

**2023 EDITION**

**THE OFFICIAL MECHANICS AND PHILOSOPHIES  
OF THE WASHINGTON OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

# **MECHANICS FOOTBALL OFFICIATING ILLUSTRATED**



**3, 4 AND 5  
PERSON  
HIGH SCHOOL  
CREWS**

**REFEREE**

PUBLISHED BY REFEREE AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS OFFICIALS

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**■ 3, 4 AND 5 PERSON CREWS**



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***WOA Football Officiating Mechanics Illustrated***

Graphics and layout by Matt Bowen, graphic designer, Referee magazine

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# CONTENTS

Introduction and Acknowledgements ..... 8

## ALL OFFICIALS

Washington High School Rule Modifications ..... 10

Officiating Philosophies/Guidelines/Interpretations..... 11

Definition of Terms ..... 15

Uniform ..... 17

Pregame Conference and Duties..... 19

Postgame Conference ..... 23

Best Practices..... 24

From Whistle to Snap ..... 30

Use of the Bean Bag..... 36

Flags and Penalties..... 38

Penalty Signaling Sequences ..... 42

Signal Chart ..... 45

Crew and Supplementary Signal Chart ..... 50

Whistle Mechanics..... 52

Quarter Change Mechanics..... 53

Chain Crew, Timers and Ball Attendants ..... 55

The Halo Principle..... 59

Fumbles ..... 61

## CREW OF FIVE

**Chapter 1:** Philosophy ..... 64

**Chapter 2:** Keys ..... 66

<b>Chapter 3: Before and After the Snap</b> .....	87
<b>Chapter 4: Coin Toss</b> .....	89
<b>Chapter 5: Timeouts</b> .....	92
<b>Chapter 6: Measurements</b> .....	95
<b>Chapter 7: Positioning</b> .....	101
<b>Chapter 8: Coverage</b> .....	114

## **CREW OF FOUR**

<b>Chapter 9: Philosophy</b> .....	158
<b>Chapter 10: Keys</b> .....	160
<b>Chapter 11: Before and After the Snap</b> .....	163
<b>Chapter 12: Coin Toss</b> .....	164
<b>Chapter 13: Timeouts</b> .....	166
<b>Chapter 14: Measurements</b> .....	169
<b>Chapter 15: Positioning</b> .....	175
<b>Chapter 16: Coverage</b> .....	184

## **CREW OF THREE**

<b>Chapter 17: Philosophy</b> .....	217
<b>Chapter 18: Pregame Duties</b> .....	218
<b>Chapter 19: Coin Toss</b> .....	219
<b>Chapter 20: Kickoff Duties and Positioning</b> .....	221
<b>Chapter 21: Scrimmage Play Positioning</b> .....	223
<b>Chapter 22: Scrimmage Play Coverage</b> .....	225
<b>Chapter 23: Short Yardage and Goal Line Situations</b> .....	228
<b>Chapter 24: Punt Positioning and Coverage</b> .....	229
<b>Chapter 25: Field Goal and Try Positioning</b> .....	231
<b>Chapter 26: Measurements</b> .....	233

# INTRODUCTION

Thank you to the football committee members and REI staff for creating the *WOA Football Officiating Mechanics Illustrated*. Your time and effort is truly appreciated and will benefit all football officials throughout the state.

The mechanics and philosophies included in the *Mechanics Illustrated* have been approved for all levels of play by the WIAA, WOA Executive Board and the WOA Football Committee and are expected to be followed by all officials and local associations in Washington.

**The mechanics outlined by the *Mechanics Illustrated* are a starting point and should be adhered to in the majority of situations.** The statewide observation and evaluations will be based on an official following the mechanics as outlined. With that being said, it is also understood by the WOA Football Committee that there may be situations not covered in the book

or situations where it is necessary for an official or crew to deviate from the prescribed mechanic in order to place the crew in a favorable position to officiate. **If an official/crew must deviate from the approved mechanic, they should return to the approved mechanic as soon as the game situation allows.**

Throughout this book, we have made use of the pronouns “he/his” to refer to an official. We recognize that there is an increasing number of female football officials and no inference should be taken by the use of this term. It is only meant in the generic sense and used for readability.

Changes from the previous edition of this manual are noted with gray-shaded text.

Todd Stordahl  
WOA Executive Director

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ALL OFFICIALS

# WASHINGTON RULE EXCEPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Washington football games shall be played under NFHS rules with the following exceptions:

## HIGH SCHOOL

### Mercy Rule

When the point differential is 40 points or greater, the game clock shall run continuously for the remainder of the game except for an injury timeout, a charged team timeout, time between quarters, or a score.

For 11-on-11 games, the game clock shall run continuously beginning in the second half.

For eight-on-eight games, the game clock shall run continuously whenever the 40 point differential is reached.

Once the running clock is used, it is continued even if the score differential is less than 40 points.

### Tie-Breaker

Tie-breakers may be used if approved by league action or the teams involved. Tie break procedures can be found in the NFHS Rules Book with the following modifications:

In the first series, both teams will have an opportunity to score starting at the 25-yard line, with the line-to-gain in effect.

If the score remains tied, a second series will start at the 25-yard line, with the line-to-gain in effect.

If the score remains tied, then both teams will be given a series starting at the 10-yard line and continue from that mark until the game is decided. The line to gain is always the goal line.

All other overtime rules in the NFHS Rules Book shall apply.

### Fifth Quarter

A fifth quarter may be played only by freshman football squads following the regular contest for players who were not starters and played in three (3) quarters or less of the regular contest.

## JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Length of Period

Varsity teams that involve ninth grade students, and may include some eighth or seventh grade students, may play 10-minute quarters. Seventh and eighth grade teams shall play no more than 8-minute quarters.

### Fifth Quarter

A fifth quarter may be played for players who were not starters and played in three (3) quarters or less of the regular contest. This quarter shall not include kickoffs, punts, tries or field goals.

### Points After Touchdown

To promote place kicking, a league may adopt a rule, whereby a successful place kick after a touchdown scores two (2) points. A successful extra point attempt by any other method shall be awarded one (1) point.

## COIN TOSS

Maximum of four captains may be present at the coin toss. There are no restrictions as to the number of injured player(s) serving as a captain, but the total number may not exceed four. Injured player(s) must be wearing a game jersey.

# OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES AND GUIDELINES

## OFFENSIVE HOLDING

Defensive players are strong and quick with an arsenal of moves such as “swim techniques” to avoid an offensive blocker so they can pursue the ball carrier or quarterback. As such, an Umpire or other covering official must exercise good judgment to determine what acts of holding need to be called.

- Did the hold occur at the point of attack? What effect does the hold have on the play?

If the ball carrier sweeps to the right with pulling guards, a hold by the left tackle should not be called because it has no effect on the play. In addition, a hold should not be called if the runner has passed the point where the hold occurred because, once again, the hold has no effect on the play. **Warn the player so he knows the official saw the hold.**

- Did the hold significantly restrict the movement that the defender was trying to make?

The hold must restrict the defender’s ability to participate in the play. The hold must turn him; take his feet; and/or change the direction of his path at the point of attack. Players “dancing” with one another when no advantage has been gained are not guilty of holding. If an offensive blocker’s hands are inside the frame of the defender’s body, and he has not turned the defender or changed the direction of the defender’s path of travel, then the hold should not be called even if that offensive lineman has grasped the defender’s shirt.

Additionally, if the offensive player’s hands grasp the shirt of his opponent outside the frame of the defender’s body, and the defender has not turned or

spun, or his path to the ball carrier has not changed, then a hold should not be called. **The official must judge whether the defender was still able to get up the field to the quarterback or ball carrier, or whether the defender can still participate in the play. If so, a hold should not be called.**

On the other hand, if an offensive lineman takes out the feet of a defensive player by tackling him, pulling or taking him to the ground, then a holding penalty should be called.

In short, if the hold is at the point of attack and significantly restricts the defender’s ability to move and participate in the play, by taking his feet or turning him from his intended path to the ball, then a hold should be called. **But, make the hold big!**

An Umpire can make his job easier by talking early and often to the offensive and defensive players about holding. Sharing information with both lines lets the players know what to expect and what will and will not be called. In that way, much of the holding, and virtually most of the resultant complaining can be avoided.

1. All takedowns or plays where a defensive player has his feet taken out from under him should be flagged regardless of the position of the player on the field or whether or not the action occurs at the point of attack.

2. If a blocker’s hand(s) initially, or at any subsequent time during the block, contacts an opponent outside the opponent’s frame, the blocker must immediately work to bring his hand(s) on or inside the frame of his opponent.



3. During a block, as the play develops, a blocker is permitted to work for and maintain a position on an opponent.
4. The hand(s) cannot be thrust forward above the opponent's frame to contact an opponent on the neck or face area.
5. If there is an act of offensive holding and the opponent being blocked is in the **process** of tackling the runner, the blocking act remains illegal and should be flagged. If another defensive player away from the spot of the illegal act is tackling the runner, the flag should not be thrown, as the holding has not had an effect on the play.
6. If there is an act of offensive holding, but the action occurs after a pass has been thrown, then a flag should not be thrown, as the holding had no effect on the play.
7. If there is an act of offensive holding, but the action occurs away from the point of attack and has no effect on the play, then a flag should not be thrown.
8. If there is an act of defensive holding against an ineligible receiver (i.e. guard, tackle, center), unless there is an actual tackling of the opponent, seriously consider not throwing the flag. A defensive lineman who holds takes himself out of the play and does not create an advantage. He essentially "blocks himself."

### ILLEGAL BLOCKS IN THE BACK

1. The angle of attack by the blocker must be from the rear, not from the side. The greater the angle of attack, the more suspect the block.
2. When blocked in the back, a player will fall or move in the same direction as his initial momentum. When blocked from the side, the player's direction changes.

3. For side blocks, with only one hand on the back, look for which hand guides the player. If the player being blocked moves sideways, the block is legal. If he moves forward, the block may be illegal.

Remember: one hand in the back can still be a block in the back.

### ROUGHING THE PASSER (RPS)

Protecting the passer is one of the Referee's main jobs. If there is any question whether the action on the passer is a foul, lean to the side of protection and call roughing the passer (RPS). Remember, the passer may not always be the quarterback.

1. RPS rules only apply on legal forward passes, thrown from in or behind the neutral zone. If the passer is hit late after he releases the ball when he is beyond the line of scrimmage, it may be a personal foul or defenseless player foul.
2. The defense may only take one step and then hit the passer after he has released the ball. However, if after the ball has clearly been thrown, the defender is within one step and puts his hands on the passer, and flexes his arms, pushing the passer to the ground, RPS should be called.
3. Do not allow a defender to commit punishing acts such as "stuffing" a passer into the ground or unnecessarily wrestling or driving him down after he has thrown the ball.

4. When a defender goes high and contacts the passer's head, face or neck area with the helmet, hand or arm, RPS should be called especially if he launches. The defender is responsible to avoid the head of the passer. If the passer ducks as he sees the defender coming and is hit in the head, it could be RPS. The only acceptable contact with a passer is a normal tackling motion.

5. If the passer is sacked and an arm is around his head, it is not a foul unless it was a personal foul.

6. A defensive player may not hit the passer with his mask in the passer's head or mask, nor may he drive the crown of his helmet into any part of the passer's body.

7. If the passer tucks the ball away and runs, he can be hit legally like any other runner.

8. There is no foul for RPS if a defender is blocked by an offensive player with such force that he cannot avoid contacting the passer. This does not relieve the defensive player of responsibility for personal fouls.

### KICK CATCH INTERFERENCE (KCI)

While a free kick is in flight in or beyond the neutral zone or a scrimmage kick is in flight beyond the neutral zone, no player of the kicking team may touch the ball or a receiver, unless blocked into the ball or into the receiver, or remain in the path between a receiver and the place where the ball is coming down.

**It is not a foul** if the kickers catch, bat, muff or touch a **scrimmage kick** in flight beyond the neutral zone, **if no receiver is in position to catch the ball.**

1. The kicking team is responsible to know the location of the kicked ball. If a receiver has to run around a kicking team player while moving toward the ball and attempting to catch it, it is KCI even if there is no contact. The receiver has a right to an unimpeded path to the ball and an unhindered opportunity to catch the kick.

2. It is KCI if the kicking team contacts the receiver before **or simultaneous** with his first touching of the ball.

3. A kick receiver is defenseless and most vulnerable when (1) his attention is on the downward flight of the ball or (2) he has just touched the ball.

4. KCI can also include a kicking team member standing close to a receiver; running in front of him; waving his arms at him; yelling, shouting or screaming at him; or otherwise obstructing his path to the ball. **This means you do not have to have contact to have a foul.**

5. A receiver need not give a fair catch signal to gain this protection.

6. When in question, call the foul for kick catch interference.

### ROUGHING / RUNNING INTO THE KICKER / HOLDER

1. Running into the kicker / holder is when the kicker / holder is displaced from his position but not roughed.

2. Officials need to differentiate between contact on the kicker's plant leg vs. the kicking leg. Since there is a higher probability of injury on the plant leg than on the free leg, contact on the plant leg is probably roughing.

3. A punter is not fair game when he is in the process of kicking the ball just because the snapper failed to execute a good snap.

4. Protection begins when the player becomes a kicker. A player becomes a kicker when his knee, lower leg or foot makes contact with the ball.

5. If a kick is reasonably certain or obvious, the defense must make an effort to avoid contact.

6. If the contact is caused by a Team K block, there is no foul.

7. There is no foul if contact is by the defense and that player blocks the ball.

8. It may still be a foul if one player blocks the ball and another player roughs or runs **into the kicker / holder.**

9. A kicker loses protection as a kicker when he has had a reasonable time to regain his balance.

10. Call running into the kicker, not roughing, when the kicker comes down on top of a grounded defensive player who slid underneath him. **However**, if the kicker comes to the ground **and then falls over** a grounded defender, there is no foul.

11. When in doubt, the foul is for roughing. Use the severity of the contact as your guideline.

### PASS INTERFERENCE

Examples of actions that could be related to pass interference include:

1. Playing through an eligible receiver who has established his position in an attempt to make a play on the ball.

2. Grabbing a receiver's arm(s) in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.

3. Extending an arm across the body of a receiver hindering his path, thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of whether or not the defender is playing the ball. Often called the "arm bar."

4. Cutting off the path of the receiver either by being in front of him and by slowing down or by being side by side with a receiver and "riding" him off his path to the ball.

5. Hooking a receiver in an attempt to get the ball in such a manner that it causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.

6. Shoving or pushing off, creating separation often occurs with offensive pass interference.

7. Blocking downfield before a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage has been touched. This act applies exclusively to an offensive player and can take the form of an illegal "pick" or a straight-ahead block by which the offensive player makes contact or pushes off in order to run his pass route.

Acts that generally WOULD NOT be considered pass interference include:

1. Inadvertent tangling of feet.

2. Incidental contact by any player while in position to get to the ball in

an equal position with his opponent. Example: the "jump ball" situation.

3. Contact away from the direction of the thrown pass.

### BOXING IN – THE "MOBILE BOX"

From the earliest days of officiating, football officials have been taught to "box in" the play. That was a difficult task with two or three officials and was made easier when schools opted to use four officials. Now that officiating has graduated to five officials, the task might seem even easier, but that is not the case.

Many officials believe (or have been taught) that more officials mean less movement, but that is not true. It will always be important to keep plays boxed in. The idea of boxing is quite evident before the snap in pre-play positioning. Once the play begins, adjustments start to happen. The "mobile box" for officials should move down the field as the players and the ball move down the field. The "mobile box" may also have to move laterally when the action goes into the side zones.

The "mobile box" will have officials who are responsible for observing the action around the point of attack. Other officials will be responsible for observing off-ball action, "cleaning up" in front of, to the side of and behind the play.

Officials need to be close enough to accurately see the action, but wide enough to have an adequate field of vision without having to turn their head.

### ILLEGAL FORMATION

If a receiver is not definitely on or off the line of scrimmage, read the formation and verify if the receiver is in the position that makes the formation legal.

A receiver who is not in the neutral zone until he leans forward is not illegal.

A defender whose head is in the neutral zone but not gaining an advantage should not be called for encroachment. Warn him. If he continues to line up in the neutral zone, and if he does not correct it, then a foul should be called.

# DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Balanced formation** — An offensive formation in which the same number of eligible receivers are outside the tackles on both sides of the snapper.

**Blitz** — A defensive strategy in which several players commit to rushing the passer. See “Showing blitz.”

**Box** — Apparatus (also known as the down marker) used by the chain crew to show ball position and the current down.

**Chain crew (or chain gang)** — Non-officials in charge of the line-to-gain equipment and box. Considered part of the officiating crew.

**Cleaning up after the play** — Mechanic in which the official not responsible for the ball carrier observes action behind and around the ball carrier.

**Cross field mechanic** — When a wing official is pushed off the forward progress spot on a play, the off line official should assist with a forward progress spot by moving to the sideline hash mark if he has a good spot.

**Dead-ball officiating** — Activity during the time immediately after the ball becomes dead.

**Digger** — Official who removes players from a pile and determines which team has recovered a fumble.

**Downfield** — Refers to the direction the offensive team is moving with the ball. On a scrimmage down, it is the area beyond the neutral zone. Opposite of “Upfield.”

**Echoing (mirroring) a signal** — Giving the same signal as a crewmate (e.g. stop the clock, touchdown).

**Eye contact** — Gaining the visual attention of another official before making a ruling. By doing so, officials can avoid conflicting calls.

**Flat** — The area behind the offensive linemen where backs go to receive short passes. A pass to a back in the flat is thrown shortly after the snap, thus making it different from a screen pass.

**Halo principle** — Technique involving imaginary circles around players that help define coverage areas for officials.

**Hash marks (or hashes)** — Also known as the hash marks, the lines on the field from which the ball is snapped if it becomes dead in a side zone or out of bounds.

**Inside-out look** — Pivot that turns an official’s back toward the middle of the field, allowing him an angle to action in a side zone or on the sideline.

**Key** — An action or reaction by a player that gives the official a tip as to what type of play the offense will run; a player an official observes for all or part of a down.

**Line-to-gain equipment** — Ten-yard length of chain connected at each end of poles used to indicate the line team A has to reach in order to achieve a first down. Commonly referred to as “the chains.” The box is also considered to be part of the line-to-gain equipment. See “Box,” “Chain gang” and “Stakes.”

**Look through** — Use of depth-of-field vision to observe a player lined up inside the nearest player.

**Mirror a spot** — Mechanic, usually used by wing officials, in which one official marks the spot of forward progress and another indicates the same spot from across the field.

**Nine-yard marks (or numbers)** — The yardline identification numbers painted on the field. The distance from the sideline to the top of the numbers is nine yards.

**Officiate back to the ball** — Mechanic in which a wing official who has moved

toward team B's goal line moves back toward the play in order to determine the spot of forward progress.

**Pivot** — A turn by the Umpire to see pass plays across the middle as well as to follow action around the runner as required.

**Point of attack** — On a running play, the area in advance of the runner through which he runs; on a passing play, anywhere in the vicinity of the passer or any player attempting to reach the passer.

**Preventive officiating** — Refers to actions by officials who prevent problems from occurring by talking to players and coaches. Preventive officiating is often related to dead-ball officiating.

**Release** — Turning attention from a specific player (usually the runner) because the player has entered another official's coverage area.

**Short side (of the field)** — The side of the field from the hash mark to the nearer sideline when the ball is snapped from the hash mark; opposite of the "Wide side."

**Showing blitz** — The defense places eight or more players within four yards of the snap, making no secret of the fact it intends to place pressure on the quarterback or kicker. See "Blitz."

**Shuffle step** — Movement used mainly by wing officials on pass plays. The torso remains perpendicular to the line of scrimmage and the feet are alternately scraped along the ground (not a crossover step) in order to move downfield.

**Side zone** — The area of the field between the sidelines and the hash marks.

**Square off** — Ninety-degree turn made by an official when marking the spot of forward progress.

**Stacked** — One player lined up directly behind a teammate (e.g. a linebacker positioned immediately behind a defensive tackle).

**Stakes (or sticks)** — See "Line to gain equipment" and "Chain crew."

**Strong side** — For the purposes of this book, the side of the offensive line on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackles; opposite of "Weak side."

**Trips** — Three eligible receivers on one side of an offensive formation.

**Upfield** — The direction the defense or receiving team is moving. Opposite of "Downfield."

**V** — Triangular alignment used by officials to relay the ball from a side zone to the hash mark.

**Weak side** — For the purposes of this manual, it is the side of the offensive line on which there are fewer eligible receivers outside of the tackles; opposite of the "Strong side."

**Wide side (of the field)** — The area from the opposite hash mark through the middle of the field and side zone to the sideline when the ball is snapped from the opposite hash mark. Opposite of the "Short side."

**Wideout** — An eligible receiver who lines up outside the last player on the offensive line, on the line of scrimmage.

**Wing official** — The Linesman or Line Judge.

# UNIFORM

The following are the uniform requirements for all WIAA sponsored contests:

Your uniform should be clean and well kept. The entire crew shall be dressed alike.

## Uniform Shirt

Officials shall wear a WOA-approved shirt, either long or short sleeve for varsity games. All crew members shall wear the same length sleeves. Local associations may determine which type of striped shirts will be worn for sub-varsity WIAA sponsored contests.

A black, long sleeve undershirt or turtleneck shirt may be worn under a short sleeve uniform shirt in cold weather if approved by the local association for regular season games only. The undershirt shall not have any letters or pictures that could be seen through the striped uniform shirt.

Shirts shall always be tucked in.

## Uniform Pants

Black pants with a 1¼" white stripe down each leg. Black pants must have belt loops.

Black officiating shorts may be worn prior to October 1 for varsity contests if approved by the local association. For non- varsity contests, the local association may determine the use of shorts. Undergarments should not be visible through pants or shorts. All officials are to wear the same type of pant.

A black belt is to be worn with both pants and shorts.

## Shoes

Entirely black shoes or black shoes with a white manufacturer's logo or stripe shall be worn. These shoes may also have a white sole. Only black laces shall may worn with either style of shoe.

## Socks

Black socks will be worn with black pants. White or black socks should be worn with shorts as long as the crew all wear the same color socks.

## Uniform Cap

A black cap with white piping shall be worn by all except the Referee. The Referee shall wear a white hat. All caps shall be fitted and clean.

## Whistle

If a whistle on a lanyard is used, both must be black. The whistle should be plastic. It is recommended that each official carry a spare whistle in their pants pocket. If a finger whistle is used, it must also be black and should be plastic. The WOA logo on the whistle is permissible.

## Jacket

Any jacket may be worn before the game during warmups. Jackets with black and white stripes may be worn during the game if approved by the local association. The entire crew shall wear jackets if they are to be worn.

## Officiating Accessories

Each official shall have:

- Two gold penalty flags, 15 by 15 inches with the center weight that is not a hard substance. One flag may be tucked into the pants above the belt so that only the weight is showing or in a pocket.
- At least one bean bag to mark non-penalty spots. Bean bags shall be white or blue and worn on the belt. All members of the crew shall use like-colored bean bags. The wing officials and Back Judge shall each have two bean bags and they may be either color.
- An information card (to record timeouts, captains, etc.) and a writing utensil.
- A wristband, rubber band or other device to keep track of downs. The

Umpire should use two elastic bands — one for keeping track of downs and the other to track ball position.

#### **Other Accessories**

- Gloves, when worn, shall be black.
- Officials may wear white sweatbands on their wrists when wearing long sleeve shirts to help other officials see their signals.
  - The Referee shall have a coin.
  - The Linesman shall have a yardage clip that is clipped to the chain as an aid for measurements, etc., and an extra snap clip to aid setting the box after the first and third quarters.
    - The Umpire should bring a towel to use on the field if necessary. The towel should be a clean black towel with no markings. Do not expect the host school to provide one.
    - The Back Judge, Referee, and Line Judge should have a timing device with them. The Line Judge is the backup for the game clock and the Back Judge has the play clock. In three and four-man mechanics, the Referee would need to time the play clock and the Line Judge runs the game clock.
      - In cold weather, officials may wear a hand warmer at their waist. The hand warmer must be black or black with a white manufacturer's logo.

#### **Alternate Officials and Assisting Officials**

Officials who are assigned as alternate officials, or who are helping with the chain crew or other sideline tasks may wear their full uniform but must wear a dark, solid color jacket or vest that totally hides their striped shirts.

#### **Arrival & Departure Attire**

Because “first impressions” are important, a varsity crew should come to the venue dressed in a professional manner. As professional attire varies in different areas, local associations should establish “dress code” guidelines for their officials.

#### **Headset Radios**

The crew may use headset radios to communicate with each other during the contest. As a standard, radios should operate on the GMRS frequency band which will allow officials in split-crew games to utilize their own radios. (The Midland LXT600 is one such radio) Radios should always be set to the lowest power setting which will maximize the battery life and reduce interference from distant sources. This will also limit the distance anyone else can overhear the crew's communications. The type of headset/earphone used is left to each individual crew member to decide for themselves. Remember, whatever you say can be heard by others with similar radios, so please be professional in your communications. The actual channel and privacy code, if available, should be set by the crew during their pregame conference.

# PREGAME CONFERENCE AND DUTIES

The official's pregame conference is a critical factor in ensuring that the upcoming game is officiated in a manner that optimizes the safety of all participants, enables the athletes to perform at their highest ability and ensures an enjoyable contest for players, coaches, fans and officials.

Note that even highly experienced crews benefit from a well-planned pregame meeting. The discussion brings the entire officiating team together and gets them focused on the game, it's a time to put aside every day concerns and other items and focus on the task at hand. A good pregame will set the tone for how the crew works together and how well the game will be officiated.

A quick run through of mechanics, even for highly experienced crews, is never time wasted. If the crew has less experienced members or is a mixed crew from different associations it gives time for everyone to discuss how the crew will work the game as a team.

Every game is different; anyone who has officiated will acknowledge this. After mechanics have been reviewed by an experienced crew it is time to talk about today's specific game. Who knows what about each team? Share your knowledge and voice your concerns. Share any information that may be pertinent regarding either of the teams, type of offense, possible issues, previous meetings, etc. If you know something about the coach's demeanor, then share that with the wing officials so they have some help in their sideline management duty. If you can identify a situation and talk about it before it happens on the field, the more likely you will be prepared to deal with it.

If the crew completely runs out of items to talk over then cover some

situations, tell of challenging calls you have had and discuss how they were or should have been handled by the crew.

A suggested pregame outline can be found on the WOA Football Central Hub. It deals with game management and mechanics. Time required for each subject will vary with crew experience, but the entire crew should leave the pregame conference comfortable with their part in each of them.

The pregame conference should start at least 90 minutes before the scheduled kickoff. Officials should not be dressing during the conference.

A pregame crew conference is mandatory at all Varsity levels of play and encouraged to take place at lower levels as well whenever possible. Decide who will move to any position if an official is injured.

There are as many different pregame conferences as there are officials. There is no magic formula for a "successful" pregame conference. There are a number of topics, however, that should be included:

## Rule Changes

Cover recent rule changes, especially in the beginning of the season when the rules and interpretations may still be a bit unclear.

## Special Coverage

Discuss what to do in the event of hurry-up offense, obvious onside kick situation, etc. If the weather is threatening, discuss how the crew will handle a suspension of play due to lightning. The crew should also decide how it will handle fights or similar altercations.



### **Making the Call**

Go over signals between officials (receivers on or off the line, “two sticks” for a first down, etc.). Discuss which crew members are responsible for counting players and what signals will be used to indicate a team has enough, too many or too few players. Remind officials who are sharing coverage to make eye contact and to practice good dead-ball officiating.

### **Reporting Fouls to the Referee**

The Referee should tell crew members how he wants fouls reported to him. Does he want the official to identify the offending team by uniform color or by referring to them as offense and defense? Remind officials to indicate the status of the ball at the time of the foul (loose ball, dead ball, etc.) and the result of the play (incomplete pass, scoring kick was good, etc.). Remind wing officials they are to tell the coach who committed the foul, the nature of the infraction and any special enforcement (loss of down, quarter extended for an untimed down, etc.).

### **Timeout Responsibilities**

Who’s timing the timeout? Where are the officials positioned during the timeout? How are you going to inform the teams that the timeout is over? Who will tell the coach how many timeouts each team has remaining?

The Referee should inform the crew that if an official coach-referee conference is requested, the Referee must have the wing official on that coach’s side on hand to monitor the conversation.

### **Bench Decorum**

This is a key element, often overlooked in pregame conferences. It is especially important if the crew does not work together often. Make sure that the officials involved have the same idea about what conduct is out of line and what isn’t. Remind wing officials to find the “get back” coach, the assistant who will help keep players and team personnel out of the restricted area.

### **Injured Officials**

Discuss how the crew will adjust assignments if an official is injured or becomes too ill to work. Which officials will move where is up to the crew, but generally a crew of four works without an Umpire and a crew of five works without a Back Judge when a crewmate is ill or injured. When a crew is reduced to two officials, it is recommended that one official work as the Referee and the other as a Linesman.

### **Halftime**

Crew are to allow the teams to leave the field before heading off yourselves. The crew should meet at a designated place on the field, allow the teams to leave and have the Referee signal the timer to start the clock.

### **Game Expectations**

If you know of some team history that may affect the game, discuss it. For example, if the two teams were involved in a fight the last time they met, you may want to talk about those ramifications on the game and the players’ and coaches’ attitudes.

## **PREGAME DUTIES**

### **Taking the Field**

The officiating crew should take the field a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time. The crew should take the field together if at all possible and should be in complete uniform and ready to start the contest. Preferably do your stretching before coming on the field, or in the end zone after all other pregame tasks are completed.

### **Meeting with Coaches**

As soon as is practical after taking the field the officiating crew should meet with the head coach of each team. If the circumstances require the coach meetings to occur prior to the officiating crew taking the field, then the Referee and one additional official at a minimum will conduct each meeting. Meet with the home team coach first if possible. The meeting should begin with the

Referee, or wing official for that sideline, introducing himself and giving the coach a card listing the names of the officiating crew members. He can be accompanied by the wing official for that sideline who can use the opportunity to instruct the Ball Attendants as to how he would like them to work with him. The Referee should then continue the meeting with his request that the coach certify that his players are legally and properly equipped followed by the WIAA required question regarding the presence of a health care provider certified in concussion management. Suggested additional subjects for the meeting include:

- Equipment issues needing the Umpire's attention
- Unusual formations or plays the team may employ or any questions
- Numbers (and names) of the team captains
- Throwing hand of passers and kicking foot of kickers
- Rule "Points of Emphasis"
- Remind coaches that they cannot come on the field between plays unless a timeout is called.
- Sideline management instructions
- Foul reporting
- Timeout calling
- Halftime duration
- Time for coin toss
- Reminder that the playing field is an extension of the classroom and appropriate behavior by all participants is expected

Additional subjects for home team head coach:

- Chain crew
- Any field issues (goal post pads, close obstacles that need to be moved)

The Referee would be well advised to involve his entire crew in the head coach meetings, which crew member will ask which questions is an excellent topic for the crew pregame meeting.

## REMAINING TIME PRIOR TO COIN TOSS

### Crew

- During team warmups, the officiating crew should be sensitive to

the interaction between the teams. If tensions exist between the teams, the crew should immediately request that the coaches intervene.

- Move about the field with purpose, avoid gathering in groups of three or more without a specific purpose/reason. Do not engage in unnecessary conversation with players or coaches of either team.
- Maintain the appearance of impartiality by avoiding any activity that could be seen by a team as showing a rapport with the opposing team.
- Observe pregame warmups by each team from the perspective of your position, take special note of players you would normally key on during the game.

### Referee

- Inspect and approve game balls, this responsibility is specifically assigned by rule to the Referee. He can be accompanied by the Umpire who can use the opportunity to instruct the Ball Attendants as to how he would like them to work with him.
- Verify the presence of required field safety devices and the absence of any potential hazards (soccer goals, track and field equipment, etc.)
  - In crews of 3 and 4, meet with the play clock operator if there is one to go over the play clock timing rules and signals.
  - Make himself available should the clock operator have any questions as to his job.
  - Spot check player equipment for legality, instruct the player/coach to correct any issues found with uniform or equipment. Refer any items in question to the Umpire for decision on legality.
  - (Optional) Meet chain crew members and thank them for their assistance.

### Umpire

- Spot check player equipment for legality, instruct the player/coach to correct any issues found with uniform or equipment. Decide on the legality of any uniform/equipment issues referred by other officiating crew members.

**Linesman**

- Instruct Ball Attendants as to how he would like them to work with him.

- Inspect the down box and chains.

Make sure the chain is securely attached to the poles and is free of kinks. If there is no tape at the midway point of the chain (to facilitate the determination of whether a five-yard defensive penalty will result in a first down), ask a trainer for tape and mark the chain. The ends of the box and chain poles must be properly covered. If they are not, ask game management to remedy the situation.

- Meet with the chain crew, instruct them on safety procedures, proper setting of the chains and the down box, proper installation of the clip, measurement and quarter change procedures.

- Walk the Linesman's sideline, look for any safety issues such as yard line markers too close to the field, team benches or training tables too close to the field.

- Ensure that the yard markers are no closer than 2 yards outside the sidelines.

- Spot check player equipment for legality, instruct the player/coach to correct any issues found with uniform or equipment. Refer any items in question to the Umpire for decision on legality.

- (4-man crew) Ensure that the team captains that you will escort onto the field for the coin toss are in place at the designated time.

**Line Judge**

- Instruct Ball Attendants as to how he would like them to work with him.

- Inspect the field (with Back Judge).

The Line Judge should walk down both sidelines and along each end line at a brisk but unhurried pace. You don't need to inspect every blade of grass, but if you discover potholes, broken glass or other hazards, ask game management to have the problem taken care of immediately. If the field is marked for another sport (many football fields are also used for soccer), make sure the crew knows which lines are being used for football. Make sure the goalposts are straight and free of decoration and that the goalpost pads

are securely fastened. Check the pylons to ensure they are properly placed.

- Spot check player equipment for legality, instruct the player/coach to correct any issues found with uniform or equipment. Refer any items in question to the Umpire for decision on legality.

- Ensure that the yard markers are no closer than 2 yards outside the sidelines.

- Meet with clock operator if possible, answer any questions he/she might have about clock operation.

- (When applicable) Meet with auxiliary down box and line to gain operators who will be working on your sideline.

- Ensure that the team captains that you will escort onto the field for the coin toss are in place at the designated time.

**Back Judge**

- Inspect the field (with Line Judge).

The Back Judge should walk down both sidelines and along each end line at a brisk but unhurried pace. You don't need to inspect every blade of grass, but if you discover potholes, broken glass or other hazards, ask game management to have the problem taken care of immediately. If the field is marked for another sport (many football fields are also used for soccer), make sure the crew knows which lines are being used for football. Make sure the goalposts are straight and free of decoration and that the goalpost pads are securely fastened. Check the pylons to ensure they are properly placed.

- Spot check player equipment for legality, instruct the player/coach to correct any issues found with uniform or equipment. Refer any items in question to the Umpire for decision on legality.

- Meet with clock operator if possible, answer any questions he/she might have about clock operation. Ensure that the team captains that you will escort onto the field for the coin toss are in place at the designated time. If on-field play clock is present and not controlled by the Back Judge, meet with play clock operator, if possible, answer any questions he/she might have about play clock operation.

# POSTGAME CONFERENCE

## Introduction

As a pre-game conference is important for the crew's preparation for the game, so also is having a postgame conference important for the crew's reflection on the game. The following are suggestions/guidelines for the crew. Each association and/or crew can adapt these guidelines as they see fit.

## Time

During the pre-game, the importance of a postgame discussion should be stressed so that the crew understands the expectations following the game. It is suggested that, following a few minutes of relaxation in the locker room, the postgame occurs prior to the crew members showering, dressing, etc. It is assumed that the Referee will initiate and lead this discussion.

## Field Issues

As a way of beginning the discussion in a "safe/objective" manner, discuss any issues concerning the field (safety factors, incorrect markings, etc.) which need to be addressed to the school's athletic director and/or your local assignor.

## Coach/player Issues

Were there any issues with either coaches or players concerning behavior/unsportsmanlike conduct, etc.? Were there any problems with sideline decorum? How were these handled? Are there any reports which need to be sent to the WOA (flagrant misconduct); and if so, who will be filing these reports?

## Pre-Game

Were there any issues concerning this specific game which were emphasized in the pre-game (swinging gate, unique free kick formations, etc.); and how were they handled on the field (did the crew do what they planned to do?) Also, were there any problems that arose that were not covered in the pregame conference?

## Penalties/Enforcements

Provide opportunity for crew members to discuss major penalties (what/why the foul was called); as well as communication and penalty enforcement procedure.

## Unique/Difficult Plays

What (if any) were the unique and/or difficult plays? What made them unique/difficult; and how did the crew handle them?

## Communication

How effective was the communication among the crew members? Give each specific group (Wing officials...Back Judge/Wing officials...Referee/Umpire...Referee/Wing officials...Umpire/Wing officials, etc.) opportunity to discuss both positive aspects as well as times when (if any) communication broke down.

## Looking Forward

Have time for a general discussion concerning the game giving each person opportunity to assess the game (what went well...what can be improved...specific things crew members appreciated about fellow crew members).

## Public Relations

The crew represents not only the local association but the WOA as well. Leaving the locker room in as good or better condition than the crew found it is important.

**The emphasis of the postgame is on the crew's working relationship with each other (how did "we" do rather than how did "I" do). Individual critique can also be provided by fellow crew members – if necessary. However, this should be done in an atmosphere of helping colleagues grow and improve.**

# BEST PRACTICES

The items listed below are considered “best practices” for football officials. Many of these items affect multiple areas of the game and are listed here for easy reference rather than being scattered throughout the book. Review of these items is encouraged by crew members before contests at any level.

## Specific Required Mechanics

1. Wing officials need to be sure their sideline is clear when the play is imminent. Coaches, players, trainers and other team personnel must be out of the restricted area. Reporters, statisticians, photographers, etc. should be a minimum of five yards back from the side or end lines.

2. At the end of the down, the Line Judge is responsible for quickly communicating the next down to the Referee as soon as the play ends. After making sure there were no fouls on the play, the Referee signals the next down to his crew. The Linesman then instructs the box holder to change the down and move to the new spot. The others on the crew echo the down signal.

3. When spotting the ball, the Umpire shall square to and face the wing from whom he is marking the spot. Do not spot the ball until you have verified that the wing officials are in or near their pre-snap position. To spot the ball after an incomplete pass, face the down box/Linesman to get the spot and position the ball in the same position relative to the hash marks as it was for the previous snap. If you cradle the ball in your towel to keep it dry, spot it when the offense breaks their huddle.

4. On long plays downfield, if the covering official has the spot on the

field and has the ball, the covering official can spot the ball and remain over it until the Umpire arrives and tell him that the ball is spotted. The Umpire will then remain over the ball until all officials are at or close to their pre-snap positions and then he will release to his pre-snap position which completes the ready for play. Similarly, if the Umpire has moved down the field to obtain the ball after a long incomplete pass play, he can relay it to the Referee who can spot it and remain over it until all officials get at or close to their pre-snap positions. The Referee will then move to his pre-snap position which completes the ready for play. If the offense is at or approaching the line of scrimmage, the referee may need to ask the quarterback to allow him to get into position before snapping the ball.

5. The wings should supervise the Ball Attendants on their side to be sure they quickly bring in new balls and chase errant passes and kicks. During the play, the Ball Attendants shall be near the wing official and either in the team box or at least five yards off the sideline.

6. When the line of scrimmage is inside the five-yard line of the defense, both wing officials shall break to the goal line at the snap and be about two to three yards off the sideline. From there, they work back to the play if it ends short of the goal line. If the line to gain is also inside the five-yard line, the wing officials must be aware of that line, but the goal line has priority.

7. When the line of scrimmage is inside the five-yard line of the offense, both wing officials come back to the goal line at the snap and work out from there. Between the five- and eight-yard line of the offense, the wing official

on the side of the field away from the Referee initially moves towards the goal line and works out to be in position to rule on a safety. In this situation, the Referee can move closer to the goal line and line up wider than normal.

**8.** If the Back Judge is on the goal line and a potential pass receiver enters the end zone the Back Judge must go with him and move to the end line to make sure that the end line is not violated. As soon as the Back Judge leaves the goal line the wing officials must assume goal line coverage and the Back Judge does not reassume goal line responsibility.

**9.** When the Back Judge has the goal line and the play goes into end zone, the wings should go into the end zone to help with player supervision.

**10.** If the touchdown is scored by a player carrying the ball across the goal line, then the signal is given by the official with goal line coverage at the time the ball crosses the goal line. If the touchdown is scored by completing a pass in the end zone the signal is given by the official with coverage of the completion. In the case of a pass in the corner this could/should be both the wing official and the Back Judge after checking with each other to make sure they agree.

**11.** On long touchdown plays close to the sideline, the Back Judge needs to check with the wing official before signaling touchdown to ensure that the runner did not go out of bounds.

**12.** On short plays that end close to the goal line, the wing officials should both crash in and the covering official can signal the touchdown as he is coming in or he can signal that the ball was short by pointing to the spot. On long runs or passes beyond the goal

line, the covering official can signal the touchdown from the sideline. On any scoring play, after the Referee verifies that there are no fouls, he gets clear of any players, faces the press box, and gives the appropriate signal.

**13.** On short runs up the middle near the goal line, the Umpire should signal to the wing official if he has the ball in the end zone using whatever signal that was decided upon during the crew's pregame conference.

**14.** All officials need to write down all unsportsmanlike fouls, any players sent off for concussion evaluation, ejections, etc. Include the quarter, time, foul, down, player number and any other relevant information.

**15.** When a scoring kick play or try is complete and the signals are given, all officials except the Referee should square out to their sideline and go down the sideline off the field. Wing officials should stop by their team's conference and be ready to bring them onto the field. Then they proceed to their pre-kick position. The Referee should go directly to the goal line, then down the goal line to his pre-kick position. No official should be running down the middle of the field. Record the score and any accompanying notes once in the proper position for the ensuing free kick.

**16.** It is good practice for the crew members to remind the Referee that the clock starts on the snap or on the ready for play. This can be done verbally or by hand signals (snapping fingers or small winding motion). The snapping of fingers is not a signal that the Referee should be giving for the clock operator.

When preparing for the next play, officials should back into their pre-snap positions and keep eyes on players whenever possible.

**17.** When relaying the ball to another official, use short under-hand tosses.

**18.** When both teams are going to exit through the same gate at halftime, crew members other than the Referee should stop the team furthest from the gate until the other team has cleared the gate. The Referee will remain on the field to start the half-time clock once all team members have left the field.

**19.** When players from both teams have left the field for halftime, the Referee shall give the wind the clock signal to the timer who should then start the halftime clock. When the teams return to the field after the halftime, the Referee shall again give the wind the clock signal to start the three-minute warmup period. (This may be prior to the expiration of the halftime clock but not before the required 10 minutes has elapsed.)

**20.** On live ball fouls it is most important for the end of the run to be covered by an official. The flag should be covered by another official who may replace the flag on the ground with his own and return the other to the flagging official. The end of the run spot and/or position of the flag are covered until the enforcement spot is determined. Do not throw a flag to another official when returning it. If the enforcement spot for the penalty is the spot of the foul, make sure to leave the flag on the ground until penalty enforcement is complete.

**21.** Any official can stop the clock by sounding his whistle and giving the stop clock signal no more than twice unless the clock fails to stop. The remainder of the crew should echo this signal. If the clock does not stop, this should be repeated.

**22.** After a long play that results in a first down, the Referee should signal to the Linesman that it is OK to move

the line-to-gain equipment, quickly jog to within 15 yards of the new line of scrimmage, and then signal the first down. The signal to the Linesman should be covered in the crew pregame meeting.

**23.** On any scrimmage kick, if the snap is over the kicker/holder's head, the Referee must move back to cover this play and the Umpire moves towards the line of scrimmage. Also, in five-man mechanics, the wing official who is opposite the Referee should also move back to help box the play in. Coverage of this type of situation should be discussed in the crew's pregame conference.

**24.** Generally, officials should not be walking between plays while doing the accordion mechanic, getting into position after long plays, during the quarter change mechanics or after scores. Use a light jog as a minimum.

**25.** If you start a play lined up on the sideline, you should not come onto the field while the ball is live. The exception is for the Back Judge during a free kick.

**26.** All signals by the referee except stop the clock, touchdown (given as the covering official), incomplete pass, first down and ready for play/start the clock (in a time-sensitive situation) are given facing the press box.

**27.** When the coin toss is to happen more than 5 minutes before kickoff, the Referee should advise each coach before the game. Coin toss will be at 10.00 (or 12.00 or 15.00) on the clock and you will need to move your warmups to outside the 30-yard line for the duration of the toss.

**28.** When going to your pre-snap or pre-kick position, do not turn your back on the players if at all possible.

**29.** On all scoring plays, after the covering official(s) rule on whether or not there was a score, the Referee shall verify there were no penalties on the play, then get clear of players, face the press box and give the final signal of a score (S5 or S6) or unsuccessful score (S10).

**30.** Once the ball carrier crosses the goal line, the covering official shall give a crisp, professional signal. A covering official who is trailing the play should sound the whistle as soon as it is clear that the runner has crossed the goal line and then give the touchdown signal when stopped at the goal line. The touchdown signal is only given by an official who actually sees the ball in possession of a runner break the plane of the goal line. Simply mirroring the touchdown signal of a fellow official is totally unnecessary. In the case of an incorrect or premature call, it forces the Referee to nullify the score, explain the error to both teams, and brings the entire crew's credibility into question

**31.** Referees should immediately start the play clock with the ready for play signal and whistle when the administrative matter is concluded, and the crew is back in pre-snap positions.

**32.** If neither the stop clock signal (S3) nor the incomplete pass signal (S10) were given at the end of the previous play, the covering official should give the dead ball signal (S7) to indicate that the 40-second play clock should be started. The 40-second play clock should also be started on the stop clock signal (S3) and the incomplete pass signal (S10).

**33.** It is important to look professional and interested in the game at all times. The more involved and active that you are or appear to be, the more coaches, players and

fans will believe you are on top of things. Body language is essential. Do not stand around with hands on hips, hands in pockets, arms folded, etc. Instead look involved and interested. If you are in a long dead ball time, monitor a huddle, stand at parade rest, etc.

**34.** Whenever one crew member gives the stop the clock signal, all others should echo that signal unless required to give a different signal. For example, on an incomplete pass, the covering official signals the incomplete pass, the remaining officials give the stop the clock signal.

**35.** After changes of possession, long plays, etc., that end outside the 10-yard line, the covering official should try to start the new series on a yard line if reasonably possible. Inside the 10-yard line at either goal, always use the precise spot where the previous play ended.

**36.** When the game is delayed at least 10 minutes due to player injury, weather or other cause, the teams should be sent to their sideline. When play is ready to be resumed, the Referee shall notify each coach there will be a three-minute warmup period where his team will go to their end zone to loosen up. If the weather conditions are unusually cold, this process can be applied to delays of less than 10 minutes. The halftime intermission may be shortened by mutual agreement of opposing coaches if a weather delay occurs during the last three minutes of the second period but the halftime intermission cannot be less than 10 minutes.

**37.** When an official sounds an inadvertent whistle, it is important that the crew ensure play is stopped and all players are observed. If you sound or hear an inadvertent whistle and you see players continuing to



play, loudly sound your whistle as needed until they stop. Continue to observe the players after the whistle until they separate and are returning to their huddle or sideline before dealing with the inadvertent whistle. If it is a running play, the covering official needs to drop a bean bag to mark forward progress when the inadvertent whistle occurs.

**38.** Generally you should not throw a presnap flag for fouls when another official is closer unless the act is blatant or a clear safety issue, and the covering official does not throw a flag. As an example, if you were on the LOS, you would not throw a flag if the far end flinched. But if he takes several steps downfield before the snap and no one else throws a flag, you should throw yours.

**39.** During the 3 minute warmup period after halftime, officials should not be in their pre-kick positions so that the teams do not come out early. Wing officials should stay near their team on the sideline so that they can bring them out at the conclusion of the 3 minute warmup period.

**40.** The referee will always be on the passing arm side of the quarterback on scrimmage plays and shall be on the kicking leg side of the punter on punt plays. The umpire will be opposite the referee in the offensive backfield.

### General Reminders

- Preventive officiating is the key to being a great dead ball official (hustle, presence, voice, whistle).
- Your primary responsibility is player safety. Personal fouls cause injuries and provoke other problems. All personal (player safety) fouls must be enforced (zero tolerance).
- Do not tolerate taunting, baiting and unsportsmanlike acts. Unsportsmanlike acts lead to more problems during the game (zero tolerance).
- Set standards early and be consistent. Active prevention starts with the first play of the game.
- Maintain your poise at all times, even when those around you are losing their composure. Be firm, but fair. Warn, but do not threaten.
- Continue to officiate after you have thrown your flag.
- Keep your eyes on the players. Do not look down at your progress spot (feet). Keep your head up. Continue to observe action around the ball carrier.
- Work as a unit. Dead ball officiating is a team effort. Box-in players. Do not let players get behind you (accordion effect). Communicate and cooperate with each other.
- Clean up the out of bounds. Get there quickly (usually straight down the sideline and then out of bounds.) If you are covering a dead-ball spot, drop your bean bag at the spot and move into the bench area or stay at the spot, look out of bounds and follow the action. Avoid being obstructed by folks in the team bench area. Bring opponents out of the team area, visually and/or physically.
- Play wide, pinch in as necessary, but do not lose your field of vision. Hustle, but do not hurry. Make your presence known when needed. Follow your keys (do not ball hawk) and see the big picture (soft eyes.) Officiate on-ball and off-ball fringe areas (hot spots) and behind the play as dictated by your keys and how the play develops.
- Take pride in being a great Dead Ball Official.
- Be in the right position. Follow the manual, but be prepared to adapt for weather conditions, game dynamics, etc.
- An official moving hesitantly toward a spot is a sign that they are unsure of the call and need or are looking for help. The angle is sometimes more important than your closeness to the play. At times, it is better to move laterally instead of toward the play.
- If you are in the right position and

hustle, coaches will be less inclined to challenge your judgment.

- Throw as few flags as possible to maintain game control. Officials are not ranked or rated on the number of fouls they call.

- A good official will always acknowledge complaints and concerns from players or coaches. Be a good listener. Talking too much can get you into trouble. Silence cannot be misquoted.

- Do not get into arguments. Maintain your own poise. Radiate confidence. Do not add fuel to the fire.

- If you think you were wrong or mistaken or may have made a bad call, do not go into the tank. Put that call behind you and get ready to make the next call.

- All officials should check down and distance on every play. Do not miss a down. If the number of the down is in doubt, call an official's timeout, consult and get it right.

- When an official sounds an inadvertent whistle, it is important the crew ensure play is stopped and all players are observed. If you sound or hear an inadvertent whistle and you see players continuing to play, loudly sound your whistle as needed until they stop. Continue to observe the players after the whistle until they separate and are returning to their huddle or sideline before dealing with the inadvertent whistle. If it is a running play, the covering official needs to drop a bean bag to mark forward progress when the inadvertent whistle occurs.

- Generally you should not throw a pre-snap flag for fouls when another official is closer unless the act is blatant or a clear safety issue, and the covering official does not throw a flag. As an example, if you were on the line of scrimmage, you would not throw a flag if the far end flinched. But if he takes several steps downfield before the snap and no one else throws a flag, you should throw yours.

- During the 3-minute warmup period after halftime, officials should not be in

their pre-kick positions so the teams do not come out early. Wing officials should stay near their team on the sideline so they can bring them out at the conclusion of the 3-minute warmup period.

### Five Last Minute Thoughts

- You don't have to call everything you see but you must see everything you call.
- Never stand still during an entire down. People will think you are lazy.
- It is more important to get it right than to look good.
- Do not dilly-dally. If you are going to get it wrong, it is better to get it wrong quickly than it is to get it wrong slowly.
- False pride has no place in officiating.

# FROM WHISTLE TO SNAP

Between the time the previous play ends and the next one begins, there are important tasks for the officiating crew to complete. This section details those mechanics and activities.

## The Accordion Mechanic

One of the basic dead ball mechanics is the accordion mechanic used at the end of most plays. Simply put, the accordion is the motion all officials other than the Umpire do towards the dead ball spot at the end of the play. This convergence of officials helps improve dead ball officiating and reminds the players that we are there. For the wing officials, it helps sell the forward progress spot and moves them away from coaches who might be reacting to the play or call.

**WHO**—all officials except the Umpire

**WHAT**—the movement we do from when one play ends until the next play begins

**WHEN**—starts when a play ends

**WHERE**—it all revolves around the spot where the play ends

**WHY**—this puts us in a good position to supervise players, mark forward progress, and do all of our dead ball duties.

**HOW**—this starts with the movement all officials do when the play ends, continues through the ball being spotted, and finishes when we have done our duties prior to the ball being marked ready for play.

Following the end of the running or pass completion play, we all do our accordion mechanic. This involves

moving in towards the spot where the play ends.

**Referee**—In the normal accordion mechanic, the Referee moves toward the end of the play, normally coming in about five to seven yards.

**Umpire**—The Umpire's duties on this are very different. The Umpire goes and gets the ball and proceeds to spot the ball at the appropriate location. A reminder — the Umpire is expected to go out into the side zones to get the ball.

**Linesman & Line Judge**— The wings come down the sideline to the forward progress yard line and square up their turn and come in to at least the top of the numbers. On most plays the wing official should not go past players from opposing teams. He needs to be in a position to dead ball officiate their activities. Also, you almost never go past the ball. In addition, the Line Judge needs to be aware of the down and distance and the possibility of a first down. The Line Judge will communicate the down to the Referee.

**Back Judge**—The Back Judge also comes toward the ball about 10 to 12 yards and supervises players. On a long pass or run, the Back Judge may have the forward progress spot and he can spot the ball (the Umpire does not have to re-spot it).

On long pass plays wing officials may need to use cross-field mechanics to accurately spot the ball especially when the receiver is coming back towards you; look across the field to the opposite official for a crossfield spot. Conversely, be prepared to give a crossfield spot by coming out to the numbers on your side.

### Returning to Pre-Snap Position

Officials who have executed the accordion mechanic after a play will be in a good position to dead ball officiate the action and players in their vicinity. When all of the players in an official's area have separated and are returning to their respective huddle or sideline and the umpire has the ball, the official should begin to back out and return to their pre-snap position unless they are holding the dead ball spot for the Umpire. The return to pre-snap position should be done without taking attention from the players in the center of the field. The official holding the dead ball spot should continue to hold the spot and not begin the return to pre-snap position until the Umpire has either spotted the ball or has released the official holding the spot. The release can be done verbally or by a signal that has been agreed upon during the pregame meeting. It is not necessary for all officials to return to their pre-snap positions simultaneously.

A word of caution when returning: Be aware of players coming onto the field from your sideline. They are frequently still listening to their coaches and can easily collide with an official who is backing away from the center of the field.

Referee will verify that team A has the appropriate number of players and is not violating the substitution rules and uses appropriate signals to communicate to the Umpire to confirm that they each have the same number of players. The Referee may signal the Umpire that he may leave the ball to assume his position prior to the ready for play signal. When the team breaks the huddle, the Referee will identify eligible receivers in the backfield,

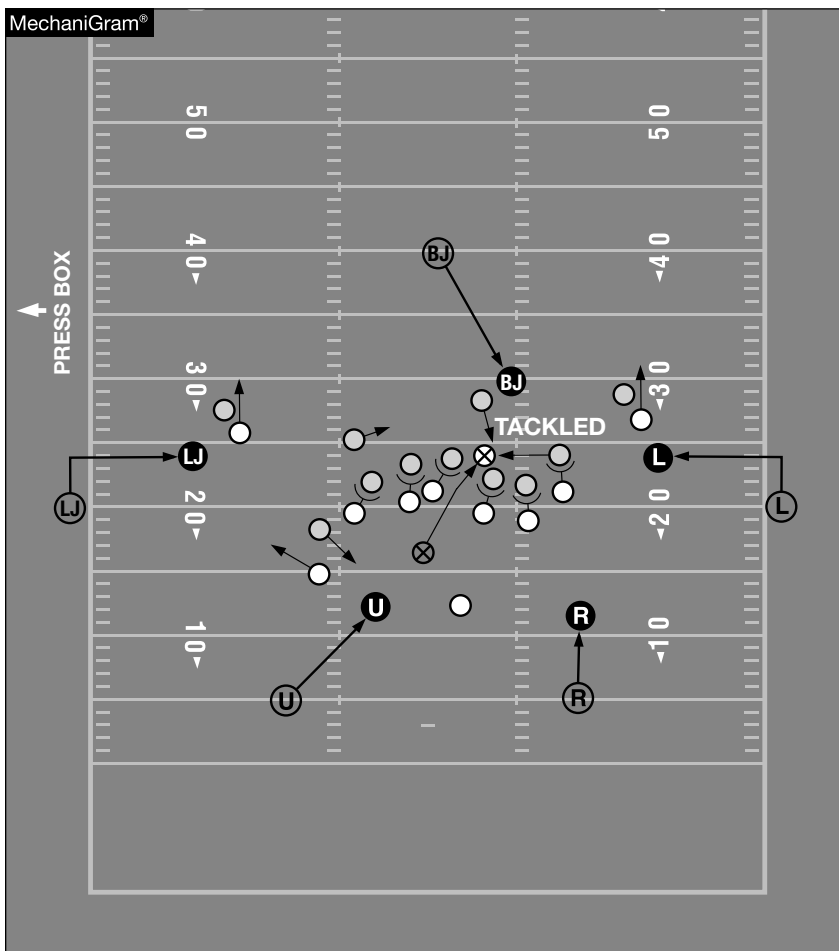
watch for illegal shifts, watch for false starts, and other pre-snap violations by the offense. The Referee will not chop the play in until all officials are in their appropriate position and the box has the correct down on it.

