

**Football Mechanics Manual  
6-Person**

Updated, Spring 2021

# SIX-MAN MECHANICS

**Introduction:**        *The following mechanics should be used throughout the MPSSAA playoff tournament and within the season when 6 officials are used. MPSSAA observers will be using this as their guide for evaluation. This manual does not cover all situations. Refer to the NFHS Mechanics Manual for additional information not mentioned within this overview.*

*The normal procedures have the Chain Crew, Linesman, and Side Judge on the home sideline with the Line Judge and Field Judge on the visitors' sideline throughout the game. However, when the chain crew is made up of officials, the officials will reverse sides (Chain Crew, Linesman, and side judge will be on the visitors' sideline).*

## **Section 1: Forty-eight hours Prior to Game**

R        Confirm game site, start time, uniform requirements, arrival time, and site of pre-game.

HL/LJ Confirm game information with R. Be sure to discuss special circumstances  
SJ/FJ (e.g. an earlier game); if there is a conflict contact assignor.

U/T

## **Section 2: Pre-game responsibilities**

All        Attendance at pre-game conference, at time and place designated in advance, 1:30 prior to scheduled game time is mandatory. If REFEREE is detained, the senior official present will conduct the meeting. Check for whistles, flags, bean bags, game card and pencils, a watch that can be used for timing, coin for toss, appropriate down and spare down indicator, clip for chains and any other necessary equipment. Stretch prior to leaving the locker room.

R        Conduct pre-game conference. If possible, locate and mark game balls. Fill out game cards identifying crew for coaches. Discuss signaling of 40/25 second play clock with SJ or booth timer.

U        If rain is probable, or if the field is muddy, contact home management (if possible) and arrange for towels to be available for your use during game. You are the final authority for the legality of players' equipment.

HL        If possible, contact home management and arrange to have chain crew, line-to-gain and down marker on the field when you arrive. Discuss downfield procedures on long runs, passes on sideline, out of bounds and spot responsibilities with SJ. Discuss goal line responsibility inside the 15-yard line (FJ & SJ) and inside 7-yard line (HL & LJ).

LJ        Discuss downfield procedures on long runs, passes on sideline, out of bounds and spot responsibilities with SJ. Discuss goal line responsibility inside the 15-yard line (FJ & SJ) and inside 7-yard line (HL & LJ).

- FJ Make certain you have correct time. Other officials will check their watches with yours. Confirm starting time with home team management. If playing time is to be kept on field, you will time game. If there is an official timer, coordinate timing instructions. Make sure you have a spare watch. Discuss downfield procedures on long runs, passes on sideline, out of bounds and spot responsibilities with LJ. Discuss goal line responsibility inside the 20-yard line (FJ & SJ) and inside 7-yard line (HL & LJ). You are responsible for dead ball spot at 1-yard line to GL when snap is between 7 yard line and 20 yard line.
- SJ If play clock is to be kept on the field, you will have the 40/25 second clock. Delay of game is your flag. Make sure you have a watch. Discuss downfield procedures on long runs, passes on sideline, out of bounds and spot responsibilities with L. Discuss goal line responsibility inside the 20-yard line (FJ & SJ) and inside 7-yard line (HL & LJ). You are responsible for dead ball spot at 1-yard line to GL when snap is between 7-yard line and 20-yard line.

### Section 3: Arrival on Field

- All Arrive on the field, as a unit, no later than 30 minutes before game time (sooner if duties should require).
- R/U After introducing yourselves and giving crew identification cards to Head Coaches, coaches. Discuss with each Head Coach the following information:
1. Legality of player equipment (umpire will rule on questionable equipment).
  2. Unusual plays or formations.
  3. Left or right handed/footed passer/kicker.
  4. Captains numbers and what time you expect captains for coin toss.
  5. What time the game will start.
  6. Halftime intentions (stay in stadium or leave). Halftime length.
  7. Whether game clock is on the field (will get 4 min warning) or on the scoreboard.
  8. Which side the SJ is on for the 40/25 second play clock (SJ will step onto field with 10 seconds remaining and visibly count last 5 seconds with arm motion).
  9. Restricted area/ Communication/ Game ball on the field expectations.
  10. NFHS Rules change/ additions review (only done for the first 2 weeks).
- R Give crew identification cards to coaches. Ascertain from game management or home coach whether or not assigned trainer, doctor, or EMT has arrived.
- U Check player equipment, tape and bandages. You are the final authority for equipment legality. Observe players during warm-ups for any suspicious equipment violations. Obtain information on Captains and any unusual plays or formations from REFEREE.
- HL Locate your chain crew and equipment on HOME sideline. Inspect the equipment for safety and functionality (e.g., make sure all downs show on down marker). Make sure there is tape on the midpoint of the chain. Instruct the crew. Suggested chain crew instructions are available at NFHS.org. Obtain information on Captains and any unusual plays and formations from

the REFEREE. Introduce yourself to Head Coach. Determine if there is a “get back” coach. Show players player restraining line.

- LJ Inspect field. Obtain information on Captains and any unusual plays or formations from REFEREE. Find out how ball will come in. Instruct ball persons if provided. Go to sideline (Visitors) opposite HL. Introduce yourself to Head Coach. Determine if there is a “get back” coach. Remind coach of players’ restraining line.
- FJ Inspect field. Obtain information on Captains and any unusual plays or formations from REFEREE. If a field clock (official or unofficial) is to be used, give instructions to the clock operator. Have timing device available. If ball persons will be used, provide proper instructions. Introduce yourself to Head Coach. Determine if there is a “get back” coach. Remind coach of players’ restraining line.
- SJ Inspect field. Obtain information on Captains and any unusual plays or formations from REFEREE. If ball persons will be used, provide proper instructions. Introduce yourself to Head Coach. Determine if there is a “get back” coach. Remind coach of players’ restraining line. Let both coaches know that you have the 40/25 second play clock.
- T Locate and test game clock. Inform FIELD JUDGE of any clock problems.

#### **Section 4: Three Minutes before Game Time (Coin Toss)**

- R/U Meet captains at the 50-yard line of their respective sideline. Instruct captains on their different options while they are still on sideline. Ask coach what he wants if he wins toss. R & U raise hand when ready to escort captains to center of field. Umpire introduces his captains to R.
- R Escort captains from home sideline. Align yourself so that you are facing the scoreboard during the coin toss. Ask captains to introduce themselves to one another. Inform captains of who is official timekeeper and location of official game clock. If field clock is official, remind captains that there will be no 4-minute warning. Conduct coin toss. If winner chooses to defer, signal immediately before proceeding with remaining options. After final choices are made, align captains and provide appropriate signals. Signals will reference the team that had the first choice (won the toss). At the conclusion of this procedure, conduct post-coin toss review with crew on receiving side of field at 45-yard line.
- U Escort captains from visitors’ sideline to center of field. Your alignment will be facing away from the scoreboard. The speaking captain stands opposite U. Introduce captains to R at center of field. Echo call of captain and record on game card captain’s choice of options. Confirm results of toss with R.
- HL Take position between hash marks and numbers on home side, facing the team box. Observe team from field. No players other than the four captains are allowed on the field. Record coin toss results. Join crew at 45-yard line of receivers.
- LJ Take position between hash marks and numbers on visitor’s side, facing team

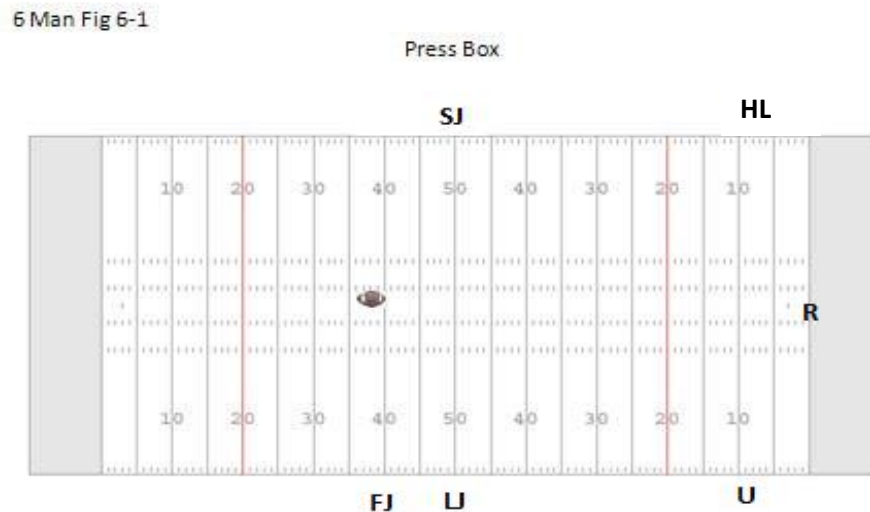
box. Observe team from field. No players other than the four captains allowed on the field. Record coin toss results. Join crew at receivers' 45-yard line.

FJ Obtain game ball from visitor and take position between hash marks and numbers on visitor's side, facing the team box. Observe team from field. No players other than the four captains are allowed on the field. Record coin toss results. Join crew at 45-yard line of receivers.

