne receiver is contacted as he catches the ball and is then pushed or driven *backwards* (behind the perpendicular angle to the sideline) and he goes out of bounds before he can get a foot down, or the receiver is physically carried out of bounds by a defender, then his forward progress is considered to be stopped in bounds, it is a catch, and the clock status is a “hot clock.”
6. If an airborne receiver goes out of bounds before he can secure the catch and there is no contact by a defender, it is an incomplete pass. 6a. If an airborne receiver catches the ball but he’s driven directly to the side or forward of the perpendicular angle and then goes out of bounds before he can get a foot down in bounds, then it is an incomplete pass.
7. If the ball carrier contacts any part of his body, other than feet or hands, onto the ground inbounds, before landing or sliding out of bounds, then he is considered to be inbounds, keep the clock running! 7a. If he is driven backwards and then out of bounds, then the foremost point of progress was stopped inbounds, keep the clock running!

**2.6** **Illegal Forward Pass/Intentional Grounding Scenario**

1. The new (2022) rule regarding a passer being able to throw the ball away or legally ground a forward pass to avoid a sack will require the work of the Flanks and the Umpire to help the R make the correct call. 1a. **New 2023:** Only the Team A player who receives the *initial snap* is allowed to throw the ball away to an area without an eligible receiver.
2. The passer must be reach 4-yards to either side of the Center (outside the width of the Free Blocking Zone) to be able to legally throw the ball away and across the LOS or LOS Extended. 2a. ***The Referee will interpret 4-yards to the right or left of center to be “three full running strides” made by the passer to either side (usually the QB in these circumstances).*** 2b. The Referee will use the field markings and goal posts to assist on the width of the *Free Blocking Zone* to assist in your determination if a passer made it outside the width of the zone. 2c. When communicating with each other, players, and coaches in regards to this new rule, you will use the exacting proper verbiage, “outside the width of the Free Blocking Zone” as opposed to common vernacular such as “the pocket” or “the tackle box” which are not mentioned anywhere in the NFHS Rules Book. 2d. Explain to them that they have to get to 4-yards to either side of the spot of the snap. 2e. When announcing this foul, you may use the common vernacular of a “tackle box” or “the pocket” when explaining the reason for the foul.
3. No eligible passer needs to be in the vicinity of the pass if the passer is outside of the width of the Free Blocking Zone and the pass crosses the LOS or LOS Extended. 3a. If the passer clearly did not go wide enough and was within “the width of the Free Blocking Zone” when he clearly throws the ball away, then an eligible receiver must be in the vicinity of the pass. 3b. If there is a receiver in the area, the Referee and/or covering official will signal incomplete and then run a few steps in and point at the receiver in the area. 3c. If no eligible receiver is in the area, then the Umpire, Flanks, and BJ will tell the Referee that he should throw a flag for intentional grounding.
4. If the passer does get outside “the pocket” and decides to throw the ball away, if there is no eligible receiver in the area of his pass, then the pass must cross the LOS or LOS Extended out of bounds or it is a foul for intentional grounding. 4a. The Flanks or Umpire will inform the Referee that the pass did not cross the LOS or LOS Extended and the Referee will drop his penalty marker at the spot of the pass. 4b. If there is an eligible receiver in the area and the pass did not cross the LOS, then it is not a foul for intentional grounding.
5. If the pass does cross the LOS or LOS Extended in this scenario, the covering official(s) will whistle and signal an incomplete pass and then signal that the pass crossed the LOS or LOS Extended by pointing with they downfield arm across their body and then motioning downfield with their index finger and say that the pass “went across.” 5a. Flanks, be sure to turn with the pass if it goes behind you out of bounds to judge if the ball crosses the LOS Extended. The Umpire will help with this, too. 5b. Flanks, on a pass that does cross the LOS or LOS Extended, come out a few steps onto the field to make your signal that the pass crosses the LOS or LOS Extended is clearly seen by everyone. The Referee will see this and then face the press box and signal one incomplete pass signal. If he has a P.A. microphone, the Referee will announce why there is no intentional grounding.
6. If you do have a pass that fails to cross the LOS or LOS Extended, the covering Flank(s) or Umpire will whistle, signal incomplete, and then run directly to the Referee and tell him that the pass failed to cross the LOS or LOS Extended in flight. 6a. The Referee will drop their penalty marker at the spot of the pass. (5-yards and loss of down). 6b. In regards to saving time, the Referee will have to determine of this illegal act unfairly stopped the clock late in either half which gives Team A an unfair advantage and, if so, will invoke **Rule 3-4-6** and start the game clock on the Ready for Play Signal with a 25-second play clock. 6c. **Rule 3-4-6** is different than the new **Rule 3-4-7**. **Rule 3-4-7** says that with a “hot clock” the offended team has the option of the starting the game clock on the snap instead of on the Ready for Play signal. This scenario under intentional grounding is not covered by **Rule 3-4-7** as we have a stopped clock. However, the Referee still has discretion with **Rule 3-4-6** over this scenario to do what is fair for the offended team.

**2.7 Working With Other Units**

1. Be aware that other units may not do things exactly like you are instructed with us. Be ready to adjust to them. Whenever you work with with a White Hat from another unit, you will be expected to adjust to what he wants to do.
2. There are small nuances, sub-mechanics, and phrases that other units may use, learn from them and improve your game and bring that knowledge back to our unit!
3. If someone from another unit is clearly doing something incorrect or something that you don’t understand, don’t be afraid to speak up. *What you have to bring to the topic may be something that other official needs to improve his game. Don’t let the 2022 Georgia State Title Game bad Touchdown call happen to you because you’re afraid to speak up with officials you don’t know that well!*

**3.0 *Primary Signals***

1. **Start the Clock (Signal 2):** Give three full backwards circles with your right arm fully extended. 1a. This will be used only by the crew to start the clock when a Free Kick is legally touched. 1b. The Referee will do this signal following an official’s time out with a hot clock. 1c. On plays within a stride of the sideline, the Flanks may do this signal to emphasize that a play ended inbounds at or short of the line to gain but our official mechanics says to give the dead ball signal in these scenarios.
2. **Stop the Clock (Signal 3):** Give two full motions with your elbows slightly bent starting with your arms out and above your shoulders motioning so that your hands cross each other above your head.
3. **Incomplete Pass or Unsuccessful Try or Unsuccessful Field Goal (Signal 10):** Start at chest level, one hand above the other, then fully extend both arms out to the sides in two full motions with the palms of your hands facing down. 3a. On an unsuccessful kick, hold the signal out to your side until the Referee sees your signal and he then can confirm it with his own signal.
4. **Dead Ball (Signal 7):** Used for plays that end *inbounds and short of the line to gain*. Raise your right hand fully extended with the palm of your hand slightly cupped and facing forward. 4a. If it is obvious a play made it past the line to gain in bounds, then you will signal to stop the clock instead. 4b. The use of this signal is to acknowledge that the play is over and it tells the play clock operator to start the 40-second play clock.
5. **Touchdown or Successful Kick or Successful Try (Signal 5):** Fully extend both arms so that your slightly cupped open palms are facing each other above your head and your elbows are even with your ears. Have a very slight bend to your elbows so that your hands are about 2-feet apart. 5a. Hold your Touchdown signal for about 5-seconds. 5b. On all successful Field Goal kicks or Tries, hold your signal until you see the Referee make eye-contact with you and acknowledges your call with his own signal.
6. **1st Down (Signal 1):** On any changes of possession, particularly on kicks fumbles, and interceptions, at the end of the play the covering official(s) will signal 1st down. 6a. Take a step downfield with your right foot, twist your upper-body to emphasize your right arm’s movement as you point downfield for the team now in possession with an open palm facing towards your left. 6b. In some scenarios, it is OK to signal a First Down with your left hand as you come into the middle of the field to clean up after a play. 6c. The Referee, on a gained First Down, may signal any way they want to. 6d. On a long pass completion if there is doubt as to Team A having possession beyond the line to gain, or a fumble beyond the line to gain resulting in Team A possession, or a muffed kick by Team R whereupon Team K gains possession, stop the clock and then signal First Down for Team A/K.
7. **Safety (Signal 6):** Signal just like a Touchdown but bring your hands, open palms together touching above your head. Flanks may signal this if a ball carrier didn’t get the ball all the way out of their own end zone.
8. **Legal batting of an airborne forward or backward Pass or Kick (Signal 11):** ***Note:*** *Tipped passes or kicks are technically legal batting of an airborne loose ball that is not grounded.* 8a*.* If anyone on the crew see’s a forward pass tipped by a defender or receiver, or a kick tipped by a defender, then that official will indicate this signal with their hands above their head with their arms to the sides of the head so they can keep observing the play. 8b. Give three motions with the right palm of the hand brushing against the backside of the left open hand. 8c. This communicates to the crew, players, and coaches that there is no longer the possibility of P.I. called on a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage. 8d. On a kick, it means there can’t be *Roughing the Kicker or Holder* unless the defender who tipped the kick *renews* their charge into those players. 8e. Only the player who tips a kick may then contact the kicker or holder. 8f. If a player is blocked into a holder or kicker, then we ignore it. 8g. The only time it’s illegal to bat an airborne ball is for the team in possession to bat a *backwards pass forward*. 8h. A *grounded ball* can never be batted *except* a Scrimmage Kick may be batted *backwards* by Team K to prevent it from entering the end zone.
9. **Reset the Play Clock (Signal 17):** Commonly called a “Bump signal,” This is primarily communicated between the BJ and R (5-man) but is used to tell all participants we are resetting the play clock. 9a. Place your open palmed right hand so that it is facing upwards next to your ear and then extend your arm fully upwards and make three-or-four pumping motions to indicate a reset to 25-seconds. 9b. Use both arms in this same open palm facing upwards motion three-or-four times to indicate a reset to 40-seconds.
10. **Touchback (Signal 3\*):** The Touchback signal is simply half of a Stop the Clock signal. Don’t do the NFL signal of the open palm facing down. Use one hand, open palm facing forward, and motion from above your head to your side, with your arm extended, three times.

**3.1** ***Secondary Signals***

 These are the signals that the crew uses to communicate with each other before the snap and after a play.