Umpire will leave the ball when the Referee signals him off or the ready for play signal is given. The Umpire's first job is to verify that team A has 11 players and to communicate that to the Referee using appropriate signals. The Umpire then must verify that on non-scrimmage kick downs that team A has five players numbered between 50-79 on the offensive line. The Umpire will listen to make sure the defenders are not interfering with the snap count

**Wing officials**—Once the ball is spotted they will be watching for substitutions and make sure they are legal. The Line Judge needs to count the defense and verify with the Back Judge that they have 11 players. Once the wing official is on their sideline they need to make sure that the sideline is clear just prior to the ball being snapped. They need to verify that the down box has the appropriate down on it. They will make sure that the offensive formation is legal and indicate to the widest receiver on their side whether he is on or off the line and give the appropriate signal and/or acknowledgement to the opposite wing.

When the widest receiver lines up off the line of scrimmage, we signal with our arm extended to show this. If the receiver then moves up onto the line of scrimmage the correct signal is to bring the arm to your chest.

## ACCORDION MECHANICS END OF THE RUN/ PASS IN MIDDLE OF FIELD

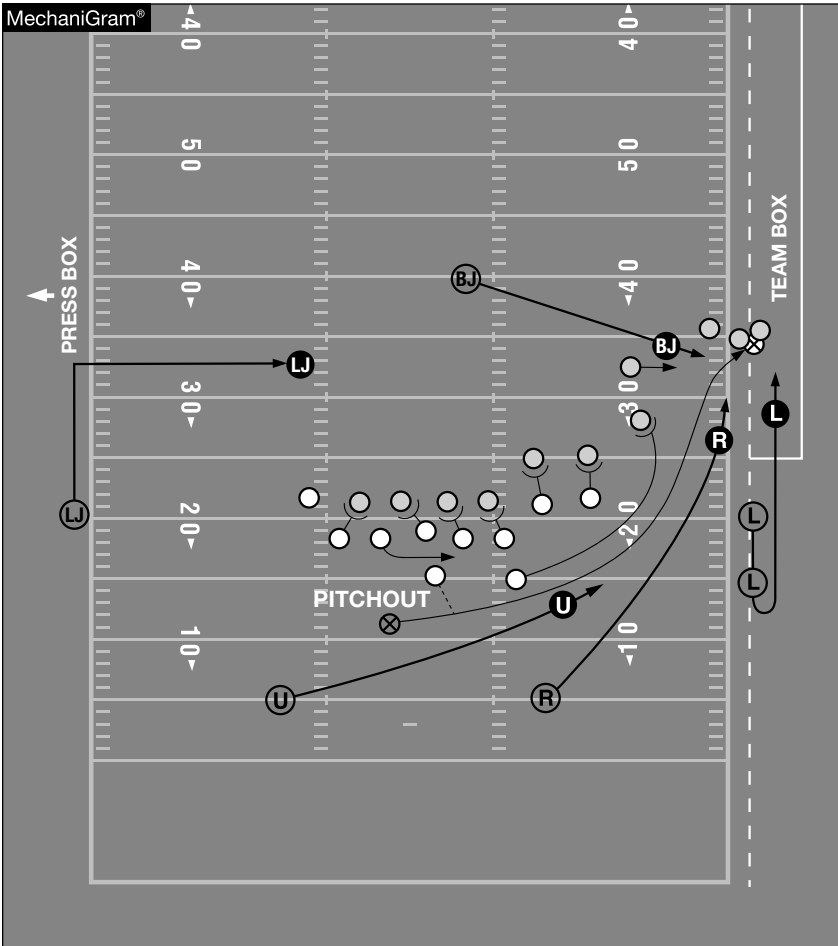


Back Judge will count the defense and communicate his count to the Line Judge and possibly the Linesman. He should then read the strength of formation and position himself accordingly.

In all but one case, wing officials would stop the accordion movement before they pass players of either team. Normally we want to be in the best position to dead ball officiate. The one exception is when the dead ball spot

is very close to a first down or the goal line. For plays close to the line to gain, if you are the nearest wing official with the spot, you should come all the way into the dead ball spot. You would then take the ball and spot it where you saw the play end (no one should ever toss the ball to an official for the spot). When a wing official has to accordion in past players, the Back Judge and/or Referee should slide over towards this side and cover any players behind him.

## ACCORDION MECHANICS RUN/ PASS THAT ENDS OUT OF BOUNDS



On short plays that result in a runner nearing or crossing the goal line, both wings should accordion in quickly (“crash in”) towards the spot where the ball crossed the goal line or where it ended short of the line. The covering wing official can check with the Umpire if there is question on whether the ball crossed the goal line or not and either signal touchdown or point down at the spot to sell the call that the runner is short.

### When we don't do the Accordion (for every rule there's an exception)

If you are a wing official and the ball is on your sideline, you don't accordion in at all — you have a spot to hold. In this situation, the other wing should come in further to be closer to the action, possibly as far as his hash mark. If the ball ends in your side zone, you don't go past it.

If we have an incomplete pass, no accordion mechanic is needed—the covering official signals incomplete

pass no more than twice and the rest of the crew gives the stop clock signal. They do not move in unless they feel they must such as to deal with player supervision.

On long plays, only the wing officials would be using the accordion.

When a penalty flag is thrown; you may have to cover another official's dead ball spot, cover the flag, or report the foul to the Referee. In those cases, you would deviate from the accordion mechanic to take care of the more important responsibility.

If there is a safety issue where you need to move to separate players, that automatically takes precedence over the accordion mechanics.

### **Other Dead Ball Mechanics**

There are other mechanics that can come into play during the dead ball period.

**Interceptions:** Wing officials would accordion in as normal. If the interception is in your primary coverage area, and the runner is downed, stop the clock and signal the new direction of play, otherwise treat it as a running play.

**Punts and free kicks:** We accordion in as usual when the punt ends. On a kick off, if the Umpire has the forward progress spot, he will hold that spot until the Line Judge comes in behind him and takes over the forward progress spot—then he moves in to spot the ball.

### **Goal Line and Short Yardage Plays:**

In preparation, the wing officials need to know precisely where the line to gain is so they are prepared to rule on the forward progress of the ball. On these plays, the wing officials accordion in quickly down the line of scrimmage to get a good spot and to keep the players apart.

**PAT kicks:** Once the ball is kicked, wings should crash in down the line of scrimmage and Referee should move in towards the center of the action. Passions are high right after a score and tempers may be short, so be in position to preventive officiate.

**Field goals:** Same as for PAT kicks, except only move in once the ball is clearly across the goal line. Remember, if it does not cross the goal line, it is a live ball and you need to officiate it as a scrimmage kick.

**Normal downs:** The Line Judge is responsible for communicating the next down to the Referee as soon as the play ends. The Referee echoes this signal and the Linesman then instructs the box holder to change the down. The others on the crew echo the down signal.

**Stopping the clock:** Any official can stop the clock by giving the stop clock signal no more than twice unless the clock fails to stop. The remainder of the crew should echo this signal. If the clock does not stop, this may need to be repeated.

**Spotting the ball:** On long plays where the wings are not yet downfield and the Back Judge has the spot on the field and has the ball, he can spot it and just let the Umpire know it is spotted (this only happens if the ball is between the hash marks). There is no requirement for the Umpire to re-spot the ball.

Likewise, in situations where the Umpire goes downfield to get the ball from a crew member, the Referee can come to the spot and take the relay from Umpire and spot the ball.

When spotting the ball off of a wing official, the Umpire should square to and face the wing from whom he is marking the spot.

When a free kick results in a touchback, Referee should blow the whistle loudly and move to a position to get players attention while giving the touchback signal.

**Ready for Play:** When required, the RFP signal should not be given until all crew members but the Umpire are in their pre-snap positions. When it is not required, the Umpire should verify the wings and Referee are in or near their pre-snap positions before spotting the ball. After a play ends inbounds that achieves a first down, the Referee should give a wind the clock signal only as soon as the umpire is in position to spot the ball. Do not wait for the chains to be moved. If the box is not yet positioned after the first down, the Head Linesman can use a bean bag to mark the line of scrimmage. After an administrative stoppage, when the RFP signal and whistle are given, the Umpire can leave the ball and move to his pre-snap position. In some game situations (little time left, hurry up offense, etc.), the Referee can “point off” the Umpire so that he can move to his pre-snap position before the RFP.



# USE OF THE BEAN BAG

The bean bag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, which may later be needed as a reference point.

Under no circumstances should the bean bag be used as a substitute for hustle. One common example of lazy officials using the bean bag instead of proper mechanics involves a play in which the runner is downed near or past a sideline.

It is not necessary to drop a bean bag at the spot a player intercepts a pass. Unlike the spot of a fumble, that spot has no bearing on penalty enforcement. The bean bag should be dropped on the correct spot and **not thrown**. If the spot is in a side zone, only the correct yard line is needed because any penalty enforcement would bring the ball back to the nearest hash mark.

## Situations In Which You Would Use The Bean Bag

**1.** Marking the spot where a ball carrier went out of bounds or to mark the out of bounds spot on punts. On free kicks, if the ball is kicked out of bounds untouched, it is a foul and the spot is marked with the flag.

The bean bag is useful when certain players go out of bounds during a play. If a player is pushed or blocked off the field, he may legally return and participate as long as he immediately re-enters; that spot does not need to be marked. However, if a player of team A or team K goes out of bounds before a change of possession, the spot should be marked. It is not a foul unless he returns and the return spot should then be marked with a flag. The bean bag will demonstrate the covering official was on top of the play.

**2.** Marking the spot the ball carrier lost possession of the ball on a fumble. The spot of the fumble must be

marked in the event a penalty occurs and that spot is needed to determine where the run ended. Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the neutral zone.

**3.** Marking the spot where a kick returner or defensive back gained control of the ball and his momentum carries him into his own end zone. The momentum exception allows a defender or kick receiver to make a play without fear of giving up a safety.

When a defensive player intercepts an opponent's forward pass; intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass; or a team R player catches or recovers a scrimmage kick or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line, and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball is 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 the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered or the kick was caught or recovered.

**4.** Marking the spot where possession of a scrimmage kick is gained by the receiving team on a kick that has crossed the expanded neutral zone. If a scrimmage kick ends between the goal lines, the covering official must mark the spot with a bean bag. That is in case post-scrimmage kick enforcement (PSK) is needed on a foul.

**5.** Marking the forward progress of a ball carrier when he has been pushed back **and there is continuing action on him**. Wing officials should use crossfield mechanics in this situation.

**6.** Marking the point of first touching of a free kick by K in the neutral zone, and first touching of a scrimmage kick.

**7.** Inadvertent whistles. When an official inadvertently blows his whistle, causing the ball to become dead, the covering official must drop his bean bag at the spot of the ball when the whistle was blown. The down may be replayed or the team in possession at the time the whistle was blown may choose to accept the result of the play.

**8.** After a long play resulting in a first down, if the chain crew is unable to be in position before the ball is spotted, the Head Linesman should use his second beanbag to mark the spot of the first down. Once the chain crew is in position, one of them can hand it back to him.

### **How To Use The Bean Bag**

**1.** Since the bean bag is always used to mark a precise spot, it should be carried to that spot and dropped, or at least dropped on that yard line extended if you are not near the exact spot.

**2.** Keep the bean bag on your belt, typically on the opposite side of your flag.

**3.** There is no need to mark the spot of a change of possession. On a scrimmage kick, drop a bean bag to mark the yard line of the end of the kick for PSK enforcements.

**4.** The forward progress spot of a passer who is being sacked is where the defensive player first contacts the passer. Wing officials are generally downfield and cannot help with forward progress behind the line of scrimmage. The Referee must keep his attention on action on the passer. Dropping the bean bag and then moving to cover that action is an easy process.

**5.** It is not a good idea to drop the bean bag on the out-of-bounds spot and

then leave to retrieve the ball. Hold the spot, drop the bean bag and continue to officiate any dead ball action, going out of bounds if necessary. If you have to retrieve the ball, make sure all action has ceased.

# FLAGS AND PENALTIES

## Use of the Flag

Correct penalty enforcement can be facilitated if the flag is thrown properly. There are two ways to throw the flag: into the air or carefully to a spot. The latter is used when a spot foul occurs (PlayPic A). If it is possible the spot of the foul will be the enforcement spot, get your flag as close to that spot as possible, especially the yard line. If off target, relocate the flag as soon as possible after the play by picking it up and placing it at the correct spot. The longer the delay in making this correction, the more it will appear to be a manipulation. Do not kick the flag to the correct spot.

For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the flag should be tossed into the air in front of the official on the side of the offending team (PlayPic B, next page).

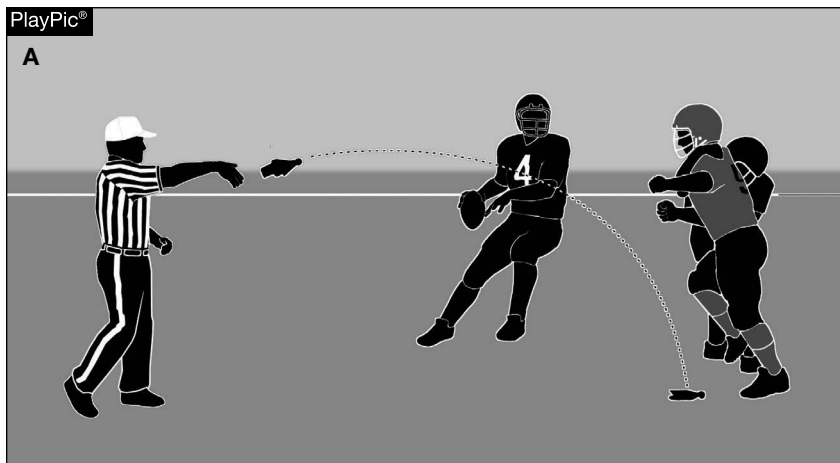
A few techniques to avoid: slam-dunking the flag to the ground; looking angry when tossing it; holding the flag and waving it, instead of throwing it; or throwing it at the fouling player. On late hits, the latter looks confrontational, and worse yet, might hit the player.

## Notification

All fouls must be reported to the pressbox and both coaches. In addition, all fouls must be communicated to all members of the officiating crew as each official has a role in penalty enforcement. Signals and sequence speak a language to officials, players, coaches, clock and scoreboard operators and spectators.

Once the flag is thrown, the calling official should give the stop clock signal at the end of the play. The official who threw the flag must ensure both the Referee and Linesman are aware of the foul as soon as possible. The Linesman will ensure the chains and box are not moved, and the Referee will prepare for the enforcement steps that follow. To get the Referee's attention, use several short blasts on the whistle after the ball is dead, repeat if needed to get attention.

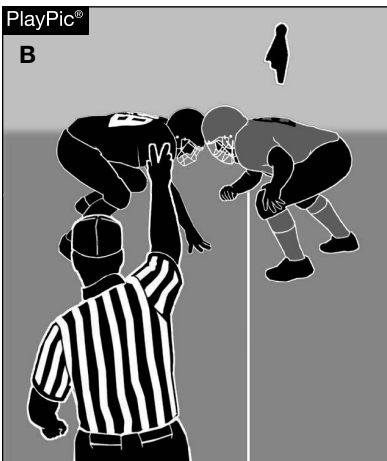
When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they should jog slowly toward the middle of the field along the LOS to report the foul to the Referee. If both wing officials (or others) have called a dead-ball foul, all the officials should report. No official should assume that another official has called the



same foul. Remember to practice good dead-ball officiating during the jog.

Avoid signaling the foul rather than reporting the foul to the Referee because another official may have a different foul.

When a penalty occurs during a live-ball play, the most critical spot is the dead ball spot. Other important spots include the spot of first touching and the spot of the end of a scrimmage kick. Some of these spots may be marked with a bean bag. The covering official should hold the most important spot until relieved or signaled by the Referee that the spot is no longer needed. If available, another official should cover the flag. Whenever possible the Referee should jog to the official who threw the flag to get the penalty information. When there are multiple flags in the vicinity of each other, the calling officials should get together to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the Referee. If there are multiple flags apart from each other, the Referee should move to a spot along the LOS and the calling officials should jog to the Referee after insuring that the important spots are covered.



The most important spot is the dead ball spot. That spot should be covered first by an official and then the spot of the flag. Flags for spot fouls should be left on the ground until the penalty is completely enforced. It is OK for the official to swap another official's flag on the ground with his while holding that spot. After swapping the flag, hand it to the official, do not throw it.

### Getting the Explanation

The Referee's first step in quality communication is to get an accurate report from the official(s) who threw the flag(s). The Referee must make sure to have all the necessary information, asking questions if necessary. Some Referees simply want to hear the foul and offender, such as, "No. 49 offense, illegal motion." Others prefer to be told what the reporting official saw, "No. 49 cut upfield too soon." It may make sense to use both techniques dependent upon the experience level of the crewmate and what was discussed in the crew pregame conference.

On certain fouls, it is critical that the Referee be told the status of the ball when the foul occurred or whether a player involved was an eligible receiver. Of course, the offending team must also be identified. The trend at many levels is to get away from referring to teams by jersey color. The pregame conference should include a discussion of how to report fouls.

Note: If there is an injured player on the field, do not proceed with the penalty enforcement process until that player is clear of the playing field. The Referee may give the preliminary signal clear of the injured player(s) to inform everyone of the infraction.

### Giving Explanation to Designated Representative for Penalty Decisions

The Umpire should assist the Referee in locating coaches for penalty options and

stand with the Referee as he explains the options. Do not consult with coaches if the choice is obvious or there is a double foul. State the options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously. The Umpire must listen to the Referee's explanation to ensure the options are properly offered. Umpires must have good rules knowledge and may have to assist a less experienced Referee with a complicated enforcement situation.

The side official should assist by making sure the head coach is aware of his options, unless he is covering the end of the run or the spot of a foul.

### **Preliminary Signal and Notification**

The Referee does not give any preliminary signal for pre-snap or line of scrimmage fouls to a team designated representative for penalty decisions will not be consulted or if the choice is obvious.

Once the Referee determines whether the penalty has been accepted or declined, he must inform other members of the crew. If the penalty is accepted, the Umpire must understand where to walk from (the enforcement spot), the yardage to walk, and which direction to walk. The Umpire must not leave the Referee until he is certain of the enforcement spot and yardage

### **Enforcing the Penalty**

The Enforcement Sequence for fouls is as follows.

1. After the Referee and Umpire determine the penalty yardage and enforcement spot;
  - a. The Umpire secures the ball and moves to the enforcement spot.
  - b. Officials that may be holding a spot or covering a flag are released to other duties.
2. At the enforcement spot, the Umpire:
  - a. Confirms that the Linesman is leaving from the same spot.
  - b. Verifies that the Line Judge is holding the enforcement yard line.
3. Once the Line Judge is at the enforcement spot, the Umpire walks off the five yard penalties while counting out the distance or jogs the 10 and 15 yard

penalties and does the math to figure out the succeeding spot. If in the side zone, the Umpire squares to the hash and comes to the hash after completing the walk-off of the distance for the penalty.

4. The Linesman walks off the penalty independently of the Umpire along or near the sidelines using the same procedures as the Umpire. The chains do not move until the succeeding spot has been determined at the end of penalty enforcement and the Linesman instructs them to move.

5. Once in position at the hash, or between the hashes, the Umpire faces the Linesman, and confirms that they are at the same spot. If they are not at the same spot, then they confer and establish the correct spot. Once they agree, the Umpire places the ball down while facing the Linesman.

6. Once the ball is down at the succeeding spot, the Line Judge is released to move to his pre-snap position.

7. While the Umpire walks off the penalty yardage the Referee gives the final signal after moving clear of players while standing still on the pressbox side of the players and facing the pressbox; do not rush the signals. The Referee follows the penalty with a first down signal when the result of the play and the penalty enforcement leaves the ball beyond the line to gain or the penalty enforcement includes an automatic first down.

8. Because the Referee will be looking in the Line Judge's direction while signaling the penalty, the Line Judge should give the Referee a signal regarding clock status.

9. Once the succeeding spot and down are determined, the Linesman instructs the down box and/or chain crew to their proper positions and verifies that the down box is correct.

10. The Referee should not signal the ready to play until all officials have recovered their flags and are in their proper positions and the chains are in position.

11. The wing official on the sideline of the penalized team should tell the coach the number of the offending player and

explain the foul in non-technical terms, e.g., “Your man in motion cut downfield too soon,” instead of, “There was illegal motion.” The other wing official need only tell the coach the nature of the foul. If the covering official didn’t get the number, don’t guess or make one up. Don’t give up other officiating duties to report numbers to the coaches. If a non-existent number is reported, crew credibility is immediately destroyed.

12. Before the ball becomes live if any crew member has questions about the enforcement, the official should stop the clock and confer with the Referee.

The enforcement sequence for dead ball fouls following a play is much the same as for live ball fouls except that they will be enforced from the succeeding spot which may have been determined by the result of the play which may or may/not have included enforcement of live ball penalties.

If there is an official’s time out for an injury and there was a foul on the previous play, do not begin the enforcement tasks until the injury situation is resolved and the coaches can give you their full attention.

### **Enforcement of Penalties on a Free Kick**

When there is a penalty on a scoring play and the designated representative elects to enforce it on the succeeding free kick or there is a dead ball foul on the free kick, the Referee will give the preliminary signal and then point to the free kick line. The enforcing official will go to the free kick line with the ball, put the ball down, give the appropriate signals, and then march off the penalty.

### **Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls and Ejections**

All officials should note the time and the player number of all unsportsmanlike fouls as two such fouls result in ejection of the player. Other flagrant single fouls can result in ejections.

Ejections must be handled in a calm and professional manner. After making the call, and prior to ejecting the player, non-player or coach, the entire crew shall

come together and quickly discuss the foul to help determine if the offense is worthy of an ejection.

Report to the head coach exactly what the offense was that caused the player to be ejected without emphasis or embellishment. Keep in mind that this report may be met with resistance. You are not there to debate the rules or the ejection, but rather to report the ineligibility of the player, non-player or coach. Keep it accurate, simple and short.

All officials should note the player number, foul and time that the foul occurred.

Do not point out the player or escort the player off the field. Allow the coaching staff to remove him from the field of play.

The official who calls the disqualifying foul should report the action that caused the penalty to the head coach. The Referee should escort that official to the conference with the coach. If the Referee is the covering official, the appropriate side official should be present at the conference. Do not assume a confrontational stance, but rather stay completely professional and detached in your report. This will serve to keep the emotions lower while delivering the information to the coach.

Once the information is given and the player removed, resume play as quickly as possible to refocus on the game and not the ejection event. It is the Referee’s responsibility to ensure that the ejection report has been submitted per WOA policies and procedures.

### **Final Thoughts**

If we have multiple flags on the ground for the same penalty, officials could meet and confirm it is for the same penalty and then move the flags together. If you throw a flag during a live ball, you must continue officiating rather than stopping while the play goes on.

# PENALTY SIGNALING SEQUENCES

The order of the penalty signals used by the Referee is just as important as the clarity of the signals. Using the language parallel, think of signal sequence as words in a sentence.

The key to quality signaling is remembering that it is a series of movements. Take your time; signals executed with separate and distinct motions ensure clarity; signals jumbled quickly together result in confusion and poor communication. Remember that the ready-for-play signal is never part of the penalty signaling sequence. It should be separate and only given when the entire crew has completed the penalty assessment process and all are back in their pre-snap positions.

Other notes regarding signals:

- It is also important to face the proper direction when giving the signals. All signals are given while facing the pressbox.

- The false start and encroachment signals are always preceded by the signal for a dead-ball foul.

- Verbalizing signals as you would when using a stadium microphone will aid in correct signaling as well as help to slow down the signal sequence.

- It is acceptable to verbalize the offending player's number when utilizing stadium microphones.

By following these principles and using the correct, accepted signals you will effectively communicate your decisions to all involved.

## Live-ball Fouls

Signaling the penalty for a live-ball foul is a three-step process: foul signal, a point toward the team that fouled and indication of the next down.

In PlayPic A (next page), team B has been called for pass interference. The Referee signals the foul (1), indicates

which team has fouled (2) and signals that team A has been awarded a new series (3).

In PlayPic B (next page), team B has been called for pass interference, but team A scored a touchdown on the play. The scoring team may choose to have the penalty enforced on the try. If so, the sequence in PlayPic A is used. If the scoring team chooses to have the penalty enforced on the next kickoff, the Referee signals the foul (1) and indicates which team has fouled (2). The Referee signals the touchdown (3), then points to the spot of the next kickoff to indicate the enforcement (4).

In PlayPic C (next page), the defense has been called for roughing the passer. The Referee first indicates the foul (1), followed by the fouling team (2). Because the penalty includes a first down, the Referee signals that team A has been awarded a new series (3).

Cases that involve an ejection add a step to the process. The Referee must indicate the decision to the pressbox. PlayPic D (next page) illustrates the sequence for a live-ball foul for illegal helmet contact that results in an ejection. The Referee first indicates the nature of the foul (1) and the fouling team (2). The ejection is then indicated (3). If the penalty results in a first down, the Referee signals that team A has been awarded a new series (4); if not, the Referee signals the next down. In this example, the penalty has given team A sufficient yardage for a first down.

## Dead-ball Fouls

When a dead-ball foul has been called, the dead-ball signal must precede the signal for the nature of the foul. That means signaling the penalty is a four- or five-step process: the dead-ball signal,

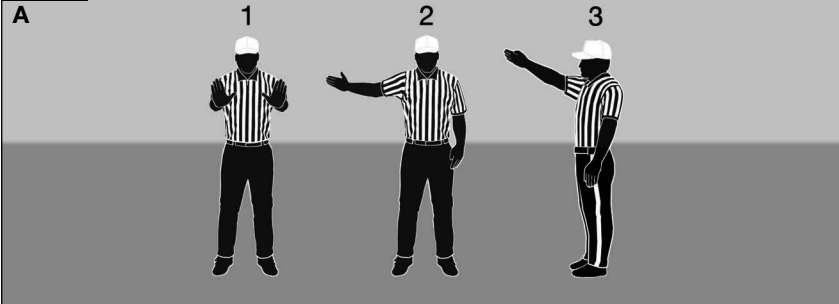
followed by the foul signal, followed by a point toward the team that fouled, followed by an indication of the next down.

In PlayPic E, team B has been flagged for a personal foul that occurred during a dead-ball period. The Referee begins with the dead-ball signal (1) followed by the signal for personal foul (2). He then indicates the team that

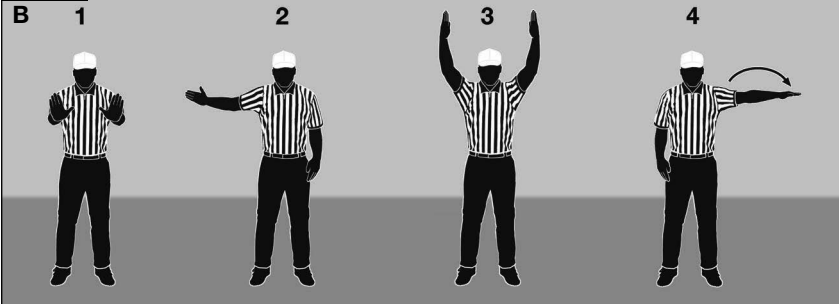
fouled (3) and signals the next down. If the penalty results in a first down, the Referee signals that team A has been awarded a new series (4); if not, the Referee signals the next down. In the example, the penalty has given team A sufficient yardage for a first down.

Penalties for dead-ball fouls are rarely declined because the yardage is “free.” However, on those rare occasions

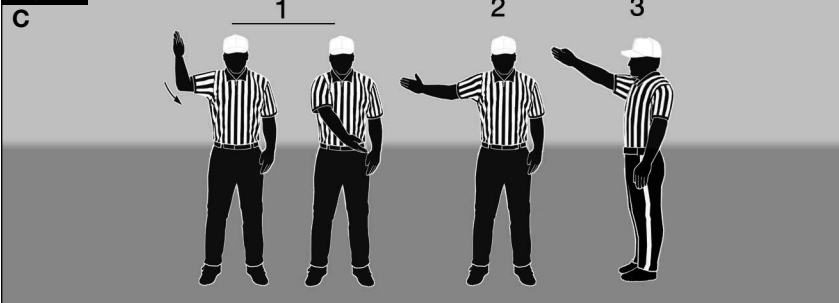
PlayPic®



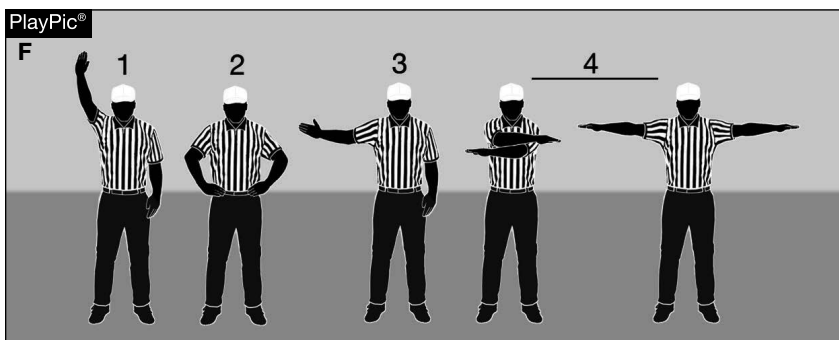
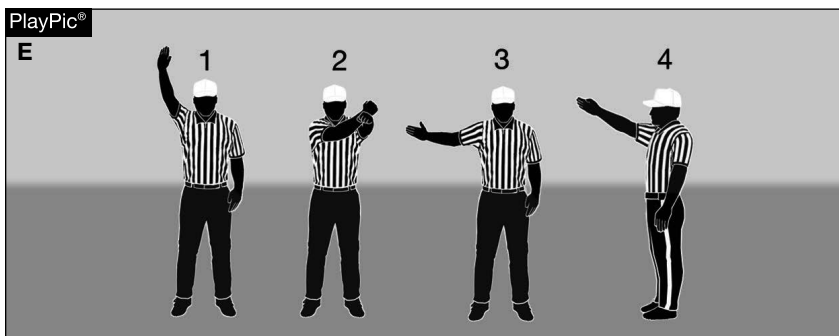
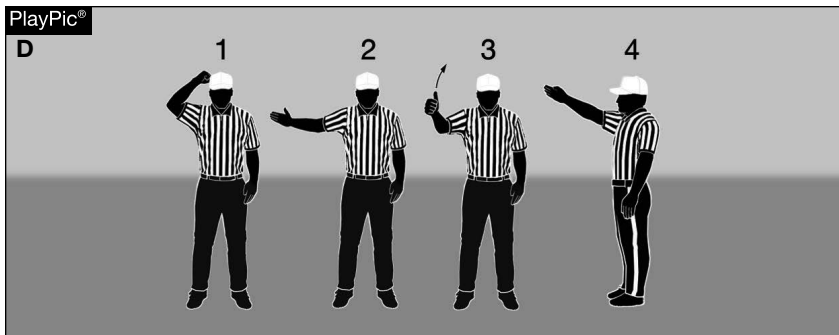
PlayPic®



PlayPic®





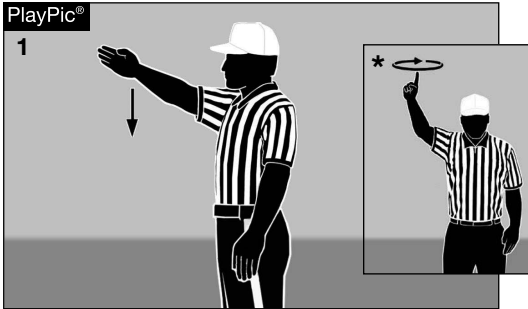


when a dead-ball foul is declined, the Referee must indicate the declination after indicating which team fouled.

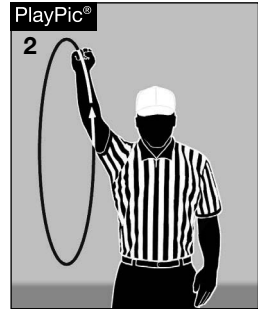
In PlayPic F, team K is ready to attempt a try but team R has been called for encroachment. Team K declines the penalty because its kicker is more comfortable kicking from the present distance. The Referee gives the signals for dead-ball foul (1) and

encroachment (2). He indicates which team has fouled (3), followed by the declination (4).

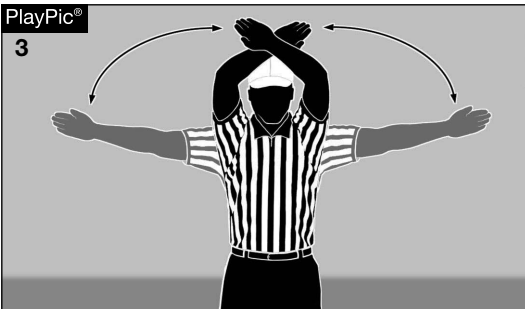
# SIGNAL CHART



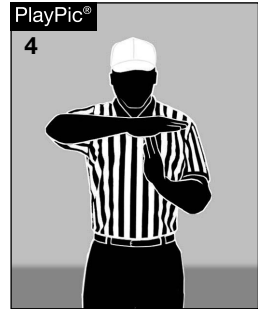
Ready for play/  
\* Untimed down



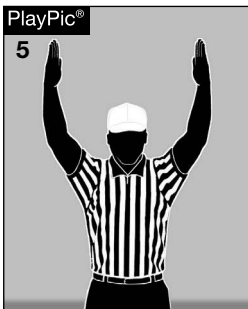
Start the clock



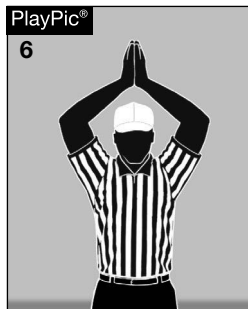
Stop the clock



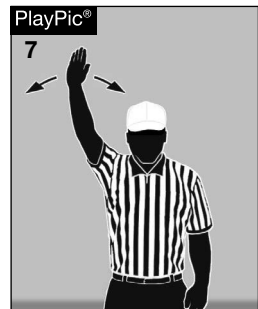
TV/radio timeout



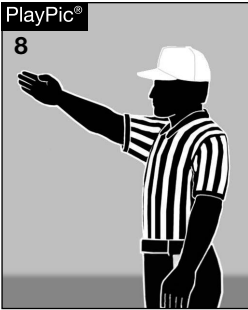
Touchdown/field goal/  
point(s) after touchdown



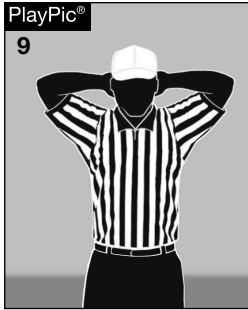
Safety



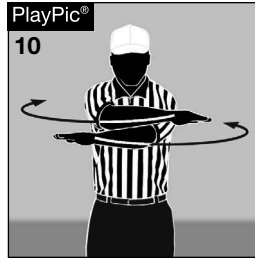
Dead-ball foul/  
touchback (arm waved  
side to side)/Start  
40-second play clock



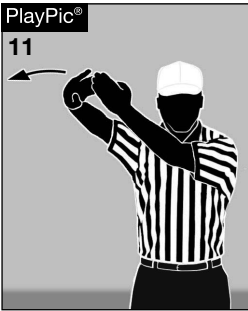
First down



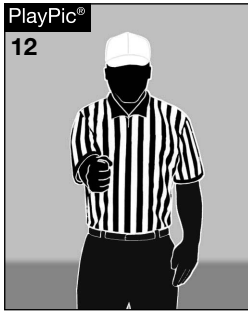
Loss of down



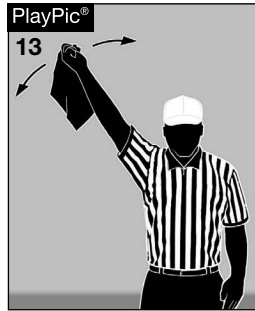
Incomplete pass/  
unsuccesful try or  
field goal/penalty  
declination/coin toss  
option deferred



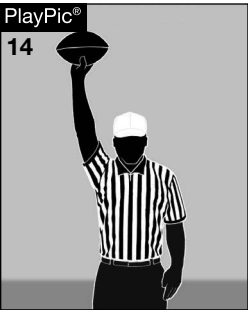
Legal touching



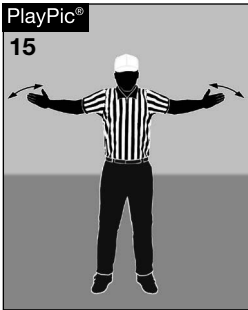
Inadvertent whistle



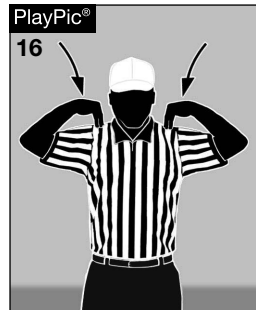
Disregard flag



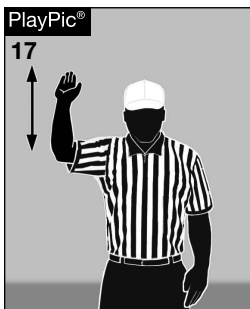
End of period



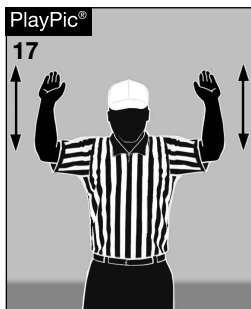
Sideline warning



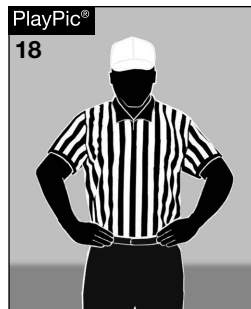
First touching  
Illegal touching



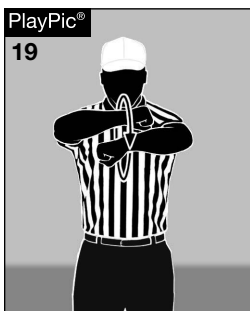
**Reset play clock to 25 seconds  
(Push palm toward the sky twice)**



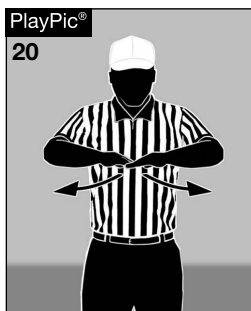
**Reset play clock to 40 seconds  
(Push both palms toward the sky twice)**



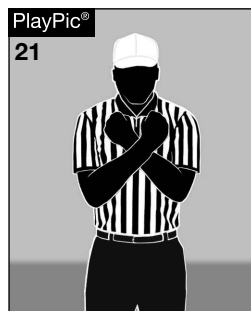
**Encroachment**



**False start  
Illegal formation**



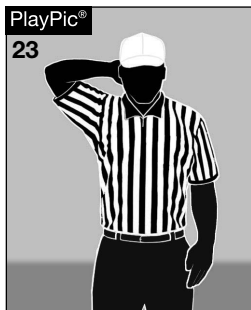
**Illegal motion (1 hand)/  
Illegal shift (2 hands)**



**Delay of game**



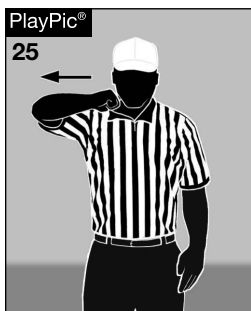
**Substitution infraction**



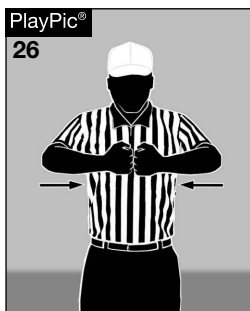
**Equipment violation**



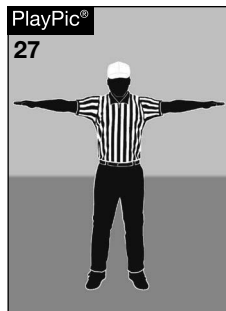
**Illegal helmet contact/  
Targeting**



**Illegal horse-collar**



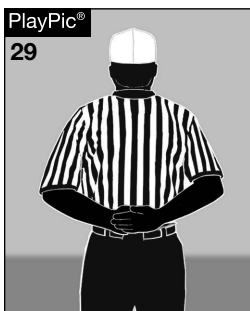
**Blindside block**



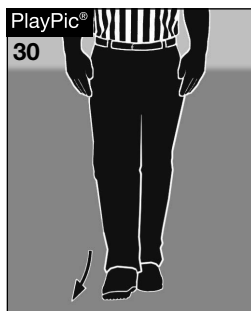
**Unsportsmanlike conduct/  
Noncontact foul**



**Illegal participation**



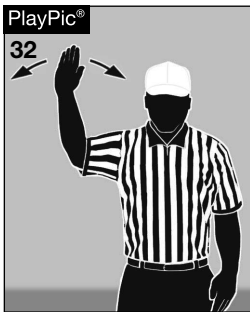
**Sideline interference**  
Note: face pressbox



**Running into or  
roughing the kicker or  
holder**



**Illegal batting/kicking**  
(for illegal kicking, follow with  
point toward foot)



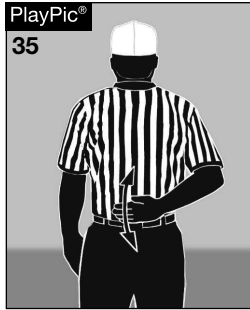
**Illegal/invalid fair catch**



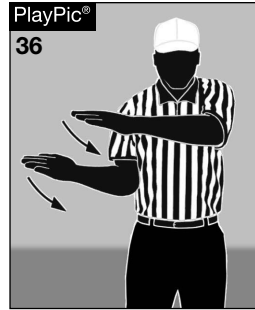
**Pass interference/  
Kick-catching  
interference**



**Roughing the passer**



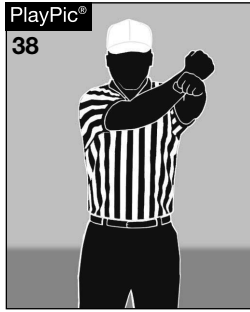
**Illegal pass /  
Illegal forward handing**  
Note: face pressbox



**Intentional grounding**



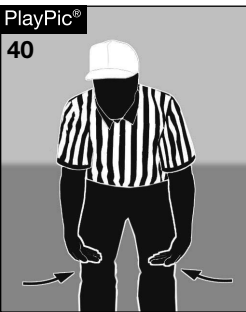
**Ineligible downfield  
on pass**



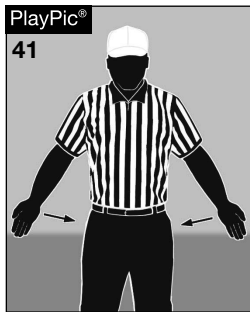
**Personal foul**



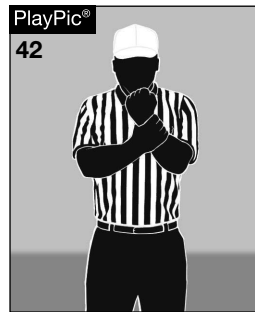
**Clipping**



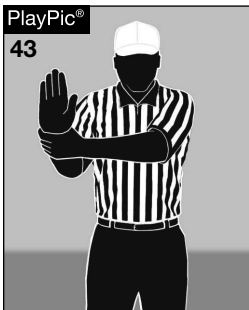
**Block below the waist  
Illegal block**



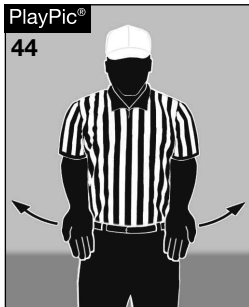
**Chop block**



**Holding/Obstruction/  
Illegal use of the hands  
or arms**



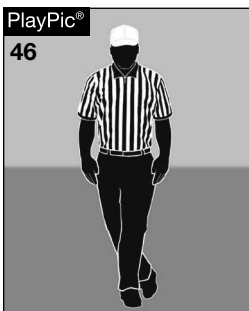
Illegal block in the back



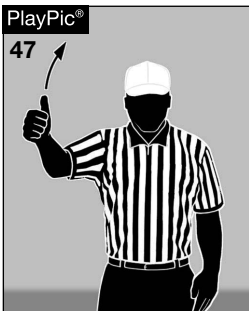
Helping the runner/  
Interlocked blocking



Grasping of facemask,  
helmet opening or  
chin strap

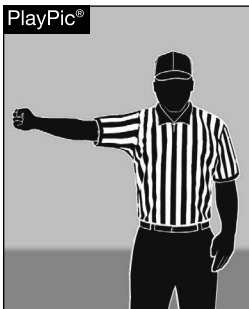


Tripping



Disqualification

## CREW AND SUPPLEMENTARY SIGNAL CHART



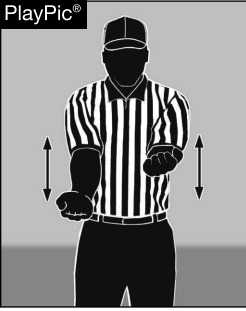
11 players on field/  
Backward pass



Less than 11 players  
on field



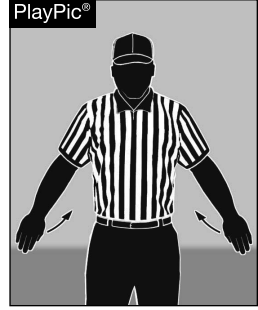
More than 11 players  
on field



**Pass juggled**



**Good catch**



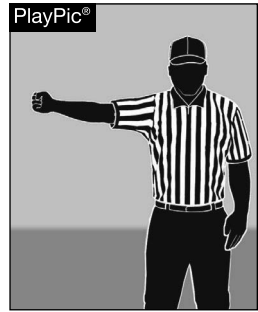
**Play ended  
out of bounds/  
Don't start clock**



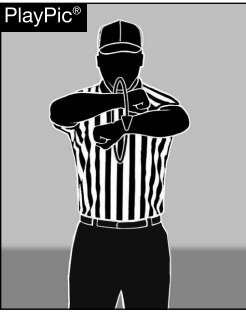
**Scoring kick wide/  
Receiver out of bounds**



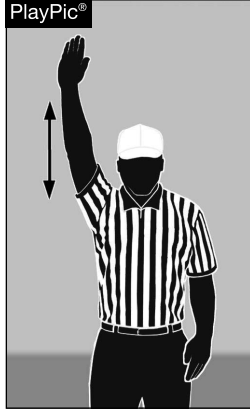
**Two (double) stakes**



**Receiver off the line**



**Snapper protection  
rules apply**



**Down box number  
incorrect**



# WHISTLE MECHANICS

Normally, the ball becomes dead and then the whistle is blown. The whistle is used to stop the ball from becoming live, confirm that something has happened to cause the ball to become dead, or by an official as a signal. The whistle is also used to inform players and officials that the play is over and that all action should stop.

After a play has ended, any official who has thrown a flag during the play should alert the crew by giving three short blasts of the whistle. This will inform the Referee of a penalty and helps ensure the clock is stopped and the box or the chains are not moved until the penalty is addressed. (For further actions needed when a penalty occurs, see the section on “Flags and Penalties.”)

Additional times an official, by position, uses a whistle:

- Referee uses the whistle and the ready for play signal (S1) to indicate the ball is ready for play after an administrative stoppage.
- Umpire whistles to indicate a timeout, dead-ball foul that prevents the snap, and player injury. It is strongly recommended the Umpire should refrain from using the whistle to confirm the ball is dead at the end of the play. The Umpire may however blow his whistle if he sees a receiver trap the ball on an incomplete pass in his coverage area.
- Wing officials use the whistle to indicate timeouts, dead-ball fouls that prevent the snap, injuries, and when the ball becomes dead following plays in their coverage areas (including touchdowns, incomplete passes and when the runner or a live ball goes out of bounds).

Back Judge uses the whistle to indicate timeouts, injuries, the end of a quarter, touchback, the ball is dead in his coverage area, and touchdowns when he is the covering official. The Back Judge is also responsible for blowing the whistle once the ball has crossed the goal line on extra point tries and field goals.

Do not mirror whistles. Only the covering official should blow the whistle. Getting the attention of another official is the only exception. Use your voice, not your whistle, to prevent or break up extracurricular activity.

**Beginning with the snap, it is strongly recommended that no official have a whistle in the mouth until the ball becomes dead.**

If an official blows an inadvertent whistle, do not attempt to conceal it. Someone will have heard it, and you will lose respect and credibility both with the coaches and the other members of the crew if you deny blowing one.

# QUARTER CHANGE MECHANICS

## Crew of Five

**Note: The quarter is not officially ended until all penalties are resolved, measurements taken if needed, verified that the down box and chains are correct, first downs signalled if achieved, etc.**

At the end of the quarter, the Referee shall go to the dead-ball spot and after verifying that there is no penalty or request for coach/referee conference, shall face the press box and hold the ball up over his head with one arm to officially signal that the quarter has ended and then return the ball to the dead-ball spot on the ground. The crew will come together at the dead-ball spot. The Linesman will report team possession, the next down, distance and yardline the ball is on, clip yardline and relative position of the ball between the hash marks. All officials will record this information. If the result of the previous play is a first down when the quarter ended, there is no need to set the clip to move the chains but rather just have the chains go to the new first down spot. Once all agree, the Referee and Umpire will jog to the new ball spot and wait for the Linesman to set the chains. The Umpire will not spot the ball until confirming the spot with the Linesman.

The Linesman will coordinate the movement of the chains by returning to the sideline and checking to make sure the clip is in proper position. Facing the sideline, grasp the chain and the clip securely. The person holding the stake closest to the nearest end zone should be the first person to move. That person should move out onto the field, and down the sideline toward the other end of the field. The Linesman should follow that person, then the person holding the other stake follow the Linesman.

The person holding the down box will follow last. All persons should jog down the sideline to the corresponding yard line on the other end of the field. The Linesman should hold the clip and chain on the appropriate yard line then ask the stakeholders to pull the end taut. Once he has the chain positioned correctly, he will double-check the next spot with the Umpire prior to the ball being placed ready for play.

If the down and distance is first and 10, the above procedure need not be followed for positioning the chains. The trailing chain can be placed directly behind the down box in this situation.

If the line to gain is the goal line, the Linesman only need to have the down box moved to the other end of the field. If time expires during the down in which a first down is made the chains should not be set, just moved to the other end of the field and set once the ball has been placed. However, if the chains are set, then time expires in the quarter, normal procedures should be used.

After confirming the status of the ball, the Line Judge monitors the team huddle on his sideline. The Back Judge is responsible for the change of quarter timing and is responsible for monitoring the team on the opposite sideline. At 45 seconds, the Back Judge signals the rest of the crew that 15 seconds remain in the dead ball period. The monitoring officials will then inform their respective teams that 15 seconds remain until the start of the quarter and encourage the teams to move onto the field. Both Line Judge and Back Judge will move to their respective positions for the start of play.

At the end of the one-minute dead ball period, the Referee will ensure that the chains are set correctly, the ball is spotted, and the crew is ready to start

the period. At that time, he should signal the ready for play. This will encourage the teams to not delay being ready to start the next quarter.

#### **Crew of Four**

At the end of the quarter, the Referee shall go to the dead-ball spot and after verifying that there is no penalty or request for coach-referee conference, shall hold the ball up over his head with one arm to officially signal that the quarter has ended and then return the ball to the dead-ball spot on the ground. The crew will come together at the dead-ball spot. The Linesman will report team possession, the next down, distance and yardline the ball is on, clip yardline and relative position of the ball between the hash marks. All officials will record this information. Once all agree, the Referee and Umpire will jog to the new ball spot and wait for the Linesman to set the chains. The Umpire will not spot the ball until confirming the spot with the Linesman.

The Linesman will coordinate the movement of the chains using the same procedure for crew of five as listed above. Once he has the chain positioned correctly, he will double-check the next spot with the Referee prior to the ball being placed ready for play.

After confirming the status of the ball, the Line Judge and Linesman will move to monitor the team huddles. The Referee is responsible for the change of quarter timing. At 45 seconds, he will signal the other crew members that 15 seconds remain in the dead ball period. The Line Judge should be aware of this signal and both will then inform their respective teams that 15 seconds remain until the start of the quarter and encourage the teams to move on field. Both Line Judge and Linesman will move to their respective positions for the start of play.

At the end of the one-minute dead ball period, the Referee will ensure that the chains are set correctly, the ball is spotted and the crew is ready to start the period. At that time, he should signal the ready for play. This will encourage the teams to not delay being ready to start the next quarter.

#### **Crew of Three**

At the end of the quarter, the Referee shall go to the dead-ball spot and after verifying that there is no penalty or request for coach-referee conference, shall hold the ball up over his head with one arm to officially signal that the quarter has ended and then return the ball to the dead-ball spot on the ground. The crew will come together at the dead-ball spot. The Linesman will report team possession, the next down, distance and yardline the ball is on, clip yardline and relative position of the ball between the hash marks. All officials will record this information. Once all agree, the Referee will jog to the new ball spot and wait for the Linesman to set the chains. The Referee will not spot the ball until confirming the spot with the Linesman. The Linesman will coordinate the movement of the chains utilizing the written procedure. Once he has the chain positioned correctly, he will double-check the next spot with the Referee prior to the ball being placed ready for play.

After confirming the status of the ball, the Line Judge and Linesman will move to monitor the team huddles. The Referee is responsible for the change of quarter timing. At 45 seconds, he will signal the other crew members that 15 seconds remain in the dead ball period. The wing officials should be aware of this signal and both will then inform their respective teams that 15 seconds remain till the start of the quarter and encourage the teams to move onto the field. Both Line Judge and Linesman will move to their respective positions for the start of play. At the end of the one-minute dead ball period, the Referee will ensure that the chains are set correctly, the ball is spotted and the crew is ready to start the period. At that time, he should signal the ready for play. This will encourage the teams to not delay being ready to start the next quarter.

# CHAIN CREW, TIMERS AND BALL ATTENDANTS

## Chain crew

The chain crew is an important part of the officiating team. When they understand the job and work smoothly with the Linesman, it can go a long way toward a well officiated game.

Prior to taking the field the Linesman should make sure he is equipped with at least one and preferably two chain clips for use by the chain crew. A well-equipped Linesman also has some means of repairing a broken chain with him on the field. This could be a plastic zip tie tucked into his cap lining, a double snap clip in his pocket or any of several other possibilities.

As soon as practical after taking the field the Linesman should inspect the down box and the line-to-gain equipment (chains). If the chain crew is present, have them assist, if they are not then have another official assist. Check for:

- General condition of the equipment, is it intact or falling apart?
- Are the necessary safety items present? There should be no sharp edges or points exposed.
- Is the chain the correct length? Stretch it out on the field and check.
- Is there a tape marker at the halfway point on the chain?

If there are any issues with the equipment, get game management involved to resolve them promptly so that the start of the game is not delayed.

Watch for the arrival of your chain crew on the field. If you see no sign of your chain crew at 15 minutes before the scheduled kickoff time, start reminding game management and/or the home team head coach that the game cannot start until the chain crew is present and you have had time to instruct them.

Upon the chain crew's arrival, greet each of them in a businesslike manner and proceed with your instructions to

them on how you would like them to function. While experienced chain crews will try to tell you that they do not need instruction, you should explain that each official reviews his responsibilities prior to taking the field no matter how many years he's been officiating and pregame chain crew instruction is treated the same. Your instructions should include:

**Safety items:** Work on the back line of the official's restricted area, 2 yards off the field. Drop the sticks and move back as far as necessary if the play comes to the area of the chain crew. Move with care through the team box, do not engage any of the players or coaches and report any incidents to the Linesman promptly.

**Officiating crew members:** Remind the chain crew that they are members of the officiating crew and, as such, they should not be coaching, cheering or outwardly supportive of either team. They also need to remain focused on the job assigned to them and not be distracted by phones or other electronic devices.

**Movement:** Emphasize the importance of not moving until they are told to. Demonstrate your signal to move for both the down box and the chains. Emphasize the importance of not moving until they are told to. Instruct them to question you if you signal them to move after a play during which a penalty flag was dropped. One suggestion is to have the chain crew or at least the down box operator raise a hand when they see a flag dropped on the field. Stress that when the crew moves they should "hustle but not hurry." Advise the crew that after a long play, the Head Linesman will drop a beanbag to mark the line of scrimmage in the event that the chain

crew is not in position. They should set up 2 yards off the field using the bean bag as a reference.

**Forward point:** When aligning the down box after the ball is spotted by the Umpire and when aligning the chains after a first down is awarded, the stake should be on the forward point of the ball and not the center or rear point.

**Pull chain taut and set the clip:**

When a first down is awarded and the chain crew has been signaled to move, the down box and the rear stake of the chains will be together at the spot of the ball. The down box should be on the “field side” so it is visible from the field. The forward chain stake holder must ensure that the chain is pulled taut prior to setting the stake. The clip is set by the crew, either by a fourth chain crew member if available or by either the down box or the rear stake holder, at the back side of the five-yard stripe farthest from the line to gain.

**Quarter change and measurements:**

Be alert and follow the Linesman’s instructions during these events. (Specific mechanics for each of these are detailed in the appropriate sections of *Mechanics Illustrated*).

After the coin toss is complete make sure the chain crew knows which end of the field the receiving team will be on so they can move to that end and be ready for the start of the game.