SJ Obtain game ball from home team and relay to FJ for KO and take position between hash marks and numbers on home side, facing the team box. Observe team from field. No players other than the four captains are allowed on the field. Record coin toss results. Join crew at 45-yard line of receivers.

All Review and record coin toss results. Run to respective positions simultaneously.

### Section 5. Kickoff (See Figure 6-1)



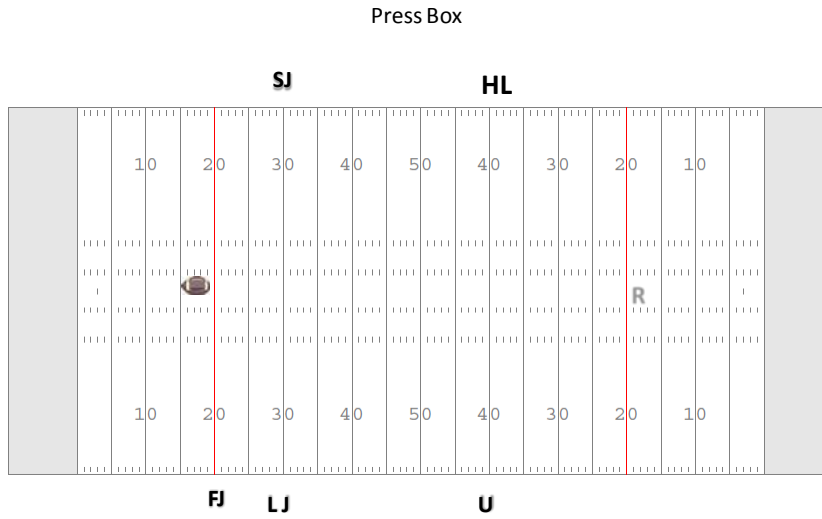
R Take position in center of field at goal line. Count R players, confirm count with U and L. Check position of crew and ready signals. Sound whistle to start 25-second clock and motion for kicker to kick ball. Sound whistle twice to alert teams and crew of timeout ending. If kick is deep and returned, pick up runner and stay with him until he enters another official's area of responsibility. Once this happens, continue to observe players coming to the immediate area of the ball as trail official. If kick enters R's end zone, sound whistle and signal touchback.

U Take position on visitor's sideline at 5-10 yard line (unless moved by penalty). Count R players, confirm count with R. Do not raise hand unless you have proper number of players. Keep hand aloft until R sounds whistle. Observe blocking on your side of field. Be alert for illegal blocks occurring in front of runner if kick is to other side. If kick is deep and returned, pick up runner if he comes to your side and stay with him until he enters another official's area of responsibility. Once this happens, continue to observe players coming to the immediate area of the ball as trail official. If kick is caught within 5-yard line, toss beanbag and be prepared to make judgment on momentum. You will judge kicks near the pylon on your side. If kick enters R's end zone, sound whistle and signal touchback.

- HL Position at home sideline on 5-10 yard line (unless moved by penalty). Count R players, confirm count with R. Do not raise hand unless you have proper number of players. Keep hand aloft until R sounds whistle. Observe blocking on your side of field. Be alert for illegal blocks occurring in front of runner if kick is to other side. As play progresses up field, stay with runner observing action immediately around runner. If runner breaks away on your side, you are trail official as SJ takes runner to the goal line. If you have spot, hold until another official releases you to move chain crew. If kick is caught within 5-yard line, toss beanbag and be prepared to make judgment on momentum. You will judge kicks near the pylon on your side. If kick enters R's end zone, sound whistle and signal touchback.
- LJ Position at visitor sideline on 50-yard line (unless moved by penalty). Count K. Confirm count with SJ. Do not raise hand unless you have proper number of players. When ready, raise hand. Keep hand aloft until R sounds whistle. At kick drift down field 10 yards observing blocking on your side of field. Be alert for illegal blocks occurring in front of runner. As play progresses up field, stay with runner observing action immediately around runner. If runner breaks away on your side, you are trail official as FJ takes runner to the goal line. You are responsible for seeing that K has at least 4 players on your side of the kicker at the kick.
- FJ For kickoff following score, time one-minute official timeout. FJ has kickers. Position on K's restraining line on visitor sideline (40 yard line unless moved by penalty). You will hand ball to kicker. Make sure ball is legal and marked. Instruct kicker to raise his hand when ready and to wait for R's whistle. Count kickers. Confirm count with SJ. Do not raise hand unless you have proper number of players. When ready, raise hand. Keep hand aloft until R sounds whistle. Observe K encroachment (call only if significant advantage gained). Angle in towards the hash on a deep kick as you drift downfield slowly no more than 10 yards. Be alert for illegal blocks occurring in front of runner. As play progresses up field, maintain 20-yard fade distance with LJ. If runner breaks away, you have runner to goal line. Once runner is down and spot is secured, look for and relay ball if offensive team is coming from your side.
- SJ SJ counts kickers. Position on R's restraining line on home sideline (50 yard line unless moved by penalty), opposite LJ. Count kickers. Confirm count with FJ. Do not raise hand unless you have proper number of players. When ready, raise hand. Keep hand aloft until R sounds whistle. Drift downfield slowly no more than 10 yards. Be alert for illegal blocks occurring in front of runner. As play progresses up field, maintain 20-yard fade distance with HL. If runner breaks away, you have runner sideline to goal line. Once runner is down and spot is secured, look for and relay ball if offensive team is coming from your side. You are responsible for seeing that K has at least 4 players on your side of the kicker at the kick.
- All Have beanbag in hand on anticipated short free kick. Signal clock to start when kick is legally touched in your area. If ball is kicked and goes out of bounds, be prepared to rule on which team last touched the ball. If out of bounds by K, toss flag at out of bounds spot, sound whistle, signal time out. If last touched by R, get spot, sound whistle, signal time out. If unsure of last touching team, beanbag spot, sound whistle, signal time out, and consult with nearest official. If runner carries ball out of bounds, nearest official holds spot and signals time out while observing action out of bounds. Official on same side follows runner, retrieves ball, and prevents any extra activity. Escort player from opposing team's sideline.

**Section 6. Kickoff after Safety (See figure 6-2)**

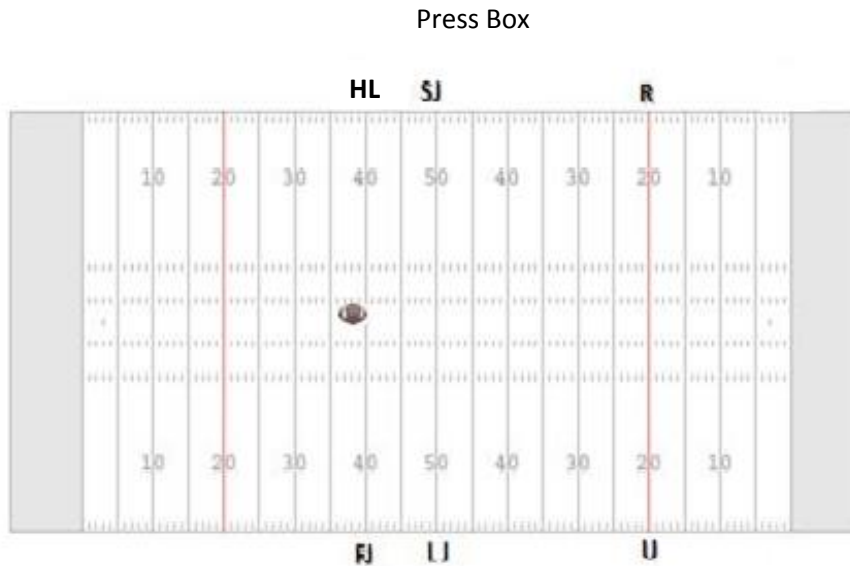
6 Man Fig 6-2



All      Same coverage mechanics as in section 5 except that K's restraining line is their 20 and a punt may be used for the free kick in addition to a place kick or drop kick. Note the yard line alignment differences.

**Section 7. Obvious Short Free Kicks (See figure 6-3) Bean bag in hand.**

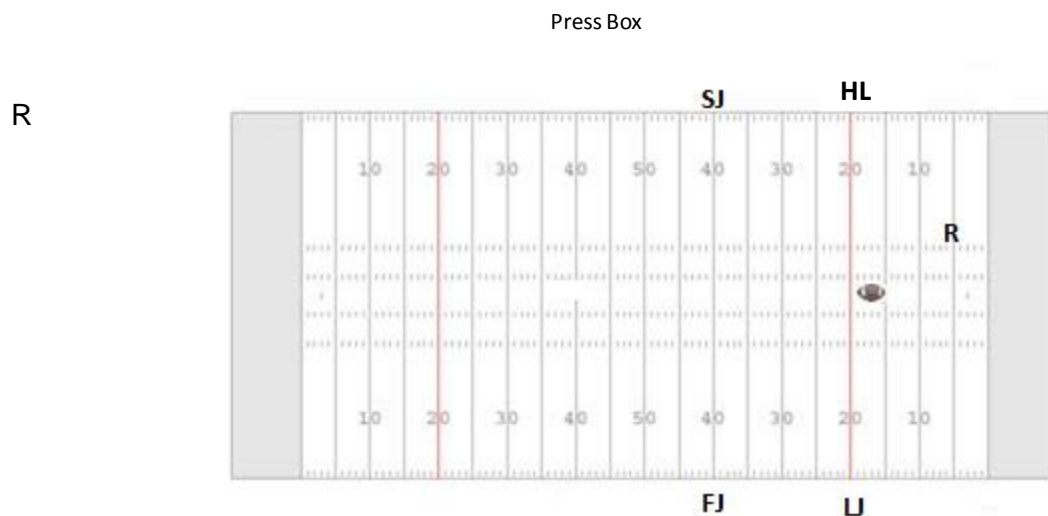
6 Man Fig 6-3



All Same coverage mechanics as in Sec. 5 with the following exceptions:  
 (1) HL moves to the K free kick line. (2) R and U move to the sidelines (R to same sideline as HL) 40 yards from the K free kick line, or 5 yards deeper than the deepest R receiver, whichever is deeper. HAVE BEAN BAG IN HAND. Be prepared to rule on first touching of kick by K before ball has traveled 10 yards and touched ground. Watch for touching of kick by R. Be alert for fair catch signals and kick-catching interference. Be aware of legal and illegal touching of kick and starting the clock. NO MUFF BY R MAY BE ADVANCED BY K. If kick is away from you, observe blocking. If kick is towards you, cover ball. If kick is long both HL and FJ angle in.