1. **Counting Players (Rule 3-7)**: a) For *11-players,* signal with a fist with an extended arm either to the side or in front of you so that your crew mates can clearly see you. Flanks, signal to the side that you’re counting with a bent elbow. Vocalize loudly “Got it!” or “Eleven!” when you signal; b) For *not enough* *players*, you will have open palms in front of your thighs. Keep in mind that some units may signal this with two open palms at their chest; c) For *too many players*, signal by rolling your two index fingers in a squirrel cage motion in front of your chest. Count a second time. cc) If you still have 12-players and no one is making an attempt to leave the field, throw your flag, blow your whistle, stop the clock as you now have a foul for an illegal substitution. d) The team has 3-seconds to have the player being replaced to *begin to leave* for the sideline. e) If that 12th player is trying to get off the field by the end of your second count, then you will give him the chance to get off the field. If he doesn’t make it off before the ball is snapped, throw your flag and let play go, then report your foul after the play. f) For *5-Team A/K players in the backfield*, the Flanks will signal “5” by waving their open palm out to their side like they’re waving at each other, up-and-down twice. Throw your flags in unison upwards and onto the LOS at the snap. ff) If a subsequent shift before the snap corrects this formation, then signal it is corrected by holding your offensive side open hand against your opposite shoulder and then signal a new on-or-off signal.
2. **Offensive Widest Player *On or Off the LOS* (for the Flanks) (Rule 7-2-1,2,3):** The widest player on your side of the Tea A formation *outside of the tackle position with eligible numbers* will cause you to indicate four different signals to your fellow Flank on the other side of the field. **1)** If the widest eligible receiver is off the LOS (clearly beyond one full yard off the LOS and clearly with their foot or head behind the waist of the snapper), you will signal with the number of eligible receivers on your side on your hand out to your offensive side at a 45-degree angle up and out from you. **1a.** If there is only one player wide on your side that is off the LOS, then signal with an open palm. If there are two players and the widest one is off, signal while indicating the number two with your index and middle finger. If there are three players and the widest is off the LOS, signal with three with your pinky, ring, and middle finger. If you have four players with the widest off, signal with four fingers. **1b**. If both Flanks signal that they have their widest player off, they will immediately count the offensive backfield to ensure that Team A does not have 5-players in the backfield. **2)** If your widest player is on the LOS, you will signal the number of eligible receivers on your side of the tackle by signaling on your hand as it’s held directly out in front of you;  **3)** If a player initially off the LOS then shifts onto the LOS and is your widest player, you will cross your offensive side arm across your chest and touch your open palm to your opposite shoulder and then point “on” towards the LOS. **4)** If an eligible number is “covered-up” on the LOS by another eligible numbered teammate, be it on purpose or on accident, indicate the cover-up by holding your hands out in front of you by making a fist with your left hand with the palm facing in, and then cover your left fist with the open palm of your right hand. **4a.** Then, signal the number of eligible receivers both by their number and position on your side of the tackle position. **4b.** If that covered-up player goes downfield on a pass that crosses the LOS, it is a foul for ineligible receiver downfield (5-yards, previous spot). **4c.** If that covered-up player intentionally touched or catches a forward pass, then it is a foul for illegal touching (5 -yards previous spot or spot of foul if behind the LOS plus a loss of down). **5.** **—The purpose of doing these signals is three-fold**: **a)** To force you to count the number of offensive players that are off the LOS and in the backfield. —*If there are five or more players in the back field, you both will signal “five” by holding your open hand to your side with a bent elbow, wave up-and-down twice, then grab your flag and wait for the snap.* —Once the ball is snapped, throw your flag about 20-feet high and a few yards out in front of you on the LOS. —If Team A corrects their illegal formation before the snap, indicate this by crossing your offensive side arm across your chest and touching your opposite shoulder, and then signal “on” or “off” as is needed; **b)** For you to see if there is a *cover-up* of a Team A player with an eligible number. *—If there is a cover-up* (usually it is the Tight End or an Unbalanced Line, but it may be a wide-out as part of a blocking scheme), *signal with your left hand in a fist extended directly outwards, then bring your right hand, open palm down, and place it over your left fist directly out in front of you*. —If that covered-up player goes downfield on a pass that crosses the LOS you will throw your flag at that player when the pass crosses the LOS for being an Ineligible Receiver Downfield (5-yards). —If that covered-up player touches the pass in an attempt to catch it or catches the pass, you will throw your flag at him for Illegal Touching of a Forward Pass (5-yards & Loss of Down). —If the player who is covering the eligible player moves off the LOS and reset before the snap, signal a creation by tapping your downfield shoulder and that the player is now “off;” **c)** In 5 or 7-man crews, for the Flanks to know which of them has the *Strong-side or Weak-side coverage* of receivers. —If you have *Weak-side coverage*, then you have all the initial coverage of all the receivers on your side of the field. —If you have *Strong-side coverage*, then the BJ is covering the inside receiver(s), then you have the one outside receiver.
3. **Gained 1st Down In or Out of Bounds (Rule 3-5-7b)**: Whenever a play ends with a 1st down *gained* by Team A, the game clock will always stop for the Down Box and chains to reset for a new series. a. The Referee will need to know the status of the ball, meaning, *“was the ball in bounds or out of bounds when it became dead?”* —If the ball carrier’s forward progress took him out of bounds, or the ball carrier took himself out of bounds, then the clock will start on the snap. The covering Flank will indicate this status to the Umpire when he gets the ball from you by saying “we’re out!” while crossing your wrists at your waist to form an “X.” —If the ball carrier was tackled, or his forward progress was stopped, in bounds, then you will indicate the the clock needs to start when the chains have reset by circling your index finger directly out in front of you with your elbow bent and say to the Umpire that “we’re hot!” b. Remember, you do not do these signals immediately after the play is over, you will need to wait for the Umpire and the Referee to approach after players have cleared and returned to their side of the LOS. Keep dead ball officiating until it is clear. c. This clock status will be communicated by the Flanks as the Umpire is getting the ball to go set it at the inbounds mark. Your verbalization of the clock status will be told to the Umpire who will then tell it to the Referee when he sets the ball. d. However, you will hold your signal until the Referee has made eye-contact with you and he can clearly see what the status is. —If you are out of bounds, the Referee will just signal the upcoming down. —If you are inbounds, the R will signal to start the game clock with a “silent wind.” e. *Remember, this only needs to be done on a gained 1st down, not on every single play near the sideline!*  f. Following any Officials Timeout other than a gained 1st Down, the BJ and the Umpire need to relay clock status to the Referee before the upcoming Ready for Play signal.
4. **I have a foul to report**: On a play where you throw your flag for a foul simultaneous with the snap, during the play, or after the play is over, once the play is clearly over you will indicate that you have a foul to the rest of the crew by repeatedly “short-blasting” your whistle 5-times and signaling to stop the clock. a. You will continue your short blasts on your whistle until you make eye-contact with the Referee. b. If you have forward progress you must maintain the dead ball spot until a crew mate relieves you by them saying to you, *“I have your spot, go report your foul.”*  c. Once you are relieved, jog to the Referee and tell him exactly what you have which must include: 1) The status of the ball-was the ball caught or incomplete/was the ball carrier tackled in or out of bounds: Example: “We have an incomplete pass on the play”; 2) the name of the foul and who committed it i.e.. “The foul is Illegal Use of Hands, Defense, number 55”; 3) Explain what the offending player did: “He knocked the receiver down 10-yards downfield before the pass was thrown.”; 4) and, if you know it, where the spot of enforcement will be: “This will be a previous spot enforcement because of the incomplete pass and results in a 1st down.”
5. **Play Clock Status (3-6-1)**: This is primarily for the Referee and BJ in 5-man but the Umpire can help out. In 4-man, this is shared by the Referee and Umpire: a. On plays that require the Referee or BJ to adjust the play clock, the “bump signal” (the right hand extended directly overhead with the palm open facing up) will indicate that the 25-second clock is being reset. b. On plays that require the play clock to be reset to 40-seconds, you will indicate this by signaling with both hands extended above the head with both palms open using a “double-pump” motion. c. On plays where the 40-second play clock is running and the ball is not spotted prior to the moment when 25-seconds is remaining on the play clock, the BJ: 1) with the game clock stopped, will indicate the ”silent” bump signal with one arm and start the 25-second play clock once the ball is finally spotted by the Umpire. The Referee will acknowledge the BJ’s signal with his own Bump signal; 2) If the game clock is running, if the Umpire is nowhere near to getting the ball spotted, then the BJ will blow his whistle and signal to stop the game clock, the Referee will do the same whistle and signals. —The BJ, then the Referee, will then signal that the play clock is being reset to 25-seconds. Once the Umpire spots the ball, the Referee will then blow his whistle and indicate to start the game clock in a normal Ready for Play Signal with a hot clock (a “whistle and wind” signal). —If this happens in 4-man, the Referee will do all this by himself. d. If the Umpire is about to spot the ball and hasn’t quite set the ball down yet with the game clock running, then the BJ, followed by the Referee, will do a “silent bump” and then start the 25-second play clock once the Umpire finally spots the ball. e. In all scenarios, the BJ, then the rest of the crew will say, “We’re resetting to twenty-five!” twice so everyone knows what is going on. f. If you are near the end of either half, be aware of a close game situation and either stop the game clock in all scenarios to reset the play clock to 25-seconds, or if it’s a blowout, don’t stop it at all. Use your discretion in these scenarios.
6. **Double-Stakes:** In any situation where the next upcoming down is greater than 10-yards to go, that means the offense has *two stakes to cross*. a. To prevent the crew from being confused and signaling to stop the clock when the offense crosses the front stake because they mistook it for the line to gain stake, the crew will signal “double-stakes.” b. This is for the LJ and HL primarily, the Umpire is encouraged to do it, too, after he backs out away from the ball after spotting it and signaling it to the LJ unless in a hurry-up offense. c. The Referee and BJ don’t need to signal “double-stakes.” d. *Double-Stakes* is signaled by crossing your forearms in front of your chest while clinching your fists. Call out, “Double-Stakes!” or “Small-Doubles!” or “Big-Doubles!” depending on the situation when you signal.
7. **Backwards Pass (Rule 7-3-4):** For any backwards pass, including a pitch option, the Flanks are directed to signal that they ruled the play was a backwards pass by extending their arm with a clinched fist to the offensive side of the field. a. On Free Kick returns, any covering official will signal this. b. On a play with multiple backwards passes, the Flanks must get even with the ball as much as possible to correctly adjudge all backward passes on a given play. c. Sometimes, a Quarterback will pitch-option to a running back a forward pass. That’s fine if it’s pitched from behind the LOS and is caught behind the LOS. —But, if the forward pitch hits the ground, you need to call an incomplete pass and be all over that play as a Flank. d. If the forward pitch occurs beyond the line of scrimmage, it’s a foul for an Illegal Forward Pass.
8. **Long-side/Short-side of the Tape on the Chains:** In regards to an upcoming down, for the HL, if the upcoming LOS is on or past the tape that is on the 5-yard mark on the chains: a. The HL will tell the U and/or R that we are “short-side!” to mean we are on or past the tape and “Five will get us Ten!” for a 1st down; b. or they will say “long-side!” to mean that we haven’t reached the tape yet. —After either vocalization, signal appropriately. c. *Short-side* will be signaled by pointing their offensive-side index finger downfield in a pumping motion in front of their belly. d. *Long-side* will be signaled by holding their two open hands facing each other about shoulder-width apart. e. *These signals are done so that should an Encroachment foul occur, the Referee knows right away if the foul results in a 1st Down or not.*  —Some units in our section say “Fifty-one!” and signal “5” then “1” with their hand to indicate that we are on or past the tape.
9. **Emphatic Signals:** a. You may use signals such as a “clutch” motion to indicate a pass was caught inbounds. b. You may point out of bounds after signaling incomplete to indicate that a pass that was caught had the receiver step out of bounds before he completed the process of a catch. c. You may indicate that a receiver juggled the ball before he completed the process of the catch and went out of bounds. d. You may also point or tap the ground if a receiver short-hopped or dropped a pass. If a ball is fumbled, but forward progress was ruled stopped, or the ground caused the fumble, emphatically run towards the dead ball spot and repeatedly blast your whistle and point emphatically and then yell emphatically that the ball as down or forward progress was stopped! e. Always signal your primary signal first before you use one of the accepted “emphatic signals.”
10. **Flanks Have “Goal Line Mechanics" Coverage Signal:** When the BJ gives up the goal line at or inside the B15-yard line to the Flanks, the three of them will signal that the Flanks are in “Goal Line Mechanics" by taking their two open hands, palms facing their chest, and in unison make a wiping motion going up-and-down and yell out “Goal line!” to each other and then point to the goal line. a. The Umpire may help with this communication but it is the BJ’s call as to if he will keep the goal line between the B15-yard line down to the B12-yard line depending on the line to gain and down and distance. b. Anything at or inside inside the B12-yard line, the BJ is instructed to give up the goal line to the Flanks. c. In 4-man, when the ball is on or inside the B10-yard line, the Flanks will automatically enter Goal Line Mechanics. d. ***Goal Line Mechanics*** are: The BJ will be positioned on the end line directly under the center of the crossbar; 1. When the ball is snapped from outside the B7-yard line while in goal line mechanics, each Flank’s first move will be to get four or five shuffle-steps downfield and to stay a few yards ahead of the ball carrier. 1a. If the ball carrier makes it to the goal line, you are expected to be there waiting for him, stopped and set. 2. If the ball is snapped from at or inside the B7-yard line, the Flanks must get immediately to the goal line and be stopped and set to see if the ball breaks the plane of the goal line or is short of it. 2a. Come back to spot the ball after the play is dead if the goal line is not reached.
11. **Dead Ball Signal (Rule 4-1-5):**For all plays within the field of play and short of the line to gain, when the ball carrier is down or forward progress is stopped, the covering official(s) will signal that the ball carrier is down and that the ball is dead by indicating Signal 7 (Dead Ball). a. After determining that the ball carrier os down and still possession of the ball, the official will raise their hand and then blow their whistle to indicate that the play is dead. —The raised hand also signals to the BJ (R in 4-man) to start the 40-second play clock. b. The dead ball signal is done in all hot clock situations except on gained 1st Downs beyond the line to gain. c. It can be done on a gained 1st down in bounds near the line to gain but only if the clock is then stopped afterwards upon the verification that the line to gain has been reached. d. On obvious gained 1st downs, signal to stop the clock only.
12. **Squirrel Cage (Rule 6-2-2/7-2-5):** This is a motion with both fists rolling over each other, just like the False Start signal, and is used for two separate signals: 1) By the Referee and Umpire at stomach-level who then point at the Long Snapper to indicate a *Legal Scrimmage Kick formation* and that the Long Snapper is “protected” from roughing which would result in an Automatic 1st down; 2) On a Field Goal attempt by the entire crew at head-level to indicate that the ball is live should the kick be blocked or the kick falls short of the end zone. 2a. The crew will indicate this signal by saying “We’re live!” at each other, then the Referee and Umpire will do a separate squirrel cage motion for each other and point at the Long Snapper to indicate that Team K is in a *legal scrimmage kick formation* and that the snapper is “protected.”