During the game, monitor the chain crew’s abilities and how they are performing. Make sure the Referee is aware of any issues that the crew is having. Remember the crew members’ names and use them, it is amazing how this little thing can help keep the crew engaged in the game. Other things that can keep the crew engaged, have them know “down and distance” for each down and ask them from time to time what it is, task your down box operator with advising you when the down box is within a yard of the five-yard tape on the chain and which side it is on. It looks great if you know, without looking, whether the defensive line of scrimmage foul enforcement will result in a first down

or not. If any chain crew member is not following the Linesman’s instructions a replacement should be requested of game management.

At halftime, thank the crew for their work so far and ask them to be sure to be back on the sideline when the teams return to the field. After the game, thank each of them, shake their hand, collect your clips and join the rest of your crew exiting from the field.

**Timer**

The element of time in a football game can be absolutely critical in the case of a close game. Correct operation of the game and play clocks by their operators is vitally important in ensuring a fair contest. Managing of the clock operation is placed by the rulebook on the Referee, but it is actually the responsibility of everyone on the officiating crew.

Prior to 15 minutes before kickoff time the game clock operator and the play clock operator (at fields equipped with on-field play clocks) should report to the Referee, Line Judge and Back Judge. At this time the following items should be covered.

1. To synchronize timer’s watch with official game time as established by the game official responsible for timing.
2. To advise game officials where the clock operator will be located.
3. Determine procedure for communication with timer and check this procedure prior to the game.
4. To discuss coordination of starting, stopping and adjusting the clock in accordance with the playing rules.

The field clock is normally started no less than 30 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will start on the Referee’s signal when the players and game officials leave the field. All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The mandatory three-minute warm-up period will be put on the clock after the intermission time has elapsed and shall be started immediately. If both teams have returned to the field and a minimum intermission period of 10 minutes has elapsed, the Referee can instruct the game clock operator to start the required three minute warmup period.

### Clock Management

1. All officials should insure that their “stop clock” signal is clear, well above the head and accompanied with a loud whistle signal.

2. The Referee must make sure that his “start clock” signal is clear with the plane of the arm circle roughly parallel to the sideline. Accompany the signal with a loud whistle signal when appropriate.

3. Untimed downs, other than extra point tries, should have the appropriate signal given so the clock operator is aware that the clock should not run.

4. Any time an official stops the game clock it is incumbent on that official to note the clock time he gave the signal in order for the crew to determine if a clock correction is necessary.

### Guidelines on when to correct game clock errors

1. Prior to the last two minutes in either half, if the game clock is incorrect by five seconds or less, do not correct the game clock. If more than five seconds, reset the game clock.

2. With two minutes or less in either half and time is a factor in the game, if the game clock is incorrect reset the game clock to the correct time.

### Guidelines on when to keep the game clock on the field

1. If the game clock becomes inoperable, the time will be kept on the field by the Line Judge.

2. If the game clock operator is inconsistent or incompetent so that the game clock must be reset constantly (more than three or four times in a quarter), inform the coaches and the game administrator that the time will be kept on the field by the Line Judge. Have the scoreboard clock turned off or set to 0:00 if possible. At this point it is incumbent upon the entire officiating crew to keep both coaches apprised of the time remaining as often as possible.

### Guidelines for play clock errors

1. If, upon the ready to play signal from the Referee, the play clock fails to start, starts but is incorrect, or becomes inoperative, the Back Judge should blow

his whistle and stop the game clock if it is running. The Referee should then signal the play clock operator to reset the play clock by pumping his hand up in the air with the palm facing the sky several times. Then the Referee can give the normal ready for play whistle and signal as well as start the game clock if it was running.

2. If the play clocks become totally inoperative or the operator is determined to be incapable of correctly operating the clocks, the Back Judge should call an official’s timeout. The Referee and the Back Judge will then advise the officiating crew, players and both coaches that the play clock time will be kept by the Back Judge on the field and he will give the normal five second warning signal by raising his hand. If possible, the play clocks should be turned off or if they are portable, turned to face a different direction. Once the decision is made to cease using the on-field play clocks, the clocks should not be used for the remainder of the game.

### Ball Attendants

Ball Attendants may be supplied by either team to assist in getting balls to the officials and retrieving balls that have left the field. If Ball Attendants are to be utilized by a team, they must be instructed by the Umpire as to how he wants them to work with him. This instruction is most easily done during the pregame ball check by accompanying the Referee. The Umpire’s instructions should include:

- Ball Attendants should move up and down the sideline with the side official, down the sideline five yards behind the side official.
- The Umpire should instruct the Ball Attendants to always deliver the new ball first, then chase down the old one if necessary.
- The new ball can be delivered to the Umpire or to the nearest official.
- The Ball Attendant needs to be bringing a new ball when the play ends. Once the ball has been spotted by the Umpire for the next play it is too late to change balls.

- Ball Attendants must be alert to change of possession plays.
- On try and field goal plays, if the Ball Attendant positions themselves behind the goal they must place a ball behind the goal post for the Back Judge/ Line Judge to retrieve when heading upfield for the succeeding kickoff.

The Umpire should monitor the performance of the Ball Attendants. If they are slowing the game and there is no reason to be changing the ball (i.e. not wet weather) then stop them from coming on the field. Let the side officials know your decision so they can assist in enforcing it and they can also explain to the coach if asked.

# THE HALO PRINCIPLE

The halo principle is designed to not only provide coverage when the ball is in those areas, but to ensure that all 22 players are observed on every play.

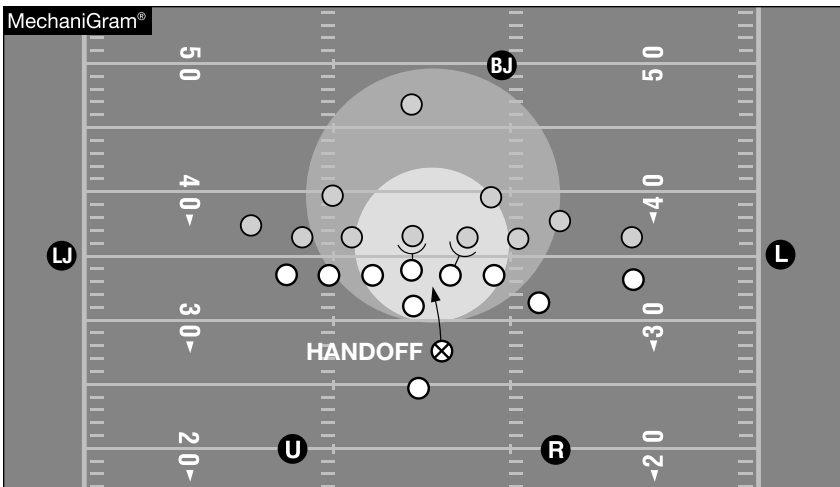
When a player is in possession of the ball (or the ball is loose on the ground, such as a rolling punt or a fumble), the halo surrounding the ball and all players in it is called the main halo. There is no hard-and-fast definition for the size of halos; use two to five yards as an average. The official nearest the main halo is responsible for the actions of players within the halo. The remaining officials are responsible for the secondary halos, which surround the players in their area.

The concept is illustrated in the MechaniGram, which depicts a running play up the middle. The Umpire observes the main halo (no shading), around the runner. The wing officials and Back Judge (crew of five) observe the secondary halo (lighter gray shading), looking for holding, illegal blocks and other fouls. The halos shift in depth, width and location as the runner

advances and varies his direction left or right.

When the quarterback takes the snap and spins to make a handoff, the quarterback, the halfback and any other team A players in the vicinity (possibly the fullback, a pulling lineman or a receiver who was in motion) are inside the main halo, which is observed by the Referee. But once the play moves into and beyond the line of scrimmage, the Referee should no longer be watching the ball carrier; he should instead be observing what happens to the quarterback, those other team A players mentioned above and perhaps any team B players who have broken through the line. The main halo becomes the responsibility of the appropriate wing official (or the Umpire if the run is up the middle).

When the runner has moved beyond the line of scrimmage, all halos shift. That's the turning point, the pivotal factor in coverage. The appropriate wing official should take the secondary halo in front of the runner, 15 or 20 yards ahead of the runner. The scope of the wing official's





observation can be extremely wide, because all the action is directly in front of him.

As the runner advances, the main halo moves with him and other members of the crew have to make a sudden shift of focus. The Back Judge in a crew of five must be prepared to sweep past the sidelines to assist in direct coverage if the runner should wind up out of bounds. When the runner goes beyond the sideline, the Back Judge must follow him.

When a punt flies overhead, the Umpire will be in the midst of players streaming downfield and will actually be inside the secondary halo described earlier (the secondary circle in front of the receiver's immediate perimeter). The Umpire should watch the players who are trying to get into position to make the tackle and the opponents who are blocking them.

Some punters choose not to try to become involved in the pursuit and simply admire their punt as it flies downfield. If the Referee is also looking at the ball far downfield, he could fail to see an unnecessary and illegal block on the punter. Even if the punter is no longer covered by roughing the kicker rules, an opponent should not get a free shot at punishing a player who is not moving to participate in the play.

# FUMBLES

Officials have specific duties when a pile forms on top of a fumble. The ball will be spotted and the process will be much simpler if each crew member does his job.

When an official sees a fumble beyond the line of scrimmage, he must drop a bean bag at the yardline at which the ball was fumbled (the spot may be used for penalty enforcement if a foul occurs while the ball is loose). He must also continue officiating.

If the covering official sees a player recover the fumble from a prone position, he should blow the play dead. If the defense recovers, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team. If the offense recovers, the covering official should only signal the next down (unless a first down was achieved; in that case, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team).

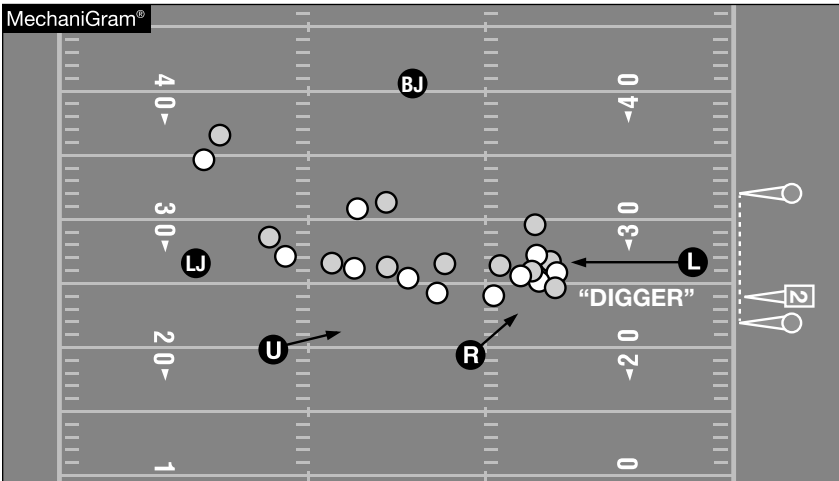
If a fumble results in players from both team forming a pile that prevents the covering official from determining possession, the ball must be “dug out” of the pile. The official closest to the

pile becomes the “digger,” the official responsible for unpling the players and determining who has recovered the fumble. The official nearest the digger signals the clock to stop and looks at the clock to be sure it is stopped. The remaining nearby officials echo the signal.

Assuming the pile consists of four or more players, the digger begins by getting the players on top of the pile to get up. One method is to tap those players and say, “You’re out,” or “You don’t have it; get up.” Pay attention when you get close to the pile; you don’t want a mouthful of helmet. The digger can’t be shy about getting dirty. The ball is somewhere on the ground; the digger should be too.

If the players are slow to unpile, another official can approach the pile and assist the digger; the remaining officials should practice dead-ball officiating and observe the players not on the pile.

If the digger can clearly see the ball or is certain he knows which player has covered it, he verbally relays that information to the Referee. By saying, “I’ve got the ball; everyone off the pile,”



the digger can ensure the proper team is awarded possession while getting the players to disperse. If team A has recovered, the Referee announces the next down (or signals the first down if team A has achieved a first down). If team B has recovered, the Referee alone signals the change of possession. In either case the stoppage is treated as an administrative stoppage, the 25 second play clock and, if appropriate, the game clock are started by the referee when the ball is ready for play.

When a fumble is recovered between two officials and the pile consists of four or fewer players, there is usually no need for a digger. The officials should make eye contact and confirm what they've seen (e.g. "I've got red ball." "So do I."). If they agree, both give the proper signals. If they don't agree, one must serve as the digger.

Anytime the Referee is in the area of the pile, the recovery information should be verbally relayed to the Referee. The Referee alone then signals.

# CREW OF FIVE

# CREW OF FIVE

## CHAPTER 1

# PHILOSOPHY

Movement and compromise are the characteristics of football officiating. Twenty-two players are moving around, competing for space and position; the officials must utilize hustle, angles, distance and planned compromises to observe and control the action.

### Hustle

Hustle is an overused word today. Everyone knows it's needed to succeed, but what does it really mean when relating it to football officiating? Hustle to cover plays and to get into position is important regardless of how many officials work a game. The fifth official allows a crew to devote extra attention to players well downfield, such as those running pass routes or blocking ahead of the runner. But that does not diminish the need for all officials on the crew to use their keys to anticipate plays and get into proper position to cover them.

Significant movement by all officials is critical for proper field coverage. Hustle gives you a chance. That equates to more running and a well-placed concern for angles.

### Movements

All officials must work hard at understanding then obtaining proper angles. Your line of sight must provide you with an opportunity to view a developing play or part of a play. You must be able to see completely through the play, which means your vision must be unobstructed by the players directly involved in the play and others near the play.

When the ball is snapped, all 22 players are in motion. An official's angle and distance adjustments are constant as play is in motion. A step or two in the right direction may open up a whole new viewing experience, free from obstruction; a step in the wrong direction will screen you from critical game action.

Far too often officials who can't (or won't) run well don't move with the flow of the play. They're afraid of getting in the way and aren't confident they can move quickly enough to avoid players and get good angles. The game suffers because coverage suffers. A good Back Judge, for instance, works sideline to sideline. That improves dead-ball coverage when a runner goes out of bounds. On plays between the hash marks and the sidelines, a Back Judge gives the crew a second

angle — one from the inside of the field looking out — to complement the wing official's outside-in view.

Movement also allows the non-covering officials to watch players away from the ball, the critical component to combating physical play. When a wing official moves off the sideline, he can watch the areas behind the run, where rough play often occurs.

The covering wing official also moves along the sideline to improve angles. There's usually at least three and sometimes six or seven players around the ball, either trying to throw blocks or attempting to make the tackle. Movement is critical to watching action around the ball. It's also paramount to game control.

Proper movement when the play is over is also important. Because the ball is live for only a few seconds every play, there's a tendency to think about spotting the ball for the next play and forgetting about the players. If officials ignore dead-ball action, players get physical with each other and game control suffers. All officials must observe player action after the ball has been whistled dead.

### **Field coverage**

Proper coverage is enhanced by good eye contact and a "feel" for where your crewmates are looking. You must learn about all aspects of football officiating to know who is covering what. Once you've mastered that, practical onfield application develops through communication, including eye contact and understanding. At the risk of being obvious, you've got to know exactly what both you and your crewmates are expected to do in specific situations — then effectively communicate with your crewmates — to truly master football officiating. When you understand why angles and distance are important and how and when to obtain them, you'll find yourself in great position throughout each game.

# CREW OF 5

## CHAPTER 2

# KEYS

- Balanced Formation, Strength Declared To Line Judge's Side
- Double Tight Ends, Strength To Linesman's Side
- Double Wing, Double Tight End Formation
- Motion Changes Strength
- Motion Changes Formation From Unbalanced To Balanced
- Motion Into Trips
- Motion Doesn't Change Strength
- Straight T
- Strength To Linesman's Side, Weak Side Split End
- Strength To Linesman's Side, Weak Side Tight End
- Trips To Linesman's Side
- Unbalanced Formation, Strength To Line Judge's Side
- Veer
- Wishbone
- Referee And Umpire Keys
- Free Kicks
- Punts
- Scrimmage Kick
- Scoring Kick Outside The 10-Yardline
- Scoring Kick From The 10-Yardline And In

Football officials have a kind of telepathy to help them determine what's going to happen before it occurs. These hints are called keys. Keys are where you first focus your attention as the play begins. Normally, your keys only last a few seconds at most and then you would shift your focus depending on the type of play.

There are two basic types of keys: "situational" and "positional" keys.

### **Situational Keys**

Situational keys are partially based on the down, distance, score, time remaining, offensive and defensive formations and actions of players at the snap. For example, it's third down and 11. Team A trails by two points with 1:37 to play in the fourth quarter and has the ball on its own 44 yardline. Going without a huddle, team A lines up in a shotgun formation with three receivers on the right side of the formation. All of that adds up to a pass. That hunch is confirmed when, at the snap, the offensive linemen drop back to pass block, the quarterback retreats into the pocket and the receivers run pass patterns rather than block team B's linebackers and defensive backs.

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 wishbone formation, for instance, are predominantly running teams. Teams using four-receiver sets and shotgun formations pass more times than not.

Linemen provide situational keys. Pulling linemen indicate a sweep or trap block. Retreating linemen indicate a pass. Charging linemen indicate a running play. When offensive linemen provide only passive resistance, allowing defensive linemen to penetrate the neutral zone, a screen pass often follows.

### **Positional Keys**

Positional keys are predetermined by the position you are working in the game. Positional keys deal more with the Back Judge and wing officials. The Back

Judge's main positional key is the widest eligible receiver on the strong side of the formation (that will usually be the split end or the flanker). At the snap, the Back Judge first observes the tackle to see if he's run-blocking or pass-blocking, then observes the actions of his key receiver. If that player moves into another official's coverage area, the Back Judge shifts his attention to players who have entered his coverage area.

In order to determine positional keys, the officials must recognize the strength of the formation (strong side vs. weak side). The strong side is the side on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackle.

When determining keys, it doesn't matter if a player is on or off the line of scrimmage. The widest receiver is the Back Judge's key whether the player is a flanker (a back usually positioned wider than the tight end) or a wide out (split outside the tackle). If players are stacked, the player nearest the line of scrimmage is considered to be the widest. For example, if a flanker is stacked directly behind the tight end, the tight end is considered the widest and is the Back Judge's key.

A balanced formation is one in which there are the same number of eligible receivers outside the tackles on both sides of the formation. An unbalanced formation is when one side has more eligible receivers on one side than the other.

The Back Judge has priority in determining keys, followed by the wing officials. Wing officials should not key the same player as the Back Judge.

The positional keys:

- Unbalanced formation — The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver on the strong side. The wing official on the strong side keys on the inside player of the formation, normally a flanker or wing back. The wing official on the weak side keys the end nearest his side, normally a wideout.
- Balanced formation — In a balanced formation, strength is always considered to be on the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver (usually a split end). The wing officials key on



receivers other than the Back Judge's key and any backs who move toward them at the snap.

- Three-receiver (trips) formation — The Back Judge keys on the two outside receivers and the strong side wing official keys on the inside receiver. The weak side wing official keys on the end nearest him.

- Double wing formation — Strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys the widest receiver on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys the inside receiver. The Linesman has both receivers on his side.

- Wishbone — Another balanced formation, which means strength is declared to Line Judge's side. The Back Judge has the end on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys the backs. The Linesman keys the end on his side.

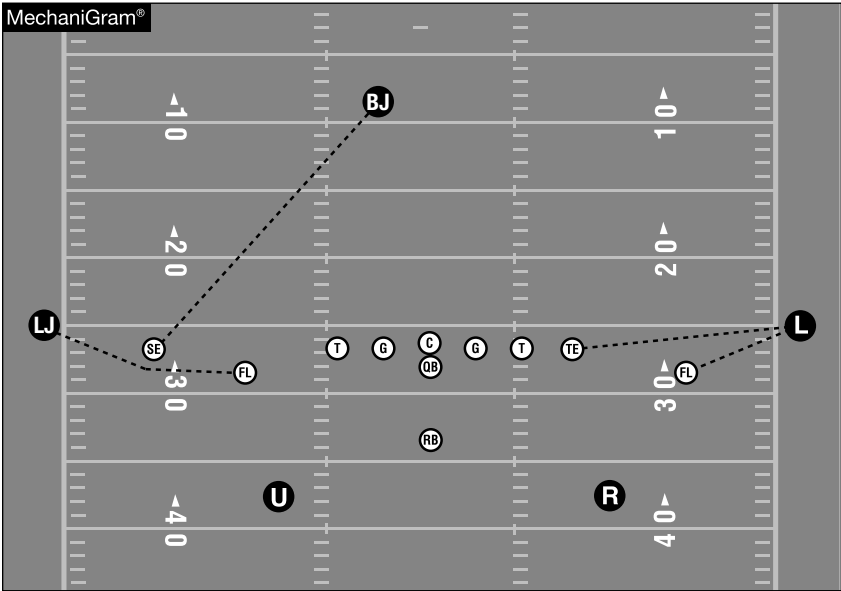
### **Motion**

An offensive player in motion can affect positional keys. It is crucial that the Back Judge and wing officials know where the motion man is at the snap because the strength of the formation (and therefore the keys) may change. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

Say team A lines up strong to the Linesman's side, but the flanker on the Linesman's side goes in motion toward the Line Judge. If the motion man gets to the Line Judge's side of the ball at the snap, the strength of the formation is now on the Line Judge's side and the keys change. The Back Judge now has the wideout on the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge has the motion man and the Linesman has the end on his side of the line. Although the Line Judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. If the motion man does not get to the opposite side of the formation before the snap, the keys do not change because the strength of the formation has not changed.

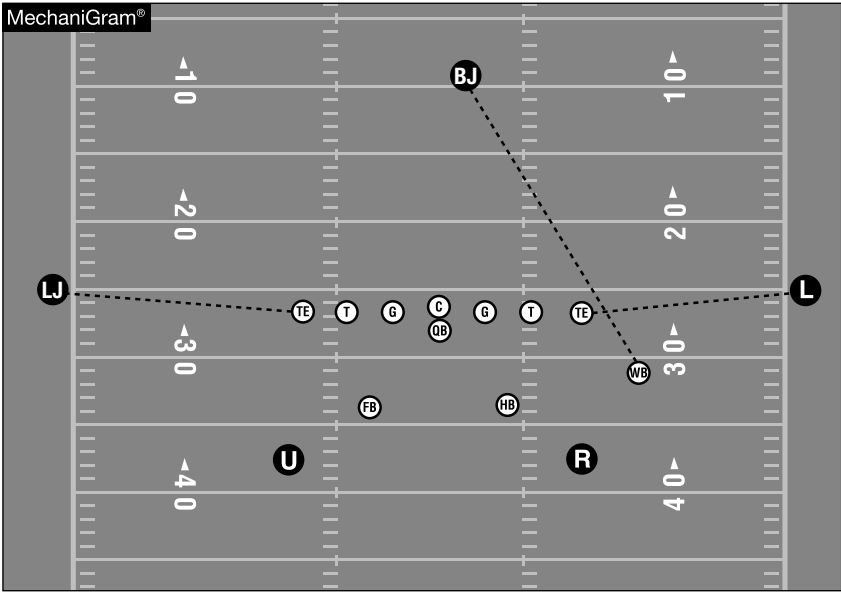
If motion turns a formation into trips, the keys for trips are in force: The Back Judge keys on the two outside receivers and the strong side wing official keys on the inside receiver.

**BALANCED FORMATION, STRENGTH DECLARED TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE**



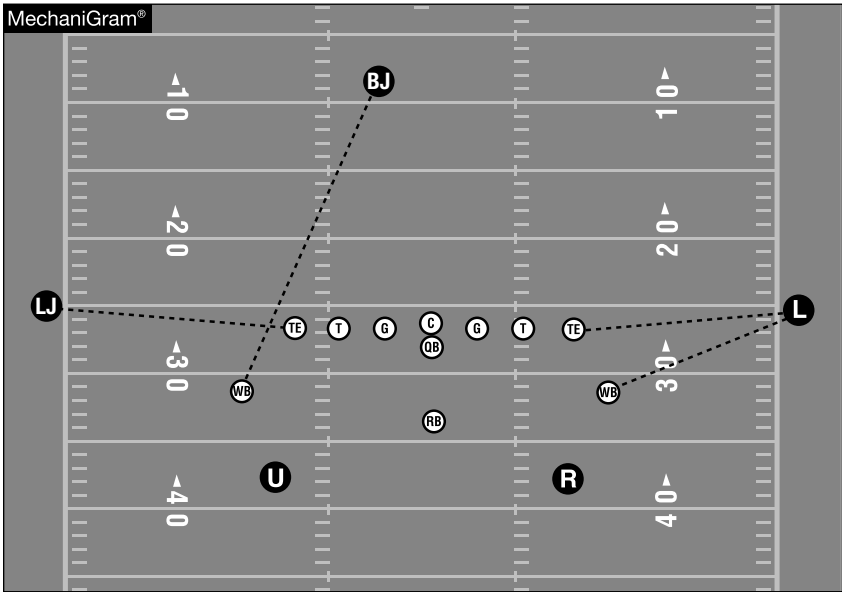
In a balanced formation, strength is always considered to be on the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver (in this case, the split end). The Line Judge keys on the flanker while the Linesman has both the split end and flanker on his side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

DOUBLE TIGHT ENDS, STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



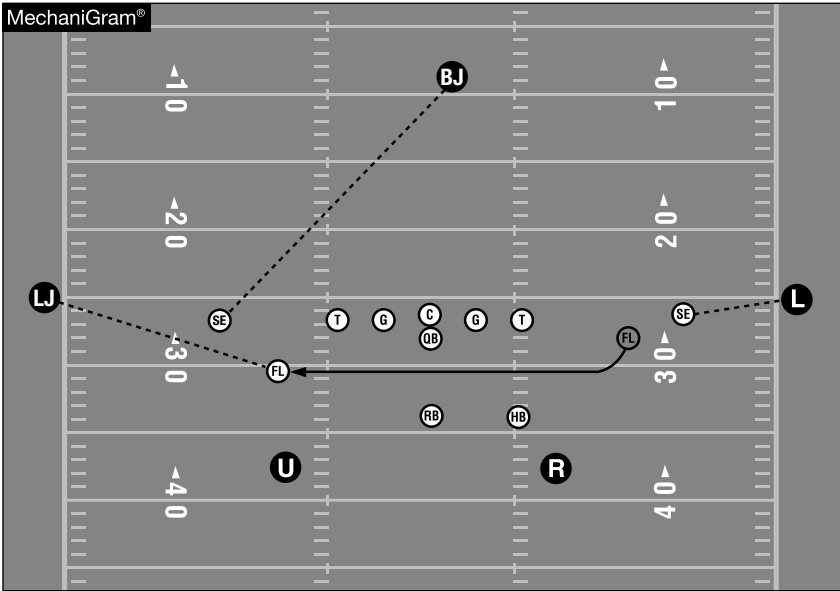
This is primarily a running formation used on short yardage, but teams sometimes throw quick passes out of this formation. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver on the strong side (the wingback on the Linesman's side in this case). The Linesman keys on the tight end. The Line Judge keys on the tight end on his side. Either wing official may also have a back who runs a pass route.

**DOUBLE WING, DOUBLE TIGHT END FORMATION**



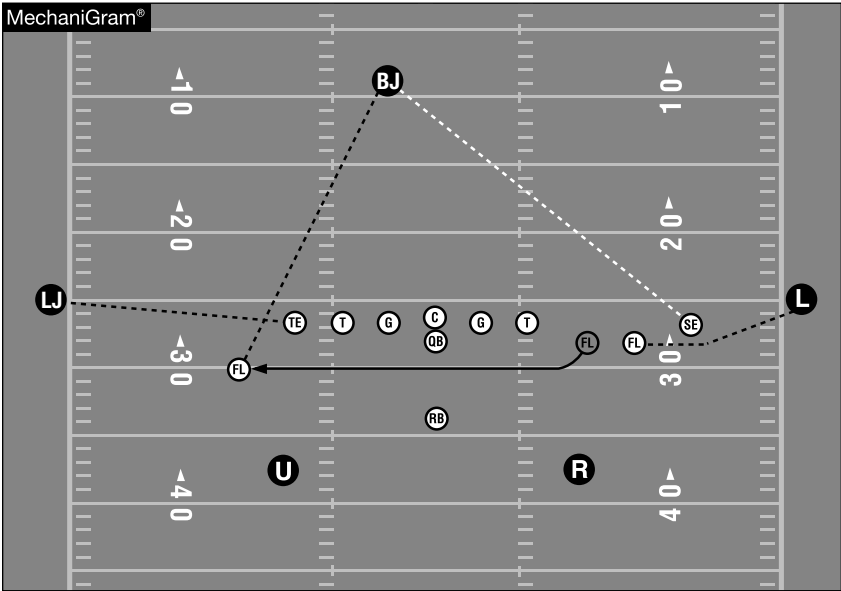
Strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver on his side. In this case, that's the wingback on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the tight end on his side. The Linesman has the tight end and wingback on his side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

MOTION CHANGES STRENGTH



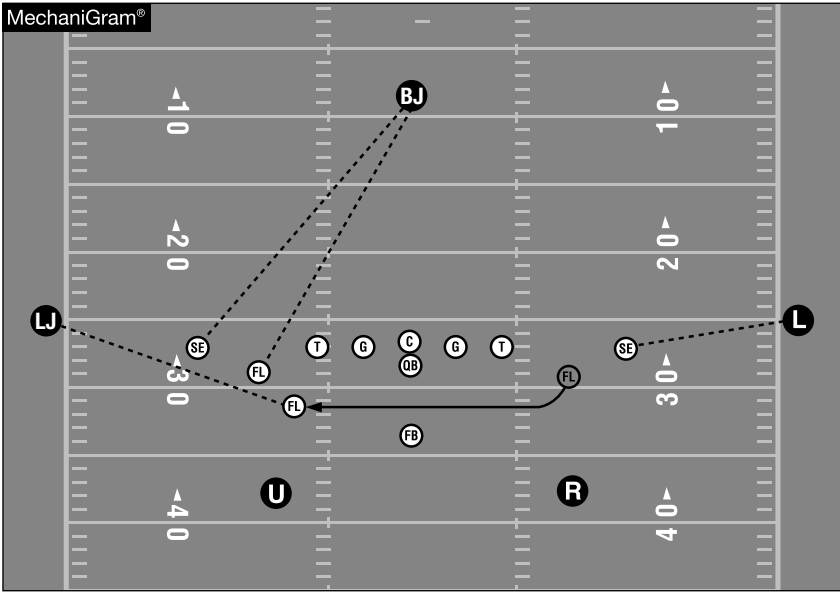
Strength was to the Linesman's side, but motion changed the strength to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge shifts his key to the strong side flanker and the Linesman keys on the split end on his side. Although the Line Judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

MOTION CHANGES FORMATION FROM UNBALANCED TO BALANCED



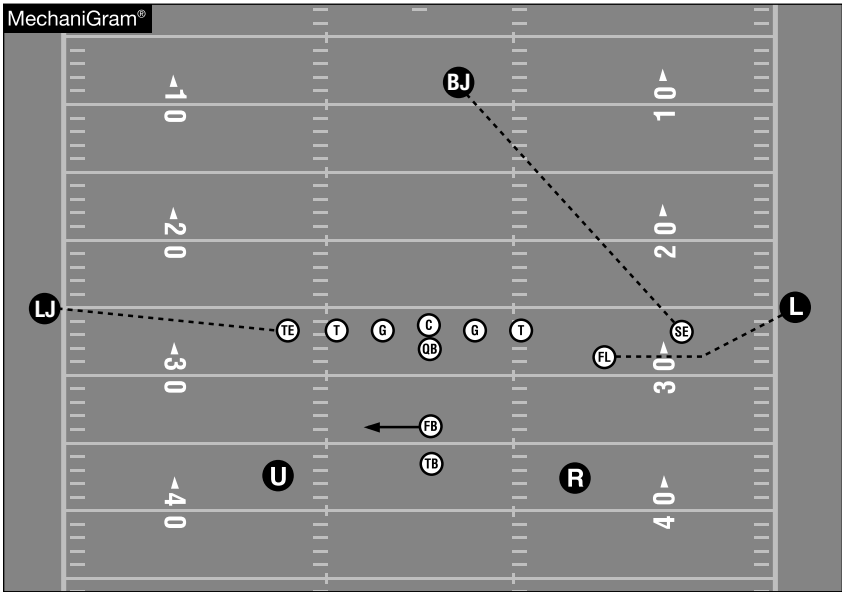
Strength was to the Linesman's side, but motion changed the formation from unbalanced to balanced. The white broken line indicates the Back Judge's original key. In a balanced formation, strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge shifts his key to the strong side flanker (black broken line) and the split end on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the inside receiver who is in motion and the Linesman keys the end on his side of the line. Although the Line Judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

MOTION INTO TRIPS



Motion by the flanker turned a balanced formation into a trips formation to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys the two widest receivers. In this case, it's the set flanker and the split end on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the inside receiver who is in motion and the Linesman keys the end on his side of the line. Although the Line Judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

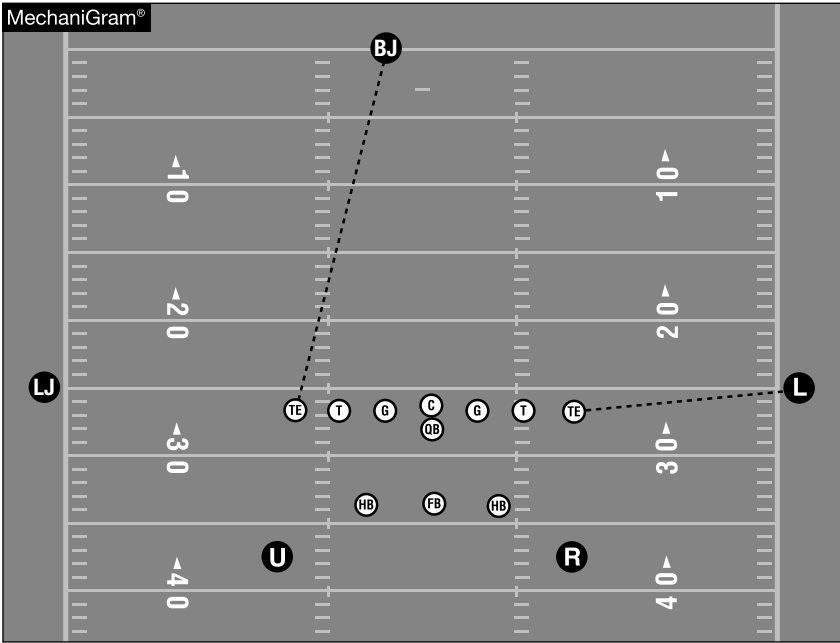
MOTION DOESN'T CHANGE STRENGTH



Strength is to the Linesman's side. Even if the back goes in motion/shifts to the Line Judge's side, but remains inside the tackles, strength is not considered to have changed. The Back Judge keys the split end and the Linesman keys on the flanker. The Line Judge keys on the split end. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

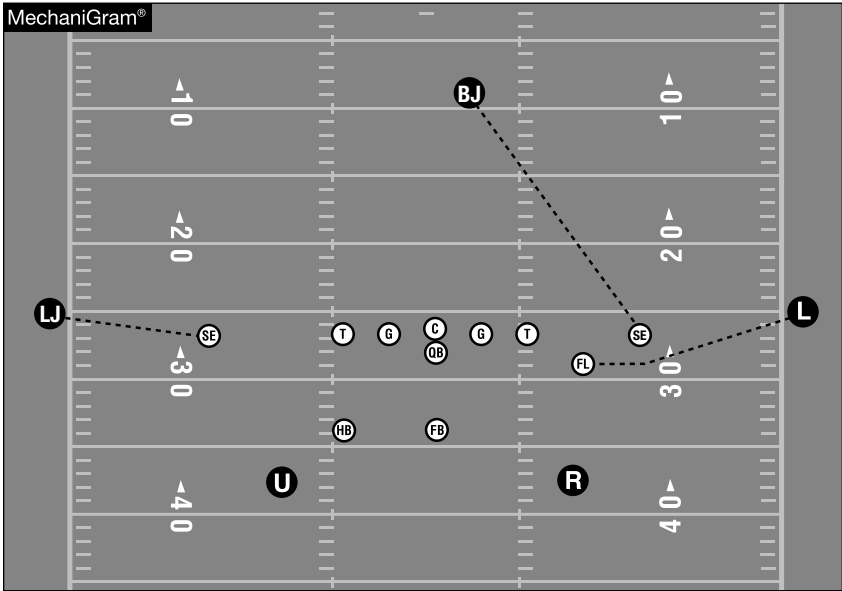


STRAIGHT T



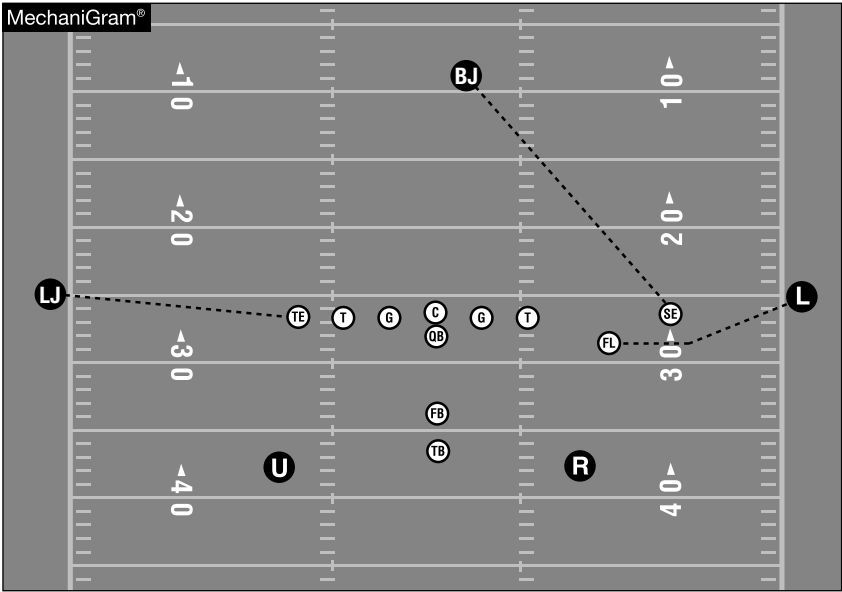
This is primarily a running formation, but on passing downs teams sometimes move a tight end to split end. It's a balanced formation, so strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the tight end on the Line Judge's side. The Linesman keys on the weak side tight end. The Line Judge has no formal key, but should look through the tight end to observe the tackle on his side and observe the halfback after the snap. Either wing official may have a back who runs a pass route.

**STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE SPLIT END**



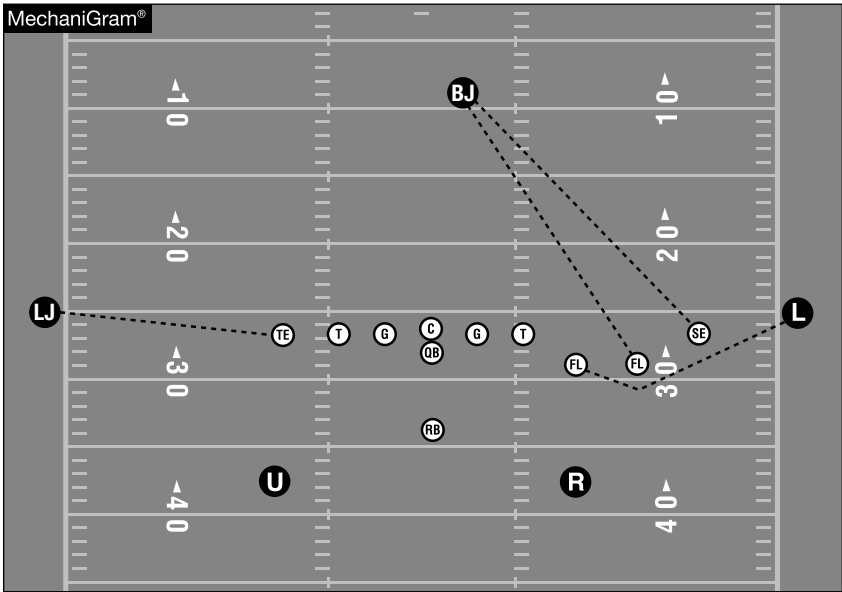
The Back Judge keys on the strong side split end and the Linesman keys on the flanker. The Line Judge keys the split end on his side. The fullback will likely stay in the backfield for pass protection, but the halfback may run a pass route. If the route is to the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge takes him.

STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE TIGHT END



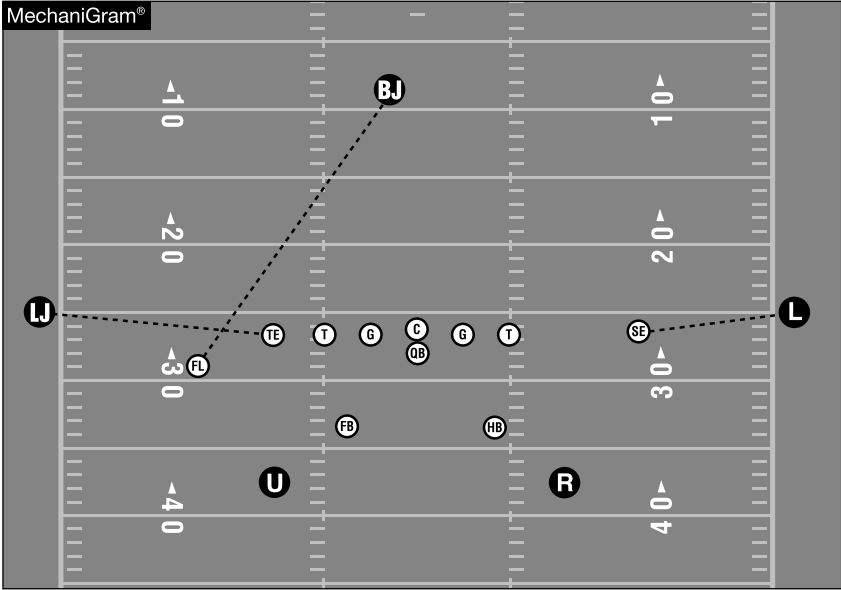
The Back Judge keys on the split end and the Linesman keys on the flanker. The Line Judge keys the tight end. The fullback will likely stay in the backfield for pass protection, but the tailback may run a pass route. If the route is to the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge takes him.

TRIPS TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



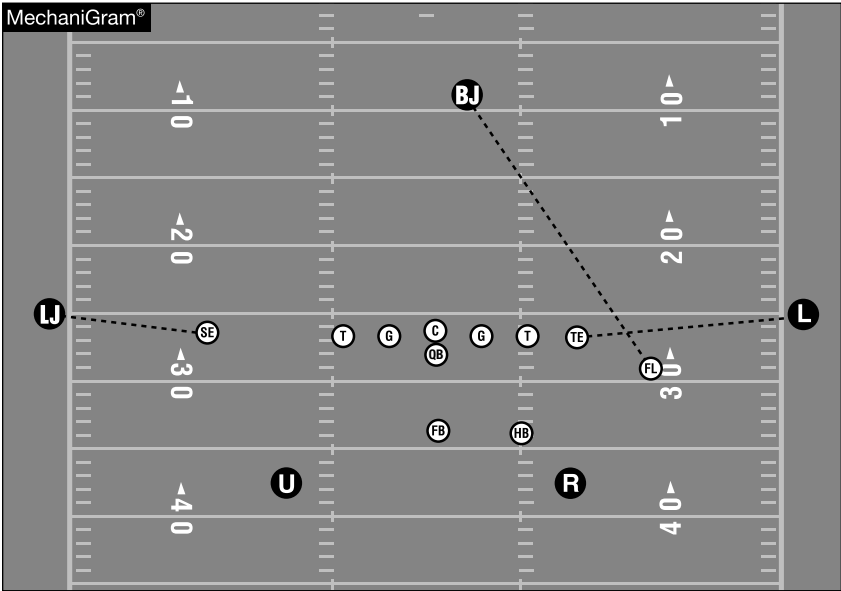
The Back Judge keys on the two outside receivers and the strong side wing official on the inside receiver. The Line Judge keys on the end nearest him. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route. If the same formation were strong to the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge would key on the inside receiver and the Back Judge on the two outside receivers.

UNBALANCED FORMATION, STRENGTH TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE



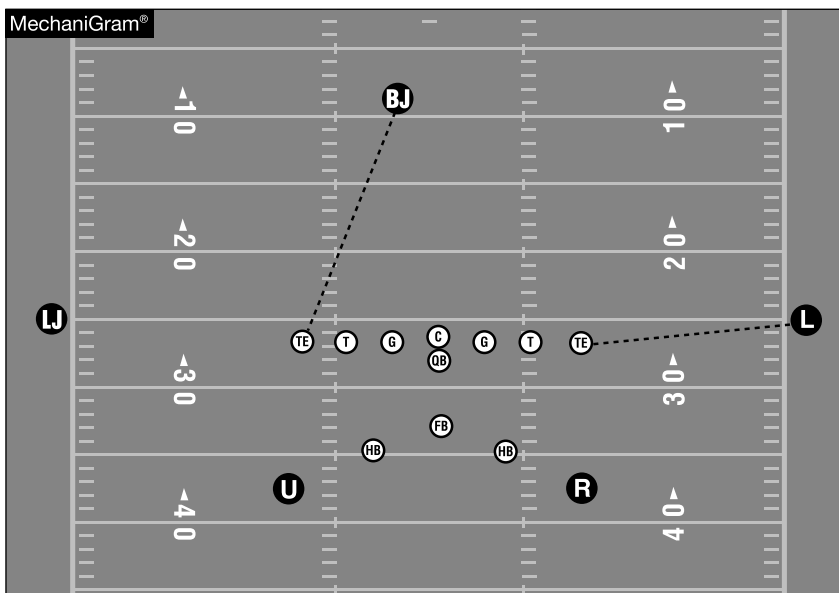
The Back Judge keys on the flanker and the Line Judge keys on the tight end. The Linesman keys on the split end on his side. Either wing official may also have a back running a pass route.

VEER



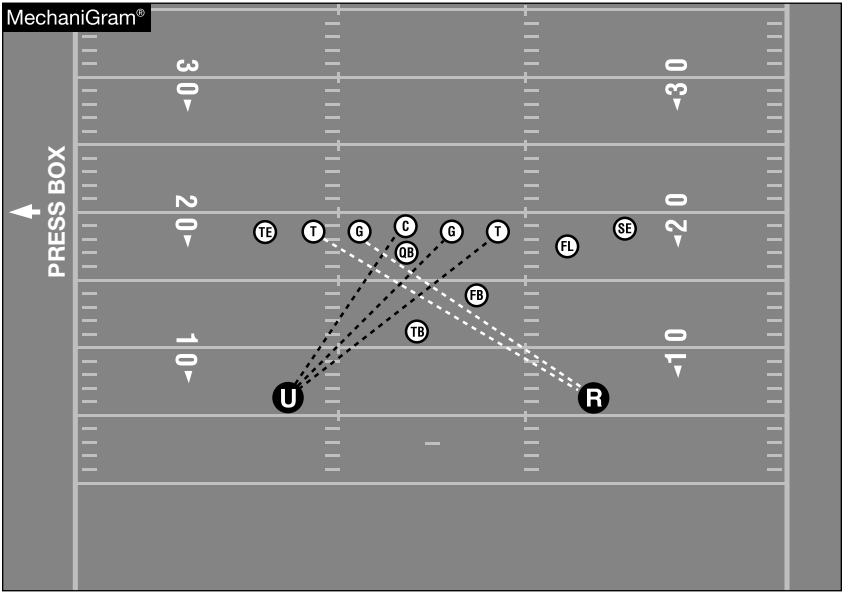
Although primarily a running formation, teams will occasionally throw to the flanker or split end. In this example, strength is to the Linesman's side. The Back Judge keys the flanker and the Linesman keys the tight end. The Line Judge keys on the split end on his side. The fullback's primary function is as a blocker.

WISHBONE



A balanced formation, which means strength is declared to Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys the tight end on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys the backs. The Linesman keys the tight end on his side.

REFEREE AND UMPIRE KEYS



Regardless of the formation, the Referee and Umpire key on the opposite-side tackle. In all but the rarest cases, that means the Referee keys on the left guard and left tackle. The Umpire keys on the center, right guard and right tackle.







### **SCORING KICK FROM OUTSIDE THE 10-YARD LINE**

For scoring kicks outside the 10-yard line, the Referee's key is the opposite guard and tackle and then the kicker and holder. The Umpire's key is the snapper and any other linemen on the Referee's side of the ball. The Linesman keys on the linemen on his side of the field. Refer to the MechaniGram on page 110 to see the relative positioning of the officials.

### **SCORING KICK FROM THE 10-YARD LINE AND IN**

For scoring kicks from the 10-yard line and in, the Referee's key is the opposite guard and tackle and then the kicker and holder. The Umpire's key is the snapper. The Linesman keys on the linemen on his side of the field and the Line Judge keys on the linemen on his side of the field. Refer to the MechaniGram on page 112 to see the relative positioning of the officials.

# CREW OF FIVE

## CHAPTER 3

# BEFORE AND AFTER THE SNAP

Prior to the snap, the Referee is responsible for observing the huddle to ensure team A is not violating substitution rules. He also identifies the eligible receivers in the backfield, observes shifts, and watches for false starts and other pre-snap violations by the offense. He counts team A along with the Umpire and using the appropriate signal, verifies the count. If the count is low, the Referee should continue to give the count signal until the ball is snapped.

The Umpire is responsible for ensuring that team A has five players, numbered 50 to 79 on the offensive line of scrimmage when not in scrimmage kick formation under the exception. The Umpire should listen for defenders interfering with the offense's snap count, observe the snapper for snap infractions and observe the guards for false starts. He counts team A with the Referee and using the appropriate signal, verifies the

count. If the count is low, the Umpire should continue to give the count signal until the ball is snapped.

Prior to the snap, wing officials will signal "double stakes" if yardage to the line-to-gain is more than 10 yards. Other officials may optionally give this signal. The wing officials must be aware of substitutions coming in from their sideline, identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field and help identify the line of scrimmage to the nearest A player. If the nearest eligible receiver is in the offensive backfield, signal to the off-side official using the extended arm signal. Hold the signal until acknowledged by the opposite side officials. When observing the covering officials extended arm, acknowledge by momentarily pointing at the opposite wing official. The Line Judge is responsible for counting B with the Back Judge and using the appropriate signal between the two positions to verify the

## CREW OF FIVE BEFORE AND AFTER THE SNAP

count. Wing officials should also try to assist the Umpire by looking at the snapper for snap infractions.

The Back Judge is responsible for the play clock timing. During the 25- or 40-second count, hold your arm straight up with five seconds to go. When the arm goes up, hard count starts (exactly five seconds). At the end of the count, look at the ball. If it is not snapped, call the foul for delay.

With an on-field 25-second field clock, the Back Judge is responsible for time but does NOT raise his arm with five seconds remaining. The mechanic to be used for delay to be called is to look at the clock at :00, look at the ball, if not snapped, call the foul for delay. The Back Judge counts B and using the appropriate signals, verifies the count with the Line Judge.

### **Forward Progress**

The wing officials are primarily responsible for forward progress. The Back Judge may assist in establishing forward progress on long runs or passes. The offside official may also help establish the forward progress spot using cross-field mechanics when the covering official is unable to determine the forward progress spot.

The wing officials should not be on the field of play during the live ball period. Maintain your position on the sideline, observing action in your area of responsibility. Forward progress should be indicated by using the down field foot. Keep your head up and observe players while marking the spot. Do not go around or jump over players in front of you along the line to mark the actual spot.

If the spot is close to the line to gain, the spotting official must come all the way in to mark the end of the play and the dead-ball spot. Wait until the players have cleared in front of you before proceeding to spot the ball.

The primary official responsible for determining the forward progress spot

is the official who can actually see the ball when the play is declared dead. This may not be the closest officials, but rather the official who has the best determination of the dead-ball spot. Utilize cross-field mechanics when appropriate.



# CREW OF FIVE

## CHAPTER 4

# COIN TOSS

The coin toss is normally conducted in the center of the field three minutes before the game. The toss may be held at an earlier time off the field if both coaches agree. In such a case the results may be simulated in the center of the field three minutes before the game.

The Umpire and Back Judge go to the sideline with the line-to-gain equipment and the Referee and Line Judge to the opposite sideline. The speaking captains (those who will give options for their teams) should be positioned so they are closest to the Referee when the group meets in the center of the field. The Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and Back Judge meet the captains at their respective sidelines and escort them to the middle of the field, positioned so their backs are to their own sidelines. The Referee may either face the scoreboard or have his back to it during the toss.

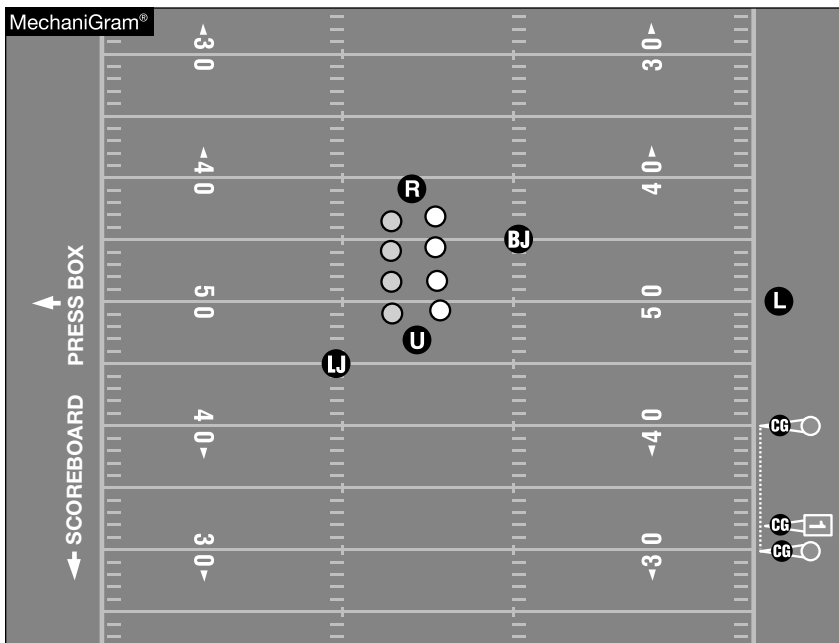
When they reach the center of the field, the Referee and Umpire will be across from each other. The Back Judge remains on the hash mark at the 45-yard line on the side of the field with

the chains; the Line Judge assumes a similar position on the 45-yard line on the opposite side. The Linesman remains on his sideline.

Players who are not involved in the toss should be kept out of the area between the top of the numbers on both sides of the field. The captains are asked to introduce themselves to each other.

The Referee should allow all captains to view both sides of the coin, identifying which side is heads and which is tails. The visiting captain is instructed to call heads or tails before the coin is flipped. The Umpire repeats the choice loudly enough for all to hear. The Referee shall verbalize the mechanics of the coin toss to the captains.

Once the winner is determined, the winner is offered his choice: defer, receive, choose a goal to defend or kick. If the choice is to defer, the Referee immediately faces the pressbox, taps the shoulder of the deferring captain and signals the declination. The remaining choices are then presented to the other captain



and the final selection is made by the deferring captain. If the winner of the coin toss does not defer, no signal is immediately given.

When the final selections are made, the captains are asked to put their backs to the goal line their team will defend and the Referee gives the appropriate signal for the team making the choice (not the team that deferred). If the choice is to kick or receive, only the first selection is signaled. If the choice is to defend a goal, two signals are given: pointing both arms toward the goal line being defended, followed by the appropriate signal for the other captain.

If at any time during the toss the Referee errs or gives incorrect information (for instance, giving the wrong team an option), the Umpire should speak up immediately.

When the toss is completed, the other officials join the Referee and

Umpire in the center of the field and record the results of the toss. All officials simultaneously move to their kickoff positions.

It is no longer necessary to meet with captains to determine second half options. Obtain those choices from the head coaches when they return for the 3-minute warm-up. You may still bring the captains together at midfield, following the 3-minute warm-up, to deal with issues and problems from the first half.

**Overtime Procedure**

If overtime is necessary, the officials wait for the three-minute intermission to end. The Referee and Umpire go to their respective sidelines and once again escort the captains to the center of the field while the other officials assume the same positions as for the pregame toss. The coin toss is repeated with the visiting team again calling it. When the

winner is determined, the options are explained. The winner may not defer, but may choose offense, defense or the goal to be used.

When the selections are completed, the captains of the team on offense are asked to face the goal line in the direction their team will advance and the opposing captains stand with their backs to that goal line. The Referee then taps the shoulder of the captain of the team that won the toss and gives the first down signal in the appropriate direction.



# CREW OF FIVE

## CHAPTER 5

# TIMEOUTS

- Timeout With Both Teams At The Sidelines
- Timeout With One Or Both Coaches On The Field

**Note: The timeout is not officially granted until all penalties are resolved, measurements taken if needed, verified that the down box and chains are correct, first downs signalled if achieved, etc.**

Any official should grant a valid timeout request and immediately stop the clock if it is running. All other officials should then echo the stop clock signal. That official reports the timeout to the Referee either in person or by voice or subtle signal as agreed in the pregame conference. Wing officials should not allow coaches or other team personnel onto the field until the time out is signaled by the Referee. The Referee indicates the timeout by repeating the stop-the-clock signal and indicating the team being charged the timeout by facing the team and extending both arms shoulder high, giving three “chucks” in that team’s direction.

All officials must record the number and team of the player requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. Each official then confirms with the Referee the number of timeouts each team has remaining. The Linesman and Line Judge inform the coaches on their respective sidelines of the timeouts remaining.