**Section 8: Runs and Forward Passes from Scrimmage—Before Snap (See figure 6-4)**

6 Man Fig 6-4



When crew is in position and ready to officiate, sound ready for play signal to start 25-second clock. Move to a position where you may comfortably see the ball and the backs. Count offense and signal with closed fist to U. If there are 10 players, signal U with fingers on chest. Position to QB's throwing arm side, 10 to 12 yards behind line of scrimmage and tight end width. Observe incoming substitutions (dead ball foul). Observe players coming to a complete stop for at least one second following huddle or shifts (live ball foul). Be alert for backs going forward prior to snap (if false start, dead ball foul). Initial key is through backs to opposite tackle.

U Guard spot of ball in a position to officiate until ball is made ready for play. After R has made ball ready for play take a position 4 to 7 yards behind B's line of scrimmage, usually opposite R and between A's tackles. Do not line up in same position for each down. Check for five Team A players numbered between 50 and 79 on A's line of scrimmage when not in a scrimmage kick formation. Count team A. Signal R. Signal if less than 11. Watch for snap infractions (dead ball foul). Watch for false starts by interior linemen (dead ball foul). If there is a time out or some other whistle that delays the snap of the ball, get to ball and await R's ready signal. Initial key is the center and two guards.



- L/LJ In the neutral zone and off of the field on the sideline. Observe signal of A's player count by R and U. Then count the number of players in the backfield to determine that A has 7 men on line of scrimmage (live ball foul). Instruct player closest to you on line ("Number 87, I have you on" or "Number 87, I have you off"). If player is off, raise arm perpendicular to body toward A's backfield to indicate that player closest to you is in the backfield. Hold until snap even if player goes in motion away from you. You have illegal motion on player in motion away from your side (live ball foul). Adjust arm position if shift by A brings widest player on or off line. Observe neutral zone for any infractions (dead ball foul). Make sure shifting receivers are set for one second (live ball foul). Determine eligible receivers.
- FJ Take a position 20 yards behind B's line of scrimmage one yard OFF field. Count B, signal count with SJ. FJ has widest receiver(s). First move is back, then react according to run or pass. DO NOT GET BEAT DEEP.
- SJ Take a position 20 yards behind B's line of scrimmage one yard OFF field. Count B, signal count with FJ. SJ has widest receiver(s). First move is back, then react according to run or pass. DO NOT GET BEAT DEEP. Start 25/40 second play clock immediately following previous down or at R's ready to play signal following any administrative time out. SJ will step onto field with 10 seconds remaining and visibly count last 5 seconds with arm motion. Make sure final 5-second chop is CLEARLY VISIBLE. Coordinate with R hand signals for final five seconds prior to violation. Delay foul is your flag.

### **Section 9: After the Snap (if a Run)**

- R At snap, fade toward A's goal line and remain deeper than and behind runner. Trail the runner. Keep ball boxed in between you and the wing official the play is moving toward. Observe runner until he gets to the scrimmage line and then turn him over to the appropriate official. When the runner moves into another official's area, direct your attention to action behind the ball. Observe action against the QB after he has handed the ball whenever possible. Move behind the play deliberately, toward the side of the field where the play is advancing in order to cover ball carrier if he is downed near or behind the line. When ball is dead, move quickly to its location. If A's first down has been made or a change of team possession has occurred, give time out signal to stop the clock, and signal either first down or change of possession. Help with the relay of the ball to U if needed.
- U After snap, establish direction of run. Do not cover the ball too closely, but watch for illegal use of hands, holding, or other fouls involving interior linemen by BOTH teams. When play is wide to either side, especially when the ball is advanced to the side zones for short gains or losses, move and focus in that direction following line play to observe action around runner. When wingman establishes end of run spot, be ready to take spot. If ball is dead in the side zone or out of bounds, be ready to spot ball at inbounds line. When ball is dead outside inbounds line, do not always remain inside the inbounds line and wait for the ball to be relayed to you. The other officials may be busy cleaning up action which prevents them from relaying the ball immediately. If this is the case then U should go get the ball and bring it back to the inbounds line for spotting. Do not delay in getting spot from wing officials, they have other responsibilities.
- HL/LJ On snaps over QB's head, have HL come back and help R cover play and LJ remains on LOS. At snap, observe the contact by and on the end players on the line of scrimmage (in addition to wide outs). Coordinate with SJ/FJ responsibility for

block by and on the tight end and wide outs. Help U with block by and on tackle if not covered. Key is tackle. If run is toward you, remain still in out of bounds area observing the blockers in front of the runner. As runner approaches line of scrimmage, take runner from R and be prepared to rule out of bounds on sideline. Keep the play boxed in between you and SJ/FJ. If run is away from you toward other wing official, observe action on QB after handoff behind R (NO CHEAP SHOTS! Live ball foul). Drift downfield observing players from the scrimmage line. Stay wide and ready for possible cut back. If the run is toward the scrimmage line between the inbounds lines, and ends there, be prepared to get forward progress and mark it unobtrusively. Use downfield foot to mark forward progress. Hold spot until U has placed ball on ground and releases you. Get to ball quickly on short yardage plays. Hold spot and let other officials unpile the play and give you the ball if it is close to a first down. Place the ball down and allow R to rule. If ball becomes dead in your side zone inbounds but near the out of bounds line, give appropriate wind signal (two arm winds) to indicate that the clock is to continue to run. Signal time out if runner is out of bounds. If you have followed the runner out of bounds, mark the spot and face out of bounds watching the action around the runner. Signal time out. DO NOT FACE IN-BOUNDS until all players are in bounds. SJ/FJ (or R on short runs close to line of scrimmage) should be prepared to follow ball out of bounds if wing is holding spot. Communicate with SJ/FJ or R for spots and clean up. Inform R of status of clock.

SJ/FJ First step is back. Establish initial direction of run. Observe action on tight end. Watch flow of play and action of offensive and defensive players blocking and tackling in front of runner. Do not let the flow of the play get past you. Keep play boxed in between you and the wing as it advances up your side zone. Fade to maintain 15-yard cushion. You will take runner only if he breaks away for long run (to goal line or “soft spot” until wing arrives and releases you). Forward progress is usually the responsibility of wings, however if the wing does not have spot, hold spot until wing is able take spot. If ball becomes dead in side zone, flex in to “talking distance” and be prepared to triangle the ball back to U for spotting. If ball becomes dead out of bounds, and wing official on that side has spot, you should be prepared to follow runner out of bounds to protect runner and retrieve ball. Escort runner out of opposing team’s sideline. If you have spot, hold it while facing out of bounds observing the runner until help arrives. Communicate with L or LJ on spots and clean up. If play is away from you, drift towards center of field while observing the middle of the field. Flex in when ball is dead. Observe players at all times. BE A DEAD BALL OFFICIAL.

All After ball is dead move quickly to assist in relaying and spotting ball. DO NOT STOP OFFICIATING. BE A DEAD BALL OFFICIAL. If advance is close to a first down, whichever official has forward progress should call out “it’s close” (LJ should help HL identify close spots). If spot is clearly a first down, signal time out and inform R of first down. Whenever possible, release L as soon as possible so he can move chain crew.

## **Section 10: After the Snap (if a Pass)**

R If passer retreats or rolls out, remain wide and deeper than the potential passer. Observe action by blocking backs and retreating linemen behind the line of scrimmage. Observe offensive and defensive action by all players as the pocket moves closer to the QB. The HL, LJ, SJ, and FJ will cover play down field and U will cover the play on and around the line of scrimmage. Be ready to lend assistance on passes into the flat. Be alert to rule on whether the pass was forward or backward (discuss this with wings in pre-game). If passer is contacted and loses possession of the ball, be ready to determine if the ball was fumbled or passed. If QB is tackled for a loss,

be prepared to mark his forward progress spot with a beanbag. If the play develops into a run, follow runner into side zones and up field depending on where wings are. Once pass is thrown, watch for roughing foul on QB (you may alert D linemen that "Ball is gone!"). You are responsible for intentional grounding call (may ask for help from wings).