**3.2 Whistle Guidelines**

1. This has become a bit of a weak point for our unit. We have too many inadvertent whistles due to a lack of self-discipline. 1a. *You will be graded on your adherence to the* ***“Two-Second Challenge Principle.***” 1b. Do not blow your whistle on a play until a minimum of 2-seconds have gone by from the end of the play. Then get to the spot, square-off, raise your hand to signal dead ball or signal to stop the clock, and then whistle. 1c. As the game dictates, you may speed it up a little bit if you have a 1st Down and the clock stops in the last minute of a half or when a team calls a time out. 1d. *You must clearly see the ball in the ball carrier’s possession while he is clearly down before you blow your whistle.* 1e. You are not protecting anyone by blowing it quickly! Sound doesn’t stop force! The play kills itself, your whistle is merely an acknowledgement of that! 1f. If a fumble occurs and then you blow your whistle erroneously, it is a bad thing to bail a team out by blowing a whistle on a ball you didn’t see in possession. 1g. The defense worked for and earned that turnover! If you don’t see the ball, then you don’t have a whistle! Adhere to the *Two-second discipline*! When it is time to blow your whistle, a 2-second continuous burst is adequate. 1h. On tackles between the Tackle positions, trust that the Referee or Umpire has a better view than you. Delay your whistle even longer and expect them to blow the whistle until a player in possession of the ball is observed clearly down by you.

 2. If you have a foul, at the end of the play give five short blast of your whistle repeatedly until you make eye contact with the Referee while you signal to stop the clock. 2a. This whistle mechanic is how the rest of the crew knows one of us has a foul and we will then make sure chains don’t move and we can mentally prepare to enforce the foul.

3. Due to different enforcements for live ball and dead ball fouls, when a long Touchdown play occurs and you’re the covering official, blow your whistle when the ball carrier clearly crosses the goal line while in possession of the ball for the score. Don’t wait to arrive to the goal line and then whistle the score. 3a. Signal a Touchdown once you reach the goal line. If a foul occurs after the whistle for a touchdown against Team A, it will get enforced as a dead ball foul on either the Try or Kickoff, rather than negate the touchdown if it’s a live ball foul. 3b. This is important information to know when this occurs! When in doubt under this scenario, it was a dead ball foul. 4. If you use a lanyard for your whistle, learn to run while holding it in your non-penalty flag throwing hand. You may need to get a long lanyard that goes to your waist if you choose to do this. 4a. If you can’t run while holding your whistle in your hand, then get a finger whistle. You will always know where your finger whistle is and you can run at full stride with your arms. —If you use a finger whistle, blow it, then make your signal. No one handed signals while blowing your whistle! Or, you can learn to take it off with your teeth and blow it while signaling with both hands. 4b. It is NEVER acceptable for a football official to officiate the play with their whistle in their mouth. This is not basketball, do what each sport requires you to do. *We can’t have an inadvertent whistle!*

5. When a charged team time out is called, toot your whistle in two burst toots five times while signaling to stop the clock. 5a. Flanks: Do this while running out to the top of the numbers to get everyone’s attention. Then, point with both hands in the direction of the team that called the out.

**3.3 Personal Fouls**

1. Any action deemed to be “fighting” or any personal striking contact (even if they miss) with a fist, elbow, knee, or kick or violent stomp with the foot must result in a Disqualification of the offending player(s). ***Per CIF definition: Fighting is a combative act with one or more of these actions* *involving two mutual opponents each participating in these illegal acts*.**
2. Should a skirmish occur after a play, Flanks, do your best to keep non-players from coming onto the field. Let coaches grab their own players only. Non-players that leave their sideline during a “fight” are to be disqualified from the game. Only do this if they move to participate in the fight. Do your best to prevent this from occurring without grabbing anyone. If you decide to not throw out players for simply coming off the sideline, that’s fine, too.

**3.4 Unsportsmanlike Conduct (USC) Guidelines**

1. Under NFHS rules, all Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls are enforced as Succeeding Spot Fouls. That means they *NEVER* prevent a Touchdown scoring on a play like the current NCAA rules do.
2. Don’t be too technical about non-players celebrating a touchdown with their teammates who just played in the last down. Only penalize for excessive celebration if the act is egregious, choreographed, taunting, or specifically banned.
3. Allow for spur of the moment, spontaneous celebrations amongst teammates at the end of the play that don’t draw undue attention and are not *choreographed,* involving posing or using the ball as a prop,or involve taunting.
4. Flag any prolonged, self-congratulatory acts that make a mockery of the game. A player who poses (including a “1st down” mock pose), does acts that bring attention to himself, dances, or takes his helmet off must be penalized. Any celebrations with the ball shall also be penalized (spiking, spinning, tossing the ball high into the air, posing then dropping the ball).
5. Rule 9-5-1 & 2 contain a list of specifically banned unsportsmanlike acts. Any acts not listed there that clearly demean or taunt an opponent shall also be penalized.
6. Any spitting at, or on, an opponent , as well as vulgar gestures, will result in an immediate Disqualification.

**3.5 Legal Kicks**

1. A **Free Kick** may be: 1) A **place kick** that is either held by a teammate or free standing, may be off a legal kicking tee or kicked from the ground. A kicker may even wedge a hole in the ground to prop the ball up or pile sand or dirt to create a tee as long as it is not more than 2-inches tall. The kicker may even kick the ball is it is resting on the ground as if he is reaching to set it on a Tee. Almost all kickoffs we see are one of the versions of a place kick (**Rule 2-24-7**); 2) A **drop kick** such as still routinely used in Rugby football. The kicker will drop the ball from his hand(s) and then kick the ball the moment it strikes the ground, or kick the ball upon the ball’s rising bounce off the ground before it begins to drop from the apex of its bounce after being dropped from the hand(s) of the kicker (**Rule 2-24-6**); 3) A Free Kick using a **punt** may *only* be used following a Safety score. A “Free Kick” means that the defense can not rush and must allow Team K to kick the ball uncontested with a minimum of 10-yards distance until the ball is kicked, even if it is a Free Kick Field Goal attempt that follows a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch (**Rule 2-24-8**).
2. A **Scrimmage Kick** is any legal kick made from a snap that puts the ball in play. 2a. A scrimmage kick can occur on any down and must be kicked from anywhere behind the LOS by the offensive team unless a change of possession occurs before the kick. 2b. If the kick is blocked or is otherwise simply short of the LOS, if Team K recovers the kick behind the LOS it is the next upcoming down. 2c. Since most kicks are on 4th down, if they recover a kick in this fashion it is a turnover on downs. 2d. If any scrimmage kick goes out of bounds, then it is a turnover to Team R, regardless of the down and where it went out of bounds. 2e. Remember, any scrimmage kick that doesn’t enter Team R’s end zone is a live ball. 2f. A legal Scrimmage Kick involves three types of kicks, two of which can score a Field Goal or Kick Try: 1) **Punt-** a controlled kick that the player purposefully drops the ball with his hand(s) and kicks the ball with any part of his lower leg (knee to toes) as it is falling from his hand(s) before the ball hits the ground or another player. A punt can never score points; 2) **Place Kick**- on a scrimmage kick the only version of a place kick allowed is for a holder to *control* the ball on the ground or on a legal tee when it is kicked. A place kick can score a Field Goal or a kick Try. If a kicker kicks a ball that is laying on the ground or on the tee *uncontrolled* by a holder, or the holder is holding the ball up in the air when it is kicked, then it is an Illegal Kicking Foul; 3) **Drop Kick**- Rarely seen but still is a possibility in the game. The kicker drops the ball to the ground and simultaneously kicks the ball as it bounces. This is just like a place kick and can score a Field Goal or a kick Try. This is called a “Drop Goal” in Rugby football (**Rule 2-24-6**)
3. These three ways (Place Kick, Punt, and Drop Kick) are the only ways the ball can be legally kicked. On all scrimmage kick plays the ball must be controlled by the kicker as a drop kick or punt or by their holder on the tee or ground to be a legal kick. 3a. An uncontrolled ball that is *deliberately* kicked while it is rolling/bouncing on the ground, or even held up in the air off the ground by a holder, or otherwise doesn’t meet these requirements, is an Illegal Kicking Foul (10-yards). 3b. Remember, if it is an illegal kick the ball is considered to be a *muff or fumble* depending on the situation. 3c. Illegal Kicking is a *deliberate act* of kicking the ball. Don’t flag someone who *unintentionally* kicks the ball in an attempt to gain possession of a fumble or other loose ball.
4. **Free Kick Field Goal**: Upon a Fair Catch or an Awarded Fair Catch, Team R has the option to line up in kick off formation and use a Free Kick to kick an uncontested Field Goal for 3-points using any version of a place kick or a drop kick. 4a. They may kick from anywhere between the inbounds marks. This option exists if Team R lines up in a regular play formation following the Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch and a foul occurs prior to the snap or if any penalty occurs by either team on the next play or those fouls occur on successive plays. 4b. When a foul occurs on a Free Kick Field Goal Option Down, the down and the option to Free Kick a Field Goal is repeating itself. 4c. Any option for a Free Kick Field Goal attempt is lost when a play from scrimmage occurs after the Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch that doesn’t involve a penalty on that next play.

**3.6 Onside Kicks**

1. These are only done from a Free Kick. 1a. For Team K to legally touch or possess a Free Kick, **the kicked ball must travel 10-yards and must be *grounded, or Team R can muff possession and Team K recovers.***  1b.The NCAA and NFL rules are different and allow a Free Kick to be possessed mid-air if no Team R player is in the area. We see this incorrectly tried at the high school or youth level from time-to-time.1c. *Under NFHS rules, if a Team K player touches, even if on accident, a Free Kick inflight before it is grounded or touched by a Team R player, then it is a foul for Kick Catching Interference (Awarded Fair Catch plus 15-yards).*
2. If Team K touches a grounded ball before it travels 10-yards, it is a First Touching violation, drop your bean bag on the yard line the ball was touched on. Team R has the option of taking the ball, 1st & 10, at that spot.
3. If Team R touches/muffs a Free Kick anywhere on the field, start the clock and anyone may possess it but Team K can’t advance the muff if they recover it.
4. If Team K immediately recovers an onside kick that is grounded and goes 10-yards, start the clock and immediately stop it, 1-second shall elapse off the clock. If Team R immediately recovers the grounded free kick and is immediately down, then 1-second shall elapse off the clock. If Team R fair catches a free kick, no time shall go off the game clock
5. Team K is not allowed to “shepherd” the ball (Illegal Block 10-yards). That means they can’t block Team R players from the ball as it is rolling within the 10-yard Neutral Zone. If Team R initiates the block, then this allows Team K to block anyone else on Team R. If Team R muffs possession within the Neutral Zone, then Team K can block, too. Be aware of a defenseless player situation if either team is in the act of attempting to recover the onside kick.
6. Do not allow a “pop up kick” to be used. That is a kick directly driven into the ground with only half of a rotation so that it bounces high up into the air. Immediately stop play, this is a Dead Ball Foul for a Free Kick Infraction (5-yards).
7. If the Free Kick goes out of bounds without Team R touching it it is a foul for a Free Kick Out of Bounds (5-yards and re-kick, or Team R is awarded possession at the spot the ball went out of bounds plus a 5-yard tack on penalty, or Team R is awarded possession 25-yards in advance of the yard line of the kick). Throw your flag at the spot the ball went out of bounds. If Team R accepts possession, the ball will be spotted along the inbounds mark.
8. If either team purposefully blocks an opponent into the ball within the 10-yard Neutral Zone in order to contact the ball before it has traveled 10-yards, we simply ignore the touching of the ball in this manner. If Team K blocks a Team R player within the 10-yard neutral zone (called “shepherding”), then it is a foul for illegal blocking (10-yard penalty).

**3.7 Ball Spotting**

1. Following a change of possession, place the ball on a yard line (nose of the ball on the front edge of the yard line whenever possible) or if the ball is dead within one-yard of a 5-yard stripe and you’re on a field with no yard line hash marks place the nose of the ball on the frontside of a 5-yard stripe. Don’t spot the ball “in-between” yard marks following a change of possession unless a half the distance to the goal penalty is enforced.
2. If a punt is downed inside the R1-yard line place it on the exact spot that it became dead at.
3. On regular plays, spot the ball on a yard line unless the ball is less than one-yard shy of either the *line to gain* or the *goal line* whereupon your spot will be as accurate as you can make it*.* If you’re on a field without yard line hash marks, then simply do your best. **The rule of thumb for Flanks to mark progress is that the foremost point of the ball lines up with the downfield edge of your foot. However, always stand feet together.**

**3.8** **Line of Scrimmage**

1. When in question as to a simultaneous False Start by the offense or Encroachment by the defense, it is always a False Start against the offense.
2. Flanks, work to keep offensive linemen legally on the LOS and only call obvious fouls for an illegal formation for 5-in the back field or when warnings are ignored or if the linemen are clearly in the backfield. Don’t wait for the 4th quarter to enforce something that you saw before but didn’t call for 3-quarters!
3. If the offensive “lineman” is clearly lined up with his head *behind* the snapper’s waist, a live ball foul will be called without warning at the snap for an Illegal Formation for having less than five players numbered 50-79 on the LOS or five players in the backfield.
4. Don’t be technical on a wide receiver (flankers/split ends/slot back) in determining if he is on or off the LOS. When in question, it is NOT a foul. You will make them be in their appropriate spots so we can avoid a foul unless it’s obvious that they’re not aligned properly. Communicate with them if they ask if they’re on or off the LOS to avoid fouls that otherwise shouldn’t have happened! Tell them to back up or move up as needed but make sure it is done before the snap or a player goes in motion. Only call coverups or five in the backfield in regards to the wideouts if it is “stinking obvious” they screwed up their alignments. We essentially don’t use the idea of “being in no man’s land” anymore as a reason to penalize a team for an illegal formation!
5. If a receiver is lined up outside the tight end, and that receiver is clearly not behind the tight end off the LOS, then that receiver is covering that tight end up which is making the tight end an ineligible receiver by position as an interior lineman. If there is doubt, then the tight end is not covered up. This doesn’t matter on run plays but really matters on pass plays if the tight end goes down field on a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage.
6. Any formation used as part of a trick play must be 100% legal in all aspects or it is a foul. In most cases you will have either an Illegal Shift, Illegal Motion, or Illegal Formation to consider on these plays. This particularly includes using a swinging gate formation with linemen who are too far off the LOS or with a snapper who is not numbered 50-79 and there are less than 5-players numbered 50-79 on the LOS. You will occasionally see a quick snap where players are not set as they’re approaching the LOS, make them do it right!
7. When in question, any quick or abrupt movements by the snapper or QB is a False Start. The QB can not move his hands up-and-down or make make quick hand motions or stomps with his feet in an attempt to make the defense encroach. Allow the QB to step a player into motion as long as he is not trying to draw the defense into the Neutral Zone.
8. If the defense commits any disconcerting acts in an attempt to make the offensive players False Start, then it is a dead ball foul (5-yard penalty) for a Disconcerting Act by the defense. A disconcerting act includes clapping the hands that simulates a Quarterbacks hand clap signal to snap the ball, yelling “Hut! Hut!,” “Go!,” or “Hike!,” stomping their feet at or yelling at the offensive linemen from a yard away, or any other act that is an attempt to hinder the offensive signals and interfere with a smooth snap of the ball.