If his team is using an “outside the 9-yard conference,” the wing official should steer his team to be in front of their team box and outside the nine-yard marks. If they are conferring on the field, the wing official must make sure that they are between the 9-yard marks and that only one coach and 11 players are in the timeout huddle.

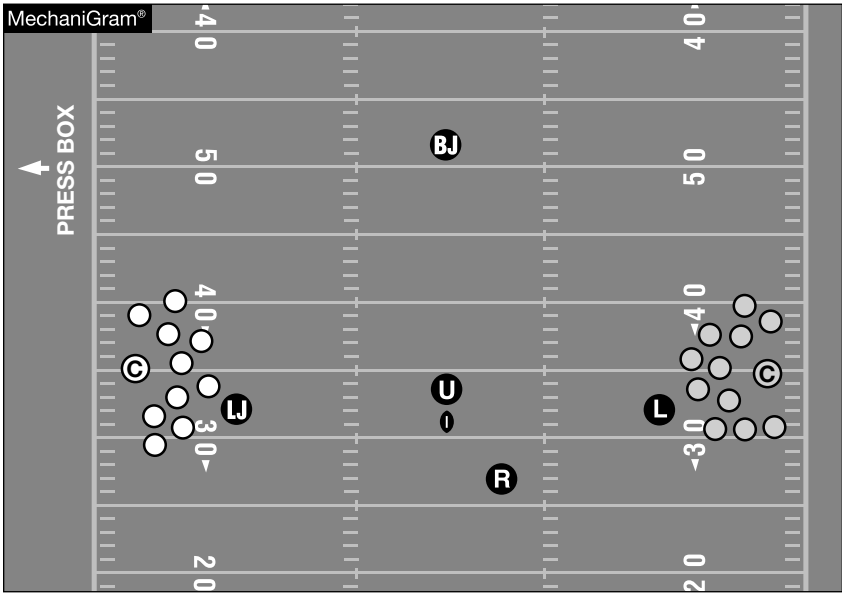
The Back Judge is responsible for timing the timeout. The one-minute count begins when the Referee signals the timeout. When 45 seconds have expired, the Back Judge informs the Referee, so the Linesman and Line Judge can inform their teams. When the minute has expired, the Referee whistles the ball ready for play.

The procedure for signaling an official’s timeout is the same as for a charged timeout except that after stopping the clock, the Referee taps his chest to indicate it is an official’s timeout. Play should resume as quickly as possible.

If the official’s timeout is for injury, any team conference must be an “Outside Nine Yard Mark Conference” if approved by the Referee. If there are any conferences, officials should take the same positions they would normally take during team timeouts. If the injury is serious, send both teams to their sidelines. Officials should write down the game situation (down, distance, time, and number of the injured player). Once team personnel are on the field, the crew should move away from the injured player. Do not offer medical advice. If the delay is longer than 15 minutes or if the Referee deems it appropriate, the Referee should advise the coaches that prior to play resuming, there will be a three-minute warmup timed on the field.

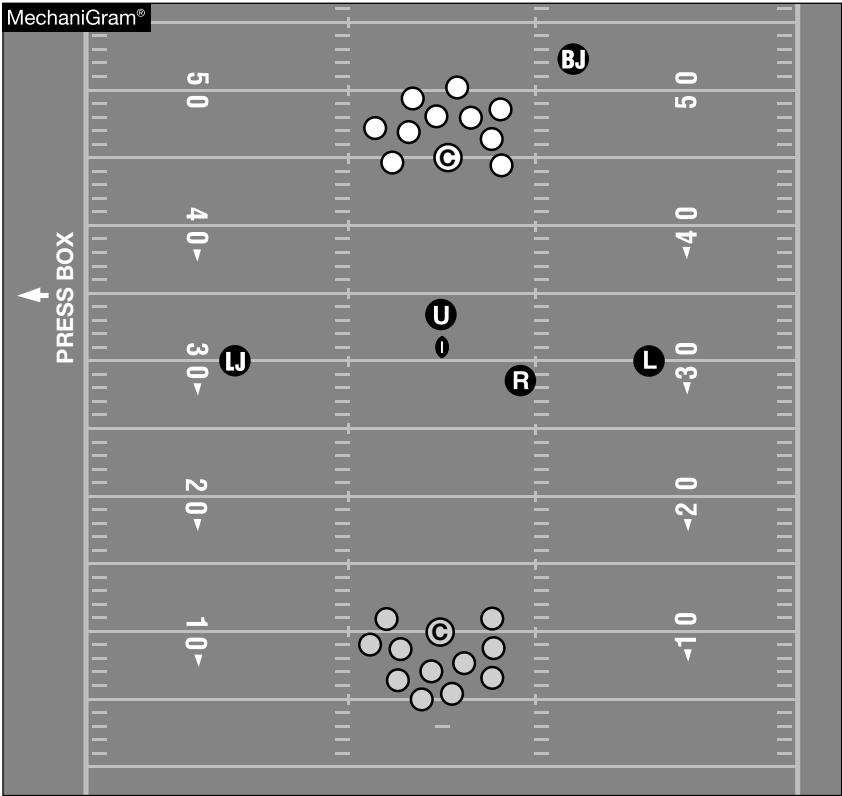
During timeouts, wing officials are responsible for monitoring conferences near your sideline. Help get players promptly back onto the field. Officials must make sure they are inside the 9-yard marks and that only one coach and 11 players are in the timeout huddle.

TIMEOUT WITH BOTH TEAMS AT THE SIDELINES



During the timeout, the Referee and Back Judge remain in their positions in the offensive and defensive backfield respectively, the Umpire stands over the ball and the Linesman and Line Judge should take positions on the offensive side of their huddle, facing so that they can both monitor their huddle and have the Referee in sight.

TIMEOUT WITH ONE OR BOTH COACHES ON THE FIELD



During the timeout, the Referee and Back Judge remain in their positions in the offensive and defensive backfield respectively, the Umpire stands over the ball and the Linesman and Line Judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines.

# CREW OF FIVE

## CHAPTER 6

# MEASUREMENTS

- Measurement In Side Zone Opposite The Chains
- Short Of A First Down
- Team A Awarded A First Down

If the ball has become dead close to the line to gain, the covering official should not throw the ball to the wing official or place the ball at the wing official's foot. The ball should be handed to the wing official who will place the ball at the dead-ball spot. If that spot is in a side zone, the ball should be measured at that side zone, then brought inside the hash mark after the measurement is concluded.

When the Referee calls for a measurement, the Linesman should have the box moved behind the lead stake. That is a reference point in case the line to gain should somehow become lost during the process. As the chains are being brought onto the field, the Line Judge should use his foot to indicate the intersection of the five-yard line where the chain is clipped and a line through the ball parallel to the sideline. That is the

spot where the Linesman will place the clipped part of the chain.

The Linesman brings the chain in from the sideline with the chain crew members. Putting one hand on the links on each side of the clip improves the Linesman's chances of keeping track of the proper link in case the clip falls off the chain. The clip must be placed on the back edge of the line for the measurement. A good double-check is for the Linesman to state that the next down will be first if the ball is beyond the stake or the next down of the series if it is short. (Example: "It will either be first or fourth.")

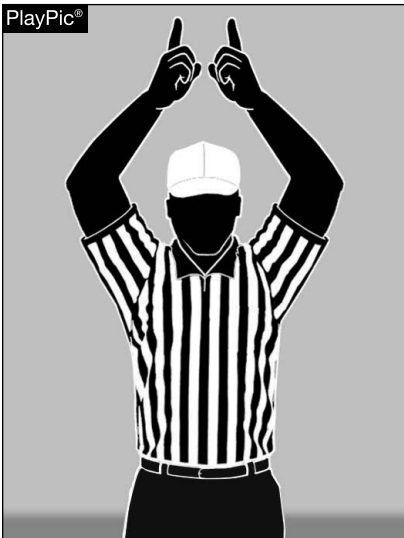
Depending on which team has the ball, the Back Judge or Line Judge can obtain another game ball from the offensive team's Ball Attendant. If the Back Judge has the ball, he can toss it to the Line Judge before the measurement.

The Back Judge holds the ball in place from the end nearest the line-to-gain. Once the Linesman tells the Referee he has the chain on the proper mark, the Umpire takes the forward stake from the chain crew member, then pulls the stake to ensure the chain is taut. The chains should not cross over the ball. The Referee rules whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake.

When doing a measurement the ball should never be moved until the measurement is completed. Then and only then should ball be moved if need be.

### **Short of a First Down**

If the measurement is in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the Umpire should keep control of the stake. The Referee uses his hands (or thumb and index finger if the ball is inches short of the front stake) to inform both benches how short the play ended of a first down (see PlayPic).



The Back Judge continues to hold the ball in place. The Referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball

and rises. The Referee should grasp the chain with two hands with the link that will be used to place the ball between his hands; that will ensure the proper link is maintained. The Back Judge continues to hold the ball in place. Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and Linesman walk to the nearest hash mark. The spare ball (the one the Line Judge is holding) is then placed at the proper spot.

Once the ball is placed, the Back Judge may remove the ball that was used in the measurement and return it to the Ball Attendant. The Referee must wait for the Linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

If the measurement occurred on fourth down and team A is short, the Referee signals the change of possession by giving the first down signal toward team A's goal line. The Referee then sets the ball in the same position as it was when it became dead so its foremost point becomes the rear point when the direction is changed. The new rear stake is then moved to the new foremost point of the ball.

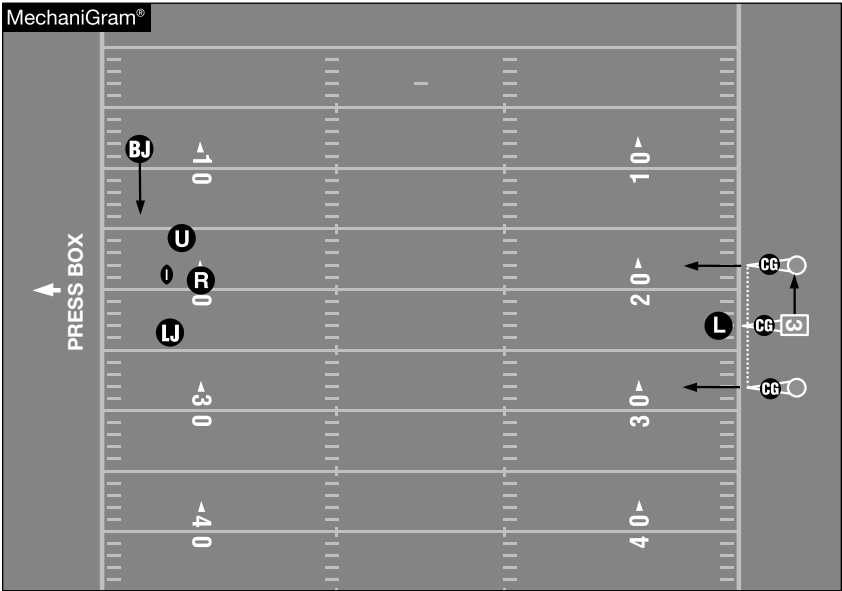
### **First down**

If the measurement results in the award of a new series, the Referee signals the first down. The Linesman need not hold the chain as he accompanies the chain crew back to the sideline, but he must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to the chain crew where the new series will begin.

If the measurement occurred in a side zone, the Back Judge should remain with the ball on the ground as a double-check to ensure the ball is spotted properly for the next play.

The Referee must wait for the Linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

MEASUREMENT IN SIDE ZONE OPPOSITE THE CHAINS



**Action on the field:** Play ends in side zone close to a first down.

**Referee:** Stops clock after seeing that measurement is necessary. Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

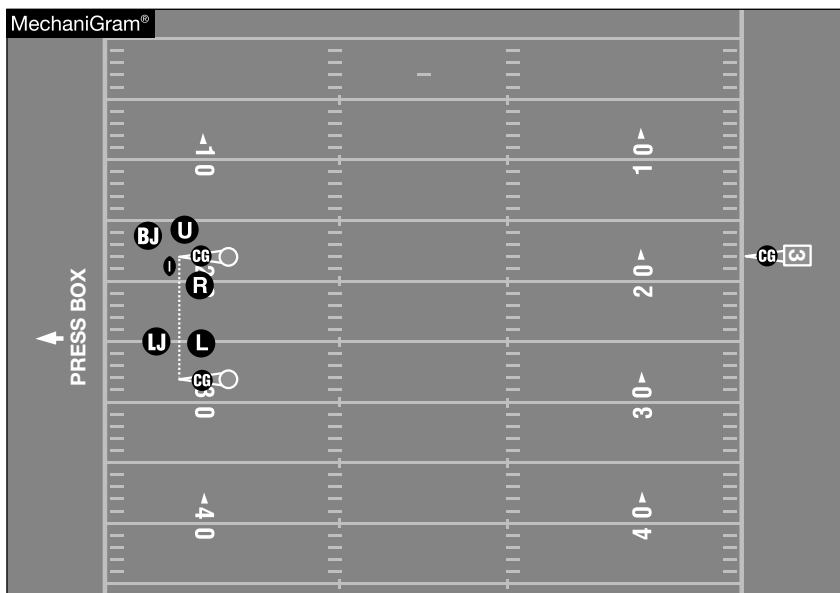
**Umpire:** Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

**Linesman:** Has box holder move box behind lead stake. Brings chain in from sideline with chain gang members to spot indicated by Line Judge.

**Line Judge:** Indicates intersection of the five-yard line where chain is clipped and line through ball parallel to sideline with bean bag or foot.

**Back Judge:** Moves to spot to hold ball in place on ground.

## SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN PART 1



**Action on the field:** Team A is short of a first down.

**Referee:** Rules whether or not ball is beyond front stake. Uses hands or fingers to inform both benches how short the play ended of first down.

**Umpire:** Holds lead stake.

**Linesman:** Holds chain in place.

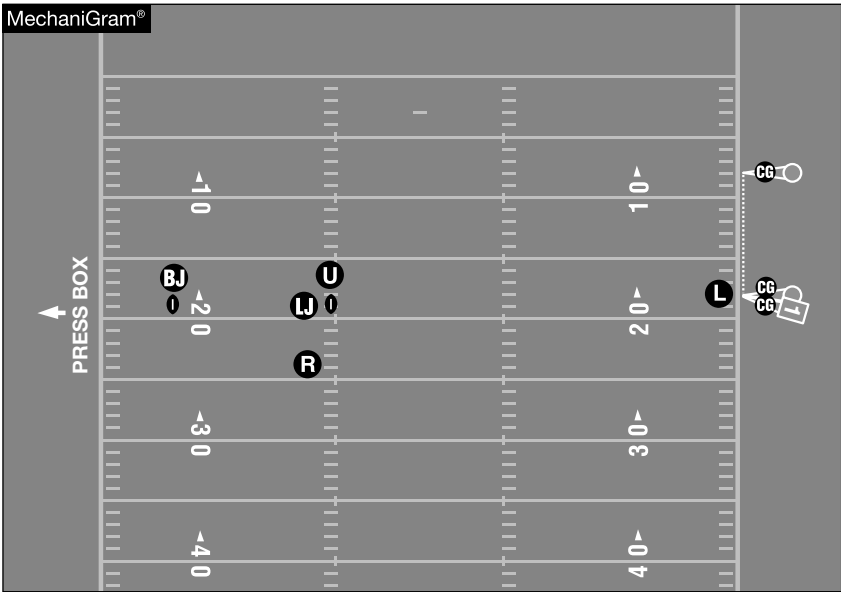
**Line Judge:** Gets spare ball from Ball Attendant.

**Back Judge:** Holds ball in place on ground.





### TEAM A AWARDED A FIRST DOWN



**Action on the field:** Team A is awarded a new series.

**Referee:** Signals first down. Waits for Linesman's signal that chain gang is back in position and other officials are ready before giving ready-for-play signal.

**Umpire:** Moves to hash mark where ball will next be snapped. Gets ball from Line Judge and places it.

**Linesman:** Returns to sideline with chain gang and indicates where new series will begin.

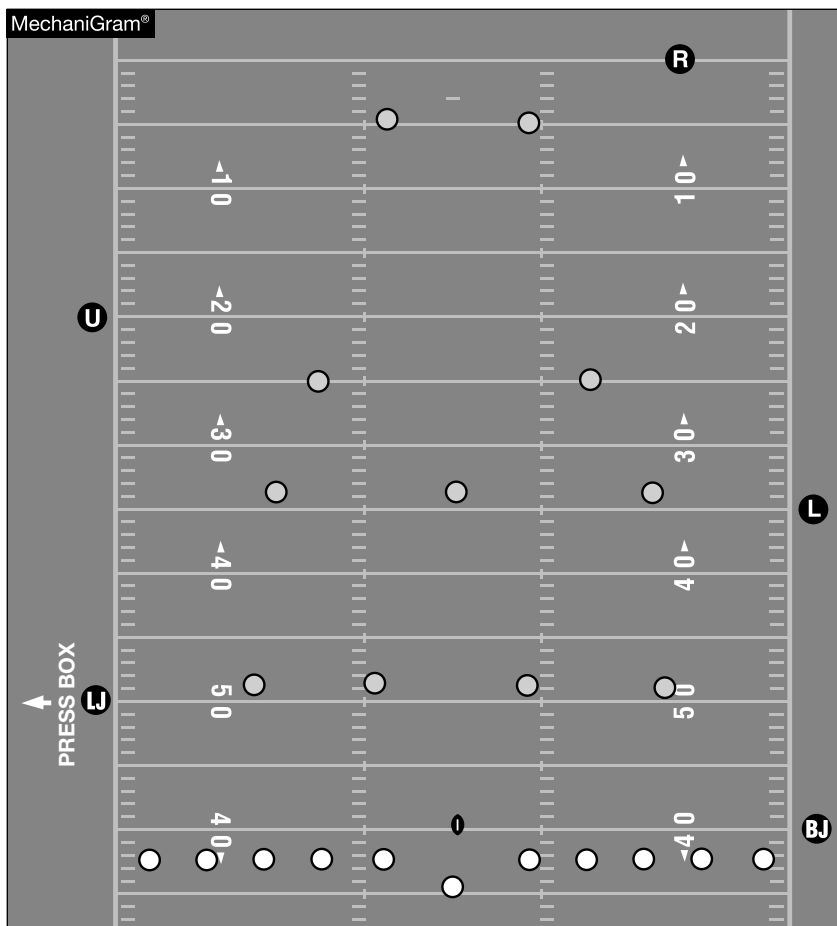
**Line Judge:** Delivers ball to Umpire for placement and returns to his sideline.

**Back Judge:** Holds ball in place on ground.

# CREW OF FIVE CHAPTER 7 POSITIONING

- Free Kick
- Onside Kick
- Scrimmage Play
- Punt
- Scoring Kick

## FREE KICK



**Note:** For free kicks where K's restraining line is not their 40-yard line and it is not a scoring kick, adjust the starting positions for each official accordingly except that no official starts deeper than the goal line.

**Referee:** Starting position is on the side of the field on which the chains are stationed, at the top of the numbers on team R's goal line. The Referee may move up from the goal line if the kicker has demonstrated that he is unable to kick the ball far enough to reach the goal line. Counts R players and confirms with the Umpire. Once he sees a ready signal from each official, the Referee blows his whistle and gives the ready for play signal. The goal line is your responsibility. You **MUST** be on the goal line **BEFORE** it becomes involved in the play. If a penalty has moved the ball a substantial distance,

set up deep enough so you do not have to retreat. Stay on the goal line until it is no longer threatened.

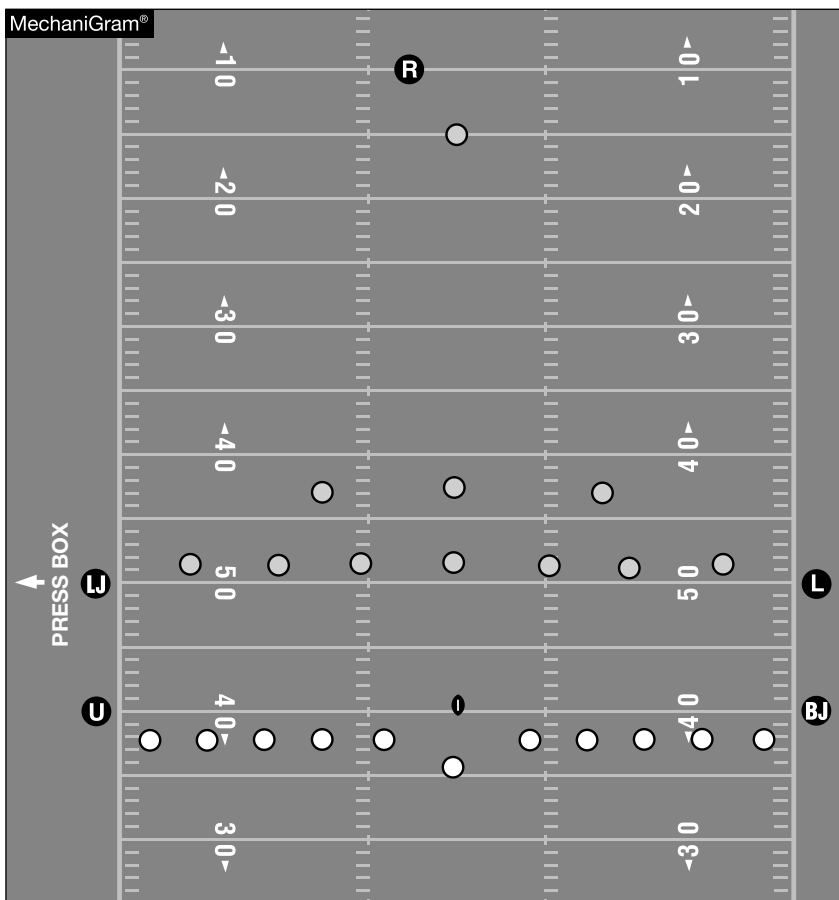
**Umpire:** Starting position is opposite chains outside sideline on team R's 20-yard line. Help clear sideline prior to ready signal. Counts R with Referee and signals. When in position and ready for the kick, and after the Line Judge signals, the Umpire should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

**Linesman:** Starting position is on the side of the field opposite the Umpire, on team R's 35 yardline. May optionally count the receiving team. When in position and ready for the kick, the Linesman should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge comes to the top of the numbers on his side of the field once the players are on the field and then counts the kicking team players. Do not allow the team to start with an incorrect number of players. The Line Judge reminds team R that all blocks must be above the waist. Before the Back Judge and Line Judge simultaneously move toward their sidelines, they both count the members of the kicking team and exchange their count signals. The Line Judge's starting position is on the side opposite the chains, at team R's 35-yard line. When in position and after ensuring sideline is clear and ready for kick, following Back Judge's ready signal, the Line Judge should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

**Back Judge:** Move up the sideline with the chains after every score. The Back Judge brings the ball out to the kicker when the 45 second time has expired from the end of the previous play. If there is a penalty to be enforced, he follows the proper procedures to enforce it at this time. Then he verifies that the correct number of players are on the field for the kicking team. He hands the kicker the ball and points out the Referee to him reminding him not to kick the ball until the Referee sounds the ready for play. Then he turns to the Line Judge and gives the signal for the correct count. He then returns to the sideline and after verifying that all members of the kicking team but the kicker are within five yards of their restraining line, he raises his hand to signal that he is ready. When the Referee signals the ready for play, the Back Judge will time the 25-second play clock and raise his hand when 5 seconds remain on the clock.

## ONSIDE KICK



**Referee:** Starting position is in the middle of the field, at least five yards deeper than the deepest receiver. Set up deep enough to cover a kick that threatens the goal line. Have a bean bag in hand. Counts R players and confirms with the Linesman and the Line Judge. When all crew members are giving the ready signal, the Referee sounds the whistle and gives the ready for play signal.

**Umpire:** Starting position is opposite the Back Judge on team K's free-kick line. The Umpire comes to the top of the numbers once the players are on the field. After identifying team K's free-kick line, the Umpire reminds team K that all blocks must be above the waist. When the Back Judge moves toward the sideline, the Umpire simultaneously moves to the sideline. Counts K with Back Judge and confirms. When in position and ready for the kick the Umpire should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee. The Umpire should have a bean bag in hand to mark the spot if team K first

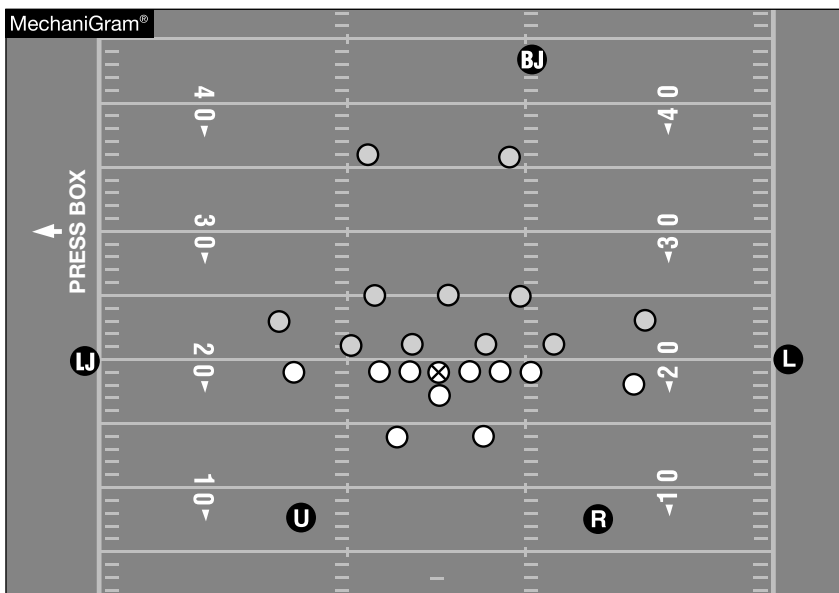
touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

**Linesman:** Starting position is the side of the field with the chain crew and on team R's free-kick line. The Linesman comes to the top of the numbers once the players are on the field. After identifying team R's free-kick line, the Linesman reminds team R that all blocks must be above the waist. When the Back Judge moves toward the sideline, the Linesman simultaneously moves to the sideline. Counts R with Referee and Line Judge and confirms. When in position and after ensuring sideline is clear and ready for the kick, the Linesman should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee. The Linesman should have a bean bag in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

**Line Judge:** Starting position is on the same side of the field as the Umpire, on team R's free-kick line. The Line Judge comes to the top of the numbers once the players are on the field. After identifying team R's free-kick line, the Line Judge reminds team R that all blocks must be above the waist. When the Back Judge moves toward the sideline, the Line Judge simultaneously moves to the sideline. Counts R with Referee and Linesman and confirms. When in position and after ensuring sideline is clear and ready for kick the Line Judge should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee. The Line Judge should have a bean bag in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

**Back Judge:** Starting position is on the Linesman's side of the field and on team K's free-kick line. The Back Judge brings the ball out to the kicker when the 45 second time has expired from the end of the previous play. If there is a penalty to be enforced, The Back Judge follows the proper procedures to enforce it at this time. After verifying that the correct number of K players are on the field for the kicking team the Back Judge hands the kicker the ball and points out the Referee reminding the kicker not to kick the ball until the Referee sounds the ready for play. Then the Back Judge turns to the Umpire and gives the signal for the correct count. The Back Judge then returns to the sideline and, after verifying that all members of the kicking team except the kicker are within five yards of their restraining line, raises an arm as a ready signal to the Referee.

## SCRIMMAGE PLAY



**Referee:** Be visible to the clock operator, in your pre-snap position wide of the huddle when marking the ball ready for play. Count the offensive team players and signal the result of the count to the Umpire. Hold that signal until he acknowledges your count signal. If you are short players, hold that signal until the snap. Once team A is at the line, starting position is on the passing-arm side of the quarterback, approximately 12 to 15 yards deep and at least as wide as the tight end. Before the ready, make sure all officials are ready. Do not go to the line of scrimmage to give the ready-for-play, nor turn your back to the ball when going to your initial position. A crisp ready-for-play signal shows confident leadership. Allow all offensive players to return to their side of the ball before making the ball ready-for-play. Be consistent. To ensure consistent tempo, count a few seconds after the Umpire spots the ball. Teams will adjust to your pace; you do not have to adjust to theirs. Disregard for hurry-up offenses. Unless time is crucial, try not to mark the ball ready-for-play with 26 or 27 seconds left on the game clock. Let it run down to below 25. You do not want a delay penalty with one or two seconds left. Common sense — preventive officiating!

**Umpire:** Starting position is in the offensive backfield approximately 12-14 yards deep and as wide as the tight end, on the left side of the line where the tight end would be. The umpire must be able to see the ball from the time the snapper handles the ball until the time it is snapped.

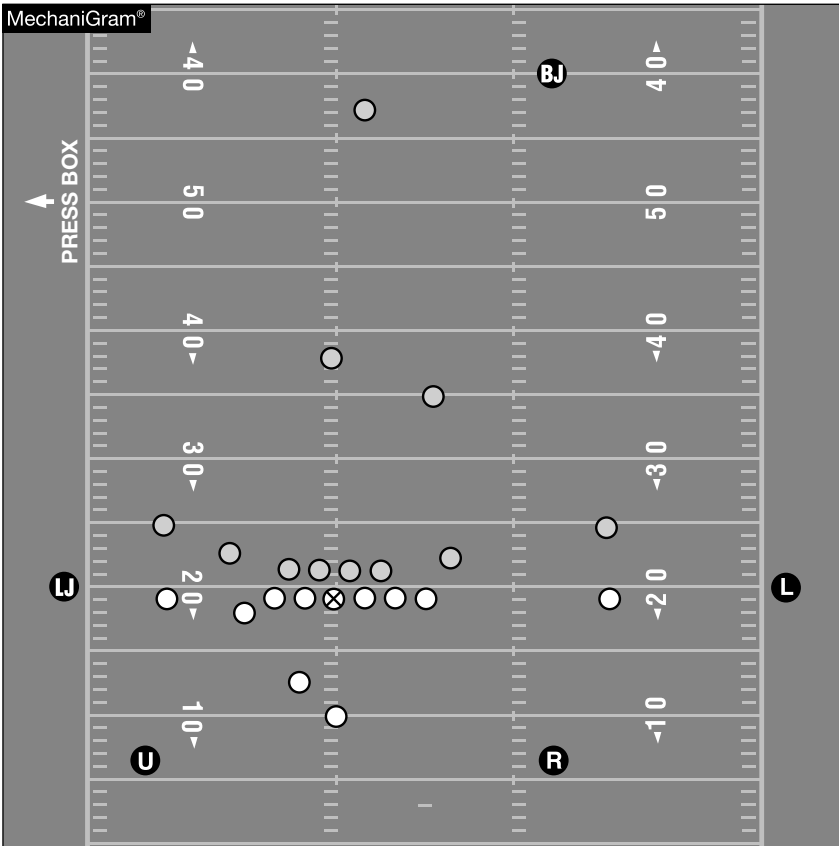
**Linesman and Line Judge:** Wing officials must ensure that anyone (reporters, statisticians, photographers, etc.) outside of the team box must be at least five yards off the sideline. (Also applies to all other plays). Line up on the sideline straddling the line of scrimmage even when the ball is on the opposite hash mark. It is easier to move in than

to retreat backward when the play comes toward you. Wing officials shall indicate to the other wing official when the widest receiver on their side is off the line of scrimmage and give the appropriate signal and/or acknowledgement to the opposite wing. The Line Judge counts the defensive team players and signals the result of the count to the Back Judge. Hold that signal until he acknowledges your count signal. The Linesman may optionally count the defense also.

**Back Judge:** Start 20-25 yards beyond the line of scrimmage, inside the uprights, and deeper than the deepest defender. You may release the goal line to the wing officials when the line of scrimmage is between the 15- and 20-yard line. You must release the goal line when the line of scrimmage is the 15-yard line and in. The decision to release or resume responsibility for the goal line is up to the Back Judge and must be communicated to the wing officials. When inside the 20-yard line, if you have not given up the goal line, your pre-snap position is on the goal line. If you have given it up, your pre-snap position is on the end line. Your pre-snap position is never in the middle of the end zone. Count the defense and verify with the Line Judge.



PUNT



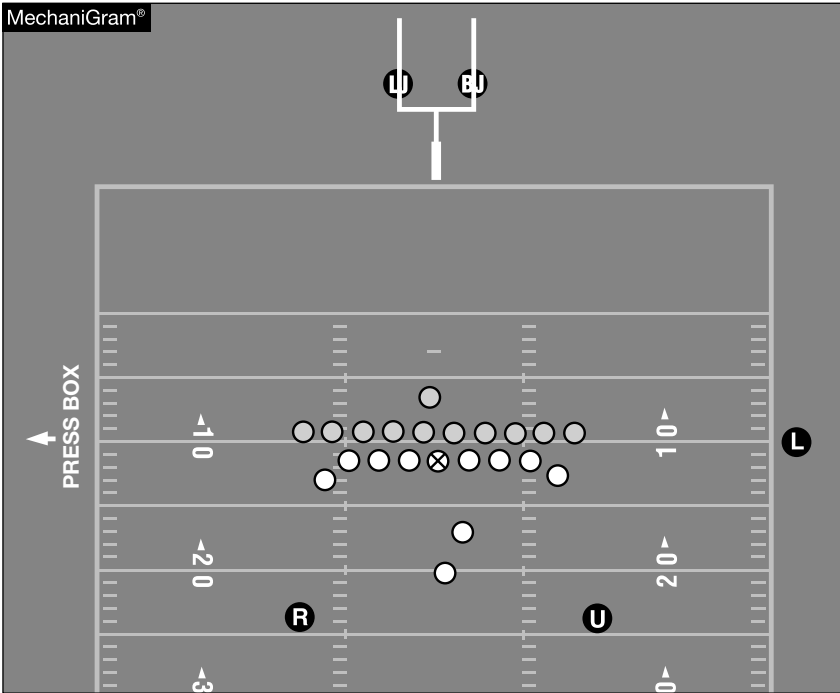
**Referee:** Position is three to five yards behind and eight to 10 yards outside the kicker, on kicking-leg side, which allows a view of the snap as well as action around the kicker before, during and after kick. Referee has the option of being wider and deeper on punts snapped inside the 20 if they are concerned about a bad snap and having to get back to cover potential plays at the goal line or end line. Remember to give the snapper protected signal to the Umpire and look for his corresponding signal. Be ready to move in the appropriate direction if an errant snap leads to a loose ball in the offensive backfield.

**Umpire:** Position is three to five yards behind and eight to 10 yards outside the kicker on the non-kicking-leg side, which allows a view of the snap as well as action around the snapper. Slowly move downfield after the ball is kicked observing the actions of the blockers.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Same starting position as for other plays from scrimmage.

**Back Judge:** Begin eight to 12 yards wider than and two to three yards behind the deepest receiver on the Linesman's side of the field. If there is no receiver, begin 40 yards off the line of scrimmage on the hash mark on the Linesman's side. Be prepared to move upfield if the kick is short or downfield if the receiver has to retreat. For scrimmage kicks snapped from the 40-yard line in, line up on the goal line at the hash mark on the Linesman's side. Do not move off the goal line unless you are positive it will not be threatened.

SCORING KICK OUTSIDE THE 10-YARD LINE



**Referee:** Starting position is two to three yards behind and eight to 10 yards outside the kicker, facing the holder. Remember to give the snapper protected signal to the Umpire and look for his corresponding signal.

**Umpire:** Starting position is two to three yards behind and eight to 10 yards outside the kicker facing the holder's back. Remember to give the snapper protected signal to the Referee and look for his corresponding signal.

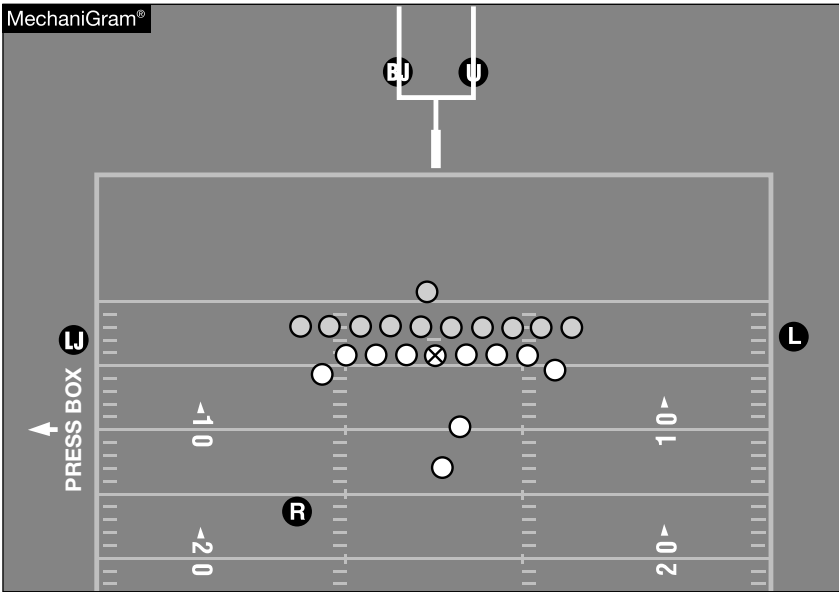
**Wing Officials:** The wing official facing the Referee remains on the line and on the sideline, while the opposite wing official joins the Back Judge behind the goalpost. However, if the line of scrimmage is on the 30-yard line or beyond, the wing official may remain in his normal sideline position at the option of the Referee as discussed in the crew's pregame conference. The MechaniGram depicts a situation in which the Line Judge is deep and the Linesman remains on the line.

**Back Judge:** Starting position is beyond the endline and behind the upright.

**Option:** Several teams have been observed using a field-goal attempt as a scrimmage kick when there is no capable punter. The ball may, or may not, be kicked toward the goalpost. Two officials are required to be under the goalpost when a team attempts a field goal that is snapped inside the 30-yard line. This mechanic reduces effective

coverage on plays where the ball may go out of bounds near the goal line or other play situations where the goalpost is never threatened. On field-goal attempts where the ball is snapped from on or outside the 30 yardline, only ONE official is REQUIRED (Back Judge) to be under the goalpost. In critical game situations where a field-goal attempt may be a genuine scoring attempt, two officials MAY position themselves under the goalpost to ensure maximum coverage of each upright.

SCORING KICK FROM THE 10-YARD LINE AND IN



**Referee:** Before marking the ball ready for play, move into the center of the action between the snapper and the kicker/holder, waiting for the Umpire to clear of his pre-snap duties and move to the end line. Remember to give the snapper protected signal to the Umpire and look for his corresponding signal. Once Umpire is clear, move to starting position — two to three yards behind and eight to 10 yards outside the kicker, facing the holder — and mark the ball ready.

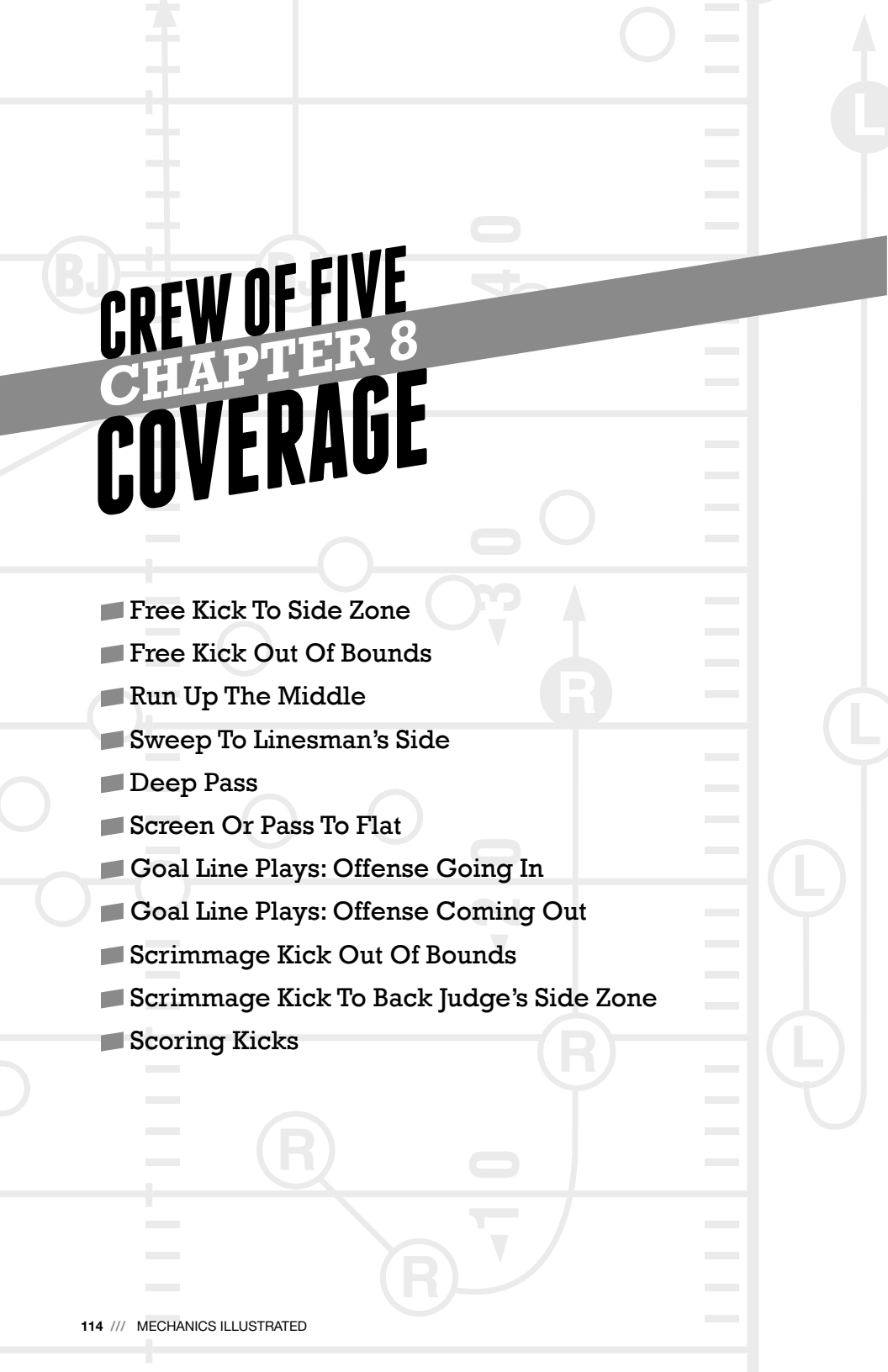
**Umpire:** Remember to give the snapper protected signal to the Referee and look for his corresponding signal. Remind defense that the snapper is protected before retreating into position under the goalpost on the opposite side from the **Back Judge**. Umpire is still responsible for noting numbering exceptions of interior linemen.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Normal positions on the end of the line. Responsible for initial line charge and any action by the back, positioned at a 45-degree angle behind the line of scrimmage, as to legal blocks on defenders coming from the outside.

**Back Judge:** Pre-snap duties the same as other scrimmage kicks. Position under the goalpost on either side of the goal post and have responsibility for that post as well as the crossbar on kicks attempted.

## **SWINGING GATE**

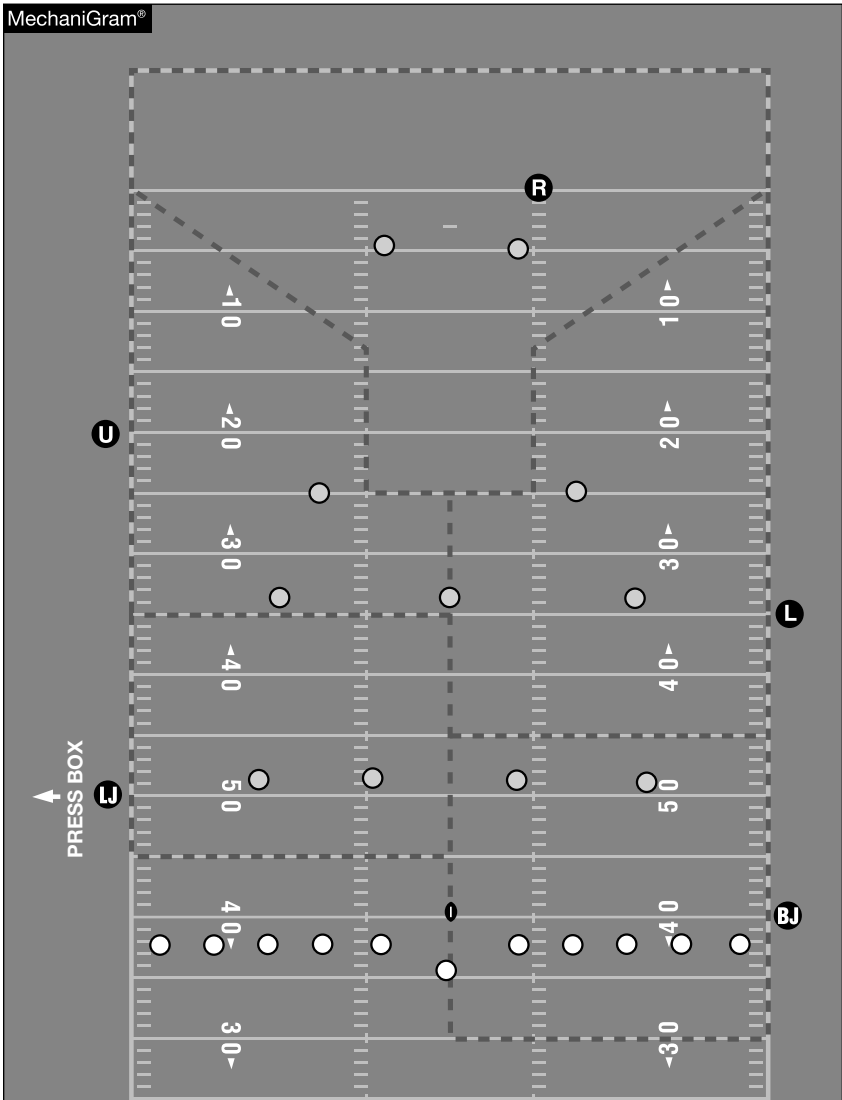
The “Swinging Gate” is a formation generally used for a try; and it primarily affects the mechanics of the Umpire and the Referee (the wing officials and the Back Judge do not need to adjust their pre-snap positions). When the offense sets up in a swinging gate formation, the Umpire and the Referee take their pre-snap positions as they would in any normal scrimmage formation. If the ball is snapped from this formation, they officiate the play from these positions. If/as the offense shifts into a scrimmage kick formation for the try, the Umpire shifts to his/her normal scrimmage kick position (behind the goal post opposite the Referee); and the Referee shifts to his/her normal scrimmage kick position (approximately eight yards wide and 3 yards behind the kicker/holder). As they shift to these positions, they can remind the defense (as well as each other) of “snapper protection.”



# CREW OF FIVE CHAPTER 8 COVERAGE

- Free Kick To Side Zone
- Free Kick Out Of Bounds
- Run Up The Middle
- Sweep To Linesman's Side
- Deep Pass
- Screen Or Pass To Flat
- Goal Line Plays: Offense Going In
- Goal Line Plays: Offense Coming Out
- Scrimmage Kick Out Of Bounds
- Scrimmage Kick To Back Judge's Side Zone
- Scoring Kicks

## FREE KICK COVERAGE ZONES



### Free Kicks

If the ball blows off the tee just prior to the kick, the Back Judge should sound his whistle, the ball should be re-teed and the play clock set to 25 seconds

when the Referee gives the ready for play signal. The Referee has responsibility to ensure that K has at least four players on each side of the ball at the kick. When the ball is touched by a member of the



receiving team, the covering official should give the “wind the clock” signal. If the kick is down the middle of the field, the Referee stays with the runner to about team R’s 25-yard line. If the return is to the Umpire’s side and as wide as the hash mark, the Umpire picks up coverage and stays with the runner. If the kick is to the opposite side and as wide as the hash mark, the Linesman takes up coverage and stays with the runner. They have responsibility for the runner’s forward progress spot from the catch to K’s 2-yard line.

The covering official should give the wind the clock signal when a receiver first touches the ball inbounds, even if other than a hand or foot is touching the ground.

If the Umpire or Linesman is responsible for the initial coverage of the runner, the Referee cleans up behind the play, but must move cautiously in case team R runs a reverse or the runner reverses his field.

The Back Judge is the center fielder. Do not allow any player to get behind you! If required to enhance coverage on a long run to the opposite side, the Back Judge will come off the sideline during the live-ball period to be in a better position to rule on forward progress or provide goal line coverage. The Back Judge administers any penalties enforced on free kicks and gives the only signal to the pressbox prior to marking off the distance.

On kicks inside team R’s five-yard line, the Referee is responsible for determining whether the momentum exception applies and whether the kick is to be ruled a touchback. If a touchback occurs, the Referee should loudly blow his whistle and move to a position to get players attention to prevent late hits on receivers and then give the touchback signal.

When the ball becomes dead, the covering official must blow his whistle and give the stop clock signal.

On free kicks that go out of bounds, the covering official should throw his flag up in the air towards the spot where the ball went out of bounds. He then moves to the exact spot where the ball crossed the sideline and remains there until it is obvious that the spot is no longer needed.

On free kicks that go out of bounds inside the 20 yardline the Referee will assist the wing official with the ruling in this side zone. If the ball goes out of bounds, the nearest official will sound his whistle, throw his flag toward the spot where the ball went out of bounds and give the stop clock signal. The Referee will then signal a free kick foul and the resulting option for the receiving team.

After the ball is kicked, the Linesman and Line Judge move quickly downfield, maintaining coverage of their respective sidelines after making sure there is no first touching and that all first blocks are legal. If there is first touching, the covering official should drop their bean bag at the yard line of the first touching and the play continues. At the end of the play, the Referee gives the first touching signal.

The Back Judge comes immediately onto the field inside the hashes to be able to officiate the play as he/she would on a long run. The Line Judge and Linesman have responsibility on wedge blocks and initial blocks up front between opposing linemen. The Line Judge should go no farther than team R’s 35-yard line in case the runner breaks off a long run.

The Linesman should move downfield an appropriate distance based upon the kickoff. They should trail the play keeping it so as to maintain a vantage point on action around the runner. Both the Linesman and Line Judge have forward progress responsibility before K’s 2-yard line.

The Back Judge has goal line responsibility. The Back Judge administers any penalties enforced on free kicks and gives the only signal to the press box prior to marking off the distance.

**Onside Kicks**

When an onside kick is anticipated and the crew has assumed the starting positions detailed on pgs 104-105, the entire crew must be prepared to cover a variety of possible plays.

The Referee has responsibility to verify that the kicking team has the required number of players on each side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kick comes to any of the deep receivers the Referee must retreat to the goal line if the kick could get into the end zone. The Referee must watch for a fair catch signal by any R player, make the catch/no catch decision if necessary and observe any initial blocking by either team. If the kick is short the referee must "clean up" behind the play watching for any illegal contact by players away from the ball. The Back Judge must be alert to any illegal action on the kicker by an R player.

The Umpire and the Back Judge must watch for K players (except the kicker) who are more than 5 yards behind the ball prior to the kick or are offside at the kick. They must also be alert for a pop-up kick. Any of these should result in a flag and an immediate whistle to end the play. After a legal kick their responsibility shifts to blocking action ahead and behind the ball, watch for illegal blocking by K prior to the ball traveling 10 yards or a block by R, also watch for low blocks and holds. Be prepared, with bean bag in hand, to mark a spot of first touching by K.

The Line Judge or the Linesman have ball responsibility if the kick comes to their side of the field. A ball between the hash marks should be covered by both officials. If the kicker has "pooch kicked" the ball just over R's front line, watch for a fair catch signal by a middle line R player. Watch for illegal blocks by both teams; be prepared, with beanbag in hand, to mark a spot of first touching by K; and

be ready to blow the play dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

In the event that an R player gets possession of the ball and advances it, the four officials who started on K's line and R's line must box in the runner and cover the play. The Back Judge is responsible for goal line coverage, the Referee trails the play and watches for illegal contact behind the play. Remember, K can acquire possession of the ball if it has been touched by R or if it has travelled 10 yards and touched the ground. However, K cannot advance the ball as it is immediately dead when a K player establishes possession.

**Free Kicks After a Safety**

The coverage areas and mechanics are the same for the free kick that follows a safety.

The Back Judge should be at team K's 20-yard line, the Line Judge and Linesman at team K's 30-yard line and the position of the remaining officials is adjusted accordingly.

**Field Goal Attempt by Free Kick After a Fair Catch**

If team K attempts a field goal by free kick after a fair catch (or awarded fair catch), the Referee and Umpire move behind the upright. The Referee rules whether or not the kick cleared the crossbar while both officials determine if the kick was between the uprights.

The remaining officials assume their normal positions for a free kick.

**Scrimmage Plays**

The Referee's starting position is 12 to 15 yards back and at least as wide as the tight end (approximately at a 45 degree angle) on the quarterback's throwing side. Adjust your position when game situations dictate a change. Start with your hands on your knees or stand straight up.

Count the offense and signal while they are in the huddle. Wing officials appreciate seeing your count as early as possible. Hold your signal until the offense reaches the line of scrimmage.

Get to the sideline and help your wing official with action out of bounds. Help escort players out of opponent's bench area.

The Referee is the sole guardian and protector of the passer, kicker and holder. Do not release your eyes from these players until they are out of jeopardy. **DO NOT** follow the ball when released by the passer — continue to focus on the passer until he is not threatened.

Help on-rushing defenders by yelling "Pass is away!" or "It's gone!"

Help spot the ball when the Umpire has gone into the side zone and help relay the ball whenever needed.

The Referee is responsible for action around the runner until he crosses the neutral zone.

On a running play, the Referee focuses on the ball, the runner and the blocking around the runner. If the play is up the middle, he should maintain his separation so that he can see the action around the runner and slowly move towards the line of scrimmage. If the play goes to the opposite side, the Referee should move toward or parallel to the line of scrimmage and maintain a position approximately in line with the runner. Over-aggressiveness is to be avoided in case the play is a reverse. If the play is to the Referee's side, the Referee moves behind the play and is responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone or turns upfield. The Referee should watch the handoff or the pitchout, see the runner head outside the free-blocking zone, and watch to see that no one illegally contacts the quarterback before drifting along to follow the play. He will not have much to observe besides the quarterback because little significant

action is likely to take place behind the runner, and the runner himself is being watched by the appropriate wing official.

On short plays that go into the side zone or out of bounds, the Referee needs to quickly come over to provide coverage and assist the wing official. The Referee needs to officiate any players that cross the sidelines looking for late hits and other personal fouls.

On passing plays, the Referee observes blocking by the backs as the quarterback drops back. The Referee should move to maintain the 12 to 15 yard distance between himself and the quarterback (e.g. if the quarterback drops back seven yards, the Referee retreats seven yards). By maintaining spacing between himself and the quarterback, the Referee will widen his field of vision. The wider view allows the Referee to determine if the pass is forward or backward yet continue to focus attention on the passer. The Referee may use the extended arm signal to indicate a backward pass. If the flight of the pass is altered because the passer's arm is hit by a defender, the Referee must determine whether the resultant loose ball is a forward pass or a fumble. If the Referee rules the play to be an incomplete pass, he must blow his whistle and signal emphatically. If the play results in a fumble, the Referee may bean bag the spot where possession was lost and continue officiating.

Intentional grounding is the Referee's call **ONLY**. In unusual circumstances wing officials may initiate conversation with the Referee and provide helpful information.

The Referee should ask for and be receptive to information from a wing official when necessary. Throw the flag first and then pick it up if information from the wing official dictates. If you must throw a late flag, "soft toss" the flag to the spot of the pass.

Similarly, the Referee has primary

responsibility for illegal forward passes. Move to passer's footsteps to judge whether it is beyond the line of scrimmage. Be receptive to input from the Umpire. Throw the flag if you believe you have a penalty; pick up your flag if the play is judged to be legal.

On runs that end out of bounds behind the neutral zone, the Referee is responsible for marking the spot.

When the referee blows the ready for play signal, the umpire should stand with his feet straddling the ball. After the signal, the umpire moves to his position.

Referees and umpires must determine the point of attack because of the potential for holding, chop blocks and other fouls.

Plays that end in a side zone may require the umpire to move outside the hashmark and toward the sideline in order to clean up behind the play. When play swings around to one side, the umpire should turn his attention to the blocking ahead of the runner and should prepare to cross outside the hashmark if the runner is downed in the side zone near the sideline. The umpire can help get the ball back to the hashmark and set it at the progress spot.

The Umpire must control the line of scrimmage and keep peace in the trenches. Do not allow the defense to interfere with the quarterback's signal calling. Warn, if possible, before throwing the flag.

Wing officials direct and manage more non-player personnel than any other official. They must be effective communicators with sideline personnel.

Determine which coach will be responsible for sideline control and who will receive penalty information.

Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field and count to ensure team A has at least seven players on the line of scrimmage. If the receiver nearest the official is in the offensive

backfield, the wing official uses the extended arm signal to alert the opposite wing official. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving, even if the player reverses his motion.

Because they will mark forward progress the vast majority of the time, the Line Judge and Linesman must be especially alert for quick-hitting running plays into the line. On runs to the opposite side of the field, the off wing official must clean up after the play.

The wing officials have to follow receivers downfield but should look back to see if a passer is truly setting up to pass.

Wing officials have responsibility for the passer if he scrambles past the line of scrimmage. Use "crossfield mechanics" on longer pass plays especially when a receiver is coming back toward you; look to the opposite wing official for a crossfield spot. Conversely, be prepared to give a crossfield spot by coming out to the numbers on your side.