- U At snap, observe the blocking by both teams on the scrimmage line. When you determine by the action that a possible pass play is in progress, move forward to the line of scrimmage deliberately while continuing to observe the offensive and defensive action between team A tackles. Be alert for a delayed running play. **DO NOT GET CAUGHT IN THE HOLE.** Help with ruling on ineligibles beyond the line of scrimmage. Be prepared to rotate and rule on completion or incompletion on quick look-in or buttonhook plays where QB throws quickly to middle. Keep track of spot of snap so the ball can be returned to that spot following an incomplete pass. Be prepared to spot the ball after every play. If pass is thrown down field, do not turn around to watch the ball going down field until all action which you have been observing has stopped. Hustle down field on completed passes to help spot the ball or form relay to spot the ball back at the previous spot on an incomplete pass. If it is a first down and L has the forward progress spot, get there quickly to release him to get his chain crew.
  
- HL At snap, observe tackle to determine type of play (either pass or run block). Observe if ineligibles go downfield. Be prepared to rule on forward or backward status of quick pass thrown to wing. Drift downfield 5 yards on sideline. Initial read for tackle and receiver. If tackle shows pass, your initial pass key is the inside receiver for contact. If only one receiver on your side, you have the nearest back for initial coverage key. Observe receivers coming into your side zone and flat area. Be prepared to rule on inbounds/out of bounds status of catch. Hold spot and face out of bounds observing action. SJ will clean up. Signal appropriately. On down field passes, communicate with SJ **BEFORE** ruling complete/incomplete. **DO NOT HURRY!** Be sure of catch/no catch and inbounds/out of bounds status before signaling ruling. On change of possession, reverse mechanics with SJ. Inform R of results of the play.
  
- LJ At snap, observe tackle to determine type of play (either pass or run block). Be prepared to rule on forward or backward status of quick pass thrown to wing. Hold line of scrimmage until ball crosses to rule on forward pass crossing line and illegal forward passes thrown beyond line of scrimmage. Initial read for tackle and receiver. If tackle shows pass, your initial pass key is the inside receiver for contact. If only one receiver on your side, you have the nearest back for initial coverage key. Observe receivers coming into your side zone and flat area. Be prepared to rule on inbounds/out of bounds status of catch. Hold spot and face out of bounds observing action. FJ will clean up. Signal appropriately. On down field passes, communicate with FJ **BEFORE** ruling complete/incomplete. **DO NOT HURRY!** Be sure of catch/no catch and inbounds/out of bounds status before signaling ruling. If L has down field spot, communicate to him first down or close to first down status. Release him and take his spot if clearly first down. Signal timeout. Inform R of results of the play.

FJ/SJ DO NOT GET BEAT DEEP. Observe formation and determine coverage responsibilities. Usually widest receiver will be yours for initial contact. You will then begin “zone” coverage as receivers move downfield. Begin fade, maintaining 15-yard cushion. Keep play in front observing receivers and defenders as they approach you. Move, and orient your body, in the direction of the receiver and defender when the ball is in air. Keep play in front of you. If pass is to opposite side, move towards center of field to officiate inside out. You have goal line if ball is snapped outside of 7-yard line. Use two-handed signal for touchdown. On passes into side zones, communicate with wing official BEFORE signaling. Clean up out of bounds action. Escort player from opposing team’s bench area. For pass plays where the snap is outside the 7, slide with the deepest receiver. If the play turns into a running play, move back to the GL for coverage. For pass plays where the snap is from the 7 or closer, initial position is on the end line.

All Officiate your primary area. “Help” when asked. Do not blow your whistle for actions outside of your area. Help relay ball back to previous spot if needed. Communicate with other officials before signaling on questionable plays.

### **Section 11: Goal Line, Short Yardage, and Non-Kick Tries**

R Follow same alignment and procedures as previously described for run or pass (Sec. 8, 9, & 10). You will never rule on a score at B’s goal line. Repeat touchdown signal to press box. On short yardage plays or any time when forward progress is close to a first down, listen for the verbal communication between the other officials, if needed, help relay ball to official holding close spot, and after the ball has been placed you should rule on the first down. If the chains are needed to rule, signal time out. If line to gain has been made, step away from players and signal first down. Be aware of clock status.

U Follow same alignment and procedures as previously described for a run or pass (Sec. 8, 9, 10). Rarely will you rule on a score at B’s goal line (e.g., a fumble recovery by A in B’s end zone, never as a result of forward progress). If you see the ball in the end zone give a thumbs-up signal on the chest for the wing officials. Within 5-yard line, you are responsible for the ball crossing the line of scrimmage on short passes. On short yardage plays or when the ball is dead near a first down, if you know the spot is close to the line to gain, call out “its close” to alert wings (particularly L, whose back is to the line to gain marker) and R that a ruling may be needed. Give the appropriate wing the ball to spot on his foot. Use voice to control players while unpling (e.g., “Use the ground”; “Get up easy”).

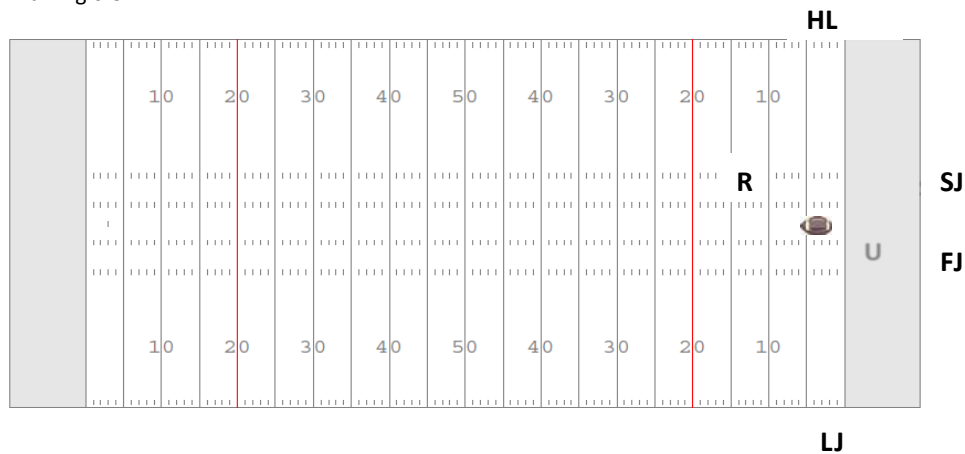
HL/LJ L and LJ take the goal line from FJ and SJ at the 7-yard line. Inside 7-yard line, initial move at snap is to goal line. In short yardage situations, initial move is to line to gain. Officiate “back” if necessary. If score occurs, sound whistle and signal only if you are in a position to see the ball in possession of the player who has crossed the goal line. Do not give “echo” signals. If you do not see the ball, close in to pile (but do not leap over players) looking for ball while opposite wing also approaches. Communicate with opposite wing by coming in with your hand up indicating a dead ball spot in the field of play. Do not signal until both wings are clear on call. There is no rush; the nightmare is when you have two different calls. If close, both officials must “sell” either score or spot. In short yardage situations, if HL has spot, LJ must tell HL he is close and to “Put it on your foot.” Hold spot and do not chase ball or move for any reason. The other officials must get the ball to you. When the ball is snapped outside the 7, on plays that end up

close to the GL, do not overrun the FJ/SJ. The FJ/SJ will rule on the spot from the 1 in, do not overrun their coverage.

FJ/SJ FJ and SJ have goal until the ball is snapped from the 7 or closer. You will line up on the GL pylon when the ball is snapped from the 20 into, but not including, the 7. At the 15 yard line, confirm with HL and LJ that you still have goal line. When the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line and in, signal switch of responsibility (verbally confirm “your GL”) with HL/ LJ. At 7-yard line and in, you have the end line. Your position is at the inbound marks to the top of the numbers if the snap is from the 7-yard line or closer. For pass outside the 7-yard line slide to receiver’s depth in the end zone and get back to goal line to cover the run. On score, immediately get ball and escort runner from end zone toward his sideline. If score is a dive into the middle of the line, do not focus on pile, but rather be aware of wing players and others standing around the pile. Do not allow cheap shots. In short yardage situations, be a good dead ball official. Help relay the ball to the appropriate wingman. Be aware of clock status and aid R in starting clock following first down or measurements.