**3.9 The Line of Scrimmage and Fouls at the Snap**

 A) The two most common fouls in football involve the line of scrimmage. In NFHS rules, there is no *offsides*. *Offsides means a team can get back onsides*. ***Not in NFHS rules***, if the neutral zone is penetrated by either team after the Ready for Play, then it is an immediate dead ball foul for *Encroachment.* We do not use the word *“offsides”* in NFHS rules. The offense can be penalized for Encroachment if they line up in the neutral zone. The neutral zone is the length of the football, tip-to-tip (12-inches) *(The Neutral Zone Expanded is only for Team A blocking on pass plays or as part of Post Scrimmage Kick enforcements on scrimmage kicks, Team A blockers may go downfield no more than 2-yards to block Team B before the forward pass is thrown across the line of scrimmage. They can’t go into the end zone to do this).*

 If a snapper is holding the rear of the ball for a shot gun snap, he my tilt the rear of the ball so that the axis of the ball is a perfect 180-degrees up-and-down. However, if the rear tip of the ball goes beyond a perpendicular 180-degree angle, it shall be a foul for an Illegal Snap infraction on the snapper. His tilt beyond perpendicular is essentially shifting the neutral zone downfield that puts the defense at a disadvantage.

 The other most common foul is a False Start by the offense. You have to be all over these fouls like butter. Any movement that simulates the snap, any sudden starting and stopping, or just a player starting too soon before the ball is snapped, constitutes a False Start. Also, *once an interior lineman places his hand down on the ground, he must keep it there or it is a False Start.*

 If there is any doubt as to who committed False Start or an Encroachment first, it was a False Start. If it is an obvious foul, you just need to come to the numbers and signal to the R. If there is doubt, come into the U and you talk it over with him and the opposite Flank.

 B) Illegal Shifts are *the most commonly missed call* in high school and college football. *All offensive players must be momentarily set for a minimum of 1-second prior to either the ball being snapped or a player going legally in motion whereupon the ball is snapped*. Where this is missed is us not counting “thousand one” to ourselves upon a team getting set and making sure this occurs before every snap. If you don’t have the time to say that count before the snap or before a motion, it’s an Illegal Shift. Multiple players may shift and re-shift before the snap as long as they are *re-set* before the snap. Often, a wide receiver is still getting to his position when a back is sent into motion or a player is in motion when a lineman goes from a 2-point stance to a 3-point stance. These are Illegal Shifts. Sometimes, the QB will send a player “in motion,” and then tell his team to get set and they go down. Then that player “in motion” is still moving at the snap. This is also an Illegal Shift because all 11-players didn’t reset after the shift into the set position. Anytime two or more offensive players are moving at the snap, it is an Illegal Shift.

 C) Illegal motion: Any back may go in motion provided that he is not moving towards the LOS at the snap. Some players will “shave” off towards the LOS at the last moment to try to gain some momentum just before the snap. That is illegal motion. Also, any offensive player who started on the LOS and then goes “in motion” is legally in motion at the snap in motion provided that: 1) the motion doesn’t result with 5 players in the backfield (illegal formation); 2) this lineman is the only player in motion at the snap; 3) this lineman is at least 5-yards behind the LOS when the ball is snapped; there are five players numbered 50-79 on the line off scrimmage at the snap.

 d) *Illegal Formation*: The most common Illegal Formation is 5-players in the backfield. When Team A has 11-players, that means 7-players must be on the LOS which means not more than 4-players at any one time can be in the backfield (Flanks will only worry about 5-players in the backfield). Ideally, both Flanks will have this flagged at the snap on every infraction. Signal that you have 5-players with your hand extended towards the back field and two waves, then put your hand over your flag. Then, when the ball is snapped, throw your flag and let play go. To be considered on the LOS, linemen must penetrate the waist of the snapper with their head or foot. This puts them within 1-yard of the LOS. If they are clearly beyond 1-yard behind the LOS with their foot in a 2-pint stance or their hand in a 3-point stance, then this is an Illegal Formation and that lineman has made himself a back and is attempting to gain an unfair advantage because they are pulling or attempting to pass block. The other Illegal Formations that could occur on a regular play from scrimmage are less than 5-players on offense numbered 50-79 on the LOS at the snap; a player wearing a number that is not 0-through-99; two players on the same team wearing the same number on the same play; in a scrimmage kick formation on 1st, 2nd, or 3rd down if the Long Snapper is not numbered 50-79 and there are not at least 4-players on the offensive LOS numbered 50-79; The offensive line interlocks legs with anyone except the Guards with the Long Snapper *before* the snap. *—The Referee and Umpire will see most of these but the Flanks will see 5-players in the backfield!*

**3.10 Forward Progress**

 A) One thing that our unit is struggling with over the past few years is the concept of *forward progress,* also known as *the foremost progress of the ball*. *A player in possession has reached his foremost point of progress when he is no longer in control of his body and is driven backwards or completely stopped without being down.* This is not an instantaneous act! Sometimes, it may take a second or two to figure out that the runner is no longer in control of his body. If he is clearly stopped or driven backwards while *no longer in control* of his body and he then fumbles, we will blow progress dead and rule that forward progress was stopped before the fumble occurred. Give the runner every opportunity to break a tackle or regain his balance if he is not controlled! It is possible for a runner to be pushed back but still have control of his body. Give him a chance to make a play and don’t be in a rush to blow your whistle. If a runner breaks free of the tackle then he has lost his spot of foremost point of progress and a new foremost point of progress will begin whenever he is contacted again. If his feet are still moving forward, then he is not controlled!

 B) In regards to forward progress on the sideline, a player’s forward progress is stopped inbounds with the game clock still running if he is *contacted inbounds* and that contact then forces the player out of bounds while going *backwards* while not in control of his body. In this case we will rule that the runner’s foremost point of progress was stopped at that very point in bounds and we will keep the clock running. If this airborne contact occurs inbounds and the runner’s forward momentum then carries him out of bounds without ever having gone backwards, then we will stop the clock because his foremost point of forward progress occurred on the sideline going out of bounds. If the runner is contacted inbounds and he then drives to the side or forward to get out of bounds, then we will stop the clock and say that the runner made himself go out of bounds to stop the clock. Expect this scenario in the last 2:00 of a half.

 C) On a pass play near the sideline, a receiver’s forward progress is considered stopped inbounds and a catch shall be ruled by the official with the clock still running if an airborne receiver secures the football over the field of play and thereafter is driven backwards and out of bounds by a tackler before he can get a foot down in inbounds. If he is driven *forward and out of bounds* before the receiver can get his foot down, then *it shall be an incomplete pass*. If the receiver is *carried* out of bounds in any direction, then it shall be a catch ruled inbounds if they complete the *process of the catch*.

 D) In regards to gaining a 1st Down at the line to gain or the ball carrier driving for the goal line for a possible Touchdown, give the ball carrier every opportunity to gain that extra yard. He is allowed a second opportunity to break through that initial stop. Even if a runner’s body is controlled, he can still reach out and extend the football to make the line to gain or goal line! Do not be so quick to blow the whistle upon an initial stop on these close plays. *The defense must control every aspect of the runner’s effort in order for us to consider progress being stopped.* *The 2022 Music City Bowl play at the goal line was blown too quickly!*

 E) When forward progress is stopped, stand on the yard line of the foremost point of progress and blow your whistle while raising your hand to signal a dead ball. If this occurs near the sideline you may signal to keep the clock running instead of the deal ball signal. Your crew mates will clean up any piles or separate players. Be sure to always turn and face the players on the sideline or who went out of bounds!

 F) If an airborne receiver catches a pass in the end zone and then is driven *backwards* back across the goal line where he then alights inbounds in front of the goal line or out of bounds, *forward progress is considered stopped in the end zone for a Touchdown* provided the receiver survives the *process of the catch*.

**3.11** **Throwing Your Flag**

 a) Straight up in the air 15-to-20-feet high so it lands on the LOS in front of you for all LOS infractions and all fouls that occur simultaneously with the snap such as an Illegal Formation or Illegal Shift.

 b) For any Dead Ball Foul, throw it straight up from where you’re standing between 20-to-25 feet above you.

 c) For any foul that is a live ball foul under the *All But One Principle* (Rule 10-6-6)*,* you will need to throw your flag at the exact spot the foul occurred. If you miss your spot, move it to the correct spot after the play is over. Most live ball fouls are enforced from the spot of the foul, the end of the run, or the previous spot.

**4.0 Fumble Philosophies**

1. If you didn’t see the ball carrier down with the ball in his possession, then it was a fumble. If you’re uncertain, let play go as another official may have clearly seen that the ball was out. Apply common sense and let the play complete itself if you’re uncertain. If you’re`100% certain it’s a fumble, drop your bean bag and keep officiating.
2. When in question as to a QB fumbling the ball or if it was, instead, a forward pass, then it will be ruled an incomplete forward pass when the ball hits the ground. —On a play where the QB is hit as he throws and the ball goes downfield and hits the ground, the Referee will be the one to signal incomplete. The Umpire will point down with his index finger so that the Referee will know that the ball is on the ground as opposed to being intercepted so that the Referee can make the appropriate call. If the Referee doesn’t blow his whistle, the Umpire will know that it’s a fumble and will officiate the play appropriately. —It is recommended that the Referee say loudly that the ball is live, or fumbled, or is out to prevent player confusion. It is OK to talk to players on a play! If a fumble is ruled, the Referee is encouraged to yell, “It’s out! It’s out!”

**4.1 Scoring Plays**

1. When in question, it is not a Touchdown. You must clearly see the ball carrier break the plane of the goal line before they’re down with the ball or clearly have possession with one foot down inbounds in the End Zone with the “process of the catch” completed to be a Touchdown.
2. When in question, it is not a Safety. The ball must clearly not make it all the way out of the End Zone (all the way across the goal line) to be a Safety.
3. When in question, it is a Touchdown when a non-airborne ball carrier crosses the goal line at the pylon with the ball crossing the *goal line extended*.
4. If an airborne receiver secures the ball in his hands while on or past the goal line and is then hit and/or tackled so that he comes down inbounds short of the goal line, it is a Touchdown because the ball broke the plane of the goal line when it was secured and the process of the catch was completed after the ball broke the plane of the goal line.
5. A Field Goal or Kick Try must pass completely within the inside plane of the goal posts and over and completely across the cross bar the kick may deflect off the posts and crossbar and will still be a live ball until the kick is clearly successful or is unsuccessful. **NOTE:** *A kick that hits the post that connects to the ground behind the crossbar is a successful kick regardless if the ball bounces back out across the crossbar.*
6. In theory, especially if you have high-winds, a Field Goal or Kick Try could be blown back towards where the kick came from. If this happens, the Field Goal is successful when the *entire ball* passes past the rear edge of the cross bar. Think of the goal posts and crossbar as a soccer or hockey goal in the air. The ball must go past the entire back-edge plane of the goal that is created by the cross bar and uprights in order to be counted as a Field “Goal.”