When you read pass, do not be too quick to release downfield. Read your keys.

You must know if a quick pass was forward or backward toward you. When in question, it is a forward pass.

Do not hurry touchdown signal on a completed pass in the corner of the end zone. Make eye contact with the Back Judge before you both signal.

Assist the Referee with intentional grounding if he asks for help or you have information to share. Any flag for intentional grounding is the Referee's decision.

The wing officials also look off-ball for action by a second or third defender on passes over the middle where the Back Judge has primary coverage. Be alert for action against a defenseless receiver.

If the ball carrier goes out of bounds into the opposing team's

bench area, the wing officials mark the out-of-bounds spot with a bean bag and follow the play into the bench area. Escort the runner back onto the field, especially through the opposing team box area.

On a run to your side, the Referee has the runner until the runner gets to the line of scrimmage. The side official will watch action around the runner, observing all blocking action and not focus on the runner. At the line of scrimmage or when the sideline is threatened, the side official will take the runner and the Referee will observe action around the runner.

On runs toward you, stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball carrier crosses the line or step into the offensive backfield and trail the play.

On runs away from you, do not come onto the field, but instead move downfield keeping your vision wide and observe action away from the ball. Be alert for reverses.

Use “crossfield mechanics” for help on forward progress after long gains. Your partner may have an uncluttered look so look at him before deciding on a progress spot.

On plays that end out-of-bounds, wing officials may come a few steps onto the field after the play to get a better view of the players that have gone out-of-bounds.

The Line Judge has the best look at the forward stake. Stop the clock for a first down. Give an inconspicuous signal to the Referee.

Wing officials will signal “double stakes” if yardage to the line-to-gain is more than 10 yards. Other officials may optionally give this signal.

The Back Judge must read his key before moving after the snap. Then if he reads run, he should not move backwards but may move laterally towards the point of attack to help box in the play. He notes blocking ahead of the runner, or to the runner himself if the

runner should advance more than 10 yards downfield.

Do not “creep” toward the line of scrimmage if you feel uninvolved in a conservative running game. About that time, a pass will be thrown over the middle — 15 yards behind you.

On long plays where the Back Judge has goalline responsibility, the wings have the responsibility for the spot to the two yard line. The Back Judge will have the last two yards of the field unless he has given up the goal line either explicitly before the play starts or if he has to move to the end in pass coverage. In those cases the wing officials have the spot all the way to the goal line.

Do not start a play outside the hash marks. Rotate to the middle of the field so that you are always looking inside out. Bracket the play with the wing official.

When a pass is in the air, move toward the ball. Do not watch the flight of the ball. The ball will get to a spot on the field. Keep your focus on action involving the receiver and defender. Look off-ball for action by a second or third defender on passes in the side zones where the wing officials have primary coverage. Be alert for action against a defenseless receiver. Remember that pass interference and kick catching interference generally occurs from the “waist up.”

Never concentrate on the ball carrier. You rarely have forward progress; the wing officials will come down and spot the ball. Officiate the action around the ball carrier! Stay deep and wide to watch dead ball action. You are the designated crew-saver. Always watch for late hits and illegal conduct well away from the ball, especially dead-ball situations. Be active moving toward sideline and assist wing officials with dead ball officiating, especially in the team box area.

Help relay and exchange game balls, but make sure all dead ball action is complete. Do not miss extracurricular activity because you are relaying a ball.

If a new ball is to be spotted at the hash mark, cover the old ball until the new ball is in place.

When a play is more than a five-yard gain and the runner heads across the sideline, the Back Judge should hustle out of bounds to protect players. On a play gaining considerably more than 10 yards, the wing official maintains the spot while the Back Judge escorts the players who went out of bounds back to the field.

On long plays down the sideline that are scoring plays, before signaling the touchdown, the Back Judge should look at the wing official to confirm that the runner stayed inbounds.

The Back Judge is responsible for team B's goal line until he has given up the goal line, at which point the Back Judge's starting position is on the end line.

If the Back Judge starts on the goal line and the action of the play forces him off the goal line, he must move to the end line and the wing officials assume responsibility for the goal line coverage. Once the Back Judge moves off the goal line on a play, he must stay on the end line and not move back to the goal line. Upon giving up the goal line, the Back Judge is to proceed to the end line where he is to officiate during the play. However, he may move off the end line only if doing so gives him a better angle and position to make a call.

The Back Judge should not let a runner beat him/her to the goal line (this would properly allow the Back Judge to stay on goal line to rule even if defenders and blockers were ahead of the runner). Back Judges should not let one or more receiver get behind the Back Judge; if the receiver(s) force the Back Judge off the goal line the Back Judge goes to the end line. Once on the end line the Back Judge is to stay in position there.

Summary, a runner does not force

a Back Judge off the goal line, but a receiver may force the Back Judge off and to the endline. If forced off the goal line the Back Judge is to move to cover the end line and to remain there.

When the pass is in flight, the Back Judge must quickly determine the intended receiver and get into the best possible position to observe the play. Both the offensive and defensive players must be observed for possible interference.

When a play ends inbounds near a sideline, the covering official shall give the "start-the-clock" signal. If the line-to-gain has been reached, he would then give the "stop-the-clock" signal twice to signify the ball is dead inbounds but the line to gain has been reached.

When there is some question as to whether the ball was caught, the covering official may give the good catch signal if the ball is caught, or if incomplete, may give either the receiver out of bounds or the pass juggled signal, after the incomplete signal is given twice.

On an interception or fumble return by the defense, the Referee now has the goal line responsibility. He should immediately start backing up and getting to the goal line. Wing officials are responsible for making sure the runner stays inbounds at their sideline and stopping the clock if he does not.

If the play is a run play and it is a two point conversion attempt which fails, the covering wing official must signal that the try failed using signal S10.

When the snap goes beyond the quarterback in shotgun formation, the Referee should widen and retreat to keep the play boxed in with the opposite wing. The wing on the same side as the Referee will have responsibility for the line of scrimmage. Once the snap is possessed by the quarterback, all officials return to their

primary coverage duties for a pass or run. If the quarterback is sacked, the wing opposite the Referee has primary responsibility for the spot.

Notes: The “spot” on sacks has been in question as well, and this should help clear that up, as there is no need for both wings to follow the quarterback back to the “progress” spot.

### **Goal Line Plays**

Although a touchdown can be scored on any play, snaps from inside the 10 yard line are referred to as goal line plays. Wing officials have the primary responsibility for the goal line and for ruling on runs crossing the goal line. When the ball is snapped between team B’s 10- and five-yard lines, the wing officials release slowly downfield at the snap, staying ahead of the runner all the way to the goal line. From the 5 yard line in, wing officials must go immediately to the goal line at the snap and then, if necessary, officiate back to the dead ball spot. It is extremely important that the covering official be on the goal line when the runner arrives to determine if a live ball has crossed the goal line.

For a play at the pylon corner, it is critical that the official maintain distance from the sideline while straddling the goal line. Wing officials should be working at a minimum of two yards off of the sideline at the snap, and be prepared to go deeper at the goal line if the play comes toward their sideline. It is important on these calls to be stationary when viewing the play at the goal line (if possible) as it provides the best view of the play. On a touchdown at the pylon where the action continues into (and often out of) the end zone, the touchdown signal is given while continuing to follow the players action. Do not remain stationary; facing the field and goalline — observe and manage the players!)

The touchdown signal is only given by an official who actually sees the ball in possession of a runner break the plane of the goal line. Mirroring the touchdown signal of another official is unnecessary and should not be done. In the case of an incorrect or premature call, it forces the Referee to nullify the score, explain the error to both teams, and brings the entire crew’s credibility into question. Once the requirements for a touchdown are met, the covering official should straddle the goal line and give a crisp, professional touchdown signal.

If appropriate, the covering wing official may signal the touchdown (or successful try) while executing his accordion in movement (crashing). Once the ball is dead, the wing officials shall accordion in quickly to be in a good position to dead ball officiate and manage the players.

Wing officials need to crash-in on plays in the middle of the field near the goal line just as they would anywhere else on the field. The wing official may pass players if necessary to rule on a scoring attempt. (Back Judge and Referee need to monitor those players passed by the wing official).

If the ball is snapped inside the 20 and is a bad snap, the wing official facing the Referee should read the Referee’s movement and take responsibility for the goal line.

### **Reverse Goal Line Plays**

Snaps from inside the 8 yard line (with the ball going out) are referred to as “Reverse goal line plays.” From the 5 yard line in, wing officials should go immediately to the goal line at the snap and then officiate forward to the dead ball spot. The exception to going to the goal line immediately at the snap would be on a quick hitter or a quarterback sneak where the wing official must rule on forward progress that happens immediately with the snap.

Wing officials should be working at a minimum of two yards off the sideline at the snap and be prepared to go deeper at the goal line if the play comes toward their sideline. Wing officials have the primary responsibility for the goal line and for ruling on runs ending behind the goal line (safety). The Referee has primary responsibility for the end line. Depending upon the location of the snap in the red zone, the Referee shall communicate with the wing officials when he assumes primary responsibility for the goal line. On pass plays where the quarterback is sacked, the Referee is responsible for determining whether or not a safety has occurred.

When the ball is snapped from the 5 to 8 yard line, the wing official facing the referee shall have primary responsibility for the goal line. In this case, the wing official does not need to immediately retreat to the goal line at the snap; however, he needs to be aware of his responsibilities for goal line coverage and be prepared to move quickly into position to rule on a potential safety.

Any time the ball is snapped inside the 20, the wing opposite the Referee must be especially alert of the movement of the Referee, as a bad snap or blocked kick may mean that the goal line or even the end line are threatened. The wing official on the same side of the Referee will have primary responsibility for the line of scrimmage.

### **Scrimmage Kicks**

The Referee must not watch the ball as it travels from the snapper to the punter — it will get there! Focus on seeing the ball into the punter's hands to rule on muff/fumble.

Stay focused on the kicker until all threat of harm has ended.

Alert the defenders when the ball is kicked: "Ball's away, ball's away."

Do not move too quickly downfield after the scrimmage kick. Stay focused on the kicker until all threat of harm has ended.

The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction in case of an errant snap or blocked kick. When the snap goes beyond the holder/ punter, the Referee should widen and retreat to keep the play boxed in with the opposite wing. The wing on the same side as the R will have responsibility for the line of scrimmage.

Once the snap is possessed by the kicking team, all officials return to their primary coverage duties for a pass or run.

If the ball carrier is sacked, the wing opposite the Referee has primary responsibility for the spot.

On a kick that has gone out of bounds on the fly, if you can assist in lining up the point where the ball crossed the sideline, raise your hand. The covering official will move up the sideline and stop when you drop your hand. Disregard if there is continuing action on the kicker. If you are unable to provide assistance, the covering official shall come to the point where he believes the ball crossed the sideline.

If the receivers begin a return, the Referee should move slowly downfield; if the runner breaks a long return, the Referee may assume responsibility for the runner. The Referee will get an inside-out look regardless of which sideline is involved since the appropriate wing official has sideline responsibility from endline to endline.

On blocked kicks, the Referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball.

The umpire observes blocking on the left side of team K's formation. After the ball is kicked, the umpire should move slowly downfield and observe action behind the runner.

The Linesman observes the initial line charge and remains on the line until



the kick crosses the neutral zone while the Line Judge drifts downfield when the ball is snapped while verifying that the snap is possessed. If the ball is not possessed by the kicker, he will move back towards the ball and help with coverage. On a short scrimmage kick, the Line Judge watches action involving short receiver(s) until the Back Judge can release from the deep receiver(s).

The wing officials should not always expect the Referee to help line up a scrimmage kick that has gone out of bounds in the air. If the Referee has a hand up, that means he can help. You may have to create a spot, but once you choose a spot, sell it!

On the vast majority of punts, however, both wing officials are responsible for their sideline from endline to endline and for covering the runner when the return is to their area. If the run is to the opposite sideline, clean up behind the play.

If the ball is snapped inside the 20 and is a bad snap, the Line Judge must assume coverage of the goal line.

The covering official must be ready to drop a beanbag at the yard line where the punt ended. They must also be ready to mark the spot of first touching with a bean bag.

All deep receivers are the responsibility of the Back Judge. Once the ball is kicked, he judges the validity of any fair catch signal, moves with the receiver and obtains a position to rule on catch vs. muff. Once the receiver catches the kick, move your attention away and to other players. Do not watch the ball carrier!

When kick goes out of bounds, rule on dead-ball spot from your inside position moving slowly toward sideline but do not go farther than the hash marks. Observing field action is more important than obtaining a precise dead-ball spot.

If a scrimmage kick comes to rest or is downed inside the one-yard line, place the ball at the one-yard

line. Common sense and preventative officiating dictate no new series should start from the six-inch line!

The covering official, regardless of position, must bean bag the spot where the kick ends. That spot may be used for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement. If the kick crosses the goal line, the covering official must give the touchback signal.

If the kick goes out of bounds on the fly, the nearest official should give the stop the clock signal, then move down the sideline further than the kick and start walking up the sideline. (Do not raise your arm.) Look towards the Referee. If he has his arm raised, continue walking until he drops his arm. Then stop and signal the direction for the first down. This is the new dead-ball spot. If the Referee does not have his arm raised, continue walking until the approximate position where you think the ball crossed the sideline. This will be the dead-ball spot.

### **Scoring Kicks Outside the 10-Yard Line**

On field-goal attempts or tries by place kick, the Referee should line up facing the holder so you can see the holder receive the ball. Be ready to assist with sideline coverage if a run or pass develops to your side.

After the snap, the Referee observes the actions of the kicker and holder. If the holder has to leave the kneeling position to catch or recover a poor snap, the Referee must know whether the rules allow the holder to return to a kneeling position. After the kick, the Referee is responsible for ruling on contact on the kicker and holder. If a kick try is blocked, the Referee should blow his whistle immediately; a blocked field goal remains live, however.

In cases of a fake or a broken play, the Referee assists on sideline coverage on the open side of the field.

Once he is confident the kicker and holder are in no danger of being

roughed, the Referee looks to the deep officials to learn the result of the kick. The signal should then be relayed to the pressbox.

The Umpire shall observe the action on the initial line charge and blocking.

If a blocked kick or fake results in a play toward the goal line on the Line Judge's side of the field, the Umpire moves toward the goal line to assist on coverage of the runner. The Umpire also helps rule whether or not a blocked kick crossed the neutral zone on his side of the field.

On a broken play, the wing official moves from under the goalpost straight along the end line to his sideline, and then turns up the sideline to stop at the goal line. From this position he can officiate ahead of any play that threatens his sideline. The Referee reacts by staying wide and outside of any play that moves into the side zone, vacated by the wing official who is under the goal post, assisting with out-of-bounds coverage.

The wing official on the line of scrimmage (the one facing the Referee when he is in position) will rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. If a pass is used on the fake, the wing official must know if the passer was beyond the line. He can also help rule on ineligible downfield on fake kicks that lead to passes. When a runner approaches the goal line, the wing official that has responsibility for the line must be at the goal line to rule on the potential score.

The opposite wing official and Back Judge stand beyond the end zone and behind the upright on their side of the field. The positioning can be adjusted once the ball is kicked to provide the best look possible. The wing official is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on his side; the Back Judge is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on his side as well as whether the ball cleared the crossbar.

The official making the decision whether the kick is good or not should

either say "yes, yes, yes" or "no, no, no" to indicate which signal to jointly use to indicate the result of the kick. Both officials should signal together (start signal together, end signal together) whether or not the

kick is good. Optionally, if the kick is wide, the official under that goal post may give the "kick is wide" signal. If the kick lands in the end zone on a field goal attempt, only the Back Judge gives the touchback signal and neither official gives the "no good" signal.

When a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball breaks the goal line plane and it is obvious it will not score, the Back Judge sounds his whistle and immediately signals while moving forward. Do not look at the other official before signaling. If you do not rule on the kick, simply mirror the other official's signal. If the play turns out not to be a kick (fake or broken play), the Back Judge has sole responsibility for the end line. The official opposite the Back Judge should signal score or no score. If you rule successful or unsuccessful, give the verbal "yes, yes, yes" or "no, no, no" and signal while moving forward. Do not look at your partner before signaling. If you do not rule on the kick, simply mirror your partner's signal.

### **Scoring Kicks From the 10-yard line and In**

Prior to marking the ball ready for play, the Referee should move into the center of the action between the snapper and the kicker/holder waiting for the Umpire to complete his pre-snap duties and move to the end line. Once the Umpire is clear, the Referee should move to the normal starting position and mark the ball ready. Focus on the initial line play around the center and then observe action around the kicker/holder.

The Umpire should remind the defense that the snapper is protected before retreating into position under the goalpost on the opposite side from the Referee. The Umpire is still responsible

for noting numbering exceptions of interior lineman. Observe initial action on and around the snapper for illegal action and as the kick is made observe your post coverage. If the ball is not kicked and live action continues, move into the end zone and resume normal duties of the Umpire. The Umpire is not a second Back Judge and has normal duties if a kick is not attempted.

The Umpire is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on his side; the Back Judge is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on his side as well as whether the ball cleared the crossbar. The official making the decision whether the kick is good or not should either say “yes, yes, yes” or “no, no, no” to indicate which signal to jointly use to indicate the result of the kick. Both officials should signal whether the kick is good or no good. Optionally, if the kick is wide, the official under that goal post may give the “kick is wide” signal. If the kick lands in the end zone on a field goal attempt, only the Back Judge gives the touchback signal and neither official gives the “no good” signal.

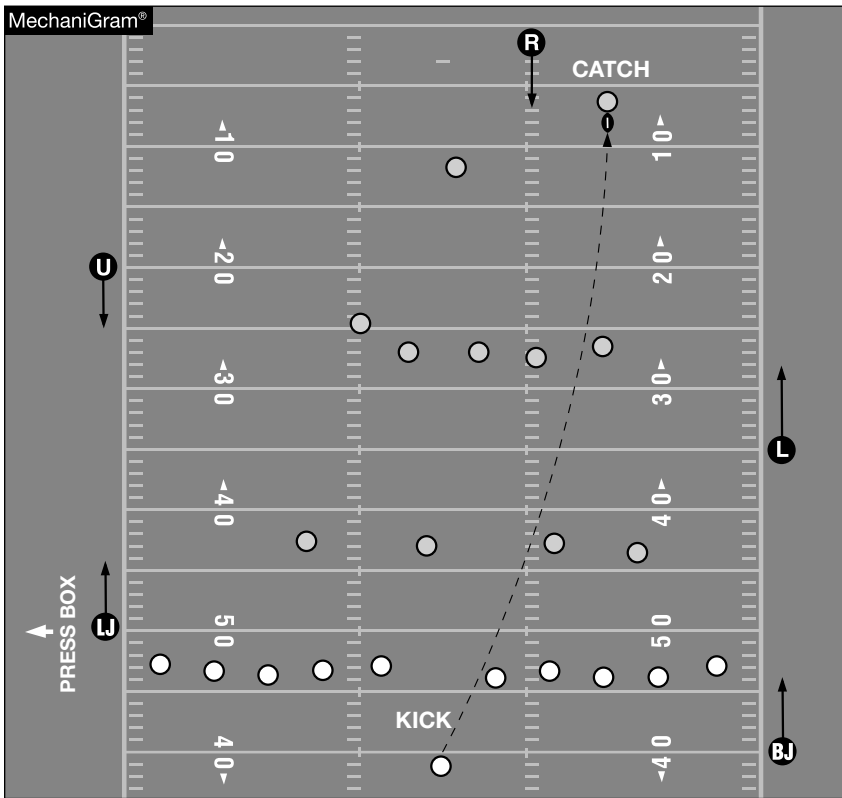
The Linesman and Line Judge should line up on the sideline straddling the line of scrimmage. The wing officials are responsible for the initial line charge and any action by the back on defenders coming from the outside. React as on any other play if ball is not kicked and remains live, responsible for the goal line in those situations.

If a scoring kick is attempted, regardless of the result, both wings should crash down the line of scrimmage as soon as a whistle sounds to help control players since passions may be high after a scoring play.

The Back Judge’s pre-snap duties are the same as per other scrimmage kicks. Position under the goalpost on the same side as the Referee and have responsibility for that post as well as the crossbar on kicks attempted. If a

fake or a broken play occurs, continue to cover the end line maintaining sole responsibility for that line. Back Judge has sideline to sideline coverage as the Umpire will have moved into the end zone to observe line play.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE PART 1



**Action on the field:** Receiver catches kick.

**Referee:** Observes catch. Signals clock to start when ball is touched by receiver. Moves to trail receiver and observes action of runner during return.

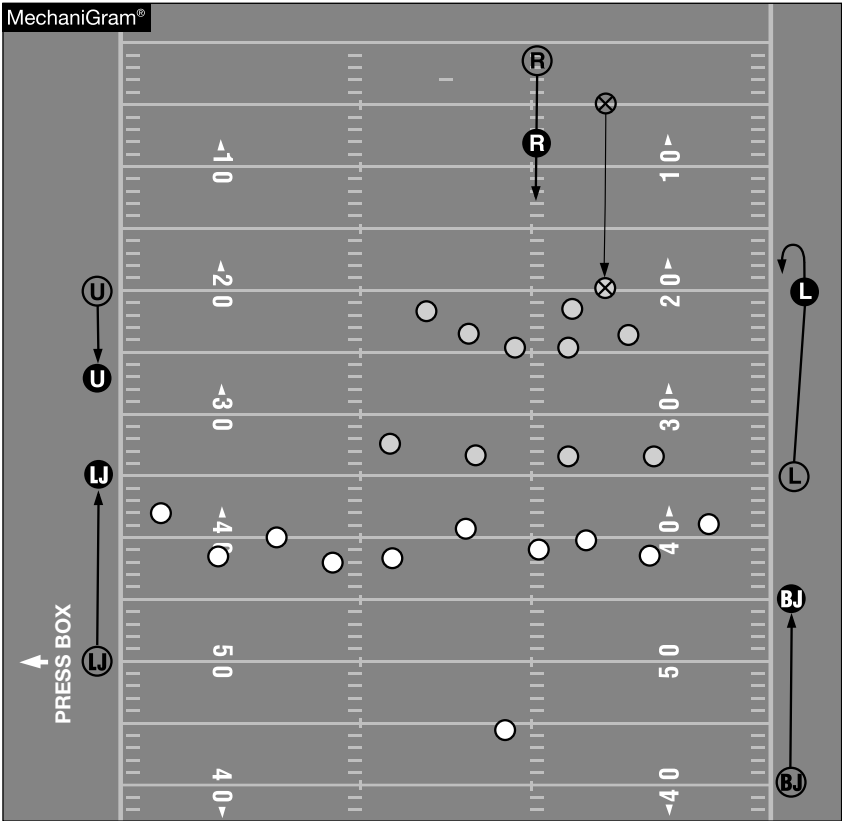
**Umpire:** Observes players in his area. Retreats slowly in case runner enters coverage area.

**Linesman:** Retreats slowly and observes action in his area.

**Line Judge:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest him while moving downfield no farther than team R's 35-yard line. Retreat to cover goal line pylon on your side if threatened.

**Back Judge:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest him including kicker while moving downfield no farther than team R's 45-yard line.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE PART 2



**Action on the field:** Runner advances.

**Referee:** Releases coverage of runner to Linesman. Observes action in front of runner (halo principle).

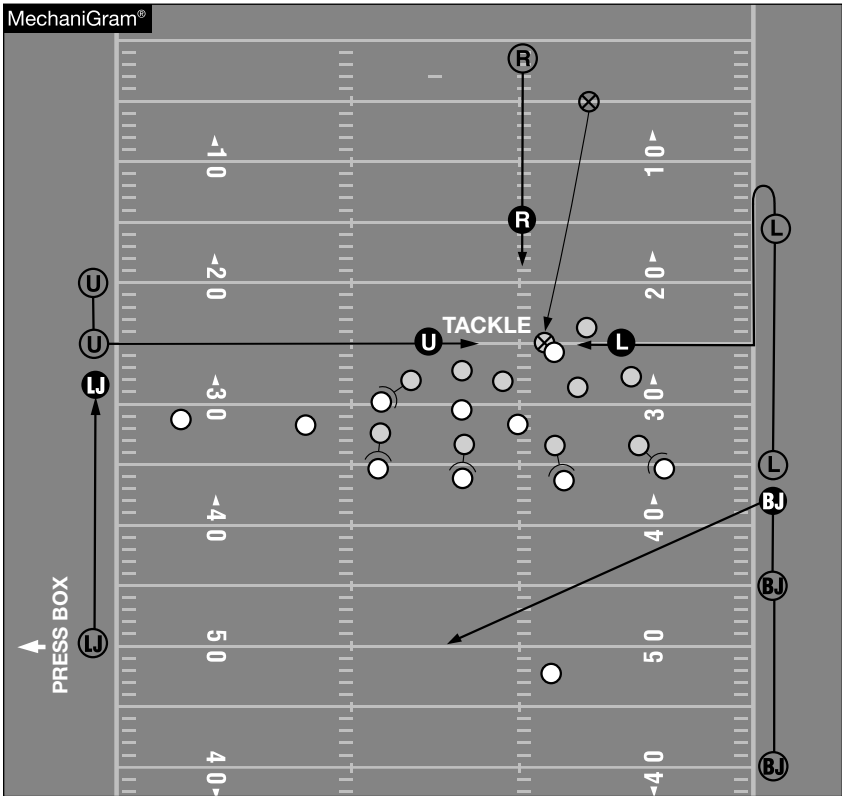
**Umpire:** Pivots and moves upfield with runner. Observes action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Continues to move downfield. Takes coverage of runner when runner enters area (about team R's 15-yard line).

**Line Judge:** Observes action in front of runner.

**Back Judge:** Observes action in front of runner.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner continues advance and is downed.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield trailing runner. Observes players. When certain no penalty flags are down, signals new series for team R.

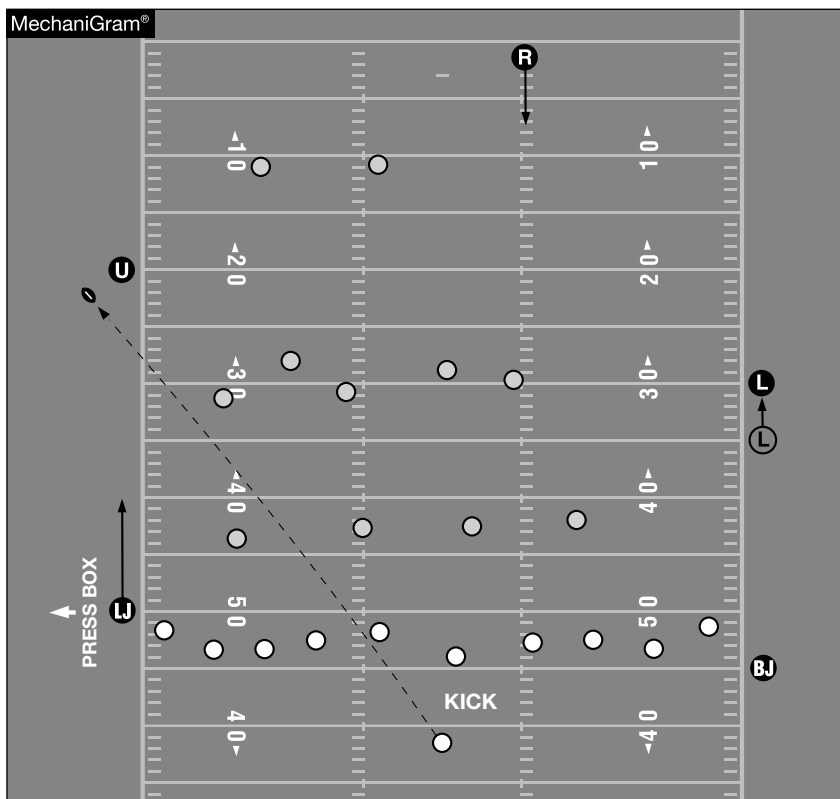
**Umpire:** Observes players. Blows whistle and gives the stop-the-clock signal when runner is downed. As covering official, holds spot until released by Line Judge. Moves onto field and spots ball (unless done by Referee) for next down.

**Linesman:** Observes players. Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner is downed. Squares off and holds spot until Line Judge mirrors. When Referee signals possession for team R, instructs chain crew to set chains for new series.

**Line Judge:** Observes players. Moves behind Umpire, releasing him from spot, and mirrors spot until Umpire sets ball.

**Back Judge:** Observes players. When Referee signals possession for team R, moves into position for next down.

## FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



**Action on the field:** Ball kicked out of bounds in Line Judge's side zone.

**Referee:** Observes action in his area.

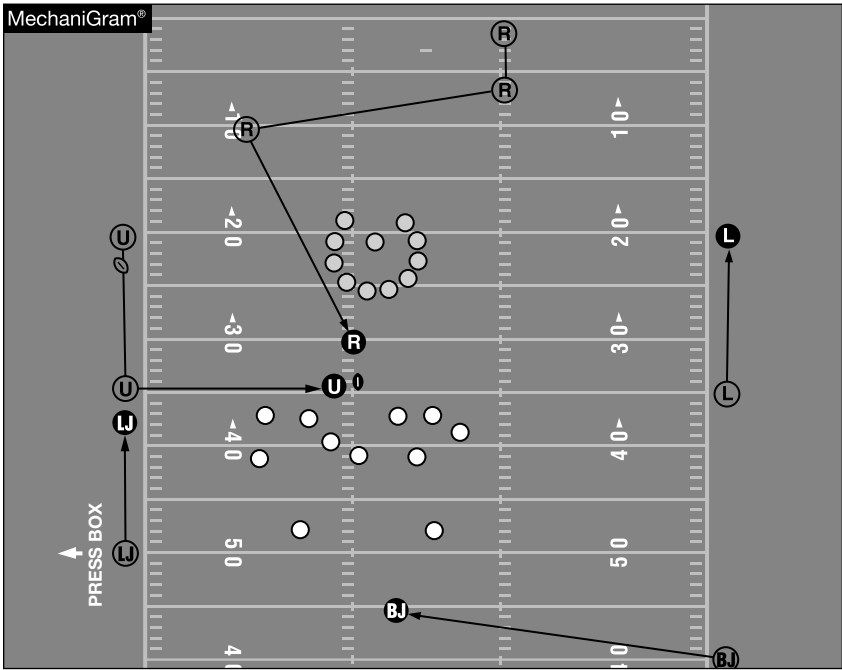
**Umpire:** Observes action in his area. Moves into position to judge which team caused kick to go out of bounds. Gives stop-the-clock signal when ball is out of bounds.

**Linesman:** Observes players in his area.

**Line Judge:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest him.

**Back Judge:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest him including kicker.

## FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



**Action on the field:** Team R chooses to take ball at its own 35-yard line.

**Referee:** Observes action in his area. Communicates with Umpire to determine result of play. Obtains choice from team R's captain. Signals team K's foul and points toward team R's 35-yard line, where ball will next be put in play. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

**Umpire:** Observes action in his area. Communicates result of play with Referee. Moves to hash mark at team R's 35-yard line, to set ball for new series. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

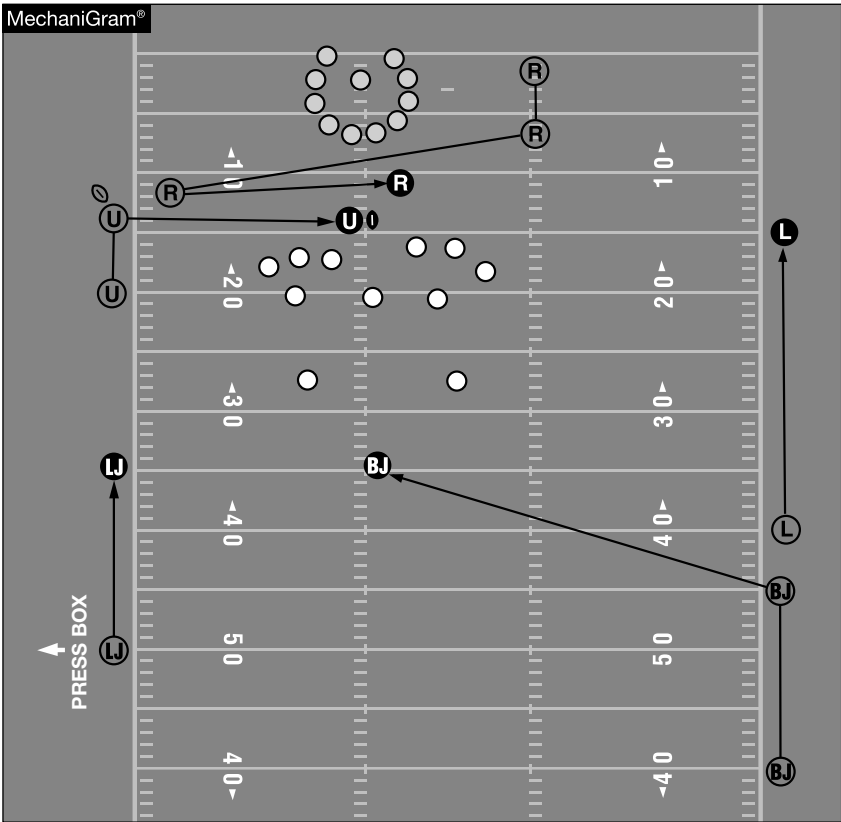
**Linesman:** Observes action in his area. Moves to team R's 35-yard line, where team R will begin new series, assists chain crew in setting chains. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

**Line Judge:** Observes action in his area. Moves downfield to team R's 35-yard line, where new series will begin. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

**Back Judge:** Observes action in his area. Moves to position for start of new series. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, turn to Pressbox side, signal appropriate signal, then move to position for rekick.)



FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



**Action on the field:** Team R caused the ball to go out of bounds.

**Referee:** Observes action in his area. Communicates with Umpire to determine result of play. Signals new series will begin at spot where kick went out of bounds.

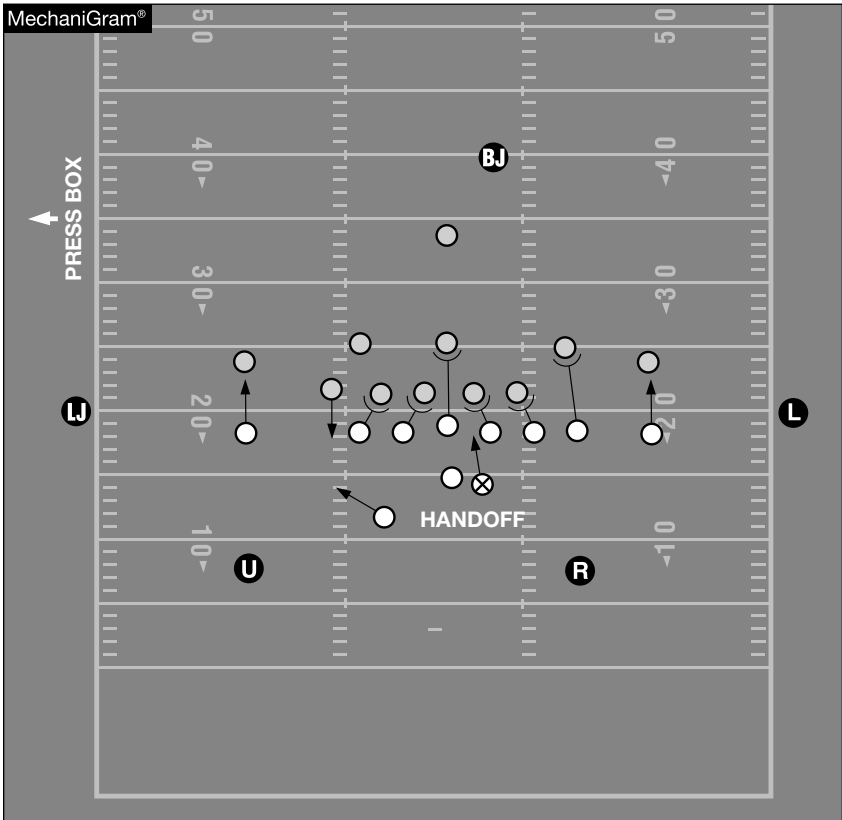
**Umpire:** Observes action in his area. Communicates result of play with Referee. Waits for Line Judge to hold spot of ball. Moves to hash mark where new series will begin and sets ball.

**Linesman:** Observes action in his area. Moves to spot where new series will begin and assists chain crew in setting chains.

**Line Judge:** Observes action in his area. Moves downfield to spot where new series will begin. Holds spot until Umpire arrives at hash mark to set ball for new series.

**Back Judge:** Observes action in his area. Moves to position for start of new series.

RUN UP THE MIDDLE PART 1



**Action on the field:** Handoff to a back.

**Referee:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Observes handoff and action around quarterback after handoff.

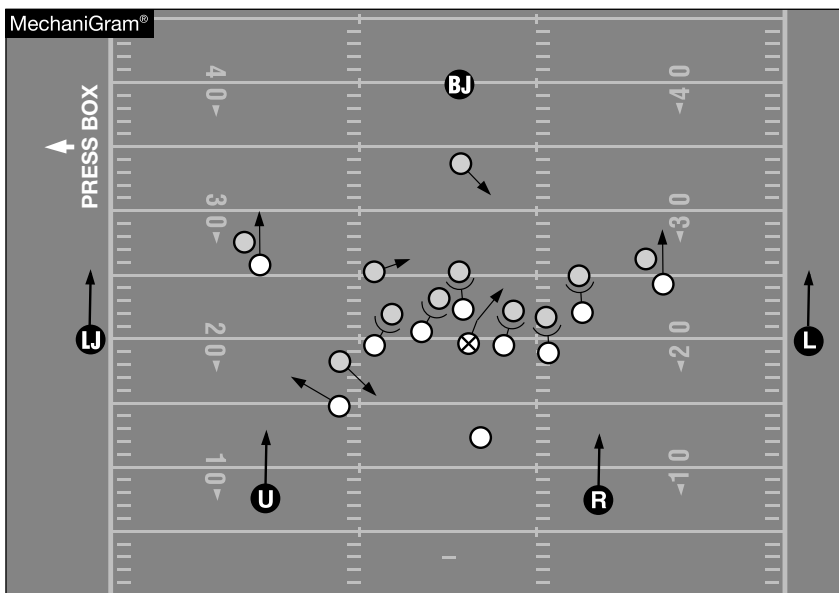
**Umpire:** Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there.

**Linesman:** Reads blocking of tight end and reads run. Observes blocking.

**Line Judge:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Observes blocking.

**Back Judge:** Reads blocking of tackle and reads run. Observes blocking.

## RUN UP THE MIDDLE PART 2



**Action on the field:** Runner advances.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action behind runner.

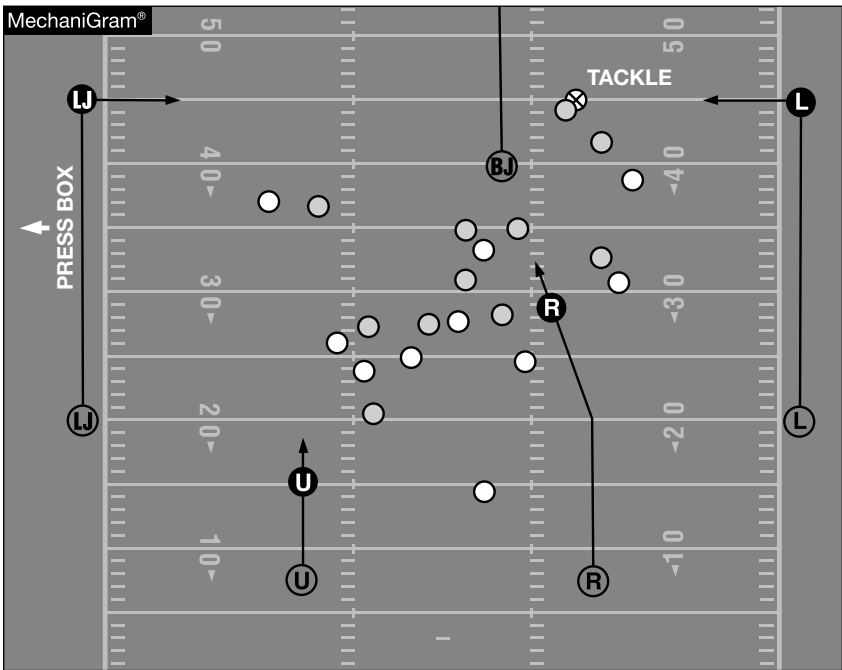
**Umpire:** Observes action around runner.

**Linesman:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action in front of runner.

**Line Judge:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action in front of runner.

**Back Judge:** Observes action in front of runner.

### RUN UP THE MIDDLE PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner continues advance and is downed.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players behind the ball in his area. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, signals linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

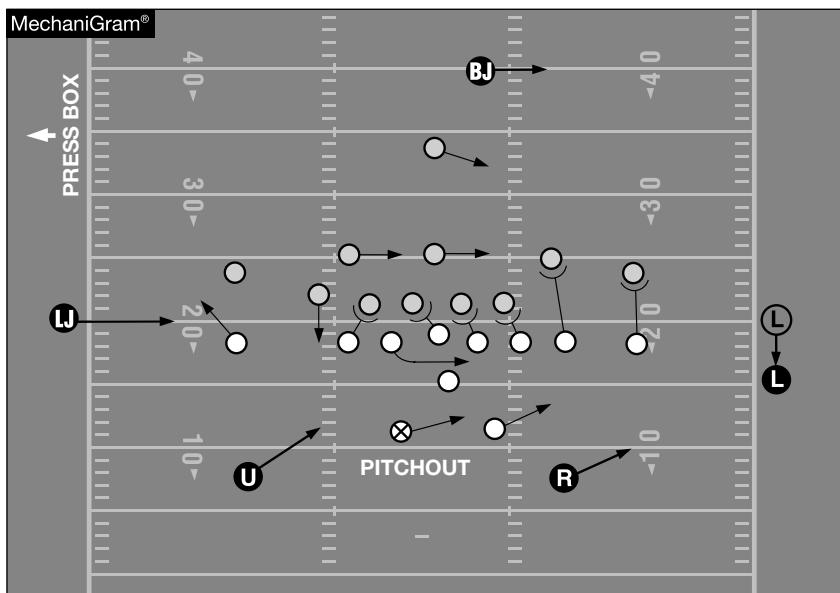
**Umpire:** Moves downfield and observes action behind runner. Observes players in his area.

**Linesman:** Moves quickly downfield and observes action around runner until runner enters back judge's coverage area. Observes players. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. If first down has been achieved, gets signal from referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

**Line Judge:** Observes action in front of runner on his side of the field. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in his area.

**Back Judge:** Observes blocking ahead of the runner and the runner himself if the runner advances more than 10 yards downfield. When runner is downed, observes players for dead-ball fouls.

## SWEEP TO LINESMAN'S SIDE PART 1



**Action on the field:** Pitchout to back.

**Referee:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

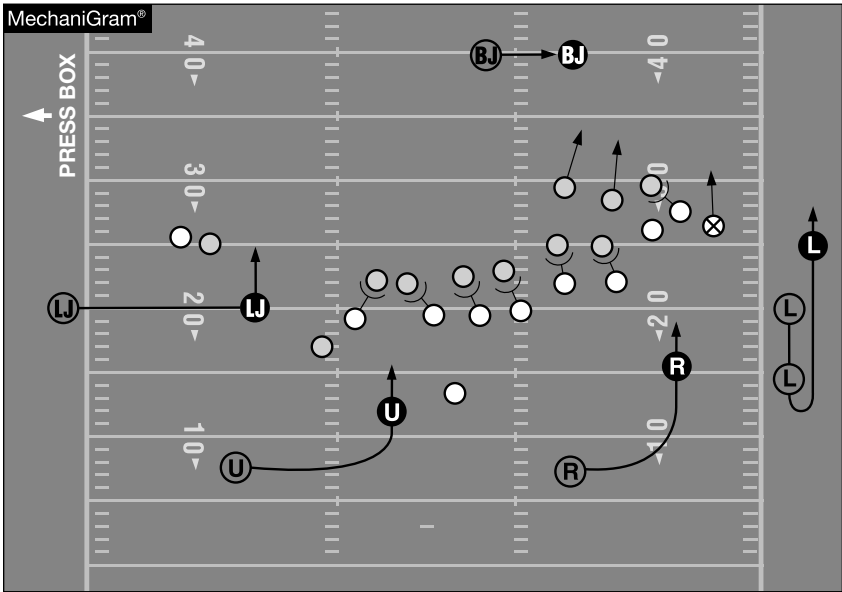
**Umpire:** Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and moves with flow of play.

**Linesman:** Looks through split end, reads blocking of tight end and reads run. As flow comes to his side, steps backward across sideline to prevent interfering with play. Waits until players have flowed downfield before moving to cover play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Line Judge:** Looks through end, reads blocking of pulling left tackle and reads sweep to opposite side. Moves slowly downfield. Observes blocking and action of players not involved in flow of play.

**Back Judge:** Observes blocking of tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

SWEEP TO LINESMAN'S SIDE PART 2



**Action on the field:** Runner advances.

**Referee:** Gives up coverage of runner to linesman. Moves slowly downfield trailing flow and cleans up after the play.

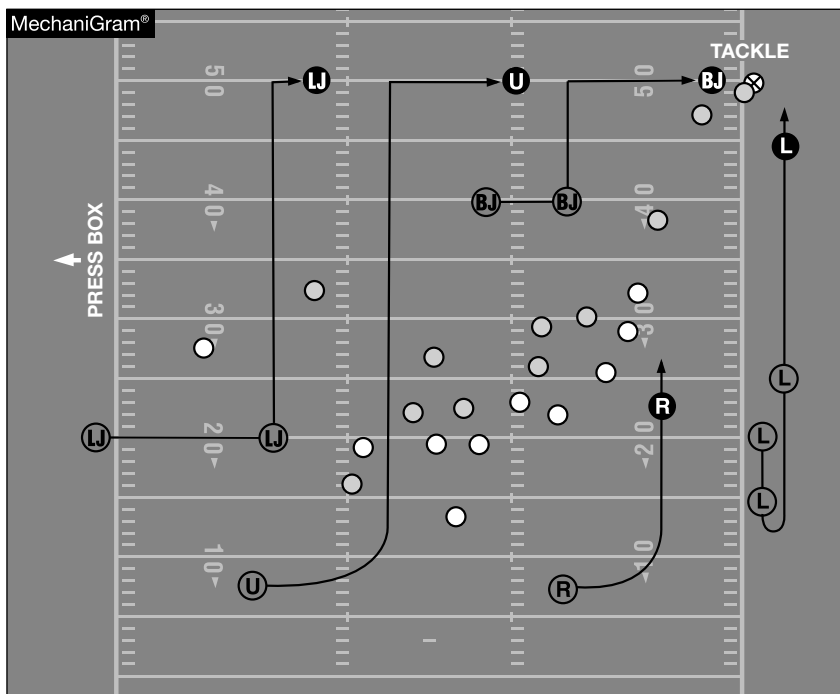
**Umpire:** Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Takes coverage of runner and moves quickly up sideline, allow play to get past you-trail slightly. Observes runner and action around runner.

**Line Judge:** Moves slowly downfield and cleans up after the play.

**Back Judge:** Moves toward play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

### SWEEP TO LINESMAN'S SIDE PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner continues advance and goes out of bounds.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, signals linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

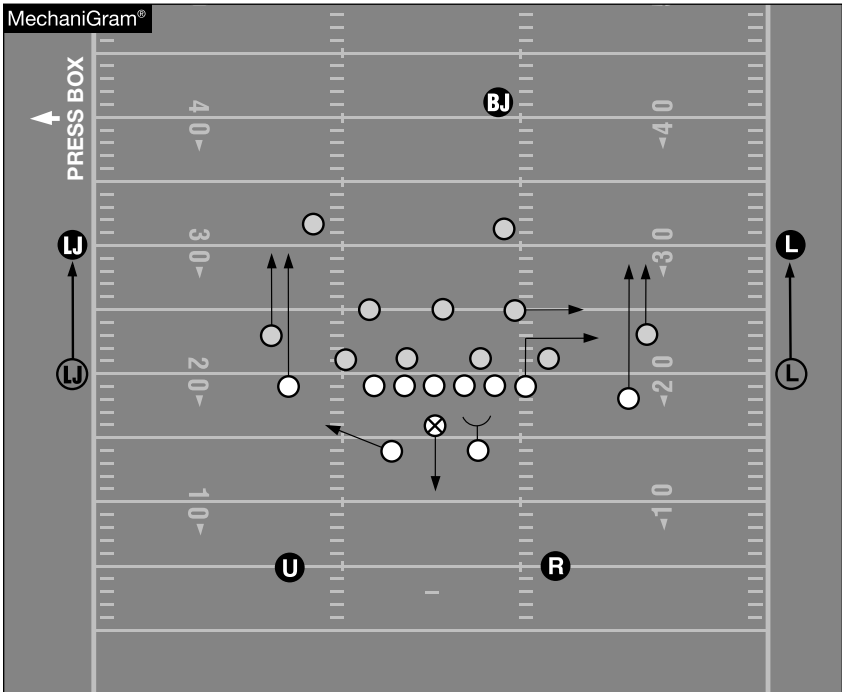
**Umpire:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players behind the ball carrier. Once spot is established, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

**Linesman:** Gives up coverage of runner when runner enters back judge's coverage zone (halo principle). Moves down sideline and observes action behind the runner. Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner steps out of bounds. Hustles to dead-ball spot to prevent post-play action. If first down has been achieved, gets signal from referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

**Line Judge:** Moves downfield with flow of play and cleans up after the play. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in his area.

**Back Judge:** Takes coverage of runner when runner enters coverage area (halo principle). Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Observes players. Holds spot until umpire arrives to set ball for new series.

DEEP PASS PART 1



**Action on the field:** Quarterback drops back.

**Referee:** Keys on opposite-side tackle; reads pass when tackle retreats. As quarterback drops back, moves back to maintain distance between himself and quarterback. Observes blocking by backs.

**Umpire:** Observes presnap adjustments and legality of snap. Keys on center and guards; reads pass when linemen retreat. Observes blocking by linemen.

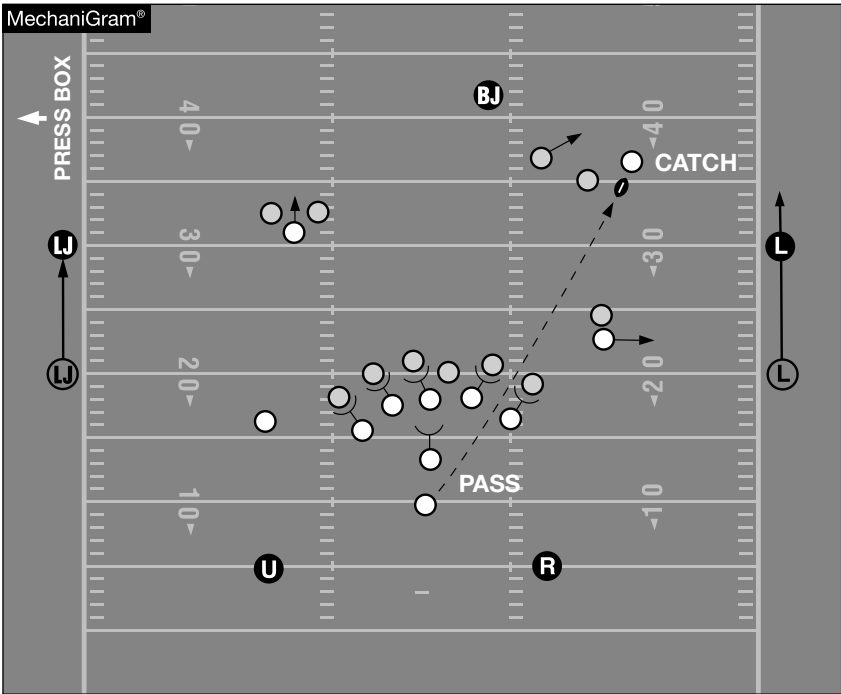
**Linesman:** Identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. Uses extended arm signal to alert line judge that end is in offensive backfield. After snap, observes initial blocking, then moves slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

**Line Judge:** Identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. After snap, observes initial blocking, then moves slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

**Back Judge:** Observes tackle's block and reads pass, then shifts focus to split end. As receivers move downfield, moves back to maintain distance between himself and receivers. Watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.



## DEEP PASS PART 2



**Action on the field:** Pass thrown to and caught by receiver.

**Referee:** Observes passer. Moves downfield with flow of play.

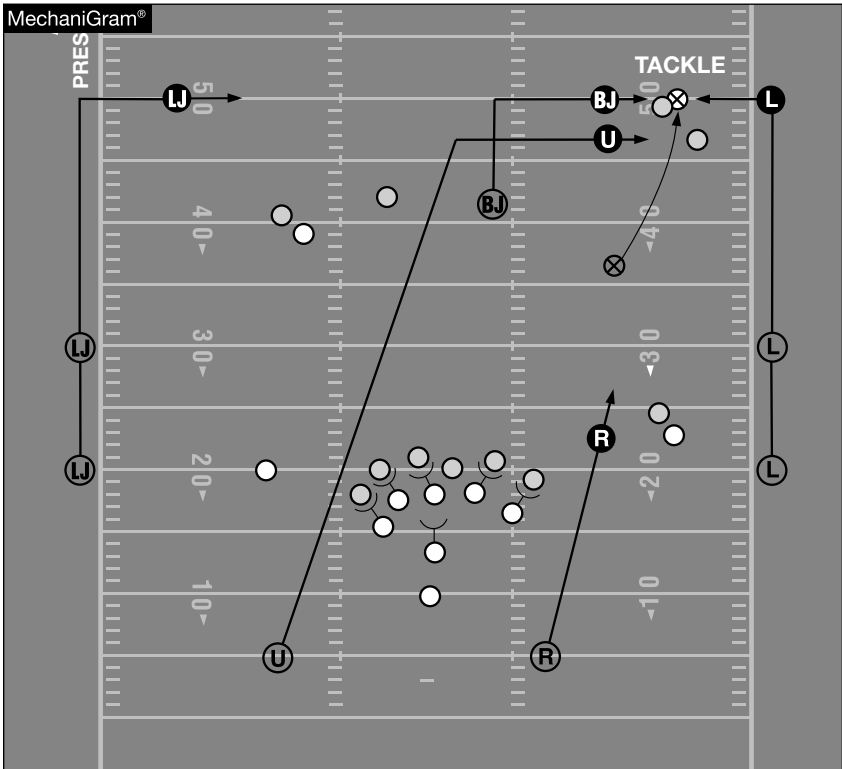
**Umpire:** Pivots to follow flight and moves in direction of the ball.

**Linesman:** Moves downfield and maintains position about halfway between line of scrimmage and deepest receiver on his side, then moves quickly to get angle to observe attempted catch.

**Line Judge:** Moves downfield and maintains position about halfway between line of scrimmage and deepest receiver on his side.

**Back Judge:** Determines intended receiver and pivots to get angle and observe attempted catch.

DEEP PASS PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner advances and is downed.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball.

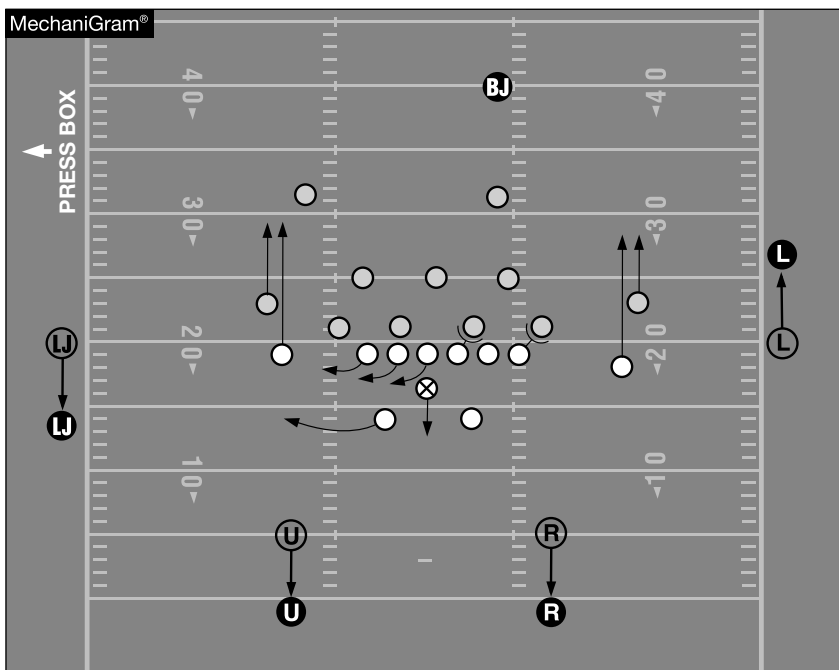
**Umpire:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. Once spot is established, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

**Linesman:** Continues to move downfield. Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Stops clock if first down has been achieved.

**Line Judge:** Moves downfield and observes players behind the ball in his area. Practices dead-ball officiating.

**Back Judge:** Moves downfield and observes players in his area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Echoes stop-the-clock signal if first down has been achieved.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 1



**Action on the field:** Quarterback drops back.

**Referee:** Keys on opposite-side tackle; reads screen or draw when tackle pulls. As quarterback drops back, moves back to maintain distance between himself and quarterback. Observes blocking by backs.