## Section 12: Field Goals and Tries by Kick (See Fig. 6-5)

6 Man Fig 6-5

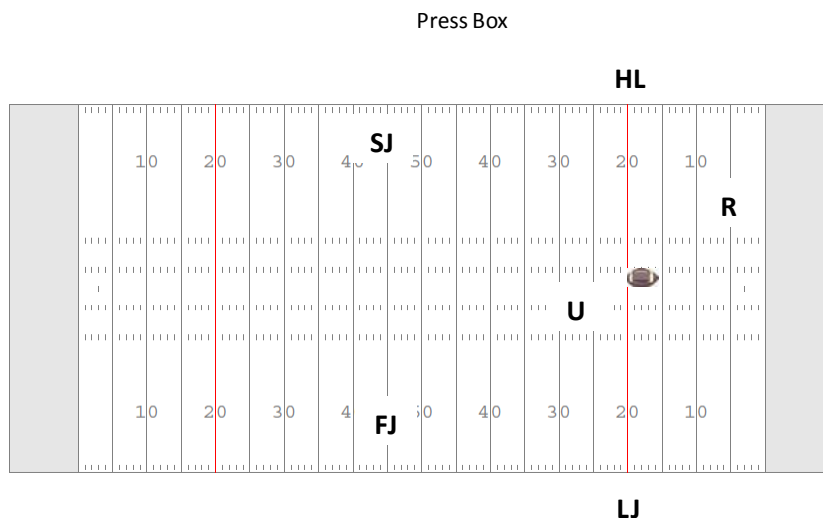


- R Initial position is facing the kick holder, 2-3 yards deeper and 3-5 yards wider than the holder. This position should allow you to rule on roughing kicker and holder fouls. Do not follow kick. Be prepared to rule on muffed snaps and dead ball. Fade and be sure play goes in front of you if kick becomes a run. If kick is blocked, you have the ball. Be aware that field goals are scrimmage kicks and are LIVE; remind crew verbally that “the kick is live.” Count K. Be aware of numbering exceptions, particularly if anticipated kick becomes pass. Signal snapper protection if it is a legal kick formation (use rolling arms to signal crew).
- U Check for numbering exceptions by team A in case of fake or kick becoming a pass. Warn R of roughing snapper (e.g., “Stay off the snapper”) when K is in a legal kick formation. Observe action on snapper. When ball is snapped, observe action of players on interior line of scrimmage. Be ready to assist R with blocked kicks, if field goal attempt, observing action around the ball. If kick becomes a pass, be aware of numbering exceptions and ineligible moving downfield. If kick becomes a run, step to goal line and assist with ruling on the goal line. Count K. Signal snapper protection if it is a legal kick formation.
- L Position and responsibilities as in normal scrimmage down. If scrimmage kick is blocked or breaks down, be prepared to move back to assist R and establish dead ball spot. Observe players around ball.

- LJ Position and responsibilities as in normal scrimmage down. You are responsible for ruling on ball crossing line of scrimmage. Do not follow flight of ball, but observe players as they move down field. If kick is blocked or kick breaks down, remain on line of scrimmage to rule on illegal forward passes or kicks.
  
- FJ Initial position is under goal post on visitor's side. You have your goal post and the crossbar. Your whistle will end the kick. Communicate with SJ ("Yes" or "no"). Step through goal and signal together. If kick becomes a run or pass, you have end line. If the ball is snapped from the 10 or farther, you have the goal line if the kick becomes a run. Be aware of numbering exceptions on the end of K's line (eligible or ineligible numbers?). Count R.
  
- SJ Initial position is beneath goal post on home side of field. SJ has his goal post. Communicate with FJ before ruling on kick ("Yes" or "No"), step through goal and signal together. Do not echo FJ's whistle. If kick becomes pass or run, you have end line. Be aware of numbering exceptions on the end of K's line (eligible or ineligible numbers?). Count R.
  
- All If a TRY by kick is blocked and it is obvious that no score can occur, sound whistle and signal no score since ball cannot be recovered and advanced by either team. If a SCRIMMAGE KICK is blocked or is short, be aware that this is a LIVE BALL. DO NOT SOUND WHISTLE. Continue to officiate.

**Section 13: Scrimmage Kicks before the Snap (not a Field Goal) (See Figure 6-6) Right footed kicker.**

6 Man Fig 6-6



- R Initial position is to kicking leg side, 3-5 yards outside the TE, and 2-3 yards behind the punter. Be prepared to rule on roughing. Observe up-backs blocks (must be above waist). Note numbering exceptions in scrimmage kick formation. Count K. Signal snapper protection if K is in a legal kick formation.
  
- U Check numbering exceptions for scrimmage kick formation. If K is in a legal punt formation signal snapper protection and warn team R to stay off the snapper. Count K.

- HL Initial position outside of sideline at line of scrimmage. Be prepared to rule on formation and encroachment fouls. Warn chain crew to remain where they are and to move only on your signal.
- LJ Initial position outside of sideline at line of scrimmage. Be prepared to rule on formation and encroachment fouls. Do not leave LOS until ball crosses LOS. You are responsible for ball crossing or not.
- FJ Initial position is 2-3 yards in front of up receiver (so as to rule on fair catch and KCI), 7 yards on field. Tell receivers what the fair catch requirements are. **FJ has 2/3 of field.** Count R. Have beanbag in hand to mark end of kick spot. Be ready to rule on kick going into R's end zone. Be aware of momentum exception and ready to mark spot of catch with beanbag.
- SJ Initial position is 2-3 yards behind the deepest receiver (so as to rule on fair catch and KCI), 7 yards on field. Tell receivers what the fair catch requirements are. **SJ has 1/3 of field.** Count R. Have beanbag in hand to mark end of kick spot. Be ready to rule on kick going into R's end zone. Be aware of momentum exception and ready to mark spot of catch with beanbag.

#### Section 14: Scrimmage Kicks after Snap (not a Field Goal)

- R Watch blocking and illegal action by players behind the line. Observe action on kicker. If flight of kick is toward a sideline, move quickly to a position in line with the flight of the ball and use arm signals to direct the official covering that side line to the out of bounds spot if required. Be prepared to cover K's goal line in case of a blocked kick, fumbled snap, or return by R. If ball goes over kicker's head, you have ball.
- U When ball is snapped, step closer to the neutral zone while observing action of players on the line of scrimmage. If ball goes over head of kicker, move to line of scrimmage and rule on ineligible crossing line of scrimmage if a pass results. Following the kick, slowly pivot and move down field while observing players away from the ball.
- HL Remain in neutral zone until ball is snapped, observe blocks and holding by or on the end players on the line of scrimmage. Move downfield 5 yards and observe status of kick. If kick is cleanly made, look for fair catch signal by receiver as you slowly move down field 10-12 yards covering action by players moving down field. You will rule on illegal blocking by R if he signals for a legal fair catch and then blocks. If kick is blocked or the snap goes over kicker's head, move back to line of scrimmage observing players around ball. Move into the backfield as determined by play while continuing to observe players around the ball. On kicks that clearly cross line of scrimmage, be aware of K's first touching or kick-catching interference. Stay on sideline to be ready to take runner to your sideline. Maintain cushion with SJ. Keep runner between you and SJ. Reverse mechanics on punt return to goal line.
- LJ After initial line charge, observe blocks and holding by or on the end players on the line of scrimmage. Determine if ball has crossed the scrimmage line. If ball goes behind kicker, maintain position on line of scrimmage to rule on ball crossing line of scrimmage. If a short kick goes down field and to your side zone, attain a position for observing possible first touching or interference. Be in a position to cover the runner coming to your sideline. Keep runner between you and FJ. Reverse mechanics on punt return to goal line.
- FJ Have beanbag in hand. If kick is short, move to shallower position to observe receiver's fair

catch signal or catch of kick. If kick is deep, fade according to up receiver. **You have 2/3 of field.** Be ready to judge first touching, kick-catching interference, or fair catch signal. **DO NOT HURRY A FAIR CATCH WHISTLE.** Mark end of kick with beanbag for PSK enforcement. If kick goes behind receivers, you have the ball if it is on your side of the field. If the ball is not on your side of the field, you have action around ball. When snap is at 40-yard line or closer, initial position is at the pylon to your side. Adjust for wind conditions. If the kick has been disrupted (e.g., a bad snap or fumbled snap), you have the illegal block by the fair catch signaler if ball is NOT on your side. You have runner until he moves into another official's area. You then become the trail official. Be prepared to help R rule on kicks that cross out of bounds in the air.

- SJ Have beanbag in hand. If kick is short, move to shallower position to observe deep receiver's fair catch signal or catch of kick. If kick is deep, fade to stay slightly ahead of deepest receiver. **You have 1/3 of field.** Be ready to judge first touching, kick-catching interference, or fair catch signal. **DO NOT HURRY A FAIR CATCH WHISTLE.** Mark end of kick with beanbag for PSK enforcement. If kick goes behind receivers, you have the ball if it is on your side of the field. If the ball is not on your side of the field, you have action around ball. If the kick has been disrupted (e.g., a bad snap or fumbled snap), you have the illegal block by the fair catch signaler if ball is NOT on your side. You have runner until he moves into another official's area. You then become the trail official. Be prepared to help R rule on kicks that cross out of bounds in the air. When snap is at 40-yard line or closer, initial position is at the pylon to your side. Adjust for wind conditions.
- All When ball is dead, the covering official who has succeeding spot should sound whistle and stop clock. Indicate direction of team in possession. Inform R and U of play results. Release HL if he has spot to get chain crew. If first touching has occurred, give signal and direction.