**4.2 Game Clock**

1. When in question, when a team calls a charged team time out at the exact moment that they are to be whistled for a foul, especially for a Delay of Game, there is no foul, grant the charged team time out instead.
2. If the game clock fails to stop or start within a second-or-two, that is OK unless it is within the last 2:00 of a half, then you will adjust the clock as you deem fair. Make them be accurate in the last two minutes of a half. *All crew members have clock status!*
3. Remember, when the game clock has less than 2:00 remaining in either half with a ***hot clock status***, that the offended team has the option to start the clock on the Ready for Play signal or on the snap, *even if the foul is declined*. Flanks must be communicating this option to the Head Coaches and let the Referee know what they want to do.
4. The Referee and BJ (Umpire in 4-man) have primary game clock status. However, the entire crew, especially the off-side Flank, have the clock, especially towards the end of a half and when time outs are requested. —Flanks, be aware of situations where a Head Coach may want to call a time out. Don’t be afraid to ask them if they want a time out, even ahead of time, and be very accommodating of their requests! If a Head Coach wants a time out at a certain time, that is a request for a time out! Grant it a the time he wants it without awaiting for a new signal from him when the clock reaches that time.

**4.3 Helmets Coming Off**

1. *If the ball carrier’s helmet comes off, then the ball is dead immediately at that spot.* Blow your whistle right away. *We only blow our whistles for the ball carrier’s helmet coming off!*
2. If the defense clearly hits/tackles the ball carrier after his helmet has clearly come off and the defense had time to see it and react, it shall be a Personal Foul against the defense for Unnecessary Roughness. If this contact is purposefully to the head of the helmet-less player, that offender shall be Disqualified for flagrant contact with intent to injure.
3. If any player, who is not the ball carrier from either team, has their helmet come off during live ball play, then they must stop participating in the play and stand in the general area that their helmet came off until the play is over. *Play will continue!* If the helmet-less player moves to *participate* in the play in any way, even after he gets his hemet back on, other than in the continuity of a tackle that initiated the act of the helmet coming off, then that player will be penalized for Illegal Participation.
4. If any opponent initiates any type of contact against a helmet-less player during live ball play, regardless of what actions the helmet-less player is doing or not doing, then that player has committed a Personal Foul for Unnecessary Roughness.
5. Anytime a player’s helmet comes off and it is not from the *direct action* of a foul committed by an opponent, that helmet-less player is regarded as an “injured player” by rule and must sit out the upcoming play unless the end of either half occurs. The official(s) who see this will, once all live ball play is over, blow their whistle and signal to stop the clock the same way the would as if a penalty occurred. They will then run to the player while pointing to their own head and tell the player, *“Your helmet came off, you’re out one play!”* and then escort that player to their sideline. —The official(s) will inform the Referee that number (fill in the blank) had is helmet come off and needs to be replaced. The Referee will signal for an official’s time out. Then, tell the coach of the team, “Get a replacement for number (fill in the blank), his helmet came off!” —Allow that team all the time they need to get a replaced player in. Once the new player is on their side of the LOS and near the formation, then the Referee will signal to set the play clock to 25-seconds if the offense was the team whose player had their helmet come off, or signal to set the play clock to 40-seconds if it was the defense was the team who had their helmet come off. Then the Referee will signal the Ready for Play with a “whistle and chop” or a “whistle and wind” according to the game clock status. —A time out will not “buy” a player back in, only if either half ends can this player return on the “next play.”

**4.4 Foul Enforcement Spots**

1. **Fouls are enforced from one of five spots:** a) **The Spot of the Foul** (always against the team in possession if the live ball foul is behind the end of the run or against the offense behind the line of scrimmage on a loose ball play); b) **The Previous Spot** (the line of scrimmage on the actual spot the ball as snapped form for fouls that occur at the snap or during/before a loose ball play); c) **The End of the Run** (for most live ball fouls against the defense or an offensive foul that occurs beyond the end of the run); d) **The Succeeding Spot** (which is the end of the run used for non-player fouls, Unsportsmanlike Conduct, or special enforcements that are **“tack on”** fouls); e) **Special Enforcements** (such as the Post Scrimmage Kick enforcement from the end of a scrimmage kick, a Free Kick Out of Bounds, or a Roughing the Passer Foul with a completed catch on the play with Team A possession at the end of the play).
2. The “**Spot**” refers not to the yard line but the actual spot on the yard line that the foul occurred at, the run ended at, or from where the ball was snapped or Free Kicked from.
3. When marking off enforcements, if the spot of the enforcement is not within the inbounds marks, then you will move to the inbounds mark and mark off the penalty from there.
4. If the penalty is greater than half-the-distance to the goal, then that foul will be enforced half-the-distance to the goal. 5-yard penalty, half-the-distance if inside the 10-yard line; 10-yard penalty, half-the-distance if inside the 20-yard line; 15-yard penalty, half-the-distance if inside the 30-yard line.
5. If a series of Carryover Fouls and/or Succeeding Spot fouls against Team R are enforced on a Free Kick which then causes the Team K Free Kick line to be at the R25-yard line or closer to the Team R end zone, then the 25-yards in advance option for the ball placement following a Free Kick Out of Bounds foul by Team K is ignored.
6. A Post-Possession Foul is any foul that occurs after a change of possession. It is important to know if a foul is before possession was lost, during the loose ball, or if it was a post-possession foul occurred due to the “Clean Hands” rule (**Rule 10-2-2**).
7. The doctrine of NFHS foul enforcement is governed by the idea of the “Basic Spot” (**Rule 10-4**). The Basic Spot is the spot that any given foul is enforced from. This doctrine of foul enforcement is based on the “All But One Principle” (**Rule 10-6**).

 **NOTE: Our unit is struggling with the new concept of the “Tack On Foul” on a play that follows a kick that involves a foul by Team K. Under NFHS rules, a penalty NEVER has to be declined to accept the results of the play!**

**5.0 Positioning —Maintain Your 45-degree Angle**

1. Our eyesight allows us to perceive most of what we see within a 45-degree visual angle, called the *periphery*, of where our pupils are pointed and focused at. You will approach a play, as much as possible, especially if you’re in the middle, by doing your best to maintain a 45-degree angle to the play to maximize your visual perception of the entirety of your responsibilities on a given part of a play. —This means, the middle officials usually need to stay within the hash marks during a play and Flanks will trail long plays, between 7-to-13-yard behind the ball carrier, so that they have a 45-degree angle on any potential tacklers or blockers near the ball carrier.
2. A 45-degree angle prevents us, in most cases, from being “straight-lined” to where all you can see is a player’s backside. —Flanks have the challenge of covering the sideline and their side of the field. Bisect your coverage with this 45-degree angle doctrine except for plays directly down the sideline, which then, you have the feet of the player(s) in or out of bounds and trust the BJ and Umpire have a 45-degree angle to help with fumbles or the ball carrier being down. —In the instances where we may be straight-lined, our crew coverage will allow another crew mate to see what you can’t. Trust each other’s, and your own, positioning on any given play!
3. Flanks and BJ, on a pass play to your sideline or end line, be no closer than 7-yards to the play, ideally 7-to-13 yards distant from the play, and try to be set (not moving) if possible with your chest squared to the sideline or end line, knees bent and head positioned slightly lower so your eye level is at about waist-level of the receiver for catches at the sideline. —Look directly at the feet in or out of bounds and with your peripheral vision you will see control of the ball. Once you see the feet down, move your eyes to ensure the *process of the catch* was completed with the ball. —If the play is on the sideline, the BJ will help the Flanks with control of the ball, on a play at the end line, the Flanks will help the BJ with ball control.
4. Don’t *over-hustle!* Maintain your positioning during a play and be under control when *in* your angle. —Flanks, stay shoulders squared to the LOS and shuffle-step with the ball carrier until he gets downfield of you, then let him turn your shoulders as you then begin to stride down field as he goes downfield of you. Always **square-off** your spots with a 90-degree cut at the sideline, never round them off. Look sharp doing so. —BJ, maintain a 10-to-15 yard cushion on your coverage if you can help it. Always contain players rather it be live ball or deal ball unless you have goal line on a play where the ball carrier. or receiver, is running towards the goal line (also with a handful of dead ball exceptions). —Referee, always contain players on downfield plays. The only time the Referee or BJ “pass players” is to separate players as needed or to get to the sideline for *dead ball support*. The Referee or BJ will always escort the Team A ball carrier or defensive players out of the sideline area and back onto the field. —Umpire, on plays that pass you, don’t get straight-lined. Move to a side within the hash marks and do your best to maintain a 45-degree angle to the ball carrier as you trail the play 7-to-13 yards behind the play. Once the play is dead, then you can come into the side zone if the play dictates that. The Umpire can also help escort players off the sideline and back onto the field. —Umpire & BJ, on a turnover and return by Team B, it is vital that you observe the Quarterback and make sure that he does not receive any Unnecessary Roughness fouls during the return if he isn’t pursuing the play. Team B will sometimes try to take a cheap shot on Team A’s most important player in these scenarios!

**5.1 Substitutions (3-7-1,2,3,4,5,6)**

1. Either team may substitute for any number of players at any dead ball interval provided that the player(s) being substituted for *begin their motion to leave the field no more than 3-seconds after the substitute reaches their position or the huddle*. —Be lenient with this aspect of the rule. If the replaced player clearly isn’t making an attempt to leave the field after you have counted your team’s players twice, then you will blow your whistle, throw your flag, and stop the clock. —The player being replaced must exit the field along any part of their team’s 120-yard length of their own sideline, never over the end line or the opponent’s sideline.
2. If a team “participates” in the play with more than 11-players, it is Illegal Participation and a 15-yard penalty. —We will do our best to prevent this by being on top of our 11-counts and stopping the ball from being snapped with an Illegal Substitution foul (5-yards) whenever we can help it. However, if a team sends a 12th player onto the field at the last second, we can’t prevent that. —If we fail to catch a 12th player before the snap but get it after the play, then that’s on the coach. There’s only so much we can do but make sure you get it, one way or the other.
3. If a replaced player is trying to get off the field but is still touching the field of play when the ball is snapped, it is a foul for Illegal Substitution. Flag it, let play go.
4. There are no “match-up” rules for substitutions like the NCAA and NFL have. You will not delay a snap so Team B can match their substitutes with Team A’s.
5. Unless a time out or foul occurs, a team may not replace a player and then send the replaced player back onto the field or pull out the player that came into the game off the field until a play, a foul, or a time out occurs. This is an Illegal Substitution foul at the snap.
6. Any substitutes for Team A must be momentarily past the top of the numbers (the 9-yard marks) after they enter the field and after the Ready for Play (or Umpire moving away from the ball after spotting it) or it is an Illegal Substitution foul (this makes the “Hide Out” play illegal).
7. Any attempt by Team A to feign a substitution in order to make Team B think a player is leaving the field as a replaced player, especially when that player is in a group of players who actually leave the field, is an Illegal Participation foul when the ball is snapped. Flanks, be all over this one! If a defender has it covered and wasn’t deceived, then let it go.
8. Many offensive “hurry-up, no huddle” schemes now attempt to catch Team B with too many players on the field when they attempt to substitute tired players. —If the replaced Team B player is on the field when the ball is snapped, it is a foul at the snap for Illegal Substitution. Flag it, let play go. —***We don’t shut a play down when a team is trying to get their replaced players off the field!*** ***We only shut it down when no one is trying to get off.*** This is a new aspect of the game that we have to respect and call as worded by rule.
9. **Illegal Substitutions— When to Flag it (ten examples):** **1)** 12-players stationary on the field with no one attempting to get off the field after 3-seconds: Throw your flag, whistle it, and stop the clock immediately, Illegal Substitution enforced from the previous spot. This is called **“*Delayed Departure*;”**  **2)** The replaced player is trying to leave the field but the ball is snapped while he is still on the field: Throw your flag at the snap, let play go, Illegal Substitution enforced from the previous spot. This is called “***Unsuccessful Departure*;”**  **3)** A non-player or 11th player steps on the field *after* the snap but *does not* move to participate in the play and *does not* influence the play or then leaves the field: Throw your flag where the player came onto the field, let play go. This is called **“*Entering and Withdrawing*”** *(this is enforced as a non-player Succeeding Spot Foul)*. If he participates or influences the play, it becomes an Illegal Participation foul enforced using the *All But One Principal* to determine the Basic Spot; **4)** The replaced player leaves the field across the end line of his own end zone or the opponent’s sideline: Throw your flag at the snap, let play go, Illegal Substitution enforced from the previous spot.This is called ***“Illegal Departure;"***  **5)** B25 comes onto the field to replace B30. Before the snap, and without a foul or time out occurring before the next snap, Team B’s coaches send B30 back onto the field and B25 comes off the field:Throw your flag at the snap, let play go, Illegal Substitution enforced from the previous spot; **6)** A88 is the 11th player for Team A. He enters the field from his sideline but never goes past the top of the numbers after the Ready for Play. No Team B player ever notices him: Throw your flag at the snap, let play go, Illegal Substitution enforced from the previous spot. If Team B covers him, then no foul; **7)** Team A has 3 players in a group leaving for the sideline as replaced players. One of those players suddenly stopped next to the sideline and is pretending that he is out of bounds. That player is actually Team A’s 11th player: If the ball is snapped, flag it, let play go. This is Illegal Participation enforced from the previous spot because Team A used a ***feigned substitution*** to deceive Team B (**Rule 9-6-4d**); **8)** Either team has 12-players and none of them are trying to exit the field but it is not recognized by an official until after the ball is snapped: Throw your flag as soon as you recognize that a team is playing or has played with 12-players, even if it is after the play. This is now an Illegal Participation foul enforced from the previous spot. *We will always try to catch this before the snap so that it is a 5-yard penalty rather than the 15-yard penalty in this example*; **9)** Team B has 10-players, the 11th player is sent onto the field before the snap but is unable to get to his side of the Neutral Zone before the snap: Throw your flag at the snap, let play go. If that player participates from behind the offense’s side of the ball, it shall be an Illegal Participation foul enforced from the previous spot (**Rule 9-6-3**);  **10)** Team B has 11-players, but B33 mistakenly thinks that he is being replaced and leaves the field to his team box leaving Team B with 10-players. Noticing that Team B has 10-players, B33 then runs back onto the field *before the snap*: Legal, not a foul because B33 was not a replaced player and retains his status as one of the 11-Team B players. If this is done intentionally to *deceive* the opponent then it is Illegal Participation enforced from the previous spot. —*Notice that only* ***Example 1*** *is the only example of when we throw our flag and stop the clock before the snap.* All others, let play go as they don’t become a foul until the ball is snapped. —All fouls, except **Example 3**, are penalized from the *Previous Spot*. **Example 3** is the only Substitution infraction that results in a *Succeeding Spot enforcement*. If this were to occur on a 4th Down play against Team B that results in Team A being short of the line to gain, the foul is enforced after the turnover on downs and Team A will lose possession! On every play with a non-player foul, the down will count and the foul is enforced from the Succeeding Spot.