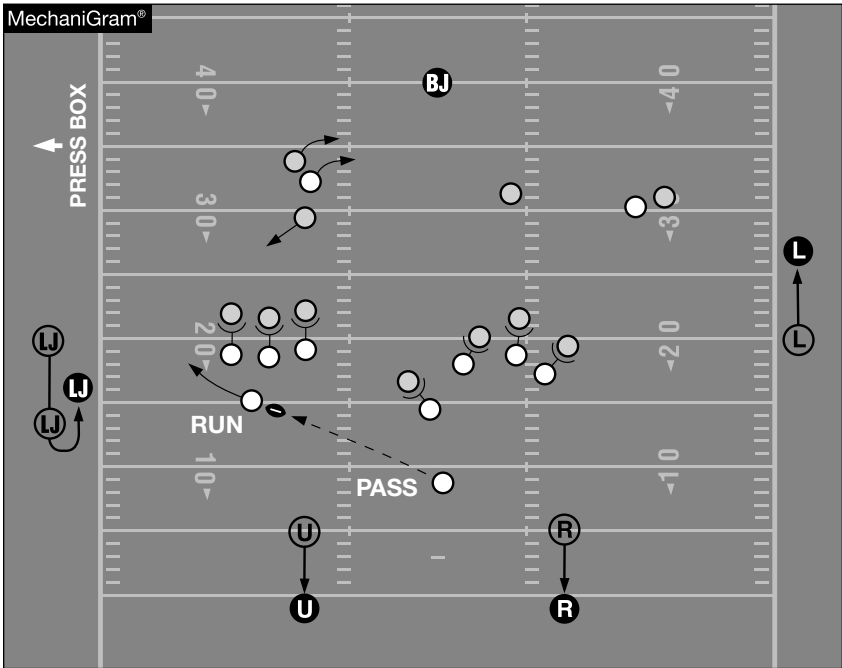
**Umpire:** Observes presnap adjustments and legality of snap. Keys on center and guards; reads screen or draw when linemen pull. Observes blocking by linemen.

**Linesman:** Identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. Uses extended arm signal to alert line judge that end is in offensive backfield. After snap, observes initial blocking, then uses shuffle step to move slowly downfield. Watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

**Line Judge:** Identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. After snap, observes initial blocking; reads screen or draw when tackle pulls. Moves into offensive backfield to cover receiver out of backfield.

**Back Judge:** Reads run when tackle fires out. Observes blocking by his keys.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 2



**Action on the field:** Pass thrown to and caught by back.

**Referee:** Observes passer. Looks to line judge for either backward pass signal, incomplete pass signal or no signal (complete forward pass). When passer is not longer threatened, moves to follow play.

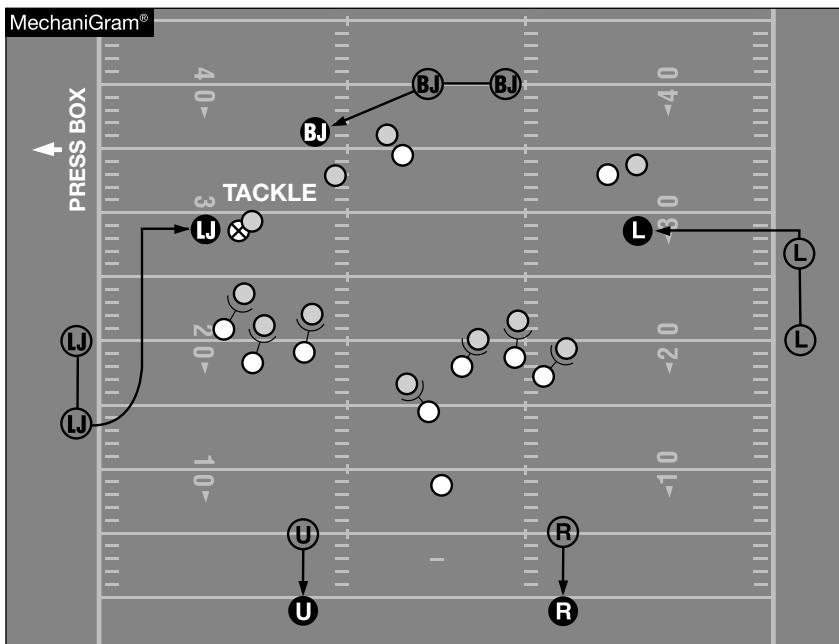
**Umpire:** Observes blocking.

**Linesman:** Moves downfield and observes action of players in his area. If pass is backward, secondary on punch signal.

**Line Judge:** Rules on whether pass is backward or forward. Observes action in front of runner.

**Back Judge:** When position of ball is established, moves toward line judge's sideline and observes action in front of runner.

### SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner advances and is downed.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players in his area.

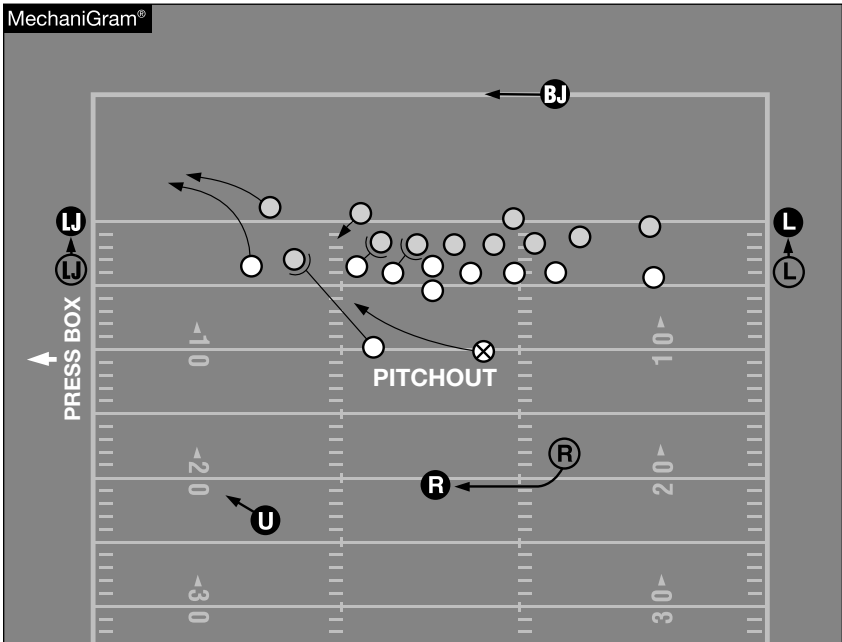
**Umpire:** Observes players in front of the ball. Moves to hashmark to set ball for next play.

**Linesman:** Moves downfield and observes players in his area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress by mirroring the line judge.

**Line Judge:** Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Stops clock if first down has been achieved.

**Back Judge:** Moves toward play and observes players around pile.

GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN PART 1



**Action on the field:** Pitchout to back, sweep left.

**Referee:** Primary for forward or backward pass. Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

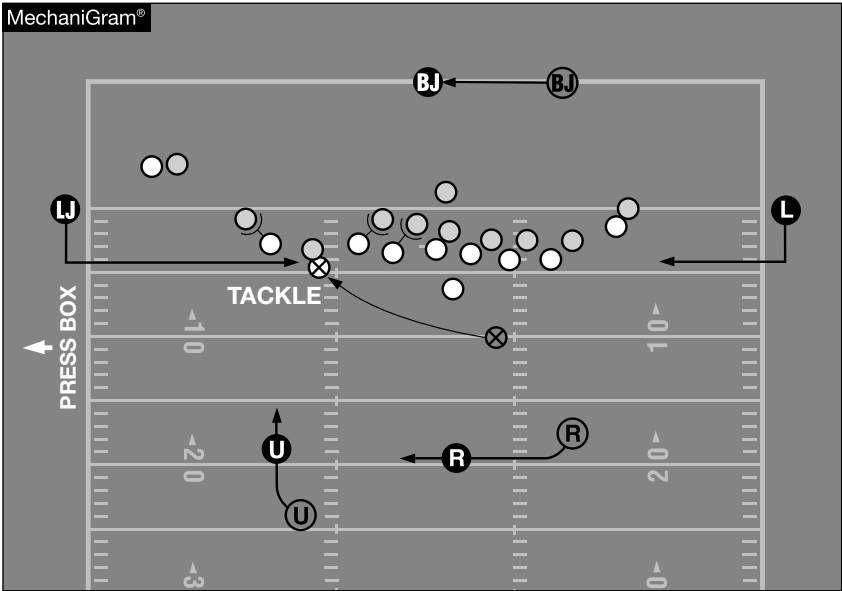
**Umpire:** Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Move immediately to the goal line pylon when the ball is snapped on or inside the five-yard line. Observes initial blocking.

**Line Judge:** Move immediately to the goal line pylon when the ball is snapped on or inside the five-yard line. Observes initial blocking.

**Back Judge:** Positioned on end line. Reads blocking of tight end and tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN PART 2



**Action on the field:** Runner stopped short of goalline.

**Referee:** Observes action.

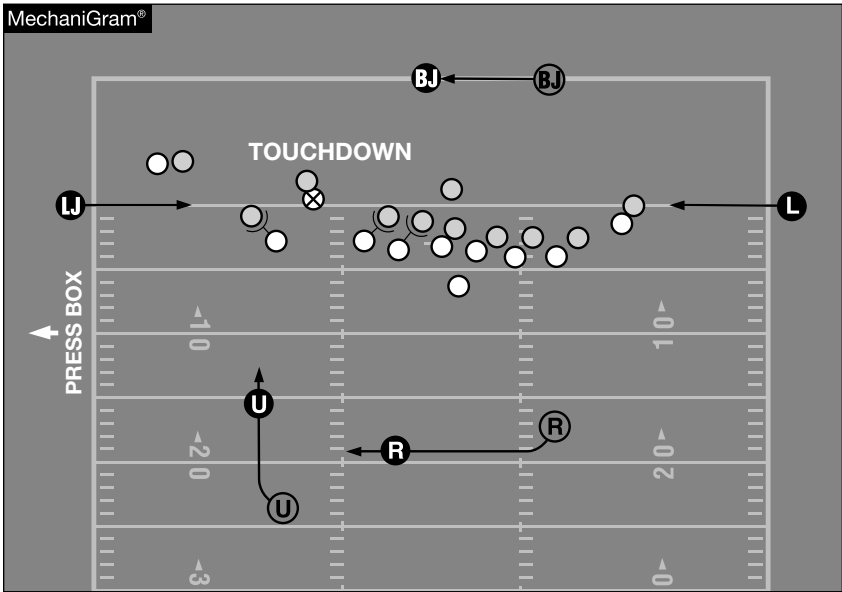
**Umpire:** Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Officiates back to the ball and squares off to mirror line judge's spot.

**Line Judge:** Officiates back to the ball to observe contact on runner and squares off to indicate forward progress. Blows whistle when runner is downed.

**Back Judge:** Moves with flow of play and observes action.

GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner scores.

**Referee:** Observes action.

**Umpire:** Observes action.

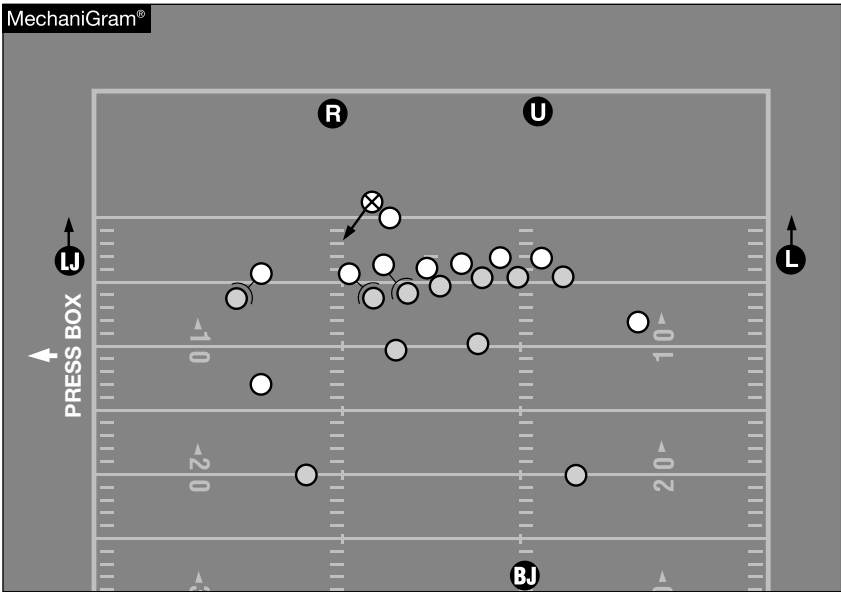
**Linesman:** Observes action.

**Line Judge:** Observes runner. When ball in possession of runner breaks plane of goalline, moves toward runner while straddling goalline, blows whistle and signals touchdown.

**Back Judge:** Moves with flow of play and observes action.



## GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT PART 1



**Action on the field:** Handoff to running back.

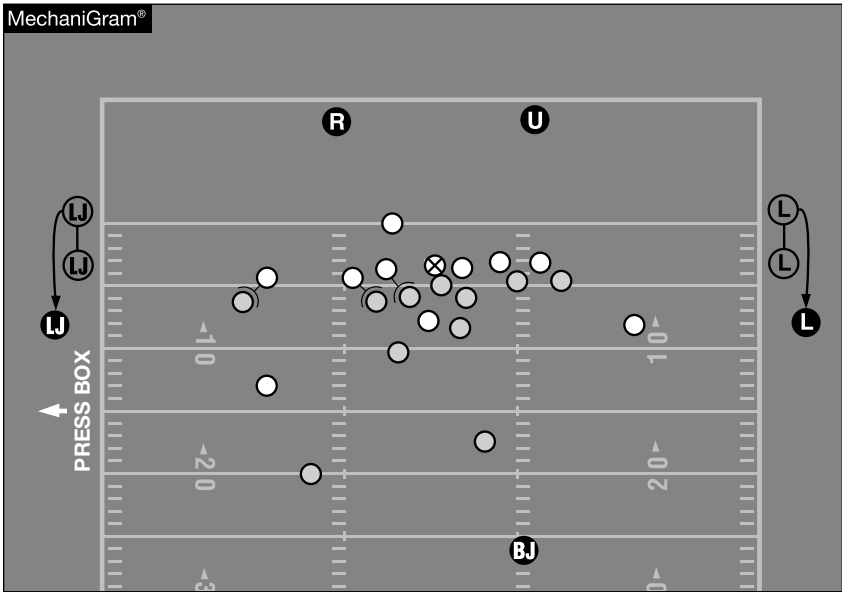
**Referee:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

**Umpire:** Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking while moving with flow of play.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** If the ball is snapped from the goal line to the five-yard line going out, your first move will be back to the goal line. If the ball is snapped from the five-yard line to the eight-yard line, the side official opposite the Referee's starting position needs to be aware of plays near the goal line as his positioning will be critical for adequate coverage on that side of the field. Delay moving up-field until the goal line is no longer threatened. Your key will be a running back positioned in the end zone. Officiate the ball as it is advanced into the field of play, but be ready to rule on a possible safety.

**Back Judge:** Reads blocking of tight end and tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT PART 2



**Action on the field:** Runner advances beyond goalline.

**Referee:** Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

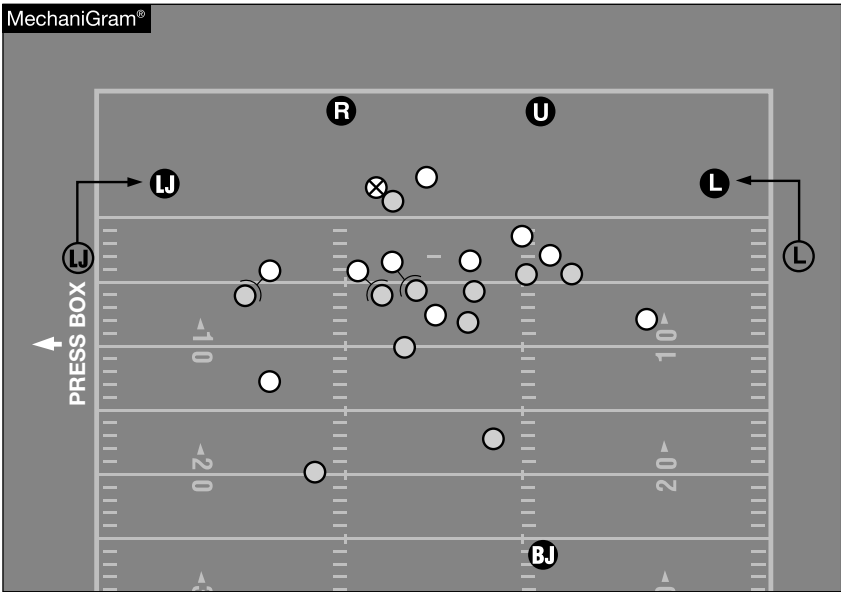
**Umpire:** Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

**Linesman:** Reverses field, moves with flow of play and observes action in front of runner.

**Line Judge:** Reverses field, moves with flow of play and observes action in front of runner.

**Back Judge:** Observes action in front of runner.

### GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner downed in end zone.

**Referee:** Move to the dead ball spot, dead ball officiate, verify with the rest of your crew they all agree a safety has been scored, then give the signal for safety after you verify there are no penalties on the play.

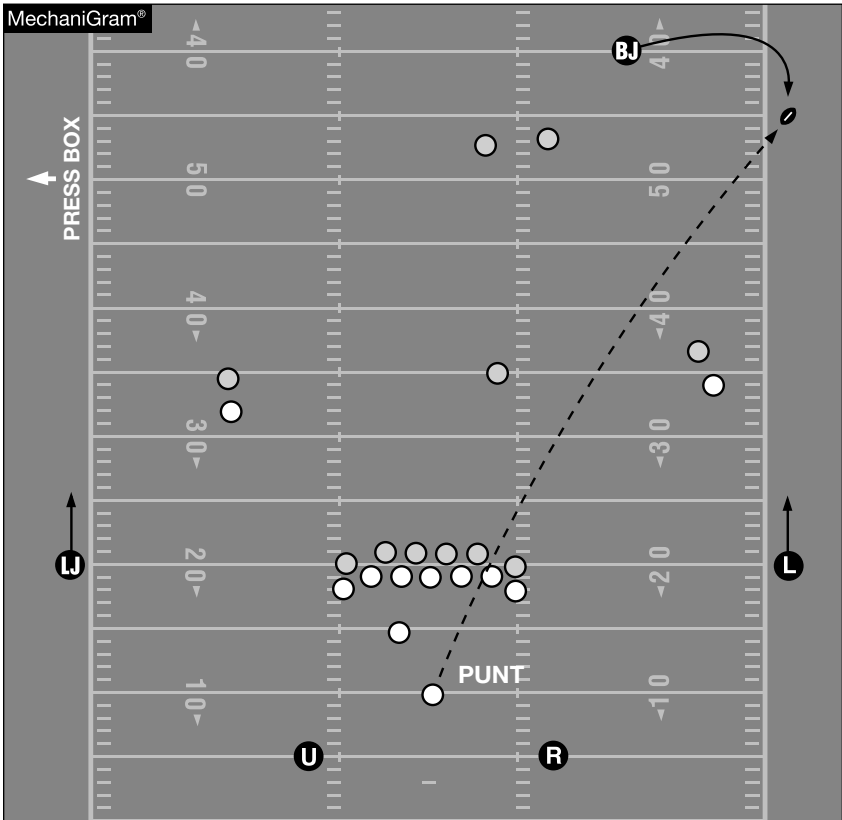
**Umpire:** Continues to observe blocking.

**Linesman:** Accordion in quickly to dead ball officiate the end of the play. Confirm to the Referee you are in agreement the play has ended in a safety. Do not give the signal for a safety.

**Line Judge:** Accordion in quickly to dead ball officiate the end of the play. Confirm to the Referee you are in agreement the play has ended in a safety. Do not give the signal for a safety.

**Back Judge:** Observes action of players away from pile.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



**Action on the field:** Ball kicked toward sideline.

**Referee:** Observes snap and action around kicker.

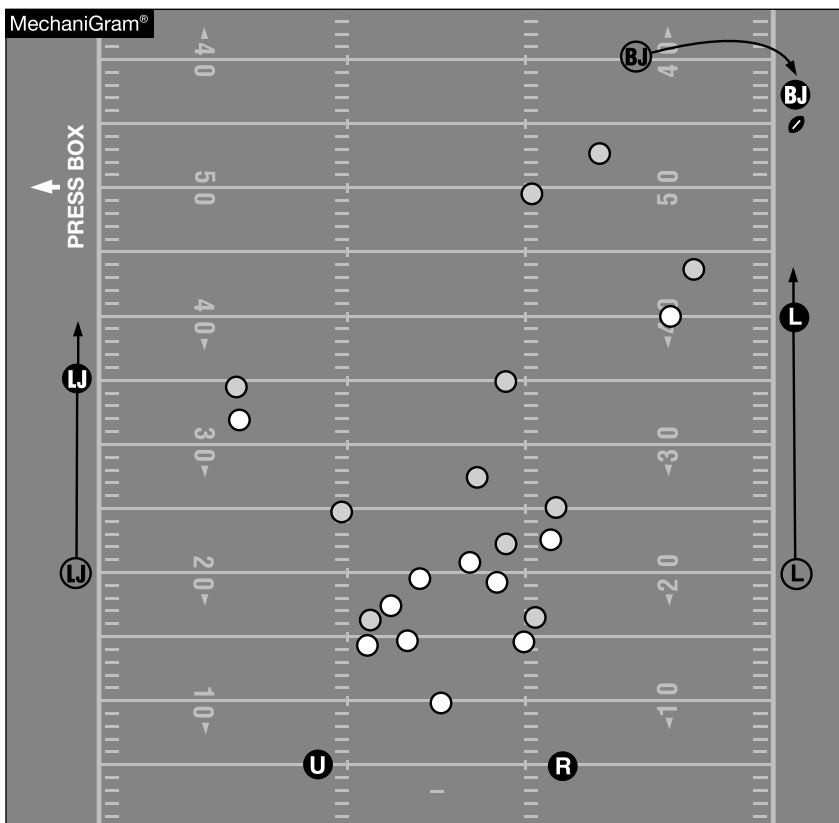
**Umpire:** Observes initial line charge and blocking on the left side of the formation.

**Linesman:** Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. Moves quickly downfield when ball crosses neutral zone.

**Line Judge:** Moves downfield on snap, observing action of players moving downfield.

**Back Judge:** Observes receivers. Retreats or moves forward to observe result of kick.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



**Action on the field:** Kick is dead out of bounds.

**Referee:** Moves quickly toward sideline to observe flight of ball.

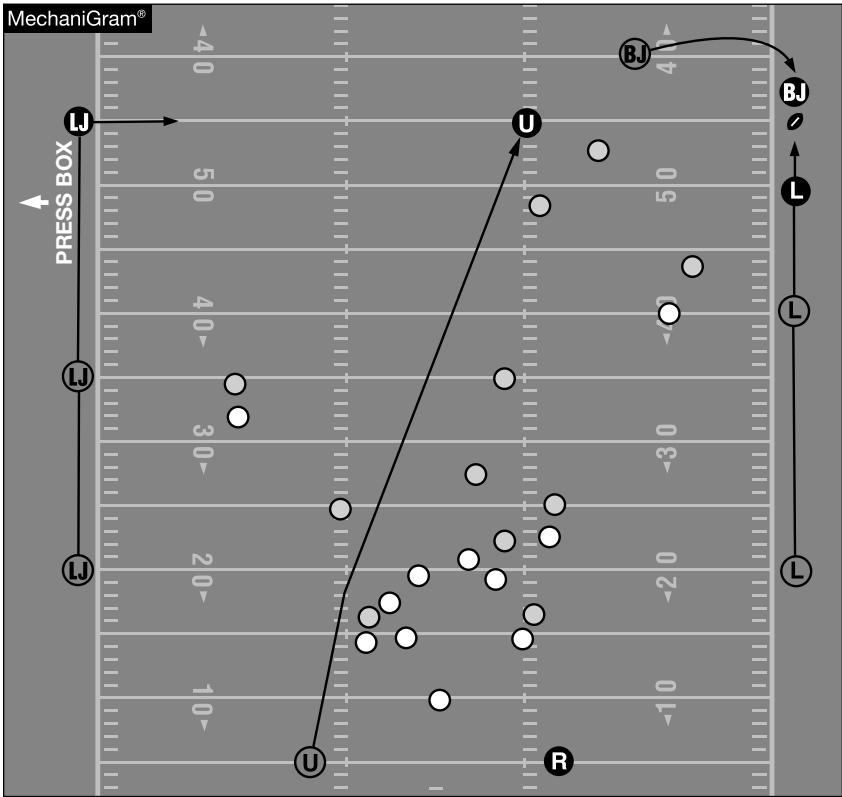
**Umpire:** Observes players as they move downfield.

**Linesman:** Moves down sideline. Observes action of players in front of ball.

**Line Judge:** Moves down sideline at the snap. Observes action of players in front of ball.

**Back Judge:** Gives stop-the-clock signal when he sees ball go out of bounds. Moves five to seven yards beyond spot where ball apparently went out of bounds, pivots and makes eye contact with referee.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



**Action on the field:** Ball spotted for new series.

**Referee:** With arm above head, observes back judge walking toward spot. When back judge reaches spot, drops arm with chopping motion. When certain there are no penalty markers down, signals linesman to move chain crew.

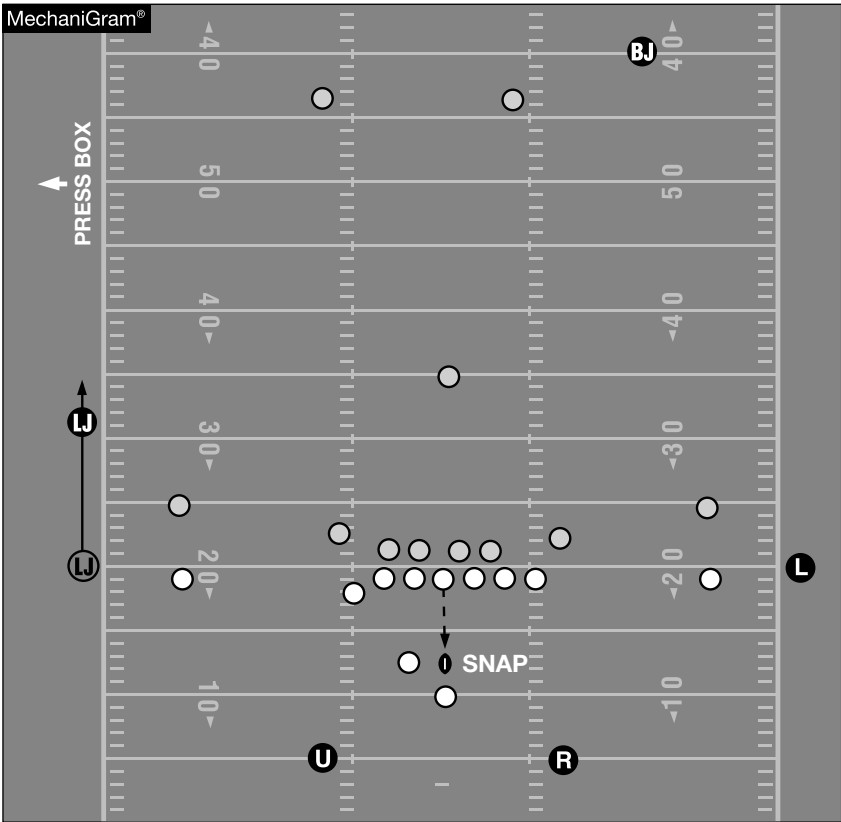
**Umpire:** Continues to move downfield and observes players. Moves to spot to set ball for new series.

**Linesman:** Hustles to dead-ball spot to prevent post-play action. Upon signal from referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot.

**Line Judge:** Continues to move downfield after the snap and observes players. Squares off and mirrors back judge's spot.

**Back Judge:** Walks slowly toward referee, stopping when referee drops arm with chopping motion. Signals first down for team R.

### SCRIMMAGE KICK TO BACK JUDGE'S SIDE ZONE PART 1



**Action on the field:** Ball snapped to punter.

**Referee:** Observes snap and action in front of and around kicker.

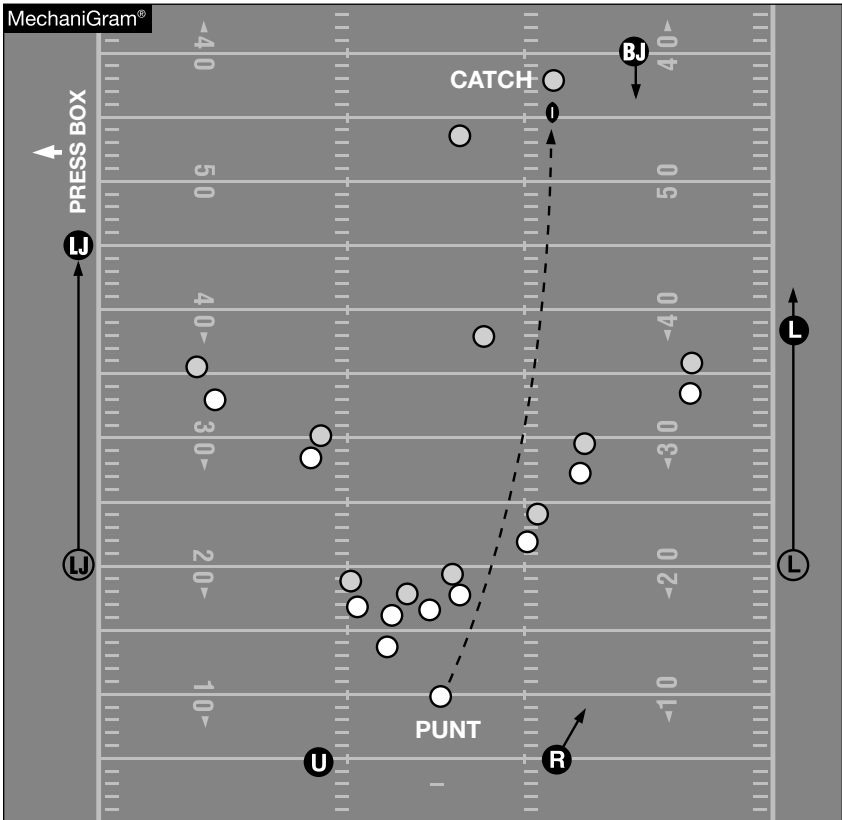
**Umpire:** Observes initial line charge and blocking on the left side of the formation.

**Linesman:** Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone.

**Line Judge:** Releases on snap and begins to move downfield, observes action on his side of the field between the neutral zone and the receivers.

**Back Judge:** Observes action of receivers.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO BACK JUDGE'S SIDE ZONE PART 2



**Action on the field:** Receiver catches punt.

**Referee:** Observes line play after ball has cleared neutral zone. Moves slowly downfield.

**Umpire:** Observes players as they move downfield. Moves downfield with flow of players.

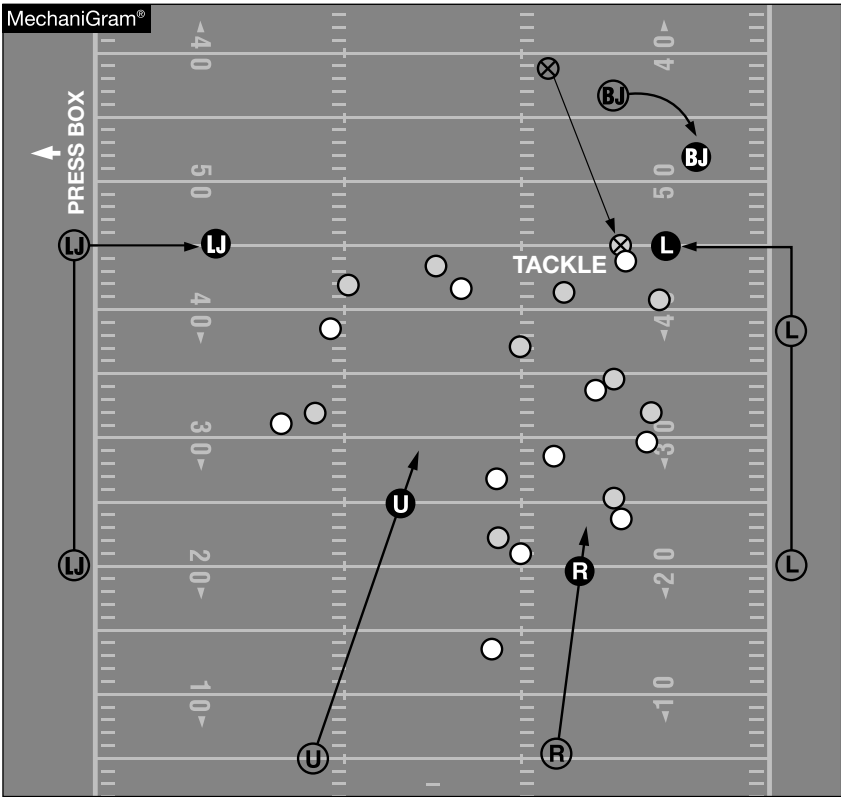
**Linesman:** Observes action of players in front of ball.

**Line Judge:** Observes action of players in front of ball.

**Back Judge:** Drops beanbag at spot the kick ends. Moves with runner.



SCRIMMAGE KICK TO BACK JUDGE'S SIDE ZONE PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner advances and is downed.

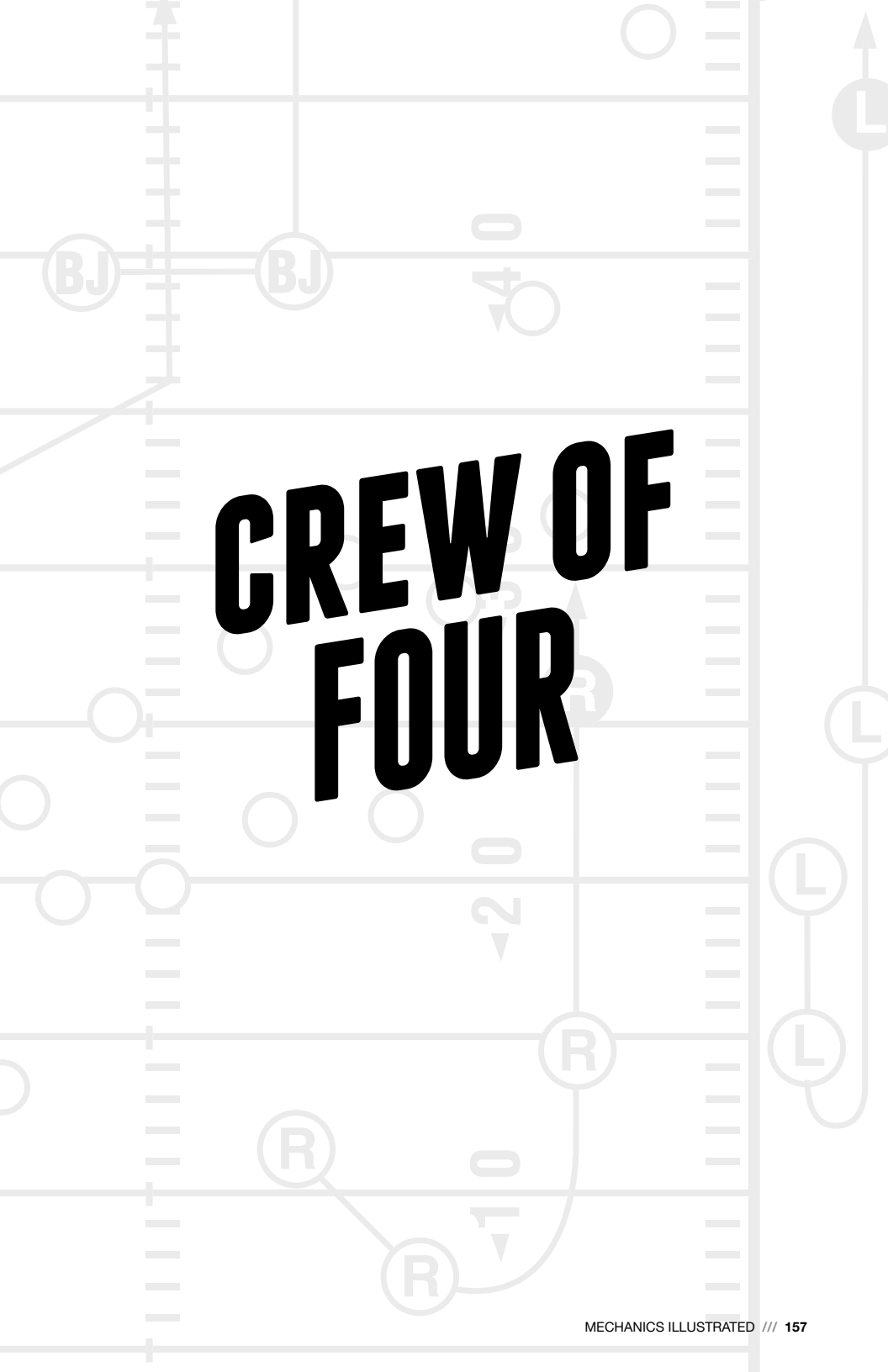
**Referee:** Observes action of players. When certain there are no penalty markers down, signals linesman to move chain crew.

**Umpire:** Observes action of players. Moves to spot to set ball for new series.

**Linesman:** Observes return of players. Upon signal from referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot.

**Line Judge:** Observes action of players. Squares off to mirror back judge's spot.

**Back Judge:** Observes action of players and takes spot within 15 yards of the end of the kick.



# CREW OF FOUR

# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 9

# PHILOSOPHY

Movement and compromise are the characteristics of football officiating. Twenty-two players are moving around, competing for space and position; the officials must utilize hustle, angles, distance and planned compromises to observe and control the action.

The challenge for officials in a crew of four is to observe the same number of players and the same amount of territory with one less set of eyes than in a crew of five. That means officials must expand their areas of coverage and utilize teamwork to get the job done.

Crews of four will follow the same general pattern of duties and responsibilities as crews of five. Thus, this section of the book only includes the major differences from five-man mechanics. Refer to those chapters for further details on what is expected in the four-man mechanics. Refer also to the "ALL OFFICIALS" sections at the beginning of this manual for general information to be used regardless of crew size. In games with a crew of four, the Line Judge will assume most of the responsibilities in the kicking game that the Back Judge has in the crew of five.

### **Hustle**

Hustle is an overused word today. Everyone knows it's needed to succeed, but what does it really mean when relating it to football officiating? Hustle to cover plays and to get into position is important regardless of how many officials work a game, but it's especially important in a crew of four because the same amount of ground and the same number of players have to be covered by fewer officials.

Significant movement by all officials is critical for proper field coverage. Hustle gives you a chance. That equates to more running and a well-placed concern for angles.

### **Movements**

All officials must work hard at understanding then obtaining proper angles. Your line of sight must provide you with an opportunity to view a developing play or part of a play. You must be able to see completely through the play, which means your vision must be unobstructed by the players directly involved in the play and others near the play.

When the ball is snapped, all 22 players will be in motion. An official's angle and distance adjustments are constant as play is in motion. A step or two in the right direction may open up a whole new viewing experience, free from obstruction; a step in the wrong direction will screen you from the critical game action.

Far too often officials who can't (or won't) run well don't move with the flow of the play. They're afraid of getting in the way and aren't confident they can move quickly enough to avoid players and get good angles. The game suffers because coverage suffers. A good wing official, for instance, flows downfield with the play when a runner is in his coverage area and drifts down field to watch the players behind the play when the run is on the opposite sideline.

Why such an emphasis on movement? Movement allows the non-covering officials to watch players away from the ball, the critical component to combating physical play. When the offside wing official properly trails the play on his sideline, he can watch the areas behind the run, where rough play often occurs.

The covering wing official also moves along the sideline to improve angles. There's usually at least three and sometimes six or seven players around the ball, either trying to throw blocks or attempting to make the tackle. Movement is critical to watching action around the ball. It's also paramount to game control.

Proper movements when the play is over are also important. Because the ball is live for only a few seconds every play, there's a tendency to think about spotting the ball for the next play and forgetting about the players. If officials ignore dead-ball action, players get physical with each other and game control suffers. All officials must observe player action after the ball has been whistled dead.

### **Field coverage**

Proper coverage is enhanced by good eye contact and a "feel" for where your crewmates are looking. You must learn about all aspects of football officiating to know who is covering what. Once you've mastered that, practical onfield application develops through communication, including eye contact and understanding. At the risk of being obvious, you've got to know exactly what both you and your crewmates are expected to do in specific situations — then effectively communicate with your crewmates — to truly master football officiating. When you understand why angles and distance are important and how and when to obtain them, you'll find yourself in great position throughout each game.

# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 10

# KEYS

- **Balanced Formation**
- **Trips To Lineman's Side**
- **Motion Changes Formation From Unbalanced To Balanced**
- **Referee And Umpire Keys**

Football officials have a kind of telepathy to help them determine what's going to happen before it occurs. Those hints are called keys.

There are two basic types of keys: call them "situational" and "positional" keys.

### **Situational Keys**

Situational keys are partially based on the down, distance, score, time remaining, offensive and defensive formations and actions of players at the snap. For example, it's third down and 11. Team A trails by two points with 1:37 to play in the fourth quarter and has the ball on its own 44-yard line. Going without a huddle, team A lines up in a shotgun formation with three receivers on the right side of the formation. All of that adds up to a pass. That hunch is confirmed when, at the snap, the offensive linemen drop back to pass block, the quarterback retreats into the pocket and the receivers run pass patterns rather than block team B's linebackers and defensive backs.

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 wishbone formation, for instance, are predominantly running teams. Teams using four-receiver sets and shotgun formations pass more times than not.

Linemen provide situational keys. Wing

officials must also read tackles to determine run or pass plays. Pulling linemen indicate a sweep or trap block. Retreating linemen indicate a pass. Charging linemen indicate a running play. When offensive linemen provide only passive resistance, allowing defensive linemen to penetrate the neutral zone, a screen pass often follows.

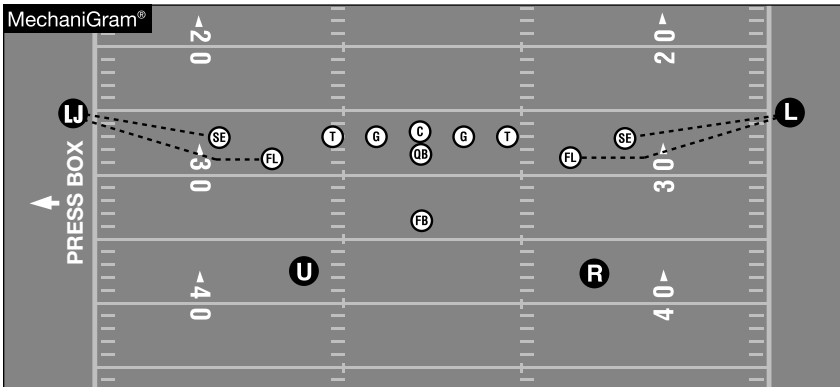
### **Positional Keys**

Simply stated, the wing officials key on the eligible receivers who line up on their sides of the field. When there is more than one eligible receiver on a particular side, the primary key is the eligible receiver on the end of the line of scrimmage (the tight end or split end). Any flanker, slot back or motion man is a secondary key.

### **Motion**

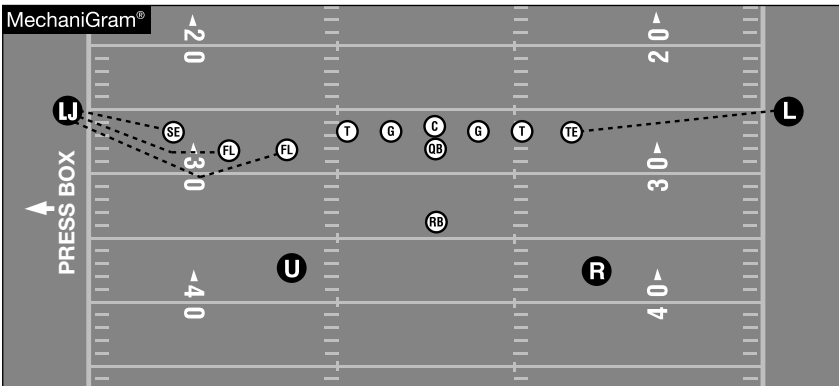
Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving. In other words, if the motion man is moving toward the Linesman, the Line Judge is responsible for observing the motion man. If the player doubles back toward his original position, the official initially responsible remains responsible. Responsibility for observing the actions of key players after the snap changes when the players enter another official's coverage area. The motion man is a secondary key for the wing official.

### BALANCED FORMATION



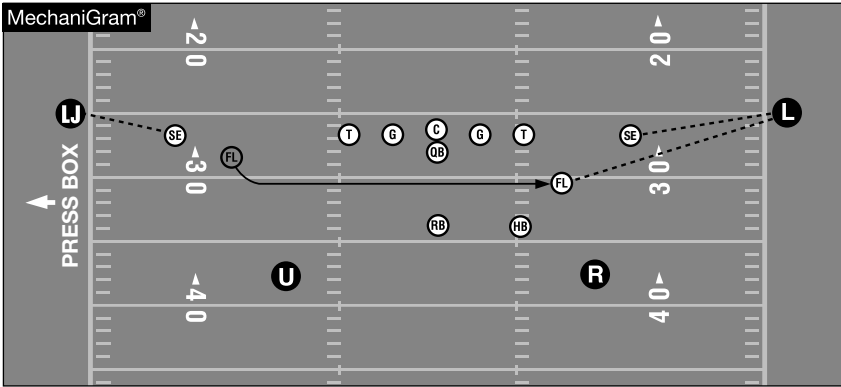
In this balanced formation, there are two receivers outside of the tackles on either side of the formation. The wing officials' main key is the widest receiver (in this case, the split end); the flankers are secondary keys.

### TRIPS TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



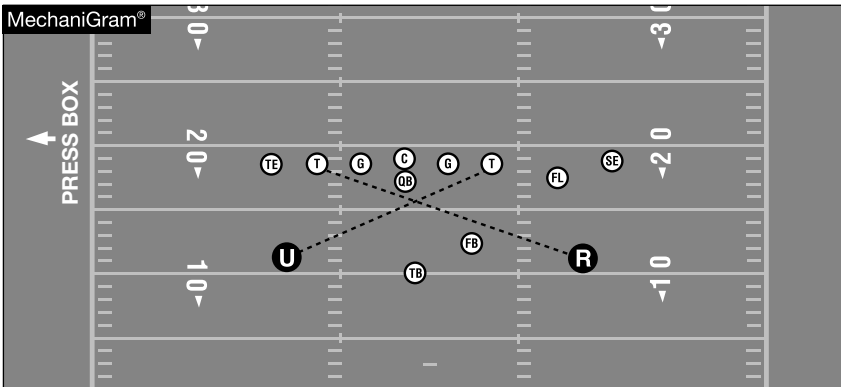
In a trips formation, the wing official on the strong side keys on the receiver on the end of the line (in this case the split end) and the two flankers are secondary keys. The Linesman keys on the tight end, the only receiver on the line on his side of the formation.

**MOTION CHANGES FORMATION FROM UNBALANCED TO BALANCED**



Strength was to the Line Judge's side, but motion changed the strength of the formation to the Linesman's side. However, the Line Judge observes the action of the motion man. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving. The split end is the Line Judge's key. The flanker and the split end are the Linesman's keys.

**REFEREE AND UMPIRE KEYS**



Regardless of the formation, the Referee and Umpire key on the opposite-side tackle. In all but the rarest cases, that means the Referee keys on the left tackle and the Umpire on the right tackle.

# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 11

# BEFORE AND AFTER THE SNAP

The Referee is responsible for observing the huddle to ensure team A is not violating substitution rules and checking player equipment. He should identify the eligible receivers in the backfield, observe shifts and watch for false starts and other pre-snap violations by the offense. He also counts team A or K on scrimmage downs and team R on free kicks. If the player count is low the Referee should communicate this to the nearest side official using the low count signal. The referee keeps track of the play clock and provides a visible signal, by putting his arm straight up, and a verbal countdown loud enough for the quarterback to hear during the last five seconds of the 25 or 40 second count.

When playing with 11 players, the Umpire is responsible for ensuring that team A has five players numbered 50 to 79 on the offensive line of scrimmage when not in scrimmage kick formation under the exception. The Umpire should listen for defenders interfering with the offense's snap count, observe the snapper for snap infractions and observe the guards for false starts. He also counts team A on scrimmage downs and team R on free kicks. If the count is low, the Umpire should continue to give the count signal until the ball is snapped.

Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their

side of the field, assist the Referee in monitoring substitutions, count to ensure team A has the required number of players on the line of scrimmage and assist the Umpire in checking the legality of uniform numbers of offensive linemen and receivers. If the receiver nearest the official is in the offensive backfield, the wing uses the extended arm signal to alert the opposite wing. The wing officials count team B players on scrimmage downs and team K players on free kicks.

### Forward Progress

The wing officials are primarily responsible for forward progress. Progress should be indicated by using the downfield foot. Keep your head up and observe players while marking a spot. Do not go around or jump over players to mark progress. Move into the field until you approach players, then stop.

If a spot is close to the line to gain, the spotting official must come all the way to the spot where the play ended. Wait for players to clear your path and then continue to spot the ball.

The primary official responsible for determining the forward progress spot is the official who can actually see the ball when the play is declared dead; and it is not based on what side of the field the play ends.



# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 12

# COIN TOSS

The coin toss is normally conducted in the center of the field three minutes before the game. The toss may be held at an earlier time off the field if both coaches agree. In such a case the results may be simulated in the center of the field three minutes before the game.

The Umpire and Linesman go to the sideline with the line-to-gain equipment and the Referee and Line Judge to the opposite sideline. The speaking captains (those who will give options for their teams) should be positioned so they are closest to the Referee when the group meets in the center of the field. The Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and Linesman meet the captains at their respective sidelines and escort them to the middle of the field, positioned so their backs are to their own sidelines. The Referee may either face the scoreboard or have his back to it during the toss.

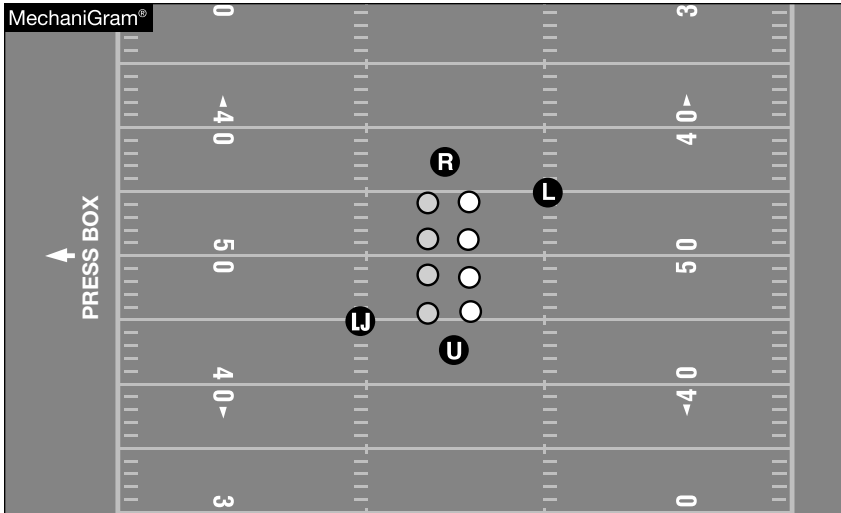
When they reach the center of the field, the Referee and Umpire will be across from each other. The Linesman remains on the hash mark on the side of the field with the chains; the Line Judge assumes a similar position on the opposite side.

Players who are not involved in the toss should be kept out of the area between the top of the numbers on both sides of the field. The captains are asked to introduce themselves to each other.

The Referee should allow all captains to view both sides of the coin, identifying which side is heads and which is tails. The visiting captain is instructed to call heads or tails before the coin is flipped. The Umpire repeats the choice loudly enough for all to hear. The Referee shall verbalize the mechanics of the coin toss to the captains.

Once the winner is determined, the winner is offered his choice: defer, receive, choose a goal to defend or kick. If the choice is to defer, the Referee immediately faces the pressbox, taps the shoulder of the deferring captain and signals the declination. The remaining choices are then presented to the other captain and the final selection is made by the deferring captain. If the winner of the coin toss does not defer, no signal is immediately given.

When the final selections are made, the captains are asked to put



their backs to the goal line their team will defend and the Referee gives the appropriate signal for the team making the choice (not the team that deferred). If the choice is to defend a goal, two signals are given: pointing both arms toward the goal line being defended, followed by the appropriate signal for the other captain.

If at any time during the toss the Referee errs or gives incorrect information (for instance, giving the wrong team an option), the Umpire should speak up immediately.

When the toss is completed, the other officials join the Referee and Umpire in the center of the field and record the results of the toss. All officials simultaneously move to their kickoff positions.

It is no longer necessary to meet with captains to determine second half options. Obtain those choices from the head coaches when they return for the 3-minute warm-up. You may still bring the captains together at midfield, following the 3-minute warm-up, to deal with issues and problems from the first half.

### Overtime Procedure

If overtime is necessary, the officials wait for the three-minute intermission to end. The Referee and Umpire go to their respective sidelines and once again escort the captains to the center of the field while the other officials assume the same positions as for the pregame toss. The coin toss is repeated with the visiting team again calling it. When the winner is determined, the options are explained. The winner may not defer, but may choose offense, defense or the goal to be used.

When the selections are completed, the captains of the team on offense are asked to face the goal line in the direction their team will advance and the opposing captains stand with their backs to that goal line. The Referee then taps the shoulder of the captain of the team that won the toss and gives the first down signal in the appropriate direction.

# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 13

# TIMEOUTS

- Timeout With Both Teams At The Sidelines
- Timeout With One Or Both Coaches On The Field

**Note: The timeout is not officially granted until all penalties are resolved, measurements taken if needed, verified that the down box and chains are correct, first downs signalled if achieved, etc.**

Any official should grant a valid timeout request and immediately stop the clock if it is running. That official reports the timeout to the Referee. The Referee indicates the timeout by repeating the stop-the-clock signal and indicating the team being charged the timeout by facing the team and extending both arms shoulder high, giving three “chucks” in that team’s direction.

All officials must record the number and team of the player requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. Each official then confirms with the Referee the number of timeouts each team has remaining. The Linesman and Line Judge inform the coaches on their respective sidelines of the timeouts remaining.

The Referee is responsible for timing the timeout. The one-minute count

begins when the Referee is informed of the timeout. When 45 seconds have expired, the Referee informs the crew so they can inform their teams. When the minute has expired, the Referee whistles the ball ready for play.

The procedure for signaling an official’s timeout is the same as for a charged timeout except that after stopping the clock, the Referee taps his chest to indicate it is an official’s timeout. Play should resume as quickly as possible.

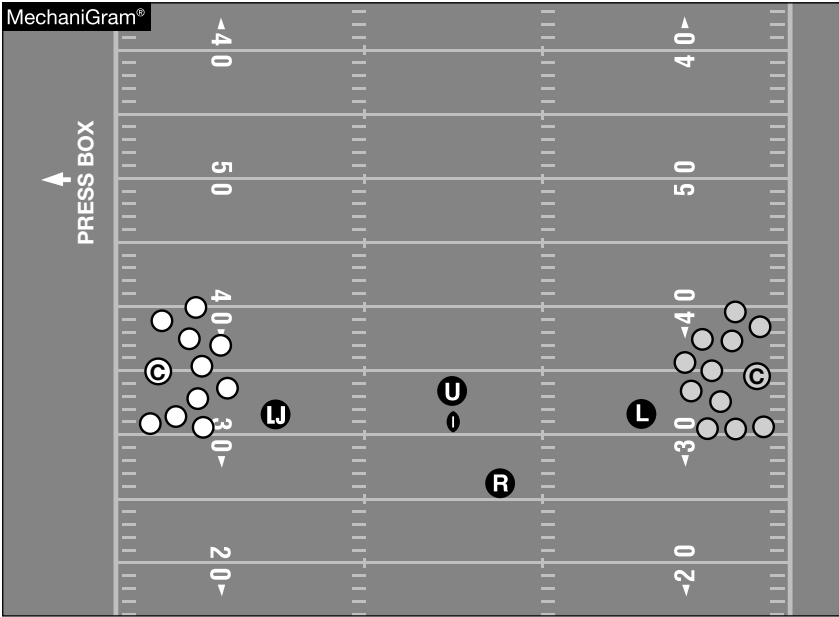
If the official’s timeout is for injury, any team conference must be an “Outside Nine Yard Mark Conference” if approved by the Referee.

During timeouts, wing officials are responsible for monitoring conferences near their sideline. Help get players promptly back onto the field.