## Section 15: Fumbles

- All When a fumble occurs, the official in the best position to see the play should rule on recovery. Make sure there are no conflicting opinions. **DO NOT HURRY.** If defense recovers, give time out signal and then the direction the ball will be going. If the fumbling team recovers, use one hand above head showing the number of the next down. If recovery is unknown, the first official to the pile is responsible for getting to the bottom of the pile and digging for the ball. The second official on the scene should give the time out signal to stop the clock and assist in un-piling players while waiting for the first official's ruling. **OFFICIALS WHO ARE NOT IN THE PILE SHOULD BE OBSERVING PLAYERS. BE A DEAD BALL OFFICIAL.** When official in pile determines possession, he should call out color of recovering team. The other official should then repeat ruling and relay information to R who will signal next down. All officials seeing fumble should mark yard line where run ends with beanbag.

## Section 16: Penalties

- All When an official observes a penalty and the ball is **ALREADY DEAD**, he should immediately sound his whistle so the ball remains dead and then throw the flag to indicate a foul. **DO NOT ALLOW THE PLAY TO CONTINUE IF YOU HAVE DEAD BALL FOUL.** If a penalty occurs during a live ball, toss the flag, when appropriate, to the yard line coinciding with the spot of the foul and continue to officiate. When ball becomes dead, sound an extra blast on whistle to get attention of the other officials and signal time out to stop the clock. Official closest to spot of foul will cover flag. Report and administer penalty accordingly:



- R/U
1. Official(s) tossing flag reports foul to R & U, giving foul committed (e.g., holding), when foul occurred (e.g., live ball), where foul occurred (e.g., @44 yd. line), who committed foul (e.g., #67 Red).
  2. R will repeat foul information to calling official who will confirm that foul is correct.
  3. R will give preliminary signal to sideline of team who has options for penalty.
  4. R will explain penalty options to captains of offended team unless enforcement is obvious.
  5. R will inform U of captain's decision.
  6. As R steps away to give signal to press box, U will mark off penalty.
- HL Marks off yardage with U; moves down box after all yardage is assessed.
- LJ Indicates direction of penalty enforcement and holds enforcement spot.
- FJ Is aware of status of clock following enforcement of penalty and will indicate to R with wind signal or snap of fingers.
- SJ Approaches down box and will stay with box until L is ready to move down box to new line of scrimmage.
- All Record foul on game card. Relay foul information to appropriate coach and penalty enforcement. Wing officials should be able to give enforcement options to coaches to expedite the enforcement process.

### Section 17: Charged Time Outs

- All When time is requested by a player or Head Coach (or "designated" head coach if head coach has been disqualified), sound whistle and give time out signal. Inform R of time out and who has requested time out. Record quarter, time of quarter, and who has requested time out (use player # if player).
- R Check with LJ for the number of time outs charged to each team and the playing time remaining in the period. Notify the HL, U, FJ, SJ and captains of the remaining time and the timeouts charged to each team. Inform captains and attendants on field 15 seconds prior to the end of the time out that the time out is over.
- U After R notification of time out, begin timing the time out. Record time, quarter, and who called time out. You will time the 60-second time out. With 15 seconds left in time out, inform R of the time out ending with a double whistle burst. Stay with the ball.
- HL/LJ After notification of time out, record time, quarter, and who called time out. Check number of remaining time outs for each team with R. Observe authorized conferences, making sure, only one of the two types is used. Notify sideline of remaining time outs for each team.
- FJ After notification of time out, record time, quarter, and who called time out. Check number of remaining time outs for each team with R. Observe your sideline for unauthorized conferences.
- SJ After notification of time out, record time, quarter, and who called time out. Check number of remaining time outs for each team with R. Observe your sideline for unauthorized conferences. Reset 25-second clock.

## Section 18: Official Time Outs

- R Signal time out. Indicate official's time out by tapping hands on chest. If it is a 4-minute warning, notify field captains and have wings notify respective sidelines for 4 minutes and remaining time outs for each team. Declare ball ready for play and wind clock if appropriate.
- U Cover ball. Remain with ball unless time out is for measurement or circumstances require you to move. If ball must be moved, take note of spot, remove ball, and replace when time out is over. Be aware of status of clock.
- HL/LJ Remain on sideline. Do not allow coaches or attendants on field unless R allows water or for an injury. Only "outside the 9 yard marks" and "away from the injury" conferences are allowed during an injury timeout. Be aware of status of clock. Reset 25-second clock (SJ).  
SJ/FJ FJ times 60-second interval after a score.

## Section 19: Measurements

- R Measurements may be requested by head coach or by a captain, but may be denied. When measurement is required, give official's time out signal, and beckon L to bring chain onto field. Clear away players from chain and ball. Measure and rule at the spot of the ball, whether in side zone or on sideline. If short of first down, move ball to inbounds line with chain. Move ball WITH CHAIN if needed for spot within inbounds line.
- U Take immediate charge of ball. Rotate ball so its long axis is parallel to the sideline by placing one end against your hand marking the foremost point. You will hold the ball for measurement.
- HL Go to chain crew and make sure that the chain is clipped at the back of the yard line closest to the rear pole that intersects the sideline. Move the down marker to the forward pole, grasp the clip, and direct the chain crew persons to move the chain onto the field. Place clip at yard line spot indicted by LJ and call "ready." If not a first down, when released, return chain to original position, or if first down set it up at the first down spot.
- LJ Take a position behind the point of measurement at the yard line where the chain is clipped. Align yourself with the ball and extend your foot to provide HL with the correct alignment for the clip. Observe team areas for illegal substitutions or unauthorized time out privileges. If ball has to be spotted at the inbounds line, repeat procedure for aligning the clip. Remind R of clock status.
- FJ Take front stake from chain crew.
- SJ Go to line to gain stake and set up the down box at this point. Maintain this position while the other officials complete the measurement. Be aware of unauthorized time out privileges on HL's sideline. If it is a first down, L will release the chain crew for you to set up for the next series. If it is not a first down, remain on the sideline until L resets the chain and then you set up the down box on the ball. Make sure the correct down is then displayed. Remind R of clock status.

## Section 20: End of Period

- R Delay end of period until you check that there is (a) no foul, (b) no timing error, c) no request for Coach-R conference, and (d) no other irregularity. When satisfied, REFEREE ONLY raises ball above his head to officially signify end of period. If at the end of the 1st or 3rd

periods, determine and record the status of the ball, down, distance, and location of the clip with HL and U. Take control of the ball and go to the opposite location of the field and re-spot the ball. If at the end of the 2nd period, hold the ball overhead indicating time has expired. Notify each coach of the time, and when you expect them back for their three-minute mandatory warm up period. Confirm with coach what options he wants to begin 2<sup>nd</sup> half (ball, choice of goal to defend). If at the end of the 4th period, hold the ball overhead indicating that time has expired. If game is over, return ball to the correct team and leave the field together. If there is an overtime period, send each team to its sideline and confer with other officials for procedure to be followed. Notify coaches and captains of the overtime procedures and one timeout per overtime period.

U If at the end of the 1st or 3rd period, determine exact location of the ball, record status of the ball, down, distance and location of the clip with R and L. If at the end of the 2nd period, secure possession of the ball from R and leave the field. If at the end of the 4th period and the game is over, make sure R returns the ball to the correct team and leave the field. If overtime is to be played, meet other officials to review overtime procedures.

HL If at the end of 1st or 3rd period, determine and record status of the ball, down, distance and location of the clip with R and U. If other than first down, clip the chain at the intersection of the sideline and marked yard line closest to the rear rod. Reverse the chain and the assistants holding the rods and move to the corresponding line at the other half of the field. Hold the previously marked point on the chain at the intersection of that yard line with the sideline while assistants tighten chain. Set up the down marker on the ball. At the end of the 2nd period, alert chain crew as to what time to return. If at the end of the 4th period and game has ended, retrieve clip and leave field. If overtime, meet with other officials to review overtime procedures.

LJ/FJ At the end of 1st or 3rd period, LJ and FJ make sure both teams are aware of when the next quarter is starting. SJ holds previous spot until ball is spotted and chains are reset. Observe both teams for substitution infractions. At the end of the 1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> periods, following the signal from R, FJ begin timing 60-second intermission. With 15 seconds left in the intermission (following 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>), inform R of the time out ending with a double whistle burst. If at the end of the 4th period, and the game is over, make sure R returns the ball to the correct team and leave field. If overtime is to be played, meet other officials to review over time procedures. FJ time this intermission (three minutes).

All Be conscious of the correct down upon resumption of play. Be aware that teams have regular time out privileges. Be aware of one time out allotted to each team per overtime period(s).

## Section 21: Post-Game Duties

R Gather game card from FJ. Make sure FJ has recorded each official's penalty. If there were any ejections or other matters that need to be brought to the attention of the commissioner, be sure of numbers and teams.

All Join other officials and leave the field together as soon as possible. Neither seek nor avoid coaches, players, or school officials. If a rule interpretation is requested, only R should provide answer. Do not converse with any members of coaching staffs, media, or spectators when leaving the field.