 ——*You must count before every single player on every single play and be accurate! Counting players prior to every snap is the* ***ultimate mental exercise*** *for an official and ensures fair play on every play! If a team has less than 11-players, we will tell them* ***after*** *the play is run.*

**6.0** **Batting The Ball**

1. The ball may be batted in any direction if it is a loose ball *in-flight* with the following exceptions: **1)** A backwards pass may not be batted *forward* by the team in possession (Illegal Batting); **2)** An *airborne scrimmage kick* may not be batted by a Team K player when there is a Team R player i*n position* to catch the kick *inflight* *beyond* the line of scrimmage (Kick Catching Interference); **3)** A free kick *inflight* may never be batted or touched by Team K (Kick Catching Interference) unless the ball is first contacted by Team R unless Team R is pushed into the ball within the 10-yard neutral zone. —Other than these exceptions, legal batting includes in-fight scrimmage kicks, forward and backward passes, and airborne fumbles. **NOTE:** Forward passes may be batted in any direction by Team B players and eligible Team A receivers. If a Team A *ineligible receiver* bats a forward pass *before* it’s touched by a Team B player, it’s a foul for *Illegal Touching of a Forward Pass by an Ineligible Receiver*.
2. A *grounded loose ball* can only be batted under the one following condition: Team K may bat a grounded scrimmage kick *backwards* in an effort to prevent the scrimmage kick from entering the End Zone for a Touchback. In all other cases, it is a 10-yard penalty for Illegal Batting when either team bats a *grounded loose ball*.
3. If Team K bats, or even accidentally touches, a *Free Kick* in-flight, it is always a foul for Kick Catching Interference. If Team K bats a *scrimmage kick* in-flight away from a Team R player who is in the act trying to catch the in-flight ball, it also a foul for Kick Catching Interference. —Team K may catch or bat an in-flight *scrimmage kick* provided that there is no Team R player in position to catch the kick. —In all other circumstances of Team K batting a Free Kick, it is illegal batting, a 10-yard penalty from the previous spot if Team K gains possession on the play, or Team R has the option of a tack on foul if Team R gains possession.

**6.1** **Charged Time Outs & Official’s Time Outs**

1. Flanks, be particularly aware of when a Head Coach may want to call a charged team time out, *especially at the end of a half or when the play clock is about to expire*. —If a coach says that he wants a time out at a particular time to avoid the clock running out then grant it without him signaling or saying *timeout* at that precise time. —Sometimes a coach will say that he wants a time out as soon as the upcoming play is over. That is OK for you to call immediately after the play ends without him signaling to you after the play because he verbalized his intentions.
2. As soon as you signal to stop the clock for the time out, instantly look at the game clock and ensure it stops at the precise time that you *intend* to stop the clock which should be the instant that you hear or see the the time out signaled or audibly called. *Correct the game clock if needed!*
3. A Flank who signals time out will run out to the top of the numbers as they whistle and signal to stop the clock and then point with both arms in a chop motion pointed in the direction of the team that called for the charged time out. —The officials in the middle will simply whistle and signal to stop the clock. The whistle sound will be double-blasts five times to get everyone’s attention. —The Referee, Umpire, and BJ will *emphatically* announce to the crew and acknowledge each to other what the upcoming down will be after the time out! *If a down is lost by a crew, it will happen on a time out or after a spike to stop the clock.*
4. On a charged team time out with an “outside the numbers conference,” the Flanks will stand at the top of the numbers on the LOS as they write down who called the time out, when it occurred, and what the down, distance, and yard line is. —If the ball is inside either 25-yard line towards the goal line, Flanks stand at the top of the 25-yard line. Flanks, ensure that your team stays between the 25-yard lines and are not out past the top of the numbers during a charged time out. —If a coach chooses to come into the middle for a “inside the numbers” charged time out, then only that one coach, without using any headsets or electronics, and the 11-players in the game along with any water boys/girls are allowed on the field.
5. The BJ (R in 4-man) will time the charged team time out. It is 60-seconds in length. —At 45-seconds expired, give three short blasts of your whistle. Flanks and Referee say loudly, “Time Out’s Over!” and hold up the upcoming down on your hand fulling extended above your head as you move to your pre-snap positions. —The Referee will the wait for the BJ’s 60-seconds signal, say, *“Here we go!”* and then do a *whistle and chop* to for the Ready for Play signal. If both teams are ready to go before the 45-second whistle or full 60-seconds have expired, then go ahead and whistle and chop. —In all situations, make sure both teams have 11-players and are ready to go after a time out is over before the Referee chops the Ready for Play in!
6. The Referee and Umpire will stay at the ball on a charged team time out (the U will straddle the ball on any type of time out). All officials will write down the time of the charged team time out and the down, distance, and yard line on their game card. They will then indicate how many time outs each team has remaining with their digits (fingers). —Each Flank will inform their respective Head Coach how many time outs that they have remaining plus how many the other team has. When a team is out of time outs, the Flank will signal with a fist (knuckles pointing upwards) at the coach and say, *“Coach, you have no more time outs.”* Make sure he acknowledges you so there is no confusion about it. —The Flanks are directed to ensure that their respective teams leave their sideline from any form of time out with exactly 11-players. We will hold up the Ready for Play signal, if needed, to make sure this happens!
7. When there is an official’s time out for an injured player, heat, or any other prolonged delay where the players are sent to the sidelines, the players will stay on the field. They may stand as close to the sideline as is possible and talk to their coaches as long as the coaches are off the field. Allow water boys/girls to bring water onto the field. The Flanks will stand on the sideline to make sure this is enforced. If there is a long delay, such as an ambulance issue, allow players and coaches to do whatever they want.
8. Anytime a player is injured and he is not getting up off the ground, the officials will direct both teams to their respective sidelines.
9. *A time out is a perfect time for the crew to hydrate!* Pound some water down so you don’t get 4th quarter heat cramps! BJ or Flanks, be ready to bring some water to the Referee and Umpire.
10. The Referee is authorized to use their discretion to call an officials time out to allow players to hydrate and are particularly encouraged and directed to do this following any changes of possession in weather that is **90-degrees or hotter**. —*A two-or-three minute officials time out to allow all participants, including the officials, to drink some water following a punt, interception, fumble recovery, or score is normal and expected under NFHS rules.* **The opinion of the NFHS rules panel is that heat stroke is 100% preventable!** When you call the officials time out, give double short blasts on your whistle as you signal to stop the clock and then indicate an officials time out and tell everyone *“Water break! Get some water!”*
11. If an injured player *appears* to have a head injury, tell the Head Coach your concern and have that player checked out. *If it is obvious that the player has the symptoms of a concussion, then he will not play for the remainder of the day.* This is our unit policy for youth and high school and any crew member can make this call. Tell the Referee who will then inform the Head Coach that the player is done for the day, *no matter what!*
12. There is no penalty for a team or coach asking for a time out when they have none remaining. We simply ignore their request. If we accidentally grant one, signal an inadvertent whistle, set the play clock to 40-seconds, and *whistle and wind* both the clocks in if the game clock was running in order to make it as fair as possible.

**6.2 The Concept of the Gained Yard** This is a more readily easier idea to fathom with a field that’s properly marked with one yard hash marks. A player has not gained a yard until he has gained *the full entire 36-inch length of that yard*. If a play starts at the A20-yard line and the runner gains only half a yard, he has not gained a yard at all and he is still considered to be on the A20-yard line. On 4th and 1 plays, the 1st Down is not gained until the full yard is gained to the line to gain.

 This is why we emphasize on every new 1st and 10 series that the chains and down box start on a yard mark. Unless a half-the-distance to the goal penalty is involved, this is something that should always be done. When marking forward progress, the NCAA standard that we strive to attain at our level is for the covering official to pick the yard line the runner was closest to when he was downed except on plays involving the *line-to-gain* and the *goal line*. On plays that involve being just shy of either the *line-to-gain* or the *goal line*, those will be ‘in-between” spots. Also, we will never have a measurement on a 1st or 2nd down play, the runner was either a full yard short of the *line-to-gain* on these downs or he made the *line-to-gain*, one or the other!

**7.0** **Overtime**

1. In CIF high school games,Overtime for a tied game at the end of regulation *is only used for Varsity contests*.All tied Varsity games at the end of regulation will use the same overtime procedure as the NCAA with one exception, Team B can’t score ona Try, if Team B gains possession on a Try, then whistle play dead. *Frosh-Soph and JV games that end in a tied score at the end of regulation will result in a tied game final.*
2. Varsity Overtime will have each team get a possession, *1st & 10* from the B25-yard line unless a succeeding spot foul changes the yard line. *The Overtime is played with normal NFHS rules with one exception, if the defense gains possession and then loses possession back to the offense, then the down shall be the next upcoming down for the offense unless they made the line to gain.* Team B can score a Touchdown on a fumble or interception return, if they do, game over.
3. **Youth leagues** all use the *“Kansas Overtime Procedure”* that is in the back of the NFHS Rules Book. Each team gets a possession, *1st & Goal* from the B10-yard line. If a succeeding spot foul changes the initial yard line from the 10-yard line (half the distance to the goal for a 1st and Goal at the B5-yard line or 15-yards to the B25-yard line, 1st and goal at the B25-yard line), it will always remain a *1st & Goal* situation, no matter where the yard line is that starts a series in Overtime. —A 1st Down can not be gained, but a new series of downs may be awarded for Roughing the kicker/holder/snapper/passer, or if Team B touches/muffs a scrimmage kick that is beyond the neutral zone and short of the goal line whereupon Team K gains possession of the loose ball. If Team B gains possession, the play is over. If they somehow gain possession in the Team A end zone for a touchdown, then game over.
4. It is possible for a Safety to be scored against Team B if they provide a new force on a fumble that then goes into their own end zone where it then goes out of bounds or is recovered there by Team B.
5. *There are no “Carryover Fouls” (Rule 8-2-2,3,4,5) for fouls that occur during or after a Touchdown on the last play of regulation or in Overtime.* Any fouls that would normally be a Carryover Foul on a Touchdown at the end of regulation will be enforced as a Succeeding Spot foul on the Try. If an Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Personal Foul for Roughing occurs on the Try, or a Dead Ball Foul occurs after the Try, then that is a Succeeding Spot foul that can affect the yard line the next possession occurs on in Overtime. Team A/K has the option to replay the Try for a *live ball foul.* The same options after a Try exist for after a successful Field Goal unless Team K accepts the enforcement Automatic 1st down for Personal Fouls for Roughing the kicker, holder, or snapper. —*All dead ball fouls will always be a Succeeding Spot Foul in Overtime.*

**7.1 *Character***

Officials are expected to exhibit and uphold the standards of integrity of the officiating profession. The image of an official demands honesty and high ethical standards. Officials should make every decision based on the circumstances and facts presented, regardless of an official’s past history with a particular player or team. No official should ever threaten a player, coach, or team with a penalty or future retaliation.

1. Realize the importance of your position and, at all times, uphold the dignity it demands.
2. Have ambition, but also patience, as over-anxiety has ruined many young or newer officials.
3. Never be jealous of a good break another official gets. Your turn may be next.
4. Never use your senior position to embarrass another official.
5. Be receptive. Open your mind to new concepts and ideas.
6. Be honest with yourself. Unreal expectations place an extra burden on an already intense job.
7. Become a leader. If you adopt a philosophy that you’re going to help others reach their goals, you’ll reach yours.
8. Be passionate. If you’re passionate about integrity, honesty, and professionalism, you’ve improved your quality of life through officiating.
9. Be courageous. Doing what is *right* versus what is popular or “safe” takes a strong will and conviction.