### **Coach-Referee Conference**

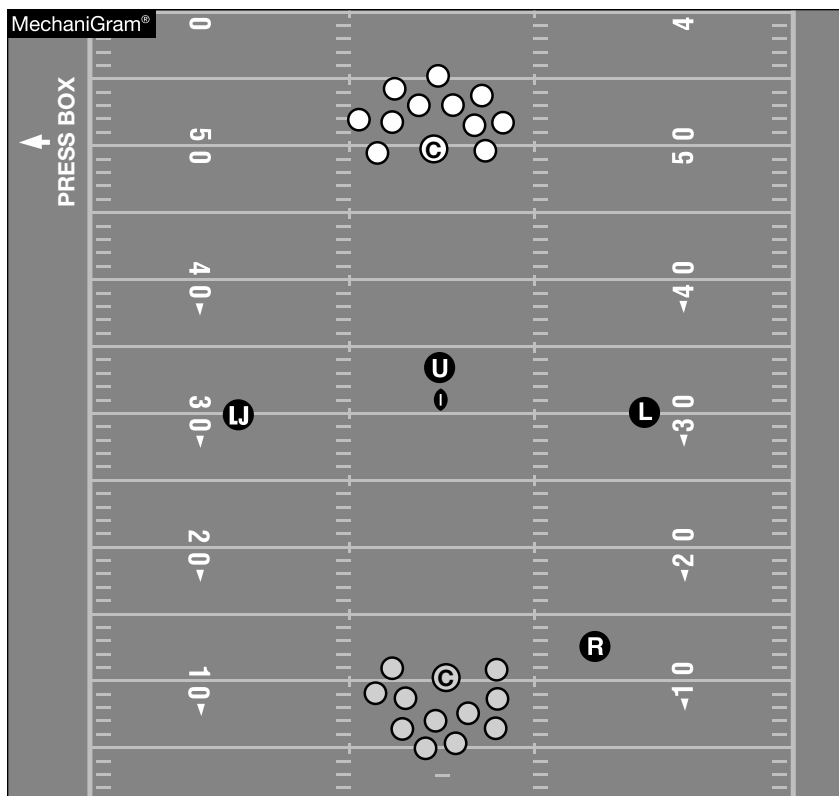
If an official coach-referee conference is requested, the Referee should take the wing official on that coach’s side along to monitor the conversation.

**TIMEOUT WITH BOTH TEAMS AT THE SIDELINES**



During the timeout, the Referee remains in his position in the offensive backfield, the Umpire stands over the ball and the Linesman and Line Judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines.

**TIMEOUT WITH ONE OR BOTH COACHES ON THE FIELD**



During the timeout, the Referee remains in his position in the offensive backfield, the Umpire stands over the ball and the Linesman and Line Judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines.

# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 14

# MEASUREMENTS

- Measurement In Side Zone
- Short Of A First Down
- Team A Awarded A First Down

When the Referee calls for a measurement, the Linesman should have the down box moved behind the lead stake. That is a reference point in case the line to gain should somehow become lost during the process. As the chains are being brought onto the field, the Line Judge should use his foot to indicate the intersection of the five-yard line where the chain is clipped and a line through the ball parallel to the sideline. That is the spot where the Linesman will place the clipped part of the chain.

The Linesman brings the chain in from the sideline with the chain crew members. Putting one hand on the links on each side of the clip improves the Linesman's chances of keeping track of the proper link in case the clip falls off the chain. The clip must be placed on the back edge of the line for the measurement. A good double-check is for the Linesman to state



that the next down will be first if the ball is beyond the stake or the next down of the series if it is short. (Example: "It will either be first or fourth.")

Once the Linesman tells the Referee he has the chain on the proper mark, the Umpire takes the forward stake from the chain crew member, then pulls the stake to ensure the chain is taut. The Referee rules whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake.

If the measurement is in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the Umpire should keep control of the stake. As seen in the PlayPic on the previous page, the Referee uses his hands (or thumb and index finger if the ball is inches short of the front stake) to inform both benches how short the play ended of a first down.

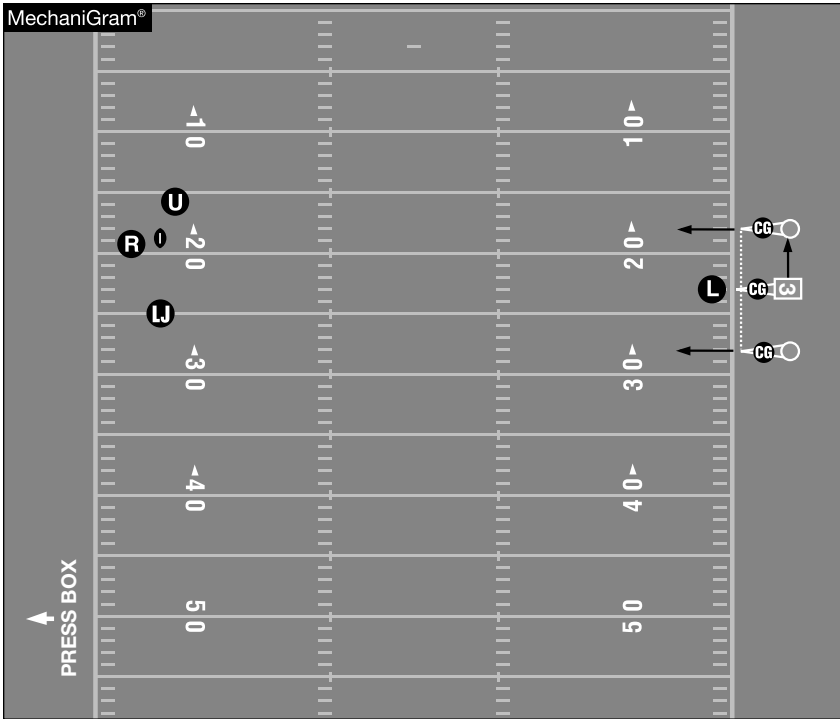
The Referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball and rises. The Referee should grasp the chain with two hands with the link that will be used to place the ball between his hands; that will ensure the proper link is maintained. Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and Linesman walk to the nearest hash mark.

The Referee must wait for the Linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

If the measurement occurred on fourth down and team A is short, the Referee signals the change of possession by giving the first down signal toward team A's goal line. The Referee then sets the ball in the same position as it was when it became dead so its foremost point becomes the rear point when the direction is changed. The new rear stake is then moved to the new foremost point of the ball.

If the measurement results in the award of a new series, the Referee signals the first down. The Linesman need not hold the chain as he accompanies the chain crew back to the sideline, but he must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to the chain crew where the new series will begin.

MEASUREMENT IN A SIDE ZONE



**Action on the field:** Play ends in side zone close to a first down.

**Referee:** Stops clock after seeing that measurement is necessary. Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

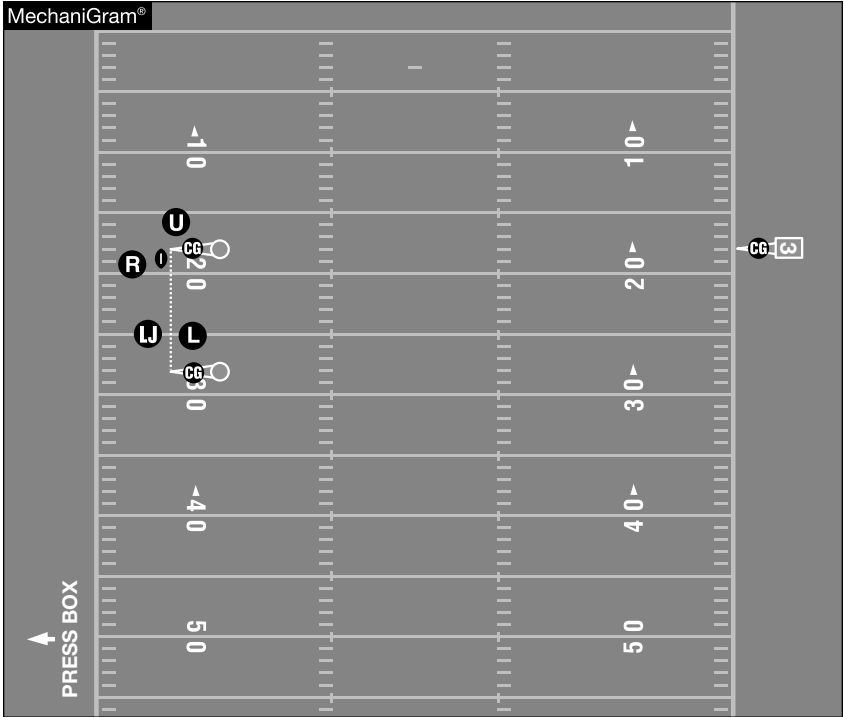
**Umpire:** Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

**Linesman:** Has box holder move box behind lead stake. Brings chain in from sideline with chain gang members to spot indicated by Line Judge.

**Line Judge:** Indicates intersection of the five-yard line where chain is clipped and line through ball parallel to sideline with bean bag or foot.



SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN PART 1



**Action on the field:** Team A is short of a first down.

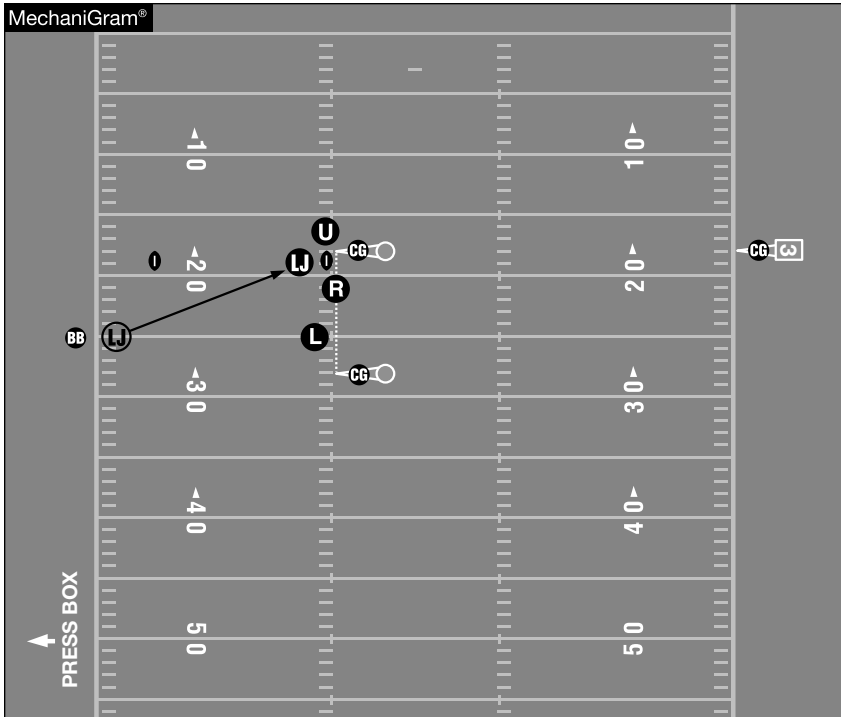
**Referee:** Rules whether or not ball is beyond front stake. Uses hands or fingers to inform both benches how short the play ended of first down.

**Umpire:** Holds lead stake.

**Linesman:** Holds clip in place.

**Line Judge:** Gets spare ball from Ball Attendant.

SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN PART 2



**Action on the field:** Chains are moved to hash mark for ball placement.

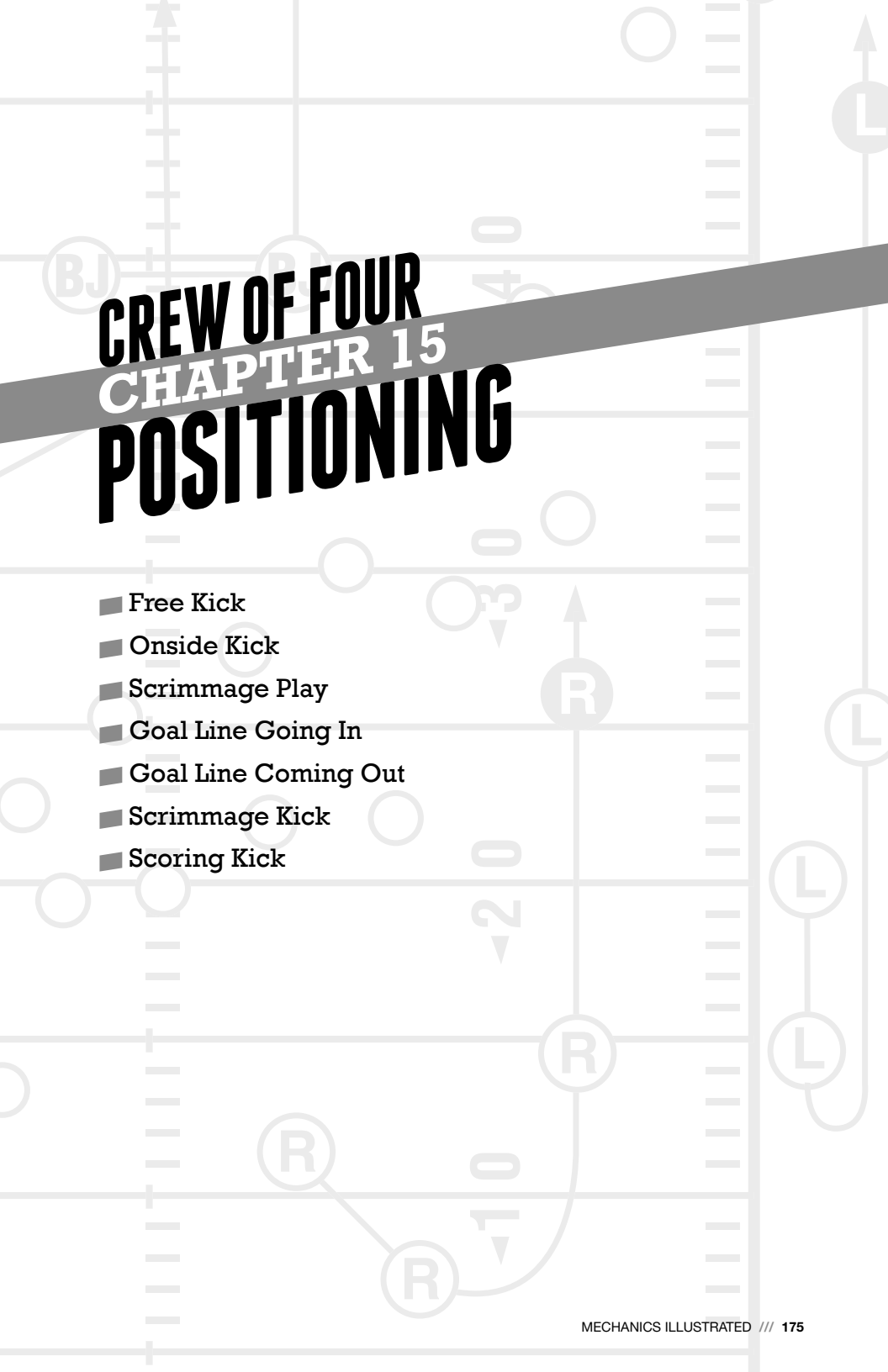
**Referee:** Grasps chain and rises. Walks to nearest hash mark. Sets chain on ground, maintaining link where ball will be placed. Gets ball from Line Judge and places it. Waits for Linesman's signal that chain gang is back in position and other officials are ready before giving ready-for-play signal.

**Umpire:** Maintains control of front stake and walks to nearest hash mark.

**Linesman:** Maintains control of clip and walks to nearest hash mark. Accompanies chain gang back to sideline and sets chains for next down. Signals to Referee when chain gang is back in position.

**Line Judge:** Delivers ball to Referee for placement.





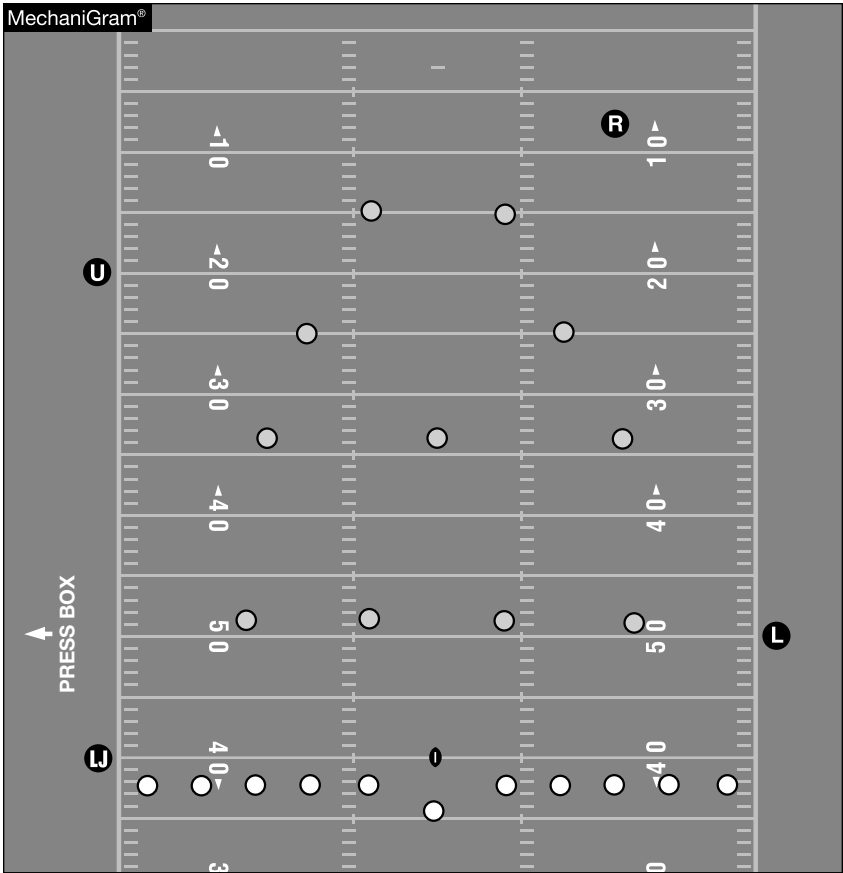
# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 15

# POSITIONING

- Free Kick
- Onside Kick
- Scrimmage Play
- Goal Line Going In
- Goal Line Coming Out
- Scrimmage Kick
- Scoring Kick

FREE KICK

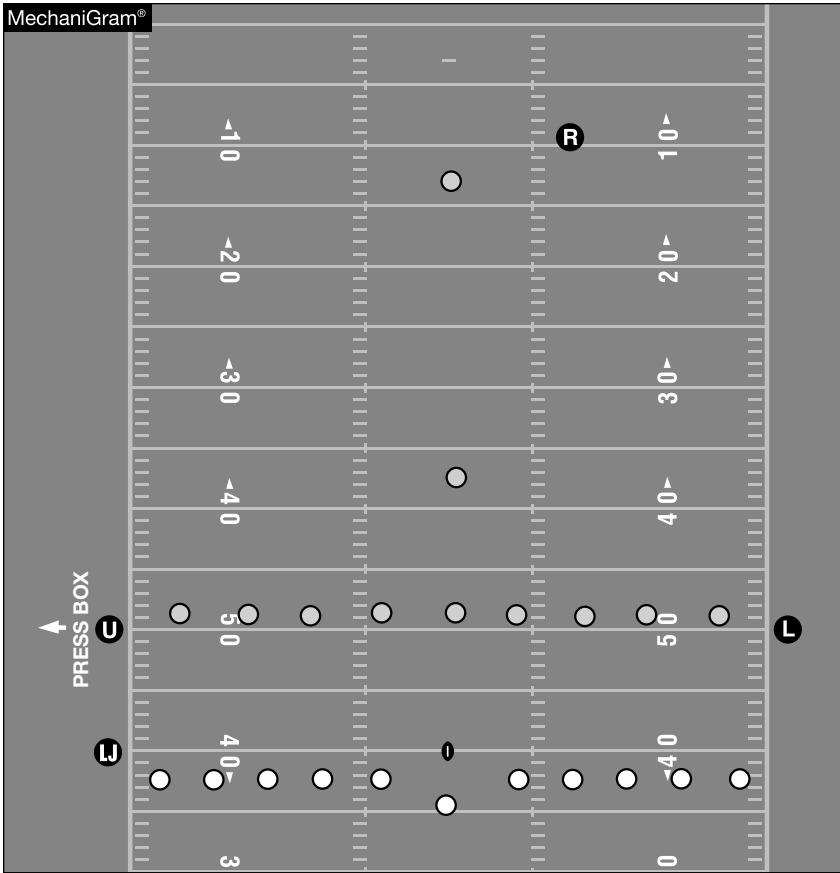


**Referee:** Starting position is near the top of the numbers near team R's five or 10-yard line on the Linesman's side of the field but do not allow any R players deeper than your starting position. After getting ready signals from the rest of the crew and the kicker, the Referee blows his whistle and gives the ready signal.

**Umpire:** Starting position is on the sideline at team R's 20-yard line on the Line Judge's side of the field. The Umpire signals the Referee by lifting an arm overhead when he is ready for the kickoff.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The Linesman is on team R's free-kick line, the Line Judge on team K's free-kick line. The Line Judge moves toward the center of the field once the players are on the field and the Linesman comes to the top of the numbers. The Line Judge should not give the ball to the kicker until team K has 11 players on the field and should remind the kicker not to kick the ball until the Referee has sounded his whistle. When they are in position and ready for the kick, they should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

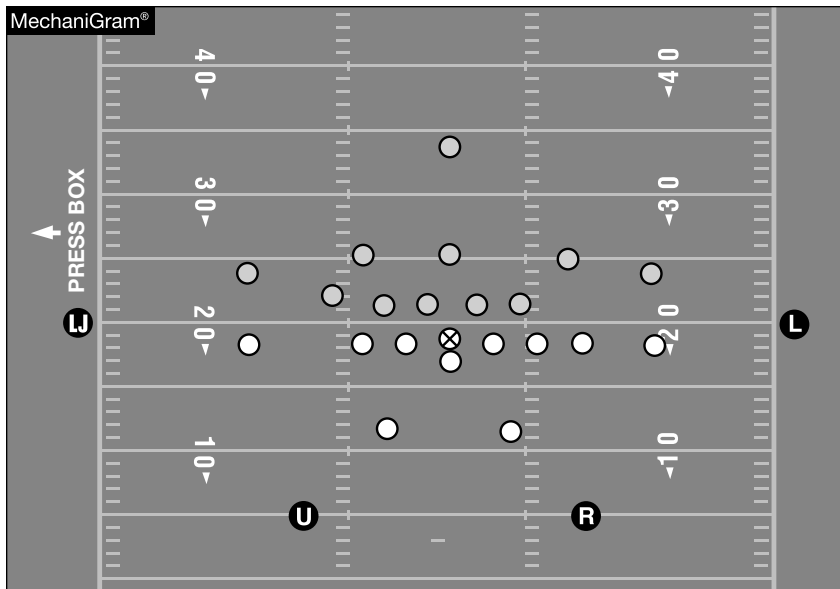
ONSIDE KICK



The Linesman and Line Judge assume their regular positions while the Referee moves up to about team R's 10-yard line and the Umpire moves up to R's free kick line (to the 50-yard line unless free kick spot has been moved by penalty).

The Umpire, Linesman and Line Judge should have their bean bags in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

## SCRIMMAGE PLAY

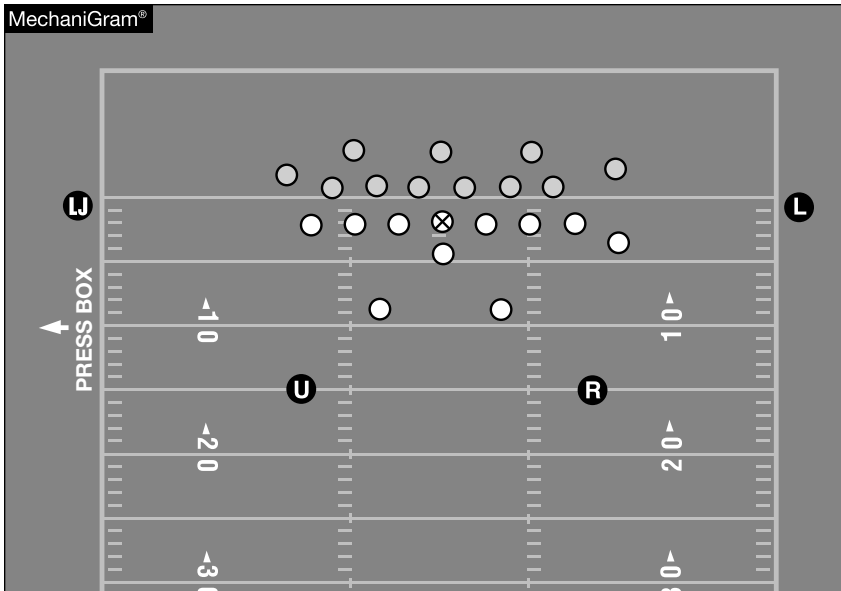


**Referee:** Starting position is on the throwing arm side of the quarterback, approximately 12 to 15 yards deep and at least as wide as the tight end.

**Umpire:** Starting position is 12 to 15 yards deep and as wide as the tight end on the quarterback's non-throwing arm side. The Umpire must be able to see the ball from the time the snapper handles the ball until the time it is snapped.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline. Working on the sideline is required.

## GOAL LINE GOING IN



**Referee:** Starting position is on the throwing arm side of the quarterback, approximately 12 to 15 yards deep and at least as wide as the tight end.

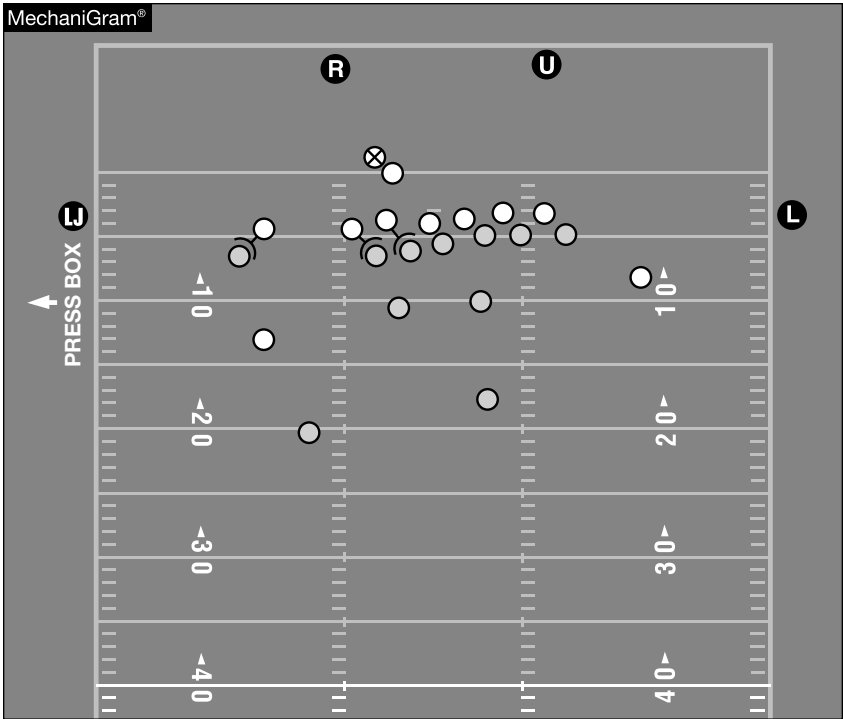
**Umpire:** Starting position is 12 to 15 yards deep and as wide as the tight end on the quarterback's non-throwing arm side. The Umpire must be able to see the ball from the time the snapper handles the ball until the time it is snapped.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** When the ball is snapped inside the 10-yard line, the wing officials should begin side-stepping toward the goal line. When the ball is snapped on or inside the five-yard line, you must move immediately to the goal line pylon. If the play moves toward you, back up as wide as needed. When the ball breaks the goal line plane in player possession, make eye contact with the opposite wing official before signaling the touchdown. There is no reason to rush this signal. On close plays in the middle of the field do not stay on the sideline. Move rapidly in toward the ball as you signal (either touchdown or pointing down at the dead-ball spot) so that everyone knows what you have. Sell your call! If not sure, move in slowly in the field of play. If you come in on the goal line or in the end zone, everyone will think the ball has crossed the goal line.

**All:** A touchdown, safety or touchback signal is given only by an official who actually rules on the play. Mirroring the signal is dangerous; if the covering official is incorrect, the crew will find it difficult to overcome two officials making a mistake. If the covering official is correct, there is no need for a second signal.



## GOAL LINE COMING OUT



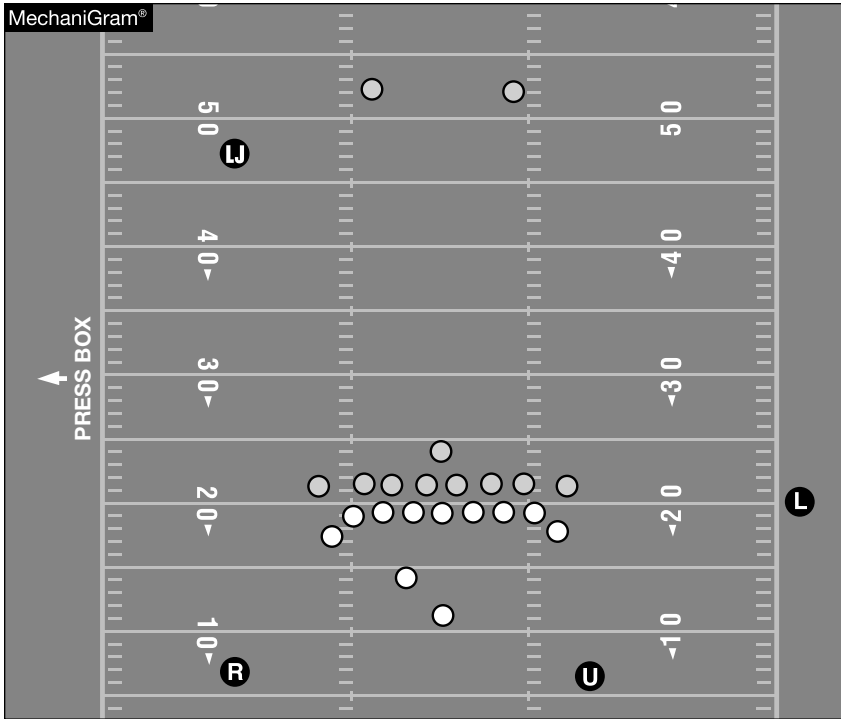
**Referee:** If ball is snapped between the goal line and five yardline, starting position should be wider than normal for adequate coverage. Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

**Umpire:** Starting position is 12 to 15 yards deep and as wide as the tight end. The Umpire must be able to see the ball from the time the snapper handles the ball until the time it is snapped.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** If the ball is snapped from the goal line to the five-yard line going out, both wing officials should move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If the ball is snapped from the five-yard line to the eight-yard line, the wing official opposite the Referee's starting position should move back toward the goal line to help and needs to be aware of plays near the goal line as his positioning will be critical for adequate coverage on that side of the field. Delay moving upfield until the goal line is no longer threatened. Your key will be a running back positioned in the end zone. Officiate the ball as it is advanced into the field of play, but be ready to rule on a possible safety.

**All:** A touchdown, safety or touchback signal is given only by an official who actually rules on the play. Mirroring the signal is dangerous; if the covering official is incorrect, the crew will find it difficult to overcome two officials making a mistake. If the covering official is correct, there is no need for a second signal.

SCRIMMAGE KICK



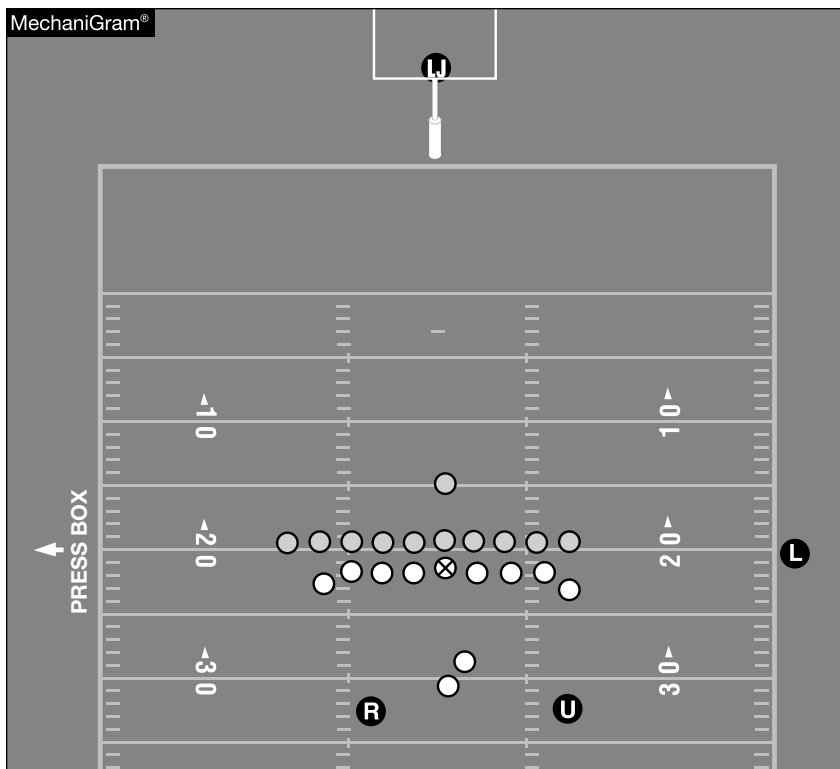
**Referee:** Starting position is three to five yards behind and eight to 10 yards outside the punter, on the Line Judge’s side.

**Umpire:** Starting position is same depth and width as the Referee. Say, “The snapper is protected,” to remind team R players about rules regarding to contact on the snapper.

**Linesman:** Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage on or behind the sideline.

**Line Judge:** Starting position is seven to 10 yards wider than and in front of the deepest receiver.

## SCORING KICK



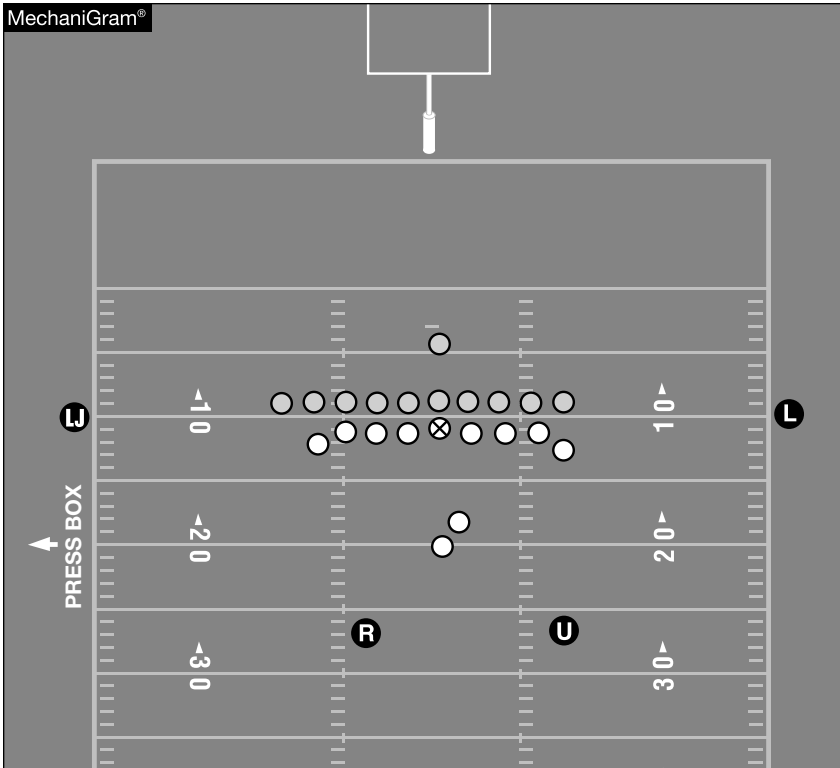
**Referee:** The Referee faces the holder from a position about 2 to three yards behind and eight to 12 yards to the side of the kicker, rules on roughing the holder and kicker and echoes the good or no good signal to the pressbox.

**Umpire:** Starting position is the same depth and width as the Referee. The Umpire is responsible for checking the numbers of the players on the offensive line and should remind team R players about rules relating to contact on the snapper. Moving toward the line at the snap will improve the view of the initial line charge.

**Linesman:** Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage and on or behind the sideline.

**Line Judge:** Starting position is beyond the endline and between the uprights. Line Judge is responsible for ruling whether the kick is good or no good.

SCORING KICK ON OR INSIDE TEAM R'S 15-YARD LINE

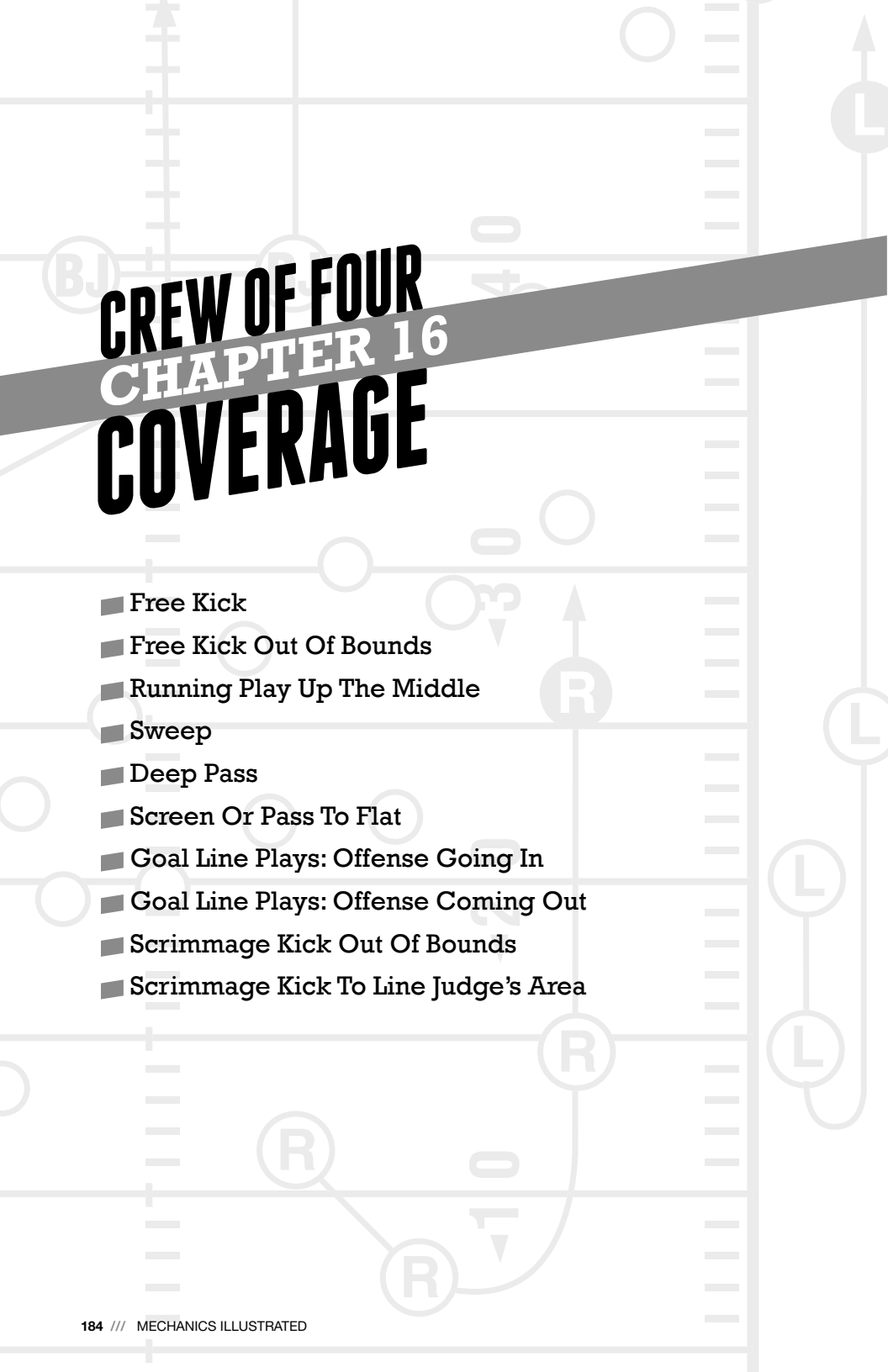


**Referee:** Starting position is 2-3 yards behind and slightly to the open side of the kicker/holder and then moves directly behind the kicker in order to see the goal. Rules on whether the kick is good or no good. Line Judge may assist in determining whether ball was over or under crossbar.

**Umpire:** Starting position is the same depth and width as the Referee. The Umpire is responsible for checking the numbers of the players on the offensive line and should remind team R players about rules relating to contact on the snapper. Moving toward the line at the snap will improve the view of the initial line charge.

**Linesman:** Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage and on the sideline. The Linesman rules on roughing the holder and kicker.

**Line Judge:** Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline. May assist Referee with determining whether ball is under or over goal crossbar.



# CREW OF FOUR

## CHAPTER 16

# COVERAGE

- Free Kick
- Free Kick Out Of Bounds
- Running Play Up The Middle
- Sweep
- Deep Pass
- Screen Or Pass To Flat
- Goal Line Plays: Offense Going In
- Goal Line Plays: Offense Coming Out
- Scrimmage Kick Out Of Bounds
- Scrimmage Kick To Line Judge's Area

**Free Kicks**

On kicks inside team R's five-yard line, the Referee is responsible for determining whether the momentum exception applies and whether the kick is to be ruled a touchback.

The Referee is responsible for noting whether team K has at least four players on either side of the kicker. Once kicked, the Referee is responsible for a rectangular area on his side of the field extending from the goal line to team R's 30-yard line and slightly more than halfway across the field.

The Umpire is responsible for a rectangular area extending from the goal line to team R's 30-yard line slightly less than halfway across the field.

The Line Judge watches for infractions involving the restraining line, including noting whether no team K player other than the kicker is more than five yards from the team K's free kick line. After the ball is kicked, the Line Judge drifts downfield, maintaining coverage of his sideline. He should not go beyond 15 yards downfield in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters the Line Judge's coverage area.

The Linesman watches for infractions involving the free-kick line. After the ball is kicked, the Linesman drifts downfield, maintaining coverage of his respective sideline. He should not go beyond 15 yards in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters the Linesman's coverage area.

If the kick goes out of bounds, the covering official is responsible for either dropping a bean bag (if team R caused the ball to go out of bounds) or a penalty marker (if team K caused the ball to go out of bounds). Officials trailing the runner must clean up after the play.

The covering official signals the clock to start if he sees the ball is touched other than first touching by team K. The covering official is also responsible for signaling the clock to stop if the runner is downed in his area or if the ball goes out of bounds. All

officials not responsible for the runner must look for illegal blocks.

**Free Kicks After a Safety**

For the free kick that follows a safety, the Line Judge should be at team K's 20-yard line, the Linesman at team K's 30-yard line and the position of the remaining officials is adjusted accordingly.

**Scrimmage Plays**

The Referee focuses on the ball, the runner and the blocking around the runner. If the play goes to the opposite side, the Referee should move toward or parallel to the line of the scrimmage and maintain a position approximately in line with the runner. If the play is to the Referee's side, the Referee moves behind the play and is responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone or turns upfield.

The Referee should watch the handoff or the pitchout, see the runner head outside the free blocking zone, and watch to see that no one contacts the quarterback before drifting along to follow the play.

On runs that end out of bounds behind the neutral zone, the Referee is responsible for marking the spot.

The Umpire observes the blocking to find the point of attack. When the hole opens, the Umpire should move away from it (to avoid interfering with the defensive pursuit) and laterally (thus turning his head toward the blockers in front of the runner and the tackling efforts of the defense).

Plays that end in a side zone may require the Umpire to move outside the hash mark and toward the sideline in order to clean up behind the play. When play swings around to one side, the Umpire should turn his attention to the blocking ahead of the runner and should prepare to cross outside the hash mark if the runner is downed in the side zone near the sideline. The Umpire can help get the ball back to the hash mark and

set it at the progress spot. He should not automatically halt at the hash and rely on other officials to get him the ball.

The Linesman and Line Judge observe the tackle on their side and read his block to determine the type of play. The wing officials move down the field trailing the runner. If the run is up the middle or in the wing official's side zone, watch the action around and in front of the runner. When the play ends, square off at a 90-degree angle to mark forward progress. If the play is to the opposite side of the field, move into the field no farther than the numbers and observe players not directly involved in the play.

Sweeps require the Referee, Umpire and the appropriate wing official to react quickly. It is important for the Referee to observe action around and behind the runner and for the Umpire to observe action around and in front of the runner. Upon observing the pulling lineman and the formation of the wall in front of the runner, the wing official's first movement should be a step back (farther off the sideline) and laterally (into the offensive backfield). Once the runner is beyond the wing official's position, he should not attempt to outrun the runner; rather, he should trail the play slightly and observe the runner and action around him.

The off wing observes players who may not be directly blocking for or chasing the runner.

Depending on location of players not directly involved in the tackle, the Umpire may have to move outside the hash mark and toward the sideline in order to clean up behind the play. When play swings around to one side, the Umpire should turn his attention to the blocking ahead of the runner and should prepare to cross outside the hash mark if the runner is downed in the side zone near the sideline. The Umpire can help get the ball back to the hash mark and set it at the progress spot. He should not automatically halt at the hash and rely on other officials to get him the ball.

If the runner is driven out of bounds less than five yards past the scrimmage line, the covering wing official can handle the play and supervise players outside the sideline after marking the out of bounds spot with his foot. When a play is more than a five-yard gain and the runner heads across the sideline, the covering wing official marks the spot while keeping an eye on players; the Referee or Umpire must hustle to the spot and escort the players back to the field.

A play gaining considerably more than 10 yards may find the covering wing official policing activity past the sidelines. The covering wing official and the Referee or Umpire should work together to be sure the ball is properly spotted and off-the-field activity is monitored.

When a play ends inbounds near a sideline, and the line-to-gain has been achieved, the covering official shall give the "start-the-clock" signal followed by the "stop-the-clock" signal to signify that the ball is dead inbounds but that the line to gain has been reached.

### **Goal Line Plays**

When the ball is snapped between team B's 10- and five-yard lines, the wing officials release slowly downfield at the snap, staying ahead of the runner all the way to the goal line.

The touchdown signal is given only by an official who actually sees the ball in possession of a runner break the plane of the goal line. Mirroring the signal is dangerous; if the covering official is incorrect, the crew will find it difficult to overcome two officials making a mistake. If the covering official is correct, there is no need for a second signal.

There are very few circumstances under which the Referee or Umpire would declare a touchdown. Under most circumstances, the wing official will be in a much better position to rule if the ball has broken the plane of the goal line.

When team A snaps the ball at or inside its own five-yard line, the wing officials move quickly to the goal line in

order to see if the runner advanced the ball completely beyond the goal line. If so, they cover the play and mark forward progress as usual.

### Scrimmage Kicks

The Referee must not watch the ball as it travels from the snapper to the punter — it will get there!

Move with the kicker as he moves forward to kick the ball. Stay focused on the kicker until all threat of harm has ended.

Alert the defenders when the ball is kicked: “Ball’s away, ball’s away.”

Do not move too quickly downfield after the scrimmage kick. Stay focused on the kicker until all threat of harm has ended.

The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction in case of an errant snap or blocked kick.

Once the threat to the kicker has ended, the Referee takes a quick look to see the flight of the ball. If the kick is toward a sideline, he must be prepared to determine the spot the ball went out of bounds. If the kick is short, the Referee goes directly to the out-of-bounds spot; if the kick is long and goes out of bounds, the covering official moves past where he thinks it flew out before walking toward the Referee with his hand up — along the sideline — until the Referee chops downward, telling him to halt. The wing officials should not always expect the Referee to help line up a scrimmage kick that has gone out of bounds in the air. If the Referee has a hand up, that means he can help. You may have to create a spot, but once you choose a spot, sell it!

If the runner breaks a long return, the Referee may assume responsibility for the runner.

On blocked kicks, the Referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball.

The Umpire should move toward the line at the snap. Once the ball has been

kicked and players from both teams have run past the Umpire, the Umpire pivots to the Line Judge’s side and moves slowly downfield.

The Linesman doesn’t move downfield until the ball is beyond the neutral zone. The Linesman is primarily responsible for determining if the ball crossed the line. The Linesman is responsible for his sideline from endline to endline and for covering the runner when the return is to his area. If the run is to the opposite sideline, he should clean up behind the play.

If the kick is short and in the Linesman’s side zone, he must know who touched a loose ball; if the kicking team is first to touch the kick, a bean bag should be dropped at the spot of the touching.

When kicks go out of bounds, the covering official should kill the clock at once. If the kick is short and toward a sideline, the Referee determines the spot the ball went out of bounds. If the kick is long and goes out of bounds, the covering official moves past where he thinks it flew out before walking toward the Referee with his hand up — along the sideline — until the Referee chops downward, telling him to halt.

On blocked kicks, the Linesman should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball. The Linesman must also be cognizant of a fake punt. If a pass to the Linesman’s flat is used on the fake, the Linesman must know if the pass was forward or backward. If the kicker initially starts to run before deciding to kick, the Linesman may have to rule whether the punter was beyond the line when the ball was kicked.

The Line Judge is responsible for covering all kicks down the middle and to his side zone and should be prepared to get to team R’s goal line to rule on momentum exception or touchback situations.

All deep receivers are the responsibility of the Line Judge. He should observe the



receivers and the players around them rather than the ball as it flies downfield.

The Linesman remains far enough away from the receiver to retain a wide-angle view and moving in at a controlled pace, with eyes searching. Once the receiver has completed the fair catch, the Linesman helps the Line Judge look for illegal action around the receiver. In such cases, it is also a good idea not to have the whistle in the mouth; it is possible for a fair catch to be muffed and a whistle blown before the ball dribbles loose from the receiver's grasp.

The Line Judge is responsible for his sideline from the line of scrimmage to team R's endline and for covering the runner when the return is to his area. If the runner breaks into the opposite side zone, coverage transfers to the Linesman and the Line Judge cleans up behind the play. On a return to the middle of the field, the Line Judge has responsibility for the runner until he gives up the runner to the Umpire; the point at which the transfer occurs depends on how far downfield the Umpire has drifted after the kick. The Referee may take over coverage of the runner if the runner breaks off a long return.

### **Scoring Kicks (Ball snapped at or inside team R's 15-yard line)**

The Referee is two to three yards behind and slightly to the open side of the kicker/holder and then moves directly behind the kicker and in a position to see the uprights. He shall rule on whether the ball is between the uprights and over the goal. He may receive assistance from the Line Judge if he is in position to see whether the ball was over or under the goal. If the try is blocked or obviously will not score, the Referee should blow his whistle to kill the ball and give the appropriate signal (the same mechanic is used if a missed or blocked field goal breaks the plane of the goal line). If a field goal is blocked and does not break the plane of the goal line, the ball remains live and no signal is given. Only

the Referee signals if the kick was good or no good.

The Line Judge is on the line of scrimmage on the sideline and has responsibility along the line. After the initial blocks, he may focus his attention on the goal to help determine whether the ball crossed over or under. He may move towards the goal to assist in this determination. If able to determine over or under, he should immediately signal the Referee that the attempt was good/no good. (Thumbs up or down is an acceptable signal.)

The Linesman is on the line of scrimmage on the sideline and has responsibility along the line. After the initial blocks, he must shift his focus to the kicker/holder as he has primary responsibility for determining running into/roughing the kicker/holder.

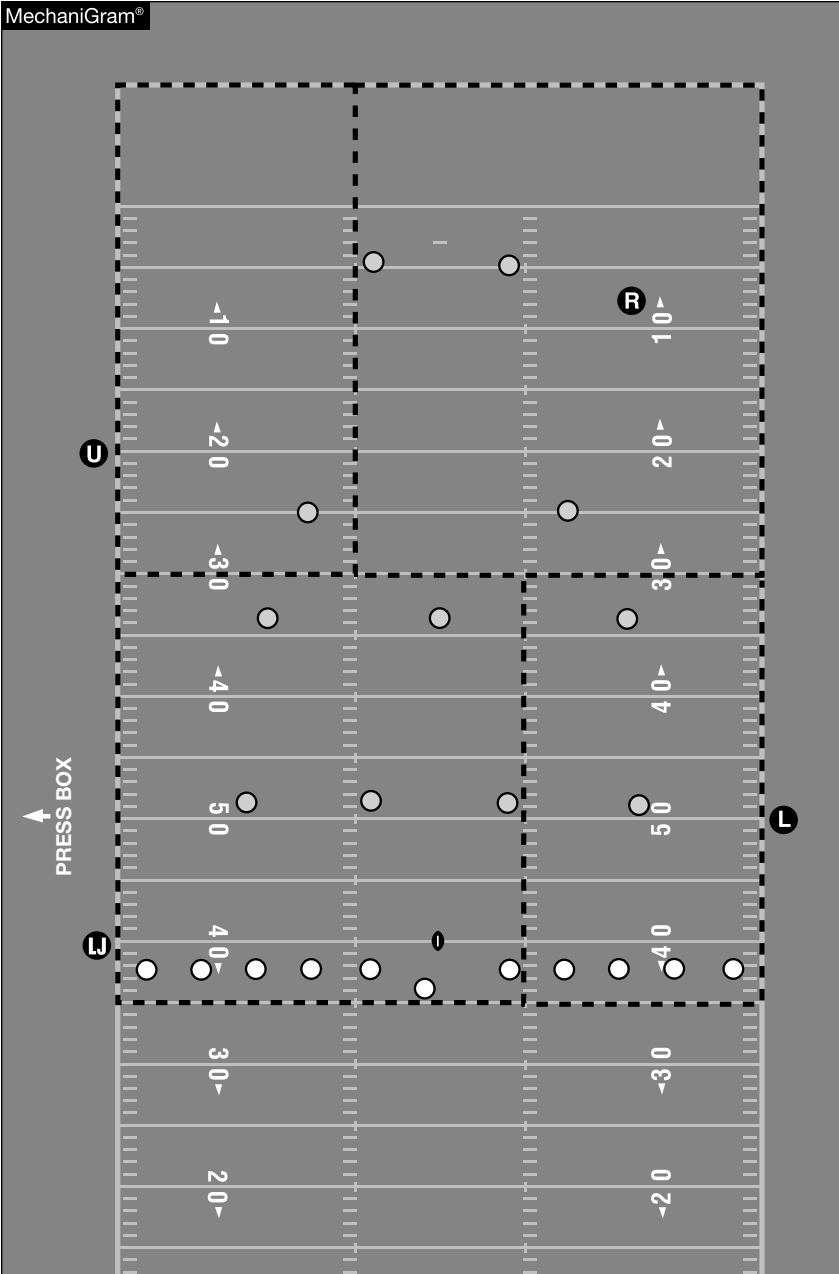
### **Scoring Kicks (Ball snapped outside team R's 15-yard line)**

The Line Judge moves five yards behind and directly between the uprights and is the sole judge whether the kick is good or no good.

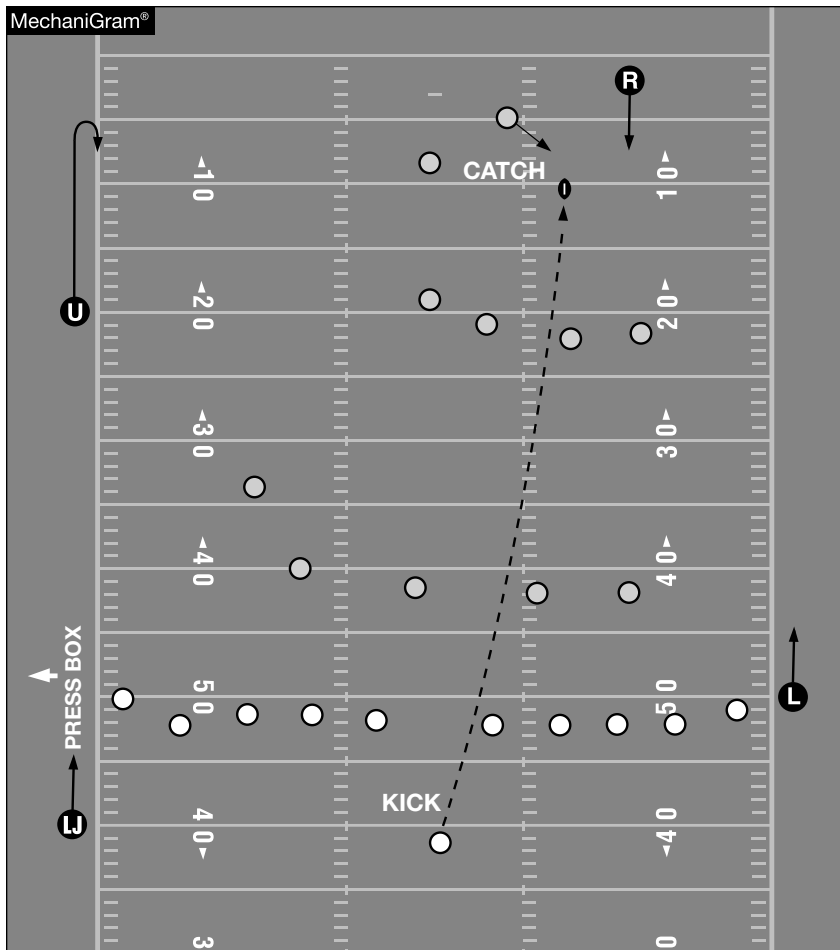
If the kick is no good and breaks the plane of the goal line, the Line Judge signals the kick no good, followed by the touchback signal.