# Appendix A:

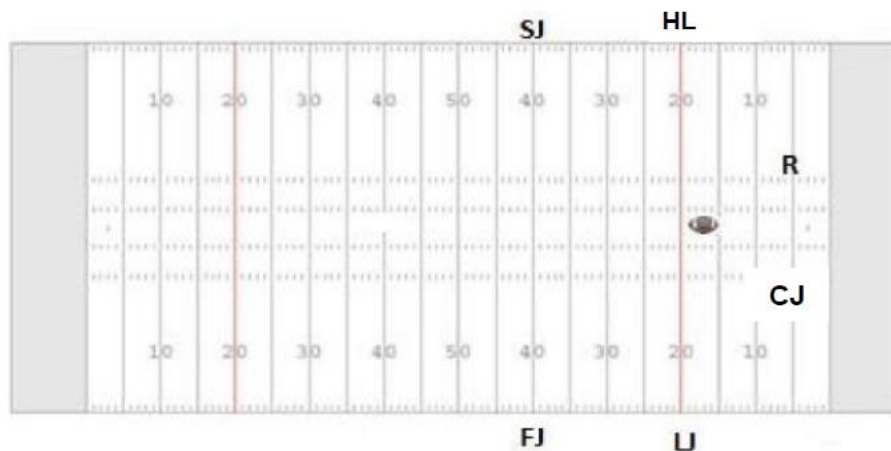
## Umpire/Center Judge in the Backfield

**Introduction:** *The following mechanics have been adapted from the NCAA/Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA) Football Officiating Manual for use in MPSSAA for six-person mechanics. Unless otherwise noted, mechanics from the current 6-person mechanics manual should be used.*

### Section 3: Arrival on Field – Ball Handling and Rotation

Following plays that require a new football, the new ball is delivered by the Umpire/Center Judge or Referee. There are times where expediency results in the ball coming from another position. Officials should be diligent in instructing ball personnel to work trailing plays, that is on the offensive side of the neutral zone, since the new ball will no longer arrive from downfield. If possible, position one ball personnel in the offensive backfield and instruct them to relay the ball directly to the Umpire/Center Judge or Referee and have one ball personnel to “chase” the other ball.

### Section 8: Scrimmage Plays – Before Snap (See figure 6-7)



- R** Count the offensive players before they break the huddle, confirming the count with the Umpire. Check the offensive formation and note the tackle box. Check the setbacks and quarterback for illegal motion and false starts. Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen that is not detected by other officials. Always work on the right-hand side of the quarterback, at least as wide as the tight end and 15 yards deep. Get into a position deep and wide where you may comfortably see the ball and backs within the tackle box. Your keys are the tackle and guard on the right side of the line.
- CJ** Primary for spotting the ball on all plays. After spotting the ball, move to a position behind but to the side of the center to prevent the snap. That position allows the Center Judge to clear the linemen’s feet as they get set and to avoid having to step over or through the gap between the center and the guard. That also affords a position in front of or to the side of the quarterback so that he also can clearly see that the snap is being prevented. While the Center Judge has primary responsibility for spotting the ball, it does not prevent other officials from spotting if it expedites the process. When that occurs, the Center Judge continues to the ball until released by the Referee. The Center Judge will promptly back into position facing the Referee and quarterback. That allows the Center Judge to pick up the tackle on his side. The primary keys are the center, guard, and tackle on the left side of the formation. The Center Judge should be

prepared to communicate directly with the center and quarterback. The Center Judge assists the Referee regarding the status of the game clock as needed.

**HL/LJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the current 6-person mechanics.

**SJ/FJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the current 6-person mechanics.

### **Section 9: Running Play Coverage**

**R** After the snap, the initial key is the tackle on the right side of the formation. Observe the action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs on backward passes. Once you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at the point of attack. On a run to the other side, focus on backside blocks. Stay with any threatened runner behind the line on your side. Be prepared to go into the side zone to cover the play as necessary. If the quarterback goes out of bounds to your sideline, coordinate sideline coverage with the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field. On option plays to your side, be prepared to cover action around the quarterback. If the quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the quarterback. After any change of possession be alert for action on the quarterback who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting at all times and illegal blocks when the quarterback is clearly out of the play.

**CJ** After the snap, the initial keys are the center, guard, and tackle on the left side of the formation. Observe the action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs on backward passes. Once you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at the point of attack. On a run to the other side, focus on backside blocks. Stay with any threatened runner behind the line on your side. Be prepared to go into the side zone to cover the play as necessary. If the quarterback goes out of bounds to your sideline, coordinate sideline coverage with the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field. On option plays the initial o your side, be prepared to cover action around the quarterback. If the quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the quarterback. Be alert for targeting at all times and illegal blocks when the quarterback is clearly out of the play.

**HL/LJ** Observe the initial action on or by the offensive player who is your key, especially if he's pressed. Observe the blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage on runs to your side or in the neutral zone. Determine forward progress when necessary. You have the runner in your side zone to Team B's two-yard line, attempting to maintain 5 to 10 yards of separation. When the flow of play is away from your position and clean up action behind the play.

**SJ/FJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the current 6-person mechanics.

### **Section 10: Forward Pass Coverage**

**R** Primary for Guard and Tackle on his side. Primarily responsible for the passer until there is no threat of a foul. Then, any lineman who is a threat for a foul, including the initial key, the tackle on the right side. Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball. Assist the Line Judge on the legality of a forward pass thrown beyond or behind the neutral zone, or out of bounds. Be prepared to rule on intentional grounding. You shall receive help from the covering official in respect to eligible receivers being in the area and the designated wing official on status of the pass crossing the line. When the quarterback drops back, retreat at a 45-degree angle to maintain a proper cushion. After any change of possession, be alert for action on the quarterback, who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks when he is clearly out of the play. After action on the quarterback, move into the area and be a presence to prevent potential fouls.

**CJ** Primary for Center, Guard and Tackle on the left side of the formation. Secondary coverage for the Quarterback. Be prepared to assist the Referee with Intentional Grounding if needed. Responsible for Team A's goal line after a change of possession. Be alert for targeting fouls and illegal blocks at all time. When the quarterback drops back, retreat at a 45-degree angle to maintain a proper cushion. You are responsible for the quarterback when he scrambles outside the numbers and into the left sideline bench area.

**HL/LJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics; except, offside line of scrimmage official has primary responsibility for ineligible players downfield.

**SJ/FJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics.

### **COVERAGE NOTES**

Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics. However, with no Umpire in the defensive backfield to quickly turn and assist with a potential trapped pass, other officials need to be diligent to assist.

## **Section 11: Goal Line Positioning and Zones**

**R** Starting position and coverage is the same as for any scrimmage play. Signal a score only if necessary, such as a delay in the on field ruling after a conference by officials. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yard line, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.

**CJ** Starting position and coverage is the same as for any scrimmage play. Additionally, assist line of scrimmage officials with determining if a pass was backwards or forward, if the passer was beyond the line-to-gain, and if the touched pass is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.

**HL/LJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics. Additionally, be alert to rule if a pass was backwards or forward, if the passer was beyond the line-to-gain, and if the touched pass is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.

**SJ/FJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics.

### ***Reverse Goal Line Mechanics***

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own three-yard line the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge must use reverse goal line mechanics. Move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If the snap is between the three and 10-yard line, the Line Judge holds the line of scrimmage and the Head Line-Judge reads the play and reacts to the goal line if necessary. Remember that a Team A runner must advance the ball completely over the goal line to avoid a safety. Be alert for fumbles and know which team provided the impetus for a ball that goes in the end zone.

### ***Reading and Understanding Keys***

**ALL** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics.

## **Section 12: Field Goals and Tries by Kick**

**ALL** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics.

### **Section 12.1: Obviously Fake Kicks**

**ALL** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in Section 8 (Umpire/Center Judge in the Offensive backfield).

### **Section 13: Scrimmage Kicks Before the Snap (Punts) – Positioning and Zones**

- R** Take a position slightly behind and to the side of the kicker, outside the tight end position and on the right side. See the ball from snap to kick and observe the blockers and kicker at the same time. Be in position to be at a 45-degree angle with kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kicker is near the end line, straddle the end line and warn the kicker before the snap.
- CJ** Stand between the snapper and personal protector shield in line with the punter until released by the Referee. When released align even with the punter and outside normal tight end position. Position is approximately 10 yards off the line. Find a spot that allows you to observe the action on and around the snapper.
- HL/LJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics. Hold your position until the ball crosses the line.
- SJ/FJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics.

### **Section 14: Scrimmage Kicks After Snap (Punts) – Coverage**

- R** Observe action on the kicker and be aware of the flight of the ball off his foot. Secondarily responsible for observing blocking by the shield. Observe players while proceeding slowly downfield if the kick remains inbounds. If the flight of the kick is toward a sideline, move quickly to a position in line with the flight. Raise your hand, signaling the covering official to begin walking toward the area where the ball went out of bounds. When the covering official reaches the spot, chop down with your arm. Be alert for action on the kicker, who is a defenseless player after kicking the ball, during the kick and on the return. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks of players clearly out of the play.
- CJ** Primarily responsible for observing blocking by the shield and secondarily for action on the kicker. Assists the Referee in determining whether contact on the kicker is illegal. You have goal line responsibility on long returns. Following the kick, quickly hustle down field and move toward the return area following and observing the first wave of Team A linemen down field.
- HL** After the snap, hold your position until the ball crosses the neutral zone and signal if the kick is tipped. Move deliberately downfield after the kick crosses the line, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the Side Judge has the runner. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner. You have goal line responsibility on long returns.
- LJ** When the kick crosses the line, move deliberately downfield, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the Field Judge has the runner. You have goal line responsibility on long returns. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner.
- SJ/FJ** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics.