**7.2 Conduct & Ethics**

1. Use of social media to convey information or discuss any aspects of particular games, coaches, teams, or players is strictly prohibited. This is particularly for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, others like it, and responding to news articles. If you’re on an official’s website, don’t name teams or coaches, etc. —In particular, never contact a player, parents, or coaches on your own accord for any reason or respond to criticism of officials with any form of media. Avoid contacting media to lodge complaints, too. Contact your leadership if you “can’t stand it.”
2. Officials shall bear a great responsibility for engendering public confidence in sports. When others are at their worst, you be your best!
3. Officials shall be free of any obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of sports competitions. In particular, if an official or their household member(s) or an immediate family member (parent, spouse/significant other, child) works for or attends the school that is playing, you will inform your Assignor and block that school and you will not work that school in question due to the allusions other people have about that situation.
4. Officials shall hold and maintain the basic tenets of officiating which include history, integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, professionalism, discretion, and tactfulness. In other words, respect all the different people involved with the game as if you personally know them and have to eat Thanksgiving dinner with them.
5. Officials shall master both the rules of the game and mechanics necessary to enforce the rules and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm, fair, and controlled manner.
6. Officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interactions with student-athletes, coaches, the chain gang, school administrators, colleagues, the band, the band conductor, cheerleaders, homecoming participants, the ticket booth attendant, the media, security, and the general public. We are all participants!
7. Officials shall display and execute superior communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.
8. Officials shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
9. Officials shall not be party to actions designed to unfairly limit or restrain access to officiating, officiating assignments, or to association membership. This includes selection for positions of leadership based upon economic factors, race, creed, color, age, sex, physical handicap, country, or national origin.
10. Officials shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations and accept and work their assigned games without any underlying conditions.
11. Officials shall work with each other and their governing bodies in a constructive and cooperative manner and fulfill their commitments to the association.
12. Officials shall never participate in any form of *illegal* gambling on sports contests, may never gamble on any sporting event in which they have either a direct or indirect involvement, and may never gamble on any events involving high school or youth athletics (March Madness brackets and Super Bowl squares are OK).
13. Officials shall not make any false or misleading statements regarding their qualifications, rating, credentials, experience, training, or competence, nor shall they disparage the character of their fellow members.
14. Officials shall accept responsibility for all actions taken.
15. Officials should never do anything to draw undue attention to themselves, their crew, fellow members, or the association.
16. On the same calendar day prior to and during any scrimmage or game at any level; any official instructional meeting; or any official football unit function that is a required or assigned function by the KCOA—**Officials shall never take any prescribed medication that produces any kind of narcotic effect, nor take a non-prescribed narcotic or hallucinogenic substance or lawfully banned (State and/or Federal) substance of any kind, including the smoking or ingestion of marijuana or the use of hemp products, or imbibe in alcohol consumption prior to or during these events** so that there can be no question that an official was not “under the influence” in these situations. Also, any items that violate public code shall not be brought onto a school campus. This includes tobacco products, e-cigarettes, alcohol, narcotics, and weapons.
17. Any current unit member arrested by a law enforcement agency or under the orders of a court of law for a *felonious offense* shall be suspended immediately until the unit director reviews the matter and rules on the length or justification of a continued suspension or a permanent ban of that member. The Board of Directors may also decide on this matter if deferred to them.
18. Officials are directed to not be a “bean counter.” Work your games that you are assigned to the best of your ability. Do not worry about the game you didn’t get and that someone else was assigned. You can’t work every game and other members often need to work particular games with particular fellow officials for their own development. *Your demeanor is often the determining factor in a game being a good or poor experience regardless of who is playing or who is on your crew.*
19. If the circumstance arises where a member has to be censured, or have their games removed as a suspension or ban due to their personal conduct, or a member is simply unable to meet the demands, standards, and requirements of an official, the decision to remove an official from any and all assignments lies solely with the *Instructional Director and/or Board of Directors*. The *Instructional Director* is responsible for establishing policy regarding these matters on a case-by-case basis for their sport, within the bylaws of the association and customs of the past, as any cases arise and has the right to revert any matters to the Board of Directors. Any decision by the *Instructional Director* to suspend or ban a member can be appealed by the affected member to the football committee who can recommended a reversal or substantiation on a simple majority vote. Then, a final appeal to the association’s board of directors can be made by the affected member with a simple majority vote by them that decides the matter. The board’s decision will be final. If a season-long, or permanent ban is applied and it happens prior to the Week 5 games, the official will be reimbursed 50% of their dues. All matters of discipline are to remain personal and confidential by all parties.

**7.3 Officiating Self-Discipline**

1. The middle officials are covered by the concept of seeing the play from “the inside-out.” This means that the Referee, Umpire, and BJ, are directed to stay in between the hash marks during live ball play as much as possible and try to maintain a 45-degree angle to the play as much as possible. In particular, the Referee and BJ will contain all players between them as much as possible.
2. Ball boys are not to come out onto he field to give us the ball or go get a ball. *This is a liability issue!* If there is a long incomplete pass, one of us will get the ball and toss it towards the ball boy. The ball boy is to hand or toss the new ball to the Flank. —BJ, make sure that the ball being used on a kick off is one that the Umpire approved and not the “kicking ball.” Kickers will often try to get an old, worn-out, weathered-looking ball that is clearly larger through years of use than a regular football. Do not allow this on kickoffs, a Try, or any other kicking situation!
3. *When in doubt, don’t guess!* Trust that a member of the crew saw the play that you were screened from or just didn’t see. Never blow your whistle on a guess!
4. For a pass to be complete, the entire *process of the catch* must happen for the pass to be complete. Do not allow a questionable “catch and fumble” scenario to be ruled a fumble. The process of the catch must be evident and absolute before we can call a completed pass and catch, or a catch and then fumble, or even a Touchdown in the End Zone! If one of the crew has an incomplete pass, then come and sell that call! *Other than the Referee, all eyes are to go to the ball when the pass is thrown!*
5. If you think something’s wrong with a ruling or enforcement, don’t wait until later to bring it up! Bring it up now!
6. **Two-Second Whistle Discipline** For Flanks— See the player down, see that he still has the ball in possession, make your 90-degree cut, raise your hand to indicate a dead ball, take a few steps in, then blow the whistle. On plays between the Tackles, wait longer or let the Referee or Umpire blow the whistle if you simply can’t see the ball in possession.
7. See the entire foul or it’s not a foul. A player falling onto his face may have been legally engaged. Don’t go with the last part of an action that you saw, you either saw the entire action from the start to the finish or it is NOT a foul.

**8.0 Miscellaneous**

1. The ankle or wrist is considered to be part of the ball carrier’s foot or hand and does not make a ball carrier *down* if those body parts contact the ground. —If a ball carrier “body surfs” a tackler or on a pile of players and he was never down with any part of his body other than his feet or hands touching the ground, or controlled so that his forward progress was stopped by the defense, then the ball carrier is not down and the ball shall remain live.
2. If a Rugby scrum occurs, don’t be in a rush to blow your whistle. Team A gets a chance to “push the pile” in an old-school *smash-mouth football* test-of-strength. Team B also gets a chance to strip the ball from the ball carrier if his forward progress has not been stopped. —This is old-school football and still has its place in the game! The Referee and Umpire are encouraged to tell the players to *“Move your feet! Move the pile! That ball’s live!”* in this situation. Only when the ball carrier is clearly down, or he is clearly controlled by a defender and his forward progress stopped in the control of a defender and the ball in the ball carrier’s possession will you blow your whistle to stop play. —Often, an official overreacts and blows this play too soon as the ball carrier is about to break out for a big gain, or the defense has stripped the ball and is running for an apparent score. Coaches will often yell that they want us to blow our whistle because someone will *“get hurt.”* However, the plays that have been recently banned because of players getting hurt are open field hits, not a Rugby scrum of a group of opponents trying to out push each other! *Be disciplined and get it right!*
3. If excessive heat is an issue (game time temperatures are above 90-degrees), particularly at the request of a game site administrator, you are directed to call an official’s time out following any punts, changes of possession, or scoring plays (at the discretion of the Referee). Ideally, you will call an official’s time out every 4-to-5 minutes of game time in this situation. Take two or three minutes to make sure all players, and yourselves, are properly hydrated. Then, resume regular play.
4. The only time foul weather will cause you to delay a game is if it is dangerous to “life or limb.” Examples include lightning (use the 30-30 Rule in the back of the Rules Book), tornado, large hail stones, ankle deep water on the field that has the ball float away from the spot due to excessive water on the field or mud that is ankle deep (players at the bottom of a pile could suffocate in something that deep). If you see lightning and/or hear thunder then you’re in range and must halt the game!
5. Running up the score is not really our concern, especially now with the running clock being an official CIF rule for a 35-point lead in the 4th quarter. With today’s pass oriented offenses you can’t “make” a team run the ball if they have a big lead. However, if it is obvious that a team is running up the score with trick plays, make sure those plays are ran perfectly and are 100% legal.
6. For any lower-level game that is played *before* a Varsity game, the Referee is directed to get the clock running as much as reasonably possible, especially if a team has a big lead. The crew will work their normal mechanics. Do the same for youth games with large leads. One technique is to start the game clock once the ball is spotted on out of bounds plays or incomplete passes.
7. **Halftime Duration:** For Youth Leagues halftime is 10:00 minutes (no 3:00 warmup period). —For for all High School games at all levels, halftime is 15:00 minutes plus the 3:00 warmup. **—High School Exceptions:** ——For Homecoming or a Special Event, a Varsity game can be up to 20:00 long plus the 3:00 warmup if the game administrator informs the Crew Chief before the start of the game.

 — —For a JV or Frosh-Soph game played *before* a Varsity Homecoming or Special Event game with a 20:00 minute halftime, the halftime duration shall be 10:00 minutes plus the 3:00 warmup.

 ——For any level of high school, *if both coaches mutually agree*, they can request that halftime be reduced down to 10:00 in length plus the 3:00 warmup. *We do not ask them to do this, they will bring it up to the Crew Chief!*

 ——Except for Varsity games, start the halftime countdown immediately upon the Referee’s declaration that the 2nd Quarter is over. For Varsity games, wait to start the halftime clock until every player from both teams has exited through the gate that leads to/from the field.

 ——For all high school levels only, if both teams are back before the end of halftime after at least 10:00 has expired and before the the full 15:00 has expired, you may start the 3:00 warmup period. A minimum of 10:00 must go off the halftime clock in order to do this! ***——The 15:00 length for most high school halftime situations is both a coaching moment and a physiological issue so players can rehydrate and digest any food they eat to prevent heat cramps in the 4th Quarter. Which, in turn, cause delays which cancel your attempts to shave a few minutes off the duration of the game if you have less than a 15:00 halftime! If a player gets heat stroke in the 2nd half, and then a parent finds out that you pushed for a 10:00 minute halftime on your own accord and sues you for negligence, you will lose in court!***

1. Either team, while in team possession, may hand the ball off backwards or pass the ball backwards to any teammate of any number or position at anytime. A *forward handoff* can only be done by Team A behind the LOS and not after any loss of possession. A Team A forward handoff can only go to a back or to an end who was not positioned as the snapper or next to the snapper. —Team A may do a forward handoff to an interior lineman *only* if that lineman turns and squarely faces his own goal line and steps back off the LOS by at least 1-yard before receiving the forward handoff.
2. What we know of the Fumblerooski was made into an illegal play in the late-1980’s as a Planned Loose Ball Infraction (**Rule 7-2-8**). The rule bans a *lineman* from picking up and running with a planned loose ball fumble. *It does not ban a back from doing this*. Eventually, a smart coach will figure this out. Be ready!
3. **CIF Running Clock Procedure for all high school games:** If any team has a 35-point or larger lead at the start of, or at any point of, the 4th quarter, the game clock shall become a “running clock” and shall only be stopped for an official’s time out (other than for a 1st down), a charged team time out, or after any score. It shall be started again after these stoppages upon the Referee’s Ready for Play signal. At anytime, both Head Coaches may agree to start the running clock at any point in the game. *Once the running clock is started, it shall remain in place for the remainder of the game no matter what*.
4. **End of the Game**

 a) HL, be sure you get your chain clips and shake hands with your chain crew thanking them.

 b) Make sure that the game ball gets to the Umpire so he can get it to the Referee so he can properly signal that the game is over.

 c) Once the Referee signals that the game is over, your job is done. You can not penalize anyone, even if they “deserve it.” If something happens after the game, note the player number or coach in your mind and write a game incident report, if necessary, so that it can be taken care of by administrators. Get your eyes on each other to make sure the entire crew is OK and then jog off the field. Meet at the gate or the curb of the track and shake hands with every crew member. *Always remember, we come onto the field together and we always leave the field together!*

 d) Keep your uniform jersey tucked in and your hat on until you either enter your locker room or reach your vehicle. People really are watching and judging you as you leave! When you reach the locker room, take your shoes off and knock any and all mud and grass of them, don’t track that stuff in!

 e) Don’t leave right away, especially on a Varsity game. Hold a quick debriefing with the Crew Chief. Never leave from a Varsity game locker room in any part of your uniform. Even if you don’t shower, change into acceptable attire, especially into a collard shirt. Be in a presentable appearance when you leave the locker room. People are watching and judging you even as you leave the locker room.

**8.1 The Statewide C.I.F. 25-Yard Line Overtime (based on the NCAA tiebreaker system) NOTE: Regular rules except if Team A loses possession to Team B and then regains possession the same down (A-B-A) which ends in Team A possession, then it’s Team A ball and it’s the next down.**

a. Immediately after the conclusion of the fourth quarter, officials will instruct both teams to retire to their respective team areas. The officials will assemble at the 50-yard line and review the tiebreaker procedures during a 3:00 officials timeout.

b. The officials will escort the Team Captains to the center of the field for the coin toss (The Head Coach has the *option* to come out for the Overtime coin toss). The Referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of not more than four field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss may not defer the choice and shall choose one of the following options:

**1**. Offense or defense, with the offense at the opponent’s 25-yard line to start the first possession series.

**2.** Which end of the field shall be used for both possession series of that overtime period.

c. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods.

d. **Extra periods:** An extra period shall consist of two possession series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap on or between the hash marks on the designated 25-yard line (unless relocated by penalty), which becomes the opponent’s 25-yard line. The snap shall be from midway between the hash marks, unless the offensive team selects a different position on or between the hash marks before the ready-for-play signal. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls.

e. Possession series: Each team retains the ball during a possession series until it scores or fails to make a first down. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. However, Team A may not have a first down if it regains possession after a change of team possession.

f. Scoring: The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winner. There shall be an equal number of possession series, as described in (e) above, in each extra period, unless Team B scores. Beginning with the *third extra period*, teams scoring a touchdown must attempt a two-point try. Although not illegal, a one-point try attempt by Team A will not result in a score.

g. Fouls after a change of team possession:

**1.** Penalties (live ball Basic Spot fouls) against either team are declined by rule in extra periods (Exceptions: Unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding play).

**2.** A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled. (Exception: Live-ball foul treated as a deadball foul.)

**3.** If both teams foul during the down and Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls cancel and the down is not repeated.

h. Timeouts: Each team shall be allowed *one timeout for each extra period*. Timeouts not used during the regulation periods may not be carried over into the extra period(s). Unused extra-period timeouts may not be carried over to other extra periods. Timeouts between periods shall be charged to the succeeding period. Radio and television timeouts are permitted only between extra periods (first and second, second and third, etc.). Charged team timeouts may not be extended for radio and television purposes. The extra period(s) begins when the ball is first snapped.

**Approved Rulings**

**I.** Team B scores a touchdown after intercepting a forward pass, intercepting or recovering a backward pass or fumble, or returning a blocked field goal attempt. RULING: Period and game are ended, and Team B is the winner.

**II.** During the first possession series of a period, Team B intercepts a forward pass, or intercepts or recovers a fumble or a backward pass, and does not score a touchdown. RULING: Team A’s possession series is ended and Team B starts its series. Team B becomes Team A when the Referee declares the ball ready for play.

**III.** During the first possession series of a period, Team A’s field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. Team A recovers the ball and runs for a touchdown. RULING: Six points for Team A. Team B begins its possession series after the try.

**IV.** Team A’s field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is tackled beyond the line to gain. RULING: Team A retains the ball to continue its possession series. First and 10.

**V.** On first, second or third down, Team A’s field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is tackled short of the line to gain. RULING: Team A’s ball, next down. **—NOTE:** If the kick attempt goes out of bounds, then it’s a turnover to Team B.

**VI**. During the first possession series of a period, Team B gains possession and then loses possession back to Team A, which (a) scores a touchdown; (b) does not score a touchdown. RULING: (a) The score counts for Team A; (b) Team A retains possession at the end of the down and it’s the next down unless the line-to-gain is made.

**VII.** During the first possession series of a period, Team A fumbles into Team B’s end zone on second down of a series. Team B recovers and downs the ball in its end zone. RULING: Touchback. Team A’s possession series is ended. Team B begins its possession series.

**VIII.** During the first possession series of a period, B10 intercepts a forward pass on his six-yard line and downs the ball in his end zone. RULING: Safety: two points for Team A. Team A’s possession series is over. Team B will put the ball in play, first and 10 on the 25-yard line at the same end of the field.

**IX.** Team A’s field goal attempt is untouched beyond the neutral zone until B17 muffs it at the five-yard line. A75 recovers at the three-yard line. RULING: Team A’s possession series continues; first down for Team A at the three-yard line.

**X.** After the end of the first possession series by Team A, Team B commits a dead-ball foul. RULING: Team B starts its possession series as Team A on the B40-yard line, 1st and 10.

**XI.** During the first possession series of a period, A12 throws a forward pass and Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B25 intercepts the pass, and B38 clips before B25 crosses Team A’s goal line. RULING: Score not allowed. The fouls cancel and the down is not repeated. Team A’s possession series is ended, and Team B begins its possession series at the 25-yard line. The penalty is not carried over. **NOTE:** Any down that ends with Team B in team possession ends Team A’s possession.

**XII.** During the second possession series of a period, B25 intercepts a pass and carries the ball across Team A’s goal line. During the run, B79 clips at midfield. RULING: No touchdown. Either the game is over, or the next period will start with first and 10 at the 25-yard line, since the penalty is not carried over.

**XIII.** During the first possession series B37 intercepts a forward pass and has a clear field to the goal line when he makes an obscene gesture toward the nearest opponent. RULING: Six points for Team B. The enforcement of the unsportsmanlike conduct foul, if accepted, will be on the try, as there is no subsequent kick off.

**8.2 Other knowledge**: Be hydrated for your games before game day! Hydration starts on Monday. Force yourself to drink a minimum of eight pints of water throughout the day. You should drink enough water so that your urine is clear. *Darker urine is a sign of dehydration*. Add plenty of salt to your diet along with calcium, potassium, and magnesium (the four electrolytes). To prevent heat cramps, besides water and electrolytes, you will also want to add to your diet in the days leading up to your games cinnamon, turmeric, vinegar (apple cider vinegar is recommended), any type of hot sauce or chili peppers that contain capsaicin, and a minimum of 2-ounces of pickle juice daily. All act to strengthen the insulators that connect our nerves to the muscles. When these insulators don’t have what they need because it’s sweated out of them, they will short-circuit resulting in heat cramps.

 On game day, it helps to have a sugar-free Powerade or Gatorade (regular sugar filled sports drinks will give you a gut ache when you run after drinking them), chocolate milk, and banana with lunch or a pregame meal at least a couple of hours before 5:00 p.m. Be sure to have a bowel movement before the game. A Powerbar or Cliff Bar during pregame also helps. Stretch throughout the week and jog or workout. In really cold games, such as a snow game in Tehachapi or playoff winds in the desert, warm beef or chicken broth will help keep you warm and energized, rub petroleum jelly on exposed skin, some people have used trash bags and cut a hole for the head to stay dry and warm and have even used sandwich baggies to keep their feet warm. Hand and foot warmers used for camping also help.

 Your game week starts on Sunday. Get your uniform ready, folded neatly and packed (no wrinkles) on Sunday. Make sure you wash your uniform immediately after you come home from a game. Don’t let it sit in a bag, it will get moldy and have to be replaced. Wash it in cold water so that the colors don’t fade, dry on low to medium heat. Sunday is the day to shine or clean your shoes and clean your hat if you didn’t do that by now. Get your game cards prepared for your upcoming games. Study any game video on YouTube or MaxPreps of your upcoming teams.

 Call your crew to confirm they are good and where to park and if anyone needs a ride. It is recommended that the Referee of a Frosh-Soph stand-alone game or a Varsity game do a conference call with the entire crew on Wednesday evening as a lead up to their pre-game, especially if a crew member will have a hard time arriving on time to participate in a proper pre-game. In the days leading up to your games, watch videos on YouTube about officiating or listen to podcasts. Read the rules, case book, study guide, and/or official’s websites like [RefStripes.com](http://refstripes.com), write down questions or scenarios and talk about them with another official.

 *If you are unable to go to an out of town school by yourself because of a vehicle issue, then you are expected to carpool with a crew mate! Make those arrangements.*

 Write or memorize a check list of what you personally need to do to be *game ready* when you hit the field. Write a cheat sheet of new rules and/or rules or mechanics you struggle with on an index card and put that in your game card wallet. The best way to memorize rules is by saying them out loud to yourself and remember them as game scenarios. Practice your signals in front of a mirror or window reflection when no one is around to bother you. Do mental exercises about game situations so that you will better handle them when they actually happen. If you don’t hear from your Head Referee by 8:30 P.M. Monday night, then you call him! *This is a standing order for all games at all levels*.

 The Head Referee of the Varsity game will be the one who decides if you wear short or long sleeves for a JV/Varsity double-header. The entire crew all will wear the same thing. For a stand-alone Frosh-Soph game, the Referee will decide. For youth league for long pants and/or long sleeves, it will be the assigned Crew Chief who decides.

 Carpool as often as you can with whom you can, especially going out of town. All of us will go out of town a few times this season so it shouldn’t be an issue for you to get to most, if not, all the schools. We have Shafter, Wasco, McFarland, Kennedy, Chavez, and Delano in the north county (6), Taft and Maricopa on the “west side,” (2), Arvin in the south county (1), and Tehachapi in the east county (1). We have to cover these ten “county schools” just like the eighteen in-town schools. Occasionally, we will have to have a Thursday or Saturday JV/Varsity contest. These games take precedence over any other level we officiate, especially youth leagues. Due to the established hot weather and air quality protocols that delay or cancel games, be flexible when these games get rescheduled to a different time.

 **Car pool meeting sites for games out of town:** Tehachapi or Arvin: The Denny’s parking lot on East Brundage Lane at Weedpatch Hwy & Highway 58; North County: The Denny’s parking lot on Merle Haggard Drive and Highway 65 or the Starbuck’s Parking lot on the corner of Olive Drive and Calloway Drive; Westside: The Buffalo Wild Wings parking lot at the intersection of Gosford Road & Harris Road. Of course, you may choose another place that works for you.

 We will meet after our Friday night games at *Applebee’s Grill & Bar,* 9000 Ming Avenue at Haggin Oaks Boulevard. Yes, you and your crew are free to choose a different place by yourselves.

 With the endless road construction continuing on Highway 99, from White Lane on the south to 7th Standard Road/Merle Haggard Drive on the north, if traffic is really bad be ready to go an alternate way to get around that mess so you can get to your game on time. If getting to a site on time (3:45 P.M. for JV/Varsity, 4:10 P.M. for Frosh-Soph) is an issue, plan to pre-game the night before on a conference call. For youth games, arrive 30-minutes prior to your first game and conduct a pre-game with your crew in the parking lot before you hit the field.

 Remember, for all high school games we always walk onto the field together as a single crew! Don’t meet for the first time on the field with your crew trickling in. Meet in the parking lot where you will do your pre-game together. *Put you cell phone away and participate as a crew. Your crew mates will take you as seriously as you take the game and the aspects of being a good crew mate!*

 For all games that do not involve a Varsity game, you will arrive partially dressed and don your jersey and any remaining uniform items in the parking lot. When you leave in your car, take your jersey off so that some clown doesn’t try to follow you in your car to your home (it has happened).

 **For Varsity games with a locker room:** Seriously, shower after a Varsity game! You stink, you’re filthy, “Mersa” is real, and practicing *personal hygiene* kills, or at least, washes away harmful bacteria. *Practice proper personal hygiene!* **A KCOA baseball umpire had half of his leg amputated in 2022 because a blister got infected and the bacteria was too strong for the medication! An argument could be made that proper hygiene habits and disinfection with soap and water would have prevented the bacteria from being at the blister site to begin with!**

 Make sure you don’t track mud or grass into the locker room. Take your shoes off and knock off the mud and grass if you have to before entering. Clean up after yourself. Put things back the way you found them. Flush the toilets. Wear a clean dress shirt when you leave, not half dressed in your uniform or in wrinkly unkempt clothes as you leave to “shower at home.” It’s not a good look and people are judging you by your appearance and professionalism even when you leave the locker room and walk to your vehicle. We all should leave the locker room together unless you have an urgent matter. It is a safety in numbers thing and we can back each other up as witnesses or with cell phone video as to any potshots that come our way from an upset coach, parent confrontation, etc. It is a safety issue and possibly a libel issue if someone says or does something to you or accuses you of something you didn’t do if you are out alone as you leave.

 Finally, make sure you have fun with each other and enjoy the experience of this great game with each other and the players and coaches. Only .00007% of Kern County residents do what we do!