#### **Section 14.1: Blocked Kick or Snap over the Kicker/Holder's Head**

- R/CJ** Retreat and box in the play. Responsible for officiating the play from inside/out perspective as play develops.
- HL/LJ** Hold the line of scrimmage until it is no longer threatened. Adjust to officiate the play as the play dictates. The Referee and the wing official he is facing will retreat and box in the play. The wing official on the same side of the formation as the Referee will hold the line of scrimmage until it is no longer threatened. As the play develops, he must adjust to officiate the play.

### **Section 15: Fumbles**

- ALL** Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 6-person mechanics. **Section**

## 16: Fouls and Enforcement

### The Process: Overview

It is now mandatory that the calling official give a preliminary signal unless there are mitigating circumstances such as multiple fouls, double fouls or situation that require verbal communications with other officials prior to determination of the foul. It is absolutely crucial that this signal be given so that everyone can make an immediate determination whether the enforcement is obvious, or an option is required from the offended team. Additionally, it helps to sell difficult calls such as pass interference. In the case of the obvious enforcements, the calling official simply needs to provide the offending player's number to the Referee who will, immediately, announce the foul. *No preliminary signal is to be given by the Referee.* If an option, or some type of crew conference, is necessary, the Referee will give a preliminary signal and then get the choice from the coach of the offended team. The Umpire/Center Judge, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge will work together to enforce the yardage distance while the Referee makes the announcement.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Calling Official

Give a preliminary signal to include the foul signal and the direction of the offending team as soon as the play is over. Advance toward the Referee to provide the number of the player that committed the foul and any other information required to correctly enforce the penalty. If multiple officials call a foul, they should quickly determine they have called the same foul and one of them would then give the signal and report the number. Be prepared to provide the result of the play to the Referee, if necessary. The calling official, or officials in the case of multiple or double fouls, should remain near the Referee during the announcement to make sure the correct number or numbers are identified.

- R** Upon noting the preliminary signal by the calling official, the Referee should determine, as soon as reasonably possible, whether the choice is obvious, or an option is required. If the choice is obvious, the Referee will make the announcement *immediately* upon receiving the offending player's number. If an option is required, the Referee will give a preliminary signal and then get the option from the offended team's coach. Note: the officials on that team's sideline must be prepared to communicate directly with the coach in order to explain the options and then relay his choice to the Referee. It should not be necessary, in most cases, for the Referee to confer with the Umpire to discuss penalty enforcement. It should not be necessary for the Referee to take more than two or three steps to clear the players and make an announcement. It should never be necessary to move any significant distance.
- CJ** The primary responsibility for enforcing penalties is assigned to the Umpire/Center Judge. As such, it is imperative that he has absolute knowledge of all penalty enforcement principles and is able to enforce any penalty with minimal Referee involvement. The Umpire/Center Judge, upon noting the preliminary signal of the calling official, will determine the enforcement in obvious cases. He will immediately mark off the penalty yardage from the correct enforcement spot. If an option is required, he will wait until the Referee receives the option from the offended team and then proceed to enforce the penalty. He will work with the Head Line-Judge and the Line Judge to ensure the penalty is correctly enforced.
- HL/LJ** The Head Line-Judge in charge of the chains shall mark off the yardage from his sideline position at approximately the same time as the Umpire, who will look to him to make sure they have marked the penalty correctly. The Line Judge opposite the chains will hold the spot from which the penalty is enforced until the Umpire/Center Judge and the Head Line-Judge in charge of the chains have completed their duties. The Line Judge will then mark off the penalty yardage and confirm that the Umpire/Center Judge and Head Line-Judge in charge of the chains have enforced the penalty correctly. Any discrepancy should be corrected immediately.



**ALL** Observe the actions of the Referee, Umpire/Center Judge, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge and make sure that no errors have been made. If any official feels a mistake has been made, he must bring it to the attention of the Referee immediately.

### **Other Concepts**

The emphasis on this process is efficiency, not speed. Officials should never rush this process. If the option is obvious, but the coach for some reason elects to choose the other option, then simply apply his choice. Referees may be able to administer pre-snap fouls with no discussion, as quite often, the foul and the offending player is easily determined. For example, an offensive tackle wearing number 76 fires out prior to the snap. The Referee would simply glance at the responsible official for the preliminary signal, then turn and announce the foul and offending player.

**NOTE 1:** The dead-ball foul signal is now reserved for fouls that occur *after* the play and should not be used for pre-snap fouls. The language, "Prior to the snap" for pre-snap fouls should not be used unless there is doubt as to whether the ball became live and it is necessary for clarification.

**NOTE 2:** The personal foul signal and announcement are to be used before the signal for any personal foul that has its own signal. Crews should seek to minimize on-field conferences. Those should be limited to complex situations that demand officials communicate the specifics of the play to one another.

# Appendix B:

## Game Clock / Play Clock Procedures

**Please have both clock operators go meet with the Referee prior to each varsity contest.**

This document includes a set of instructions for the clock operators to assist with the recent changes to the **play clock** that now involves a 40 / 25 second possibility for delay of game. This 2-page document separates the instructions for the 40 second and the 25 second **play clock** and also includes some general instructions that are not new but equally important.

**The following addresses the common play situations that require the 40 second option.**

1. The team A (offense) runner is stopped in bounds short of the first down. The **game clock** continues to run and the **40-second play clock** is started immediately.
2. The team A (offense) runner is stopped in bounds beyond the line-to-gain (first down). The **game clock** is stopped for the first down and the **40-second play clock** is started immediately. The Referee will restart (wind) the **game clock** (no whistle involved) as quickly as the football is placed on the ground and ready for play.
3. The team A (offense) runner OR a team A fumble OR a team A backward pass goes out of bounds. The **game clock** is stopped and the **40-second play clock** is started immediately. The **game clock** will not start again until the next legal snap.
4. A team A (offense) legal, forward pass is thrown and is incomplete. The **game clock** is stopped and the **40-second play clock** is started immediately. The **game clock** will not start again until the next legal snap.
5. A double change of possession during the down occurs resulting in team A in possession at the end of the down (very, very rare but a possibility). The **game clock** is stopped for a first down and the **40-second play clock** is started immediately. The **game clock** may be restarted (wind with no whistle) or not depending on whether out-of-bounds was a factor. (Example: team A's forward pass is intercepted and team B fumbles during a return and team A recovers – again, this is extremely rare but a possibility.)

**It is important to note that none of the situations listed above involve an administrative stop / interruption in play. All of those possibilities are addressed on page 2 of this document. These situations listed above will likely occur most of the time (except for #5) throughout the game. There is no signal/whistle from the Referee during the 40 seconds.**

**NOTE to the play clock operator: starting the 40 second play clock “immediately” is to be interpreted as starting the 40 seconds as quickly as the covering official signals the end of the play using signal #3 (time-out) or signal #7 (dead ball with one arm straight up) or signal #10 (incomplete pass). These are the only 3 signals you should expect at the end of a**

play prior to the 40 second play clock starting.

## **Administrative stoppages / Interruptions**

It is also possible for the situations that are listed below to occur during the game that are administrative issues / interruptions to the normal flow of play. Please understand that this list does not necessarily include absolutely every possibility.

**NOTE to the play clock operator:** Every situation listed below will result in a 25 second play clock that is not started immediately at any time, but you will wait until the situation has been addressed and the Referee will then utilize signal #1 which is the very common ready-for-play signal (with his whistle sounded) or signal #2 which restarts both clocks (with his whistle sounded).

**Game Situations:** \*a foul occurs during the down or after the down; \*either team calls a timeout; \*play is stopped for an injured player; \*play is stopped for a player whose helmet has come completely off during play; \*a measurement for a first down; \*a change of possession during the down (it is team B's ball); \*any play that involves a score (touchdown, field goal, safety, extra point try); \*a down that includes any legal scrimmage or free kick; \*the beginning of a period including an OT period; \*an inadvertent whistle; \*an untimed down at the end of a period.

**This list should include most every 25 second play clock situation, but an extremely rare situation is a possibility (a dog runs across the field; the lights go out; weather conditions).**

### **General Statements:**

1. The common ready-for-play whistle/signal is not used for a 40-second play clock.
2. It is very important that the same individual in the press box is not responsible for both clocks!!!
3. The game clock operator must always be ready for the Referee to wind/start the game clock when it is stopped. The game clock will always start on a legal snap if it is not already started/running prior to the legal snap.
4. **Always** turn off any scoreboard horn. There is absolutely no need for a horn at any time!
5. Make certain that we always run the 25-second play clock prior to an extra point try, prior to a kickoff, and prior to the kick following a safety.
6. Always set the play clock back to 40 during the play in progress to be ready. You will have plenty of time to change it back to 25 at the end of the play if that is necessary.

**FINALLY, the play clock operator must always be ready for the Referee to reset the 40 second clock to 25 seconds if and when the 40 seconds has run down past and below 25**

**seconds and the football is not on the ground ready for the next play. The Referee's signal for this is a pumping motion with one hand up and down near his head.**

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