### FREE KICK COVERAGE ZONES

MechaniGram®



FREE KICK PART 1



**Action on the field:** Receiver catches kick.

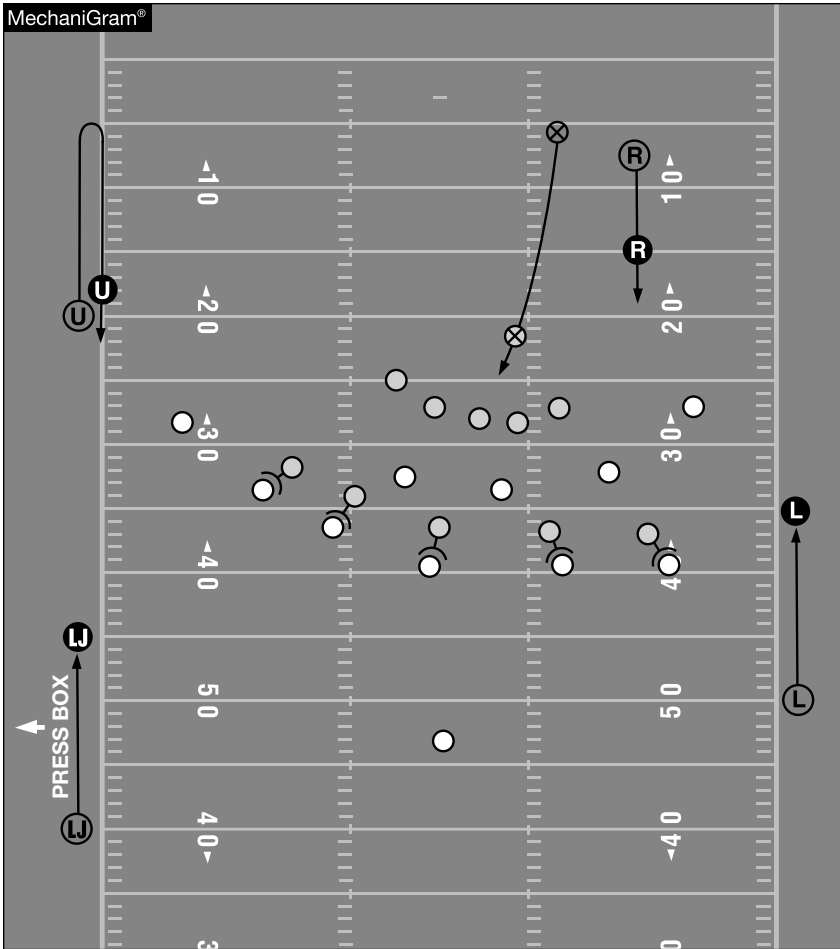
**Referee:** Observes action in front of receiver on his side of field. Moves slowly upfield.

**Umpire:** Retreats to observe catch. Signals clock to start when ball is caught by receiver. Moves to stay ahead of receiver and observes action of runner during return.

**Linesman:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on his side of field.

**Line Judge:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on his side of field.

FREE KICK PART 2



**Action on the field:** Receiver advances.

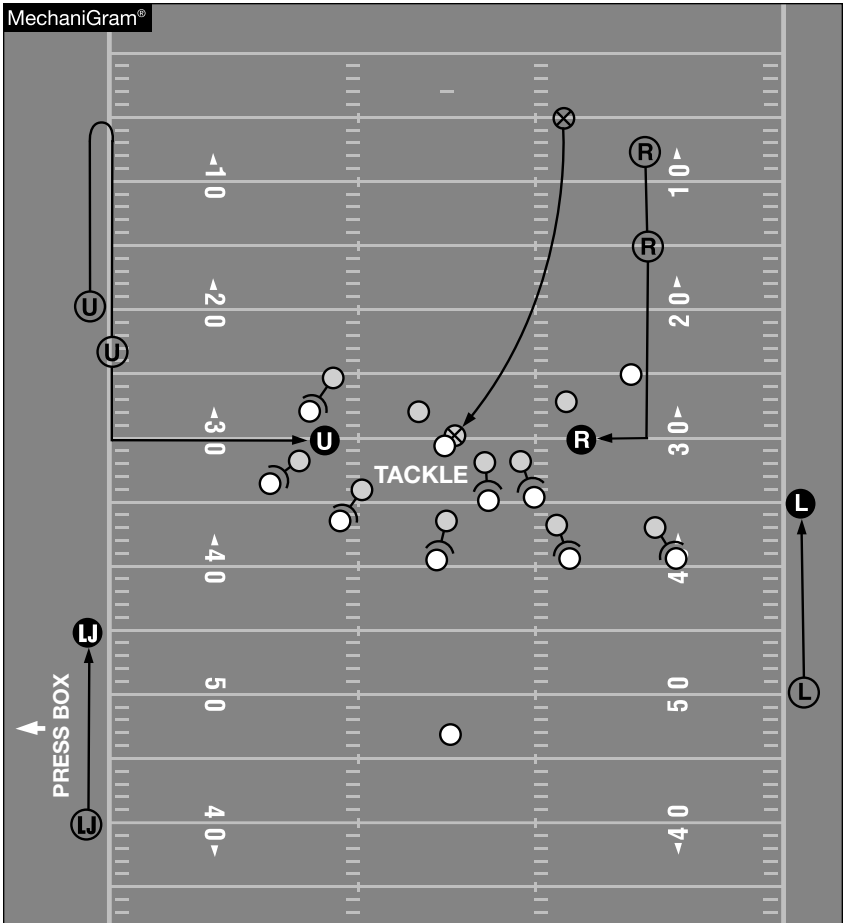
**Referee:** Observes action in front of receiver on his side of field. Moves slowly upfield.

**Umpire:** Moves to trail runner and observes action by and in front of runner during return.

**Linesman:** Stops 15 yards downfield from team R's free-kick line. Observes action in front of receiver on his side of field.

**Line Judge:** Stops 15 yards downfield from team K's free-kick line. Observes action in front of receiver on his side of field.

FREE KICK PART 3



**Action on the field:** Receiver continues advance and is downed.

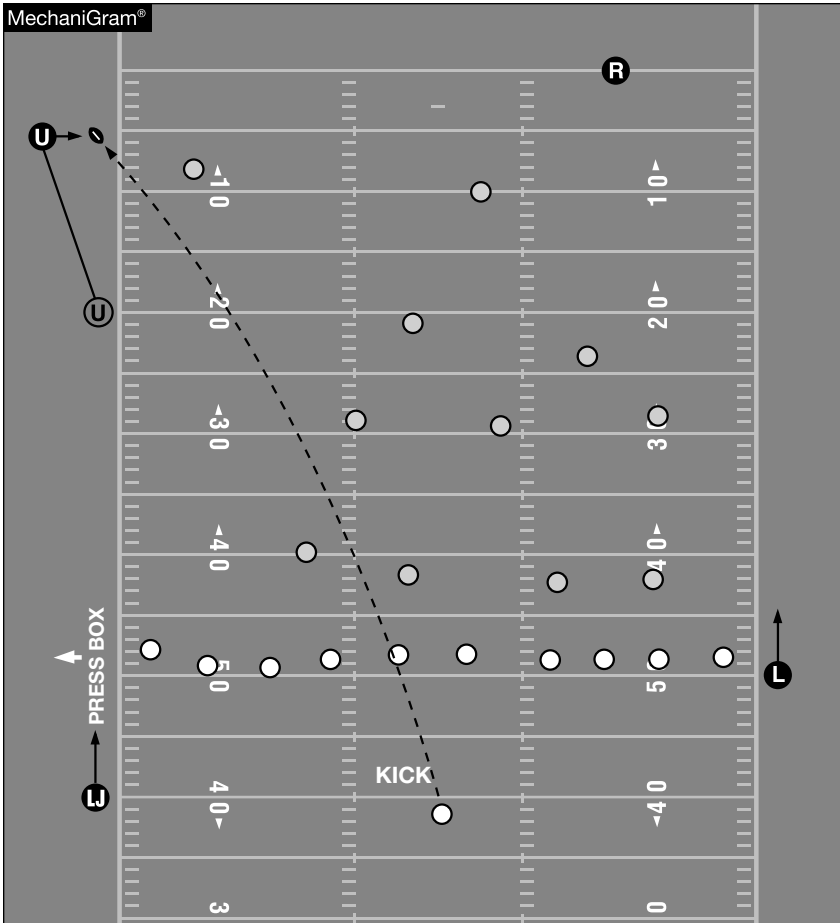
**Referee:** Moves upfield and observes action of players. Takes coverage of runner when runner enters his area (halo coverage). Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner is downed. Squares off and holds spot until Umpire can mirror spot.

**Umpire:** Moves upfield and observes runner until runner leaves coverage area (halo coverage). Squares off to mirror Referee's spot.

**Linesman:** Observes players. When Referee signals possession for team R, instructs chain crew to set chains for new series.

**Line Judge:** Observes players.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



**Action on the field:** Kick becomes dead out of bounds.

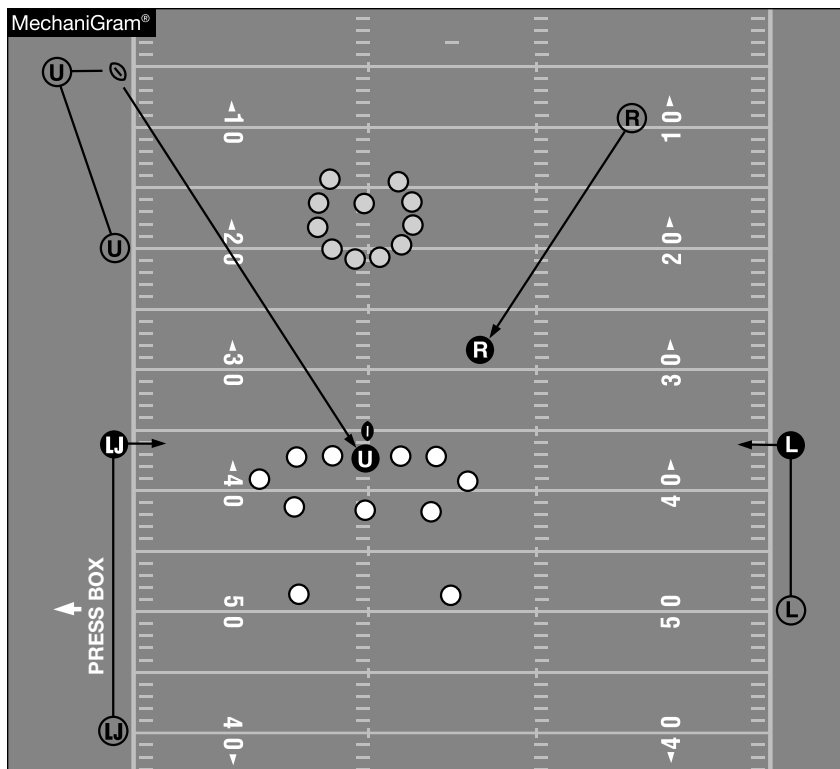
**Referee:** Observes action in front of receiver on his side of field.

**Umpire:** Retreats to observe ball. Signals clock to stop when ball is out of bounds.

**Linesman:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on his side of field.

**Line Judge:** Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on his side of field.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



**Action on the field:** Team R chooses to take ball at its own 35-yard line.

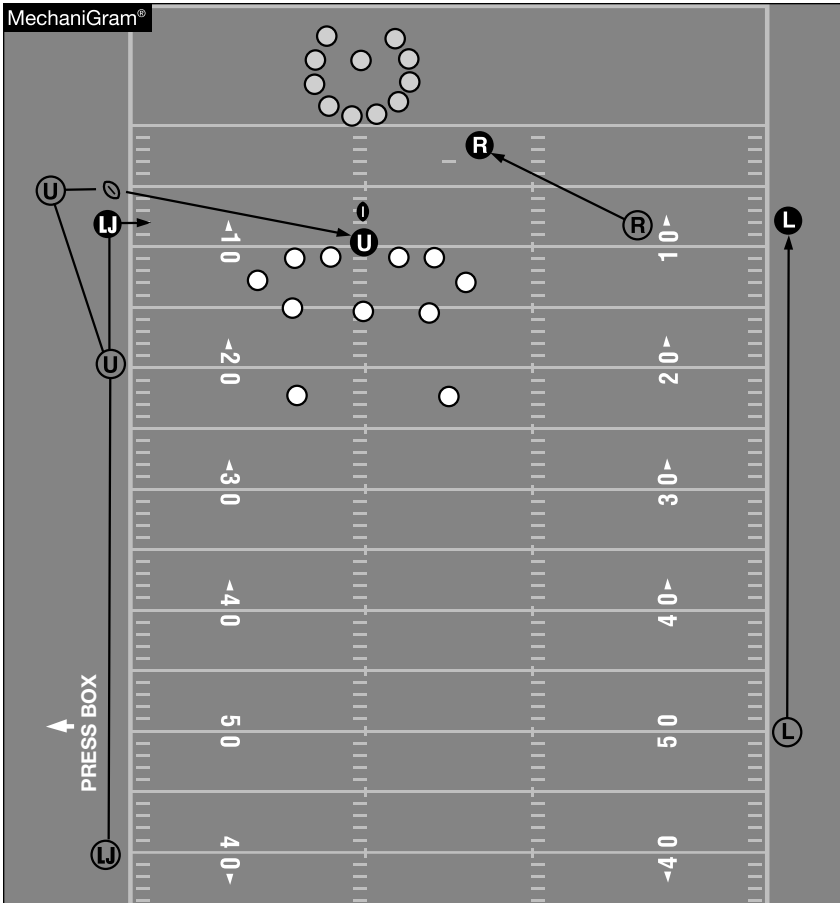
**Referee:** Observes action in his area. Communicates result of play with Umpire. Obtains choice from team R captain. Signals team K's foul and points toward team R's 35-yard line, where ball will next be put in play. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

**Umpire:** Moves downfield and observes action in his area. Gives stop-the-clock signal when ball goes out of bounds. Communicates result of play with Referee. Moves to hash mark at team R's 35-yard line to set ball for new series. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, signals team K's foul, walks off penalty and returns to position for rekick.)

**Linesman:** Moves downfield and observes action in his area. Moves to team R's 35-yard line, where team R will begin new series, assists chain crew in setting chains.(If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

**Line Judge:** Mirrors spot at team R's 35-yard line, where new series will begin. (If team R chooses a rekick for enforcement of a penalty, walks off the penalty, then returns to position for rekick.)

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



**Action on the field:** Team R caused kick to go out of bounds.

**Referee:** Observes action in his area. Communicates result of play with Umpire. Signals new series will begin at spot where kick went out of bounds.

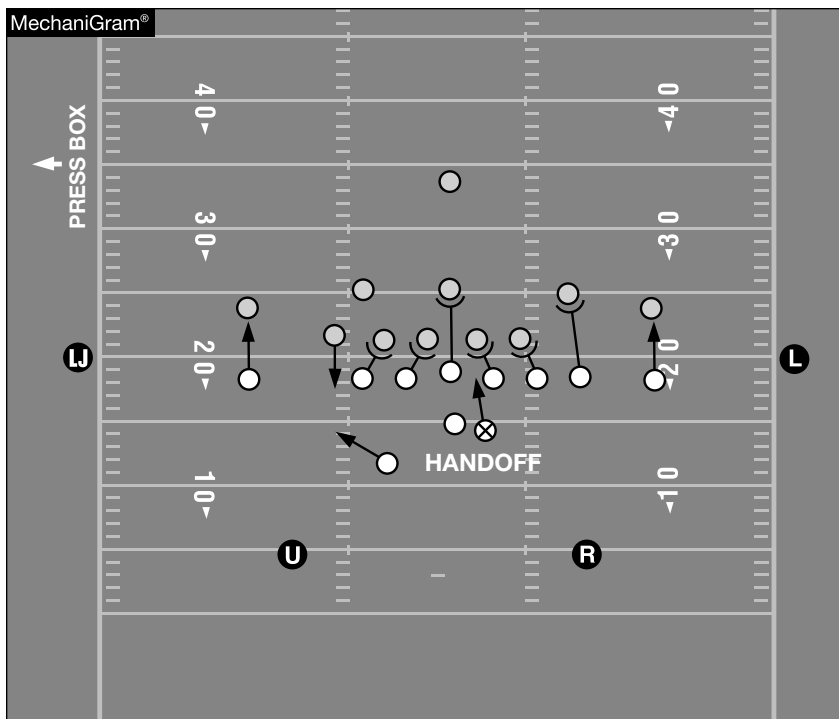
**Umpire:** Observes action in his area. Gives stop-the-clock signal when ball goes out of bounds. Communicates result of play with Referee. Waits for Line Judge to arrive and mirror spot; moves to hash mark where new series will begin and sets ball.

**Linesman:** Moves downfield and observes action in his area. Mirrors Line Judge's spot where new series will begin and assists chain crew in setting chains.

**Line Judge:** Moves downfield and observes action in his area. Takes spot where new series will begin from Umpire.



## RUNNING PLAY UP THE MIDDLE PART 1



**Action on the field:** Handoff to back.

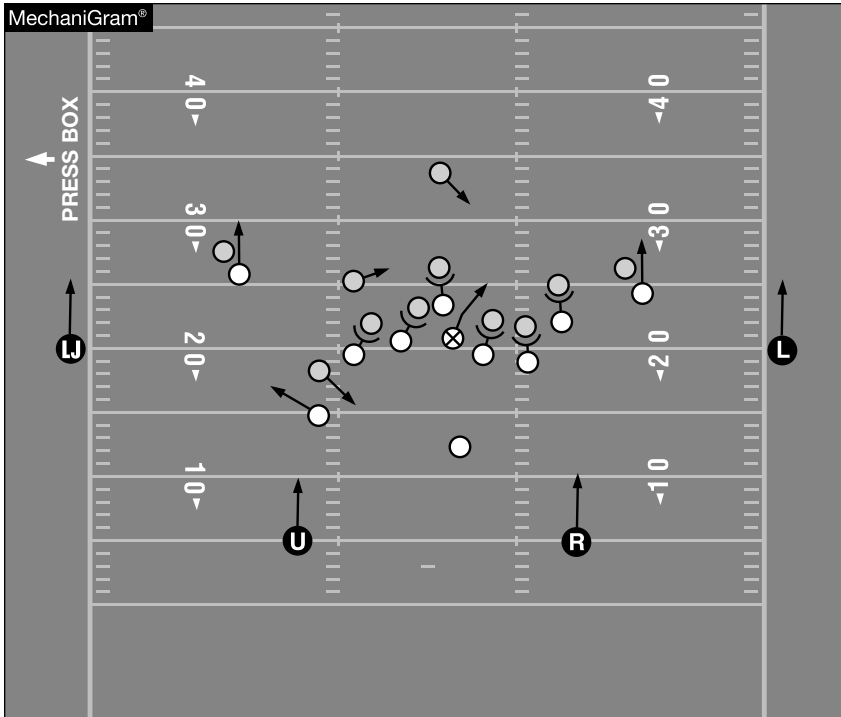
**Referee:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Observes handoff and action around quarterback after handoff.

**Umpire:** Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there.

**Linesman:** Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Observes initial line charge.

**Line Judge:** Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Observes initial line charge.

**RUNNING PLAY UP THE MIDDLE PART 2**



**Action on the field:** Runner advances.

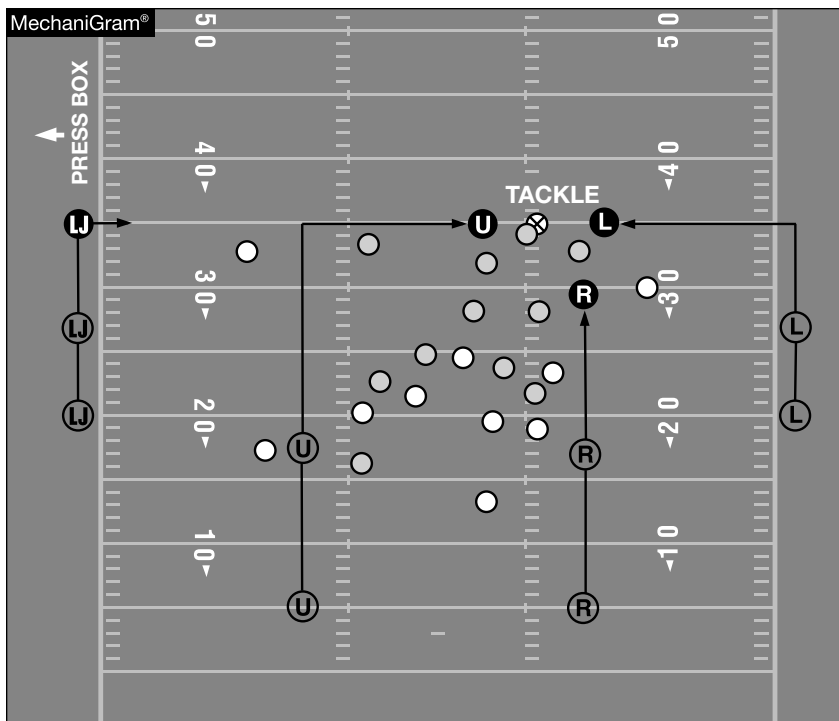
**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action behind runner.

**Umpire:** Observes runner and action around runner (halo principle).

**Linesman:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action in front of runner.

**Line Judge:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action in front of runner.

### RUNNING PLAY UP THE MIDDLE PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner continues advance and is downed.

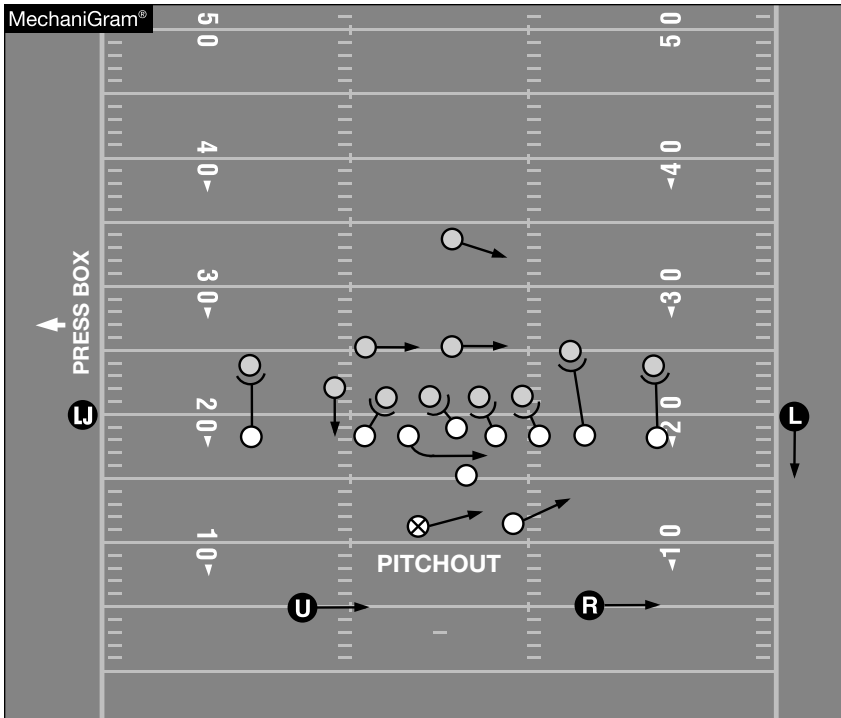
**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players in his area. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, signals Linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

**Umpire:** Moves quickly downfield and observes action in front of runner. Squares off to mirror spot. Observes players. Sets ball for next down.

**Linesman:** Moves quickly downfield. Observes players. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. If first down has been achieved, gets signal from Referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

**Line Judge:** Observes action in front of runner in his area. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in his area.

SWEEP PART 1



**Action on the field:** Pitchout to back.

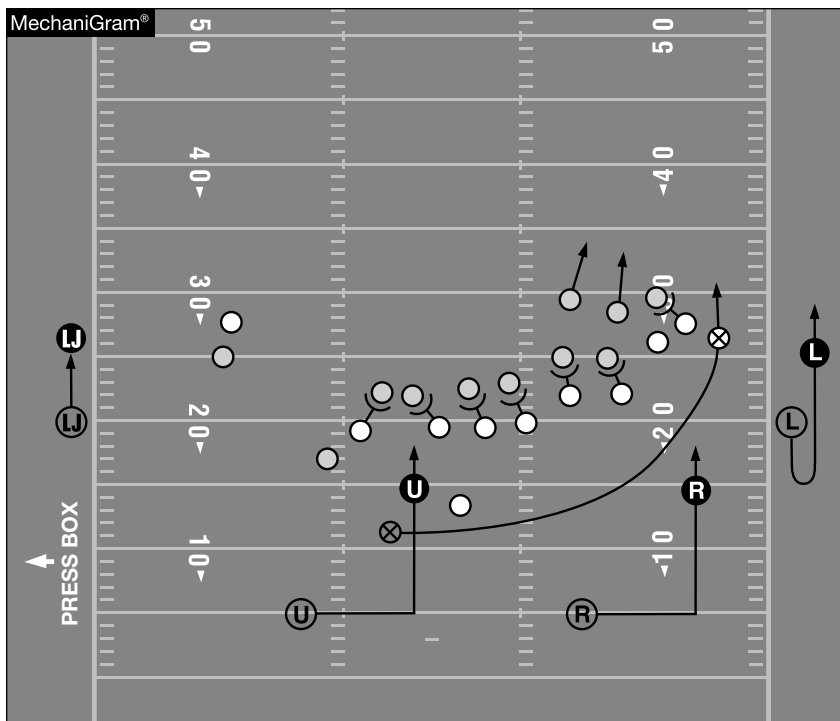
**Referee:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner behind line of scrimmage.

**Umpire:** Reads blocking of pulling left guard and reads sweep. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Steps into offensive backfield. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Line Judge:** Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Moves slowly downfield. Observes blocking and action of players not involved in flow of play.

SWEEP PART 2



**Action on the field:** Runner advances.

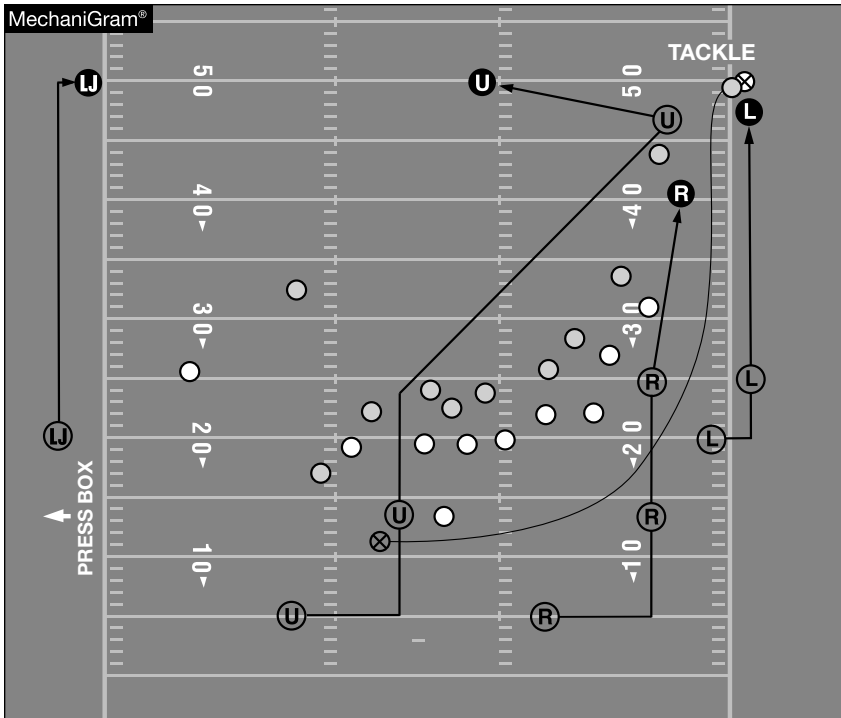
**Referee:** Gives up coverage of runner to Linesman (halo principle). Moves slowly downfield trailing flow and cleans up after the play.

**Umpire:** Pivots and moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Takes coverage of runner (halo principle) and moves up the sideline trailing the runner. Observes runner and action around runner.

**Line Judge:** Moves slowly downfield and cleans up after the play.

## SWEEP PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner continues advance and is downed out of bounds.

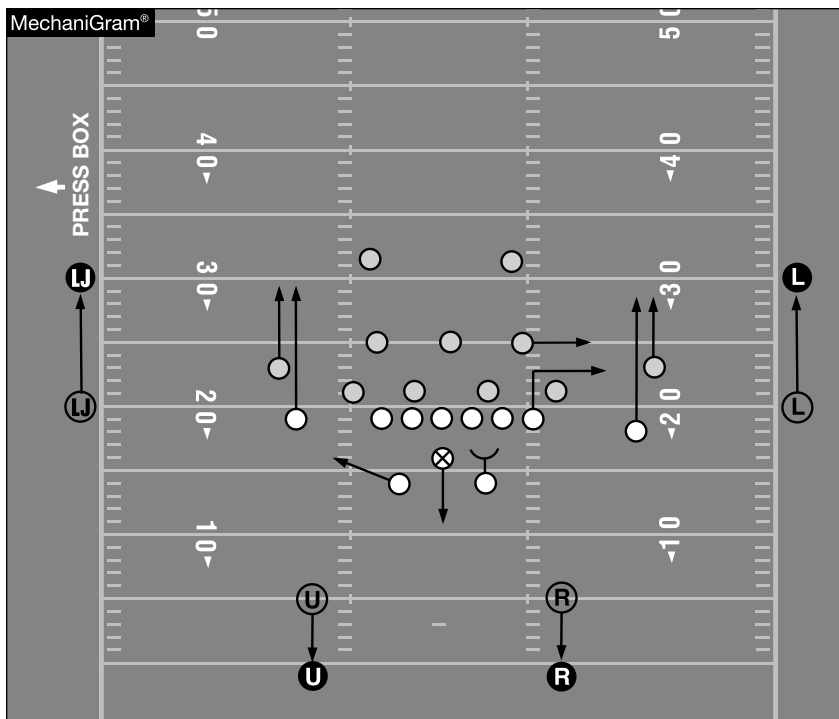
**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players behind the runner. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, signals Linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

**Umpire:** Moves downfield and observes players in front of the ball. Hustles to dead-ball spot to prevent dead-ball action. Once all players have returned to field, hustles to hash mark to set ball for next down.

**Linesman:** Continues to move downfield and observes runner and action around runner all the way down sideline. Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner steps out of bounds. Uses inside-out look to observe out-of-bounds players and squares off to mark spot of forward progress. If necessary, drops bean bag to indicate spot and moves out of bounds to stop dead-ball action. Holds spot until Umpire arrives to set ball for new series. If first down has been achieved, gets signal from Referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

**Line Judge:** Moves downfield with flow of play and cleans up after the play. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in his area. Holds spot until released by Umpire.

DEEP PASS PART 1



**Action on the field:** Quarterback drops back.

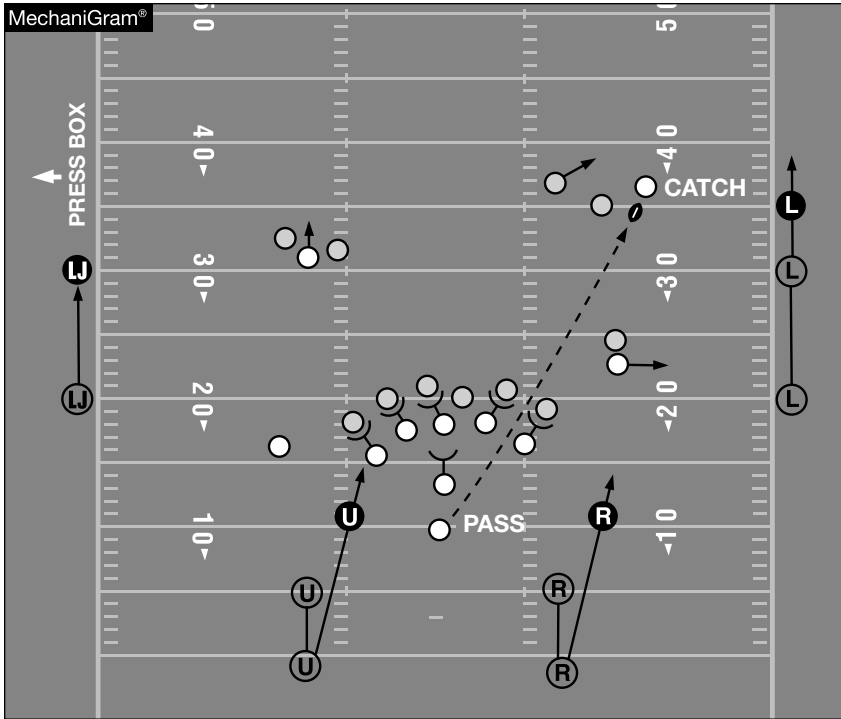
**Referee:** Keys on opposite-side tackle; reads pass when tackle retreats. As quarterback drops back, moves back to maintain distance between himself and quarterback. Observes blocking by backs.

**Umpire:** Observes pre-snap adjustments and legality of snap. Keys on center and guards; reads pass when linemen retreat. Steps up to the line of scrimmage and observes blocking.

**Linesman:** Identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. Uses extended arm signal to alert Line Judge that end is in offensive backfield. Keys action of tight end and reads pass. Uses shuffle step to move slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

**Line Judge:** Identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. Keys split end and reads pass. Uses shuffle step to move slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

DEEP PASS PART 2



**Action on the field:** Pass caught by receiver in Linesman's side zone.

**Referee:** Observes passer. Moves downfield with flow of players.

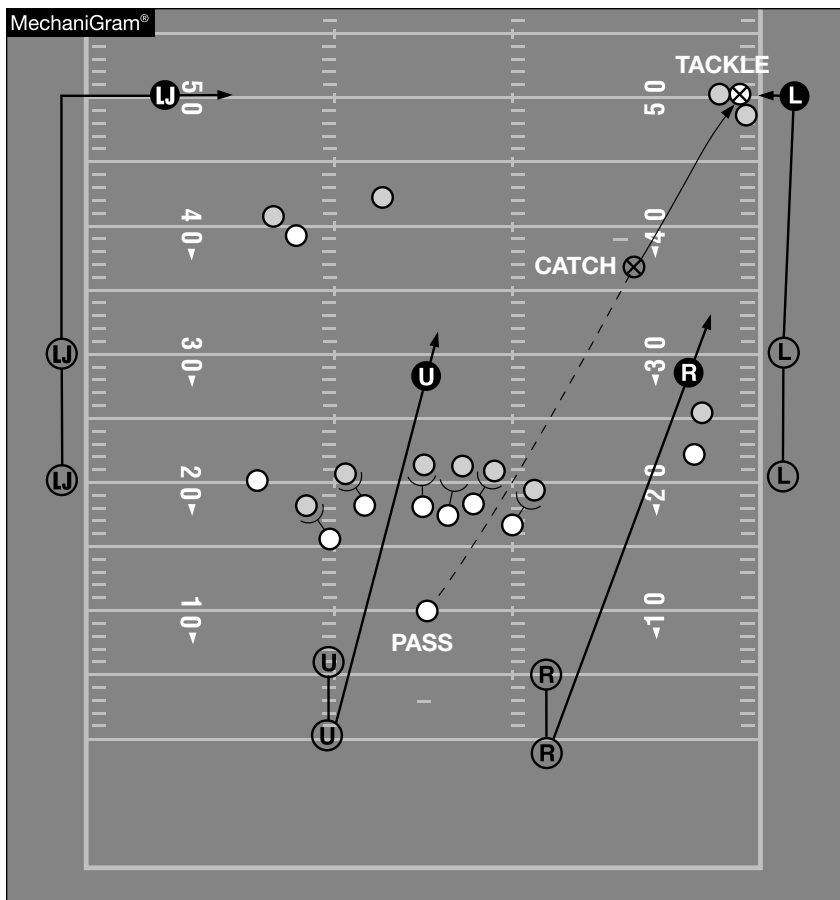
**Umpire:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players in his area.

**Linesman:** Uses shuffle step to maintain position about halfway between line of scrimmage and deepest receiver on his side. Moves quickly down sideline to get angle to observe attempted catch.

**Line Judge:** Uses shuffle step to maintain position about halfway between line of scrimmage and deepest receiver on his side.



DEEP PASS PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner advances and is downed.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield, observes players behind the ball and cleans up the play. If players land in team area, hustles to sideline to observe action.

**Umpire:** Moves slowly downfield, observes players behind the ball and cleans up the play. Once spot is established, hustles to hash mark to set ball for next down.

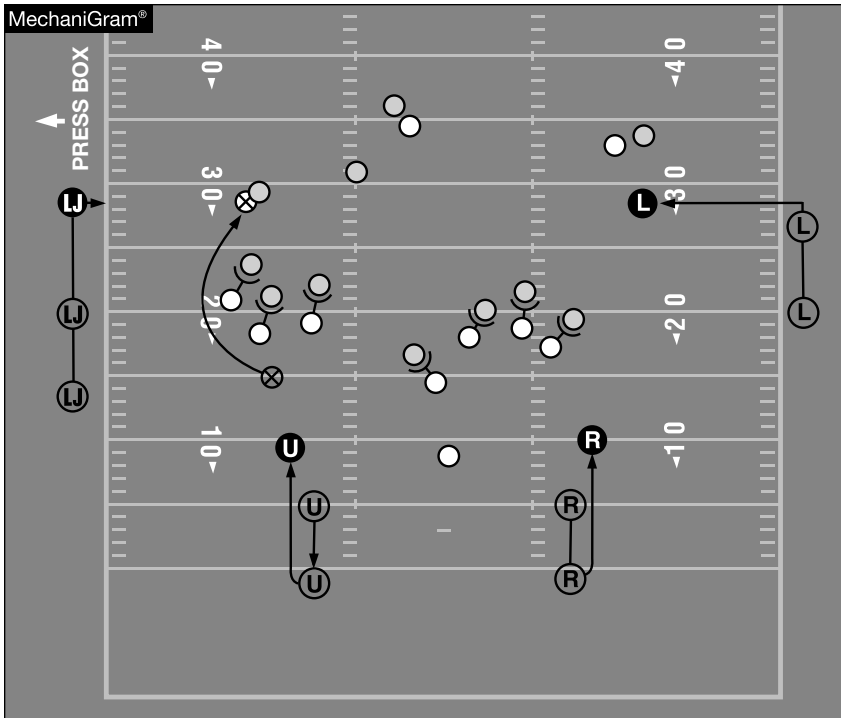
**Linesman:** Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Gives stop-the-clock signal if first down has been achieved. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Observes any players who may land in team area.

**Line Judge:** Continues moving downfield and observes players in his area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress.





SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner continues advance and is downed.

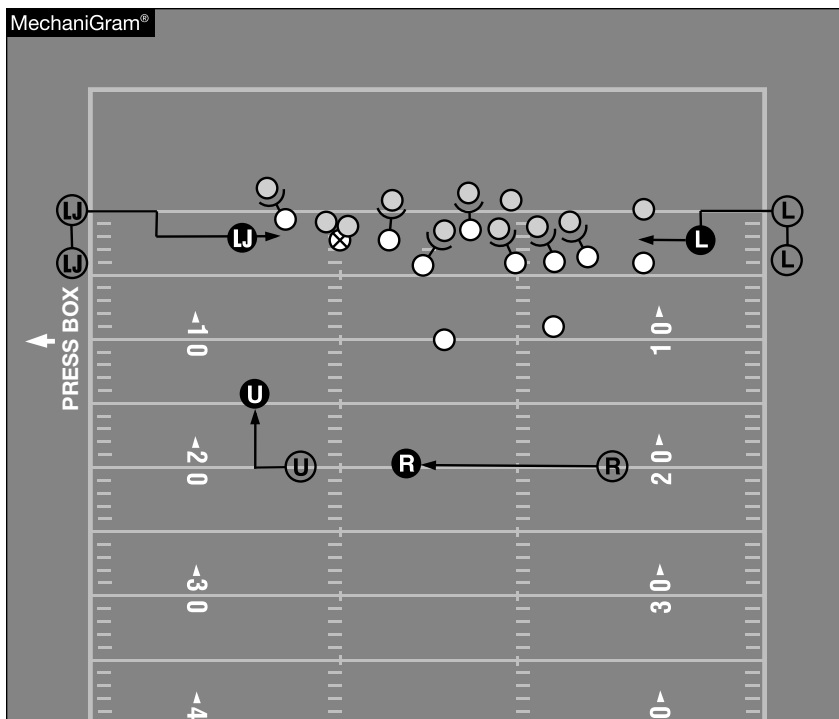
**Referee:** After clearing action on the passer, moves slowly downfield and observes players behind the ball.

**Umpire:** Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. When runner is downed, hustles to hash mark to set ball for next down.

**Linesman:** Continues to move slowly downfield and observes players in his area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress.

**Line Judge:** Moves downfield with runner. Observes action of runner and players around runner (halo principle). Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Stops clock if first down has been achieved.

GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN



**Action on the field:** Handoff to back.

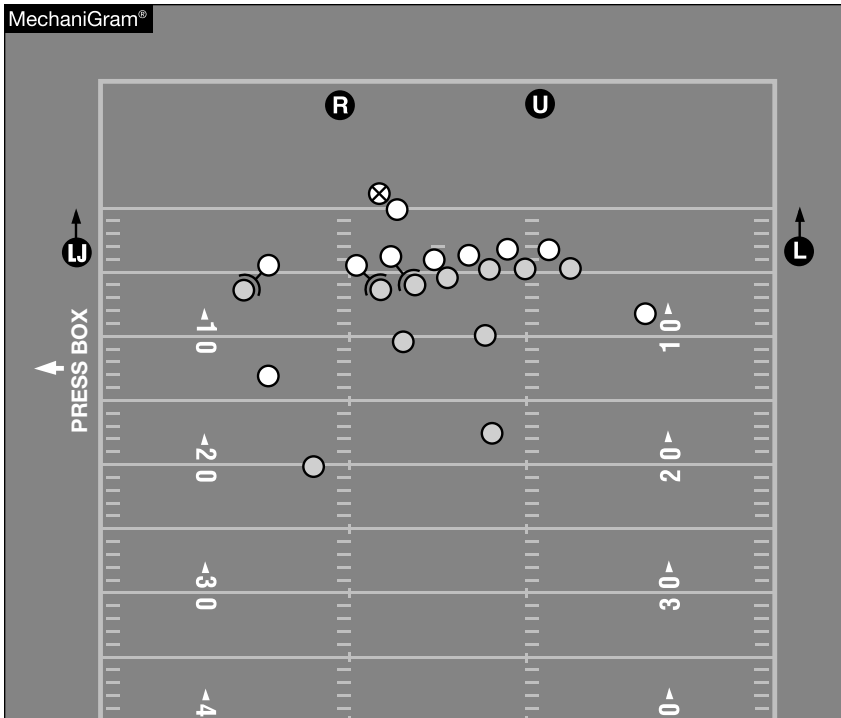
**Referee:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner. If run results in a touchdown, observes signal of covering official and signals touchdown to pressbox.

**Umpire:** Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Moves immediately to goal line at snap. Reads blocking of tight end and reads run. Observes initial blocking. If ball in runner's possession breaks plane of the goal line in coverage area, signals touchdown. If runner downed short of goal line, officiates back to the ball and marks progress.

**Line Judge:** Moves immediately to goal line at snap. Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Observes initial blocking. If ball in runner's possession breaks plane of the goal line in coverage area, signals touchdown. If runner downed short of goal line, officiates back to the ball and marks progress.

## GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT



**Action on the field:** Handoff to running back.

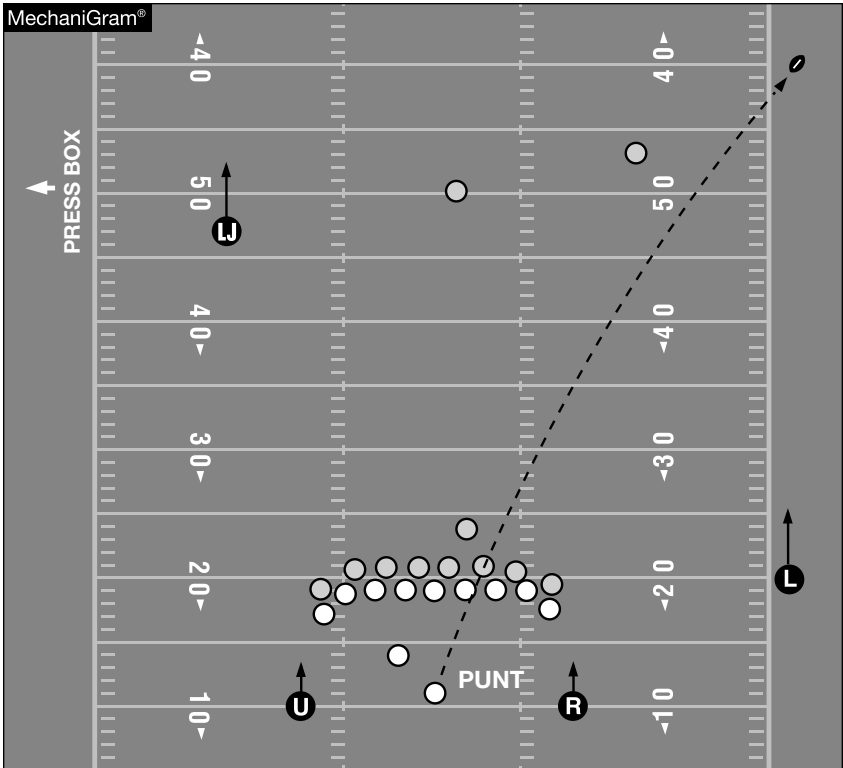
**Referee:** Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

**Umpire:** Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

**Linesman:** Moves immediately to goal line at snap. Observes initial blocking. If runner is in coverage area and is downed in end zone, signals safety. If runner advances beyond goal line, officiates back to the ball and covers play as usual.

**Line Judge:** Moves immediately to goal line at snap. Observes initial blocking. If runner is in coverage area and is downed in end zone, signals safety. If runner advances beyond goal line, officiates back to the ball and covers play as usual.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



**Action on the field:** Punt to Linesman's side.

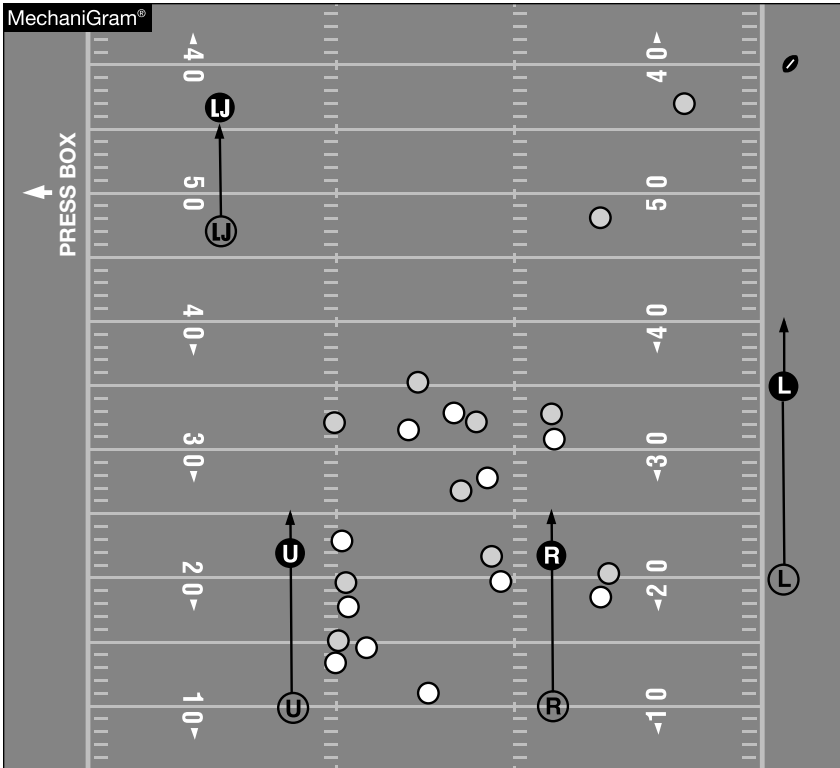
**Referee:** Observes snap and action around kicker.

**Umpire:** Observe the initial charge of linemen and contact on the snapper.

**Linesman:** Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. Moves downfield when kick crosses the neutral zone.

**Line Judge:** Observes receivers. Moves downfield when ball flies deeper than receivers.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



**Action on the field:** Ball becomes dead out of bounds.

**Referee:** Observes flight of ball, once the kicker is no longer threatened, adjusting position if necessary.

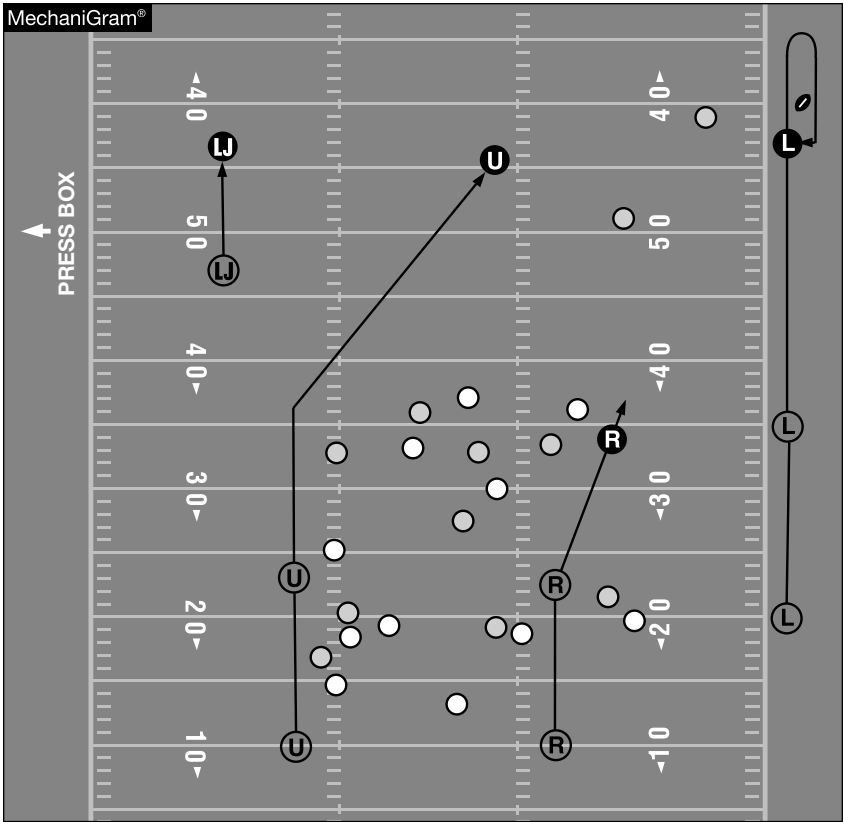
**Umpire:** Pivots toward the Line Judge's side of the field, moves downfield with flow of players and observes players as they move downfield.

**Linesman:** Moves quickly down sideline, observing action of players moving downfield. Stops clock when he sees ball go out of bounds.

**Line Judge:** Observes action of players in front of ball.



SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



**Action on the field:** Ball spotted for next down.

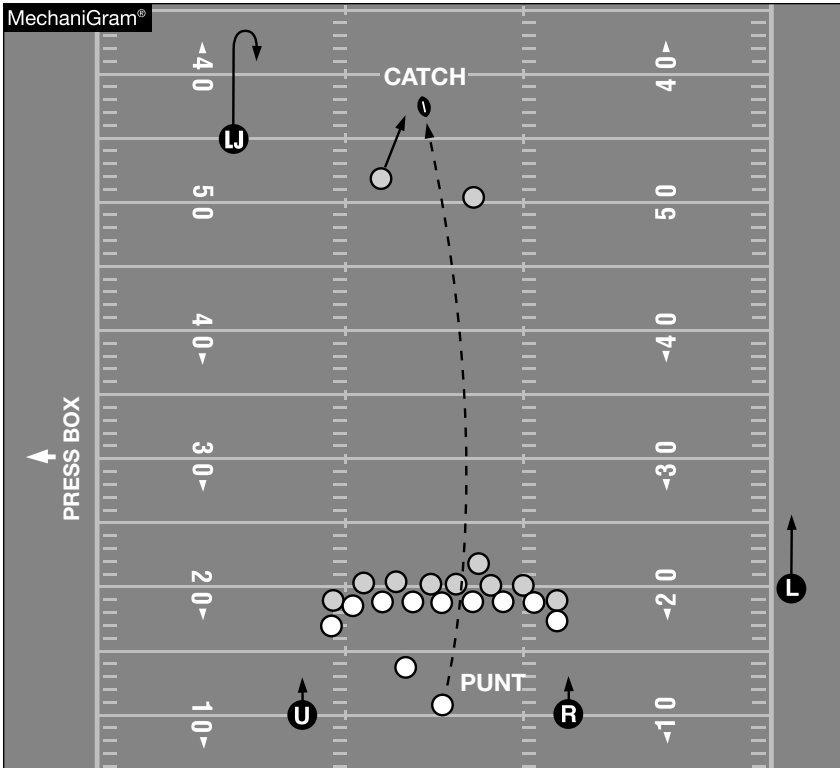
**Referee:** Moves as needed to line up with the flight path of the ball. With arm above head, observes Linesman walking toward spot. When Linesman reaches spot, drops arm with chopping motion. When certain there are no penalty markers down, signals Linesman to move chain crew.

**Umpire:** Continues to move downfield and observes action of players in his area. Moves to hash mark to set ball for new series.

**Linesman:** Moves five to seven yards beyond spot where ball apparently went out of bounds, pivots and makes eye contact with Referee. Walks slowly toward Referee, stopping when Referee drops arm with chopping motion. Signals first down for team R. Upon signal from Referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot.

**Line Judge:** Observes action of players in front of ball. Squares off and mirrors Linesman's spot.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO LINE JUDGE'S AREA PART 1



**Action on the field:** Receiver catches kick in Line Judge's area.

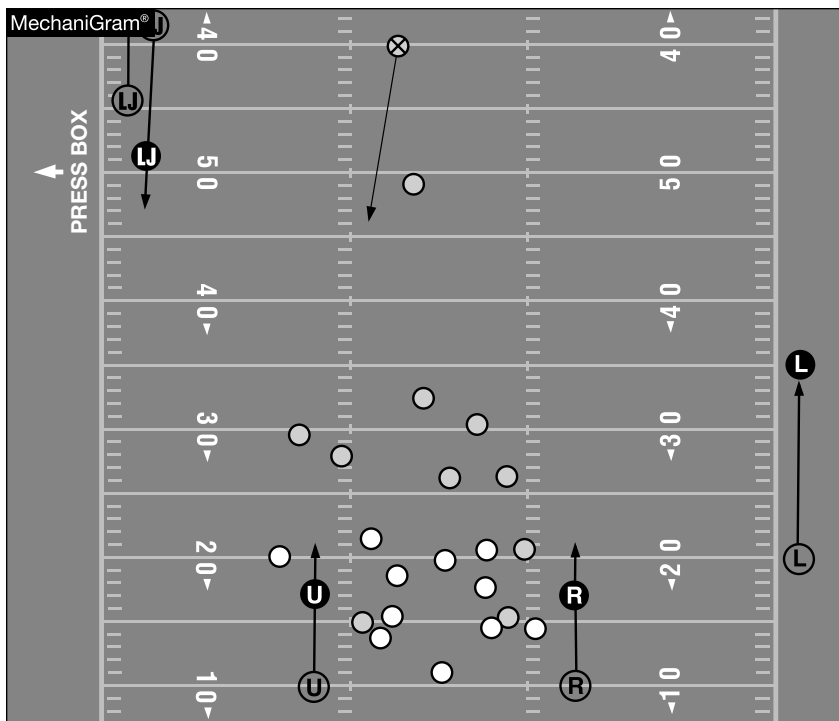
**Referee:** Observes snap and action around kicker. Moves slowly downfield with flow of players. Has team K's goal line on long runback.

**Umpire:** Observe the initial charge of linemen and contact on the snapper.

**Linesman:** Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. When ball crosses neutral zone, moves downfield and observes players in his area.

**Line Judge:** Observes catch. Drops bean bag to indicate spot where kick ended. Moves upfield slightly ahead of runner, observing runner and action in front of runner.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO LINE JUDGE'S AREA PART 2



**Action on the field:** Runner advances.

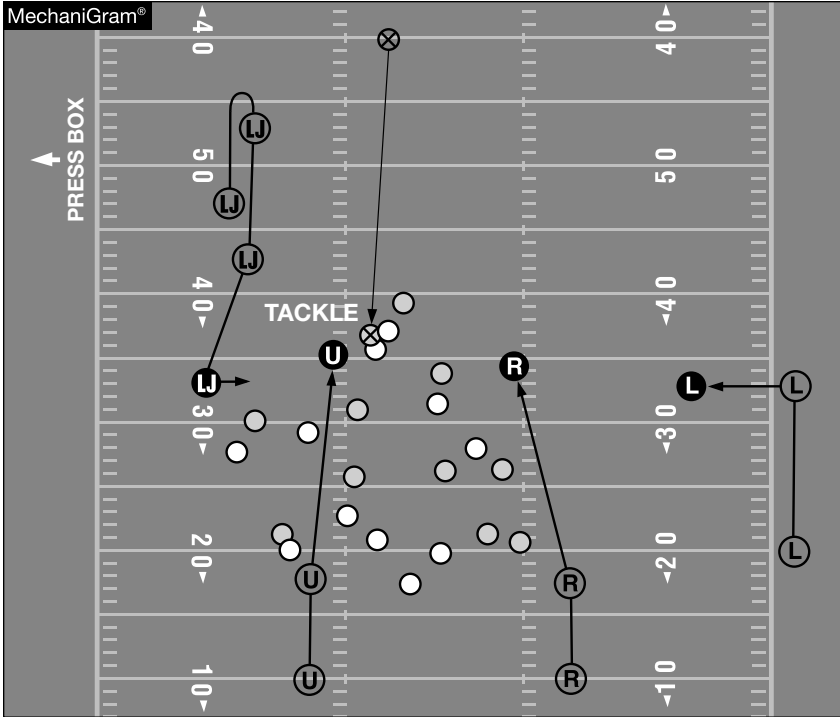
**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action of players in his area.

**Umpire:** Pivots toward Line Judge's side. Moves with flow of players downfield and observes action of players in his area.

**Linesman:** Moves down sideline and observes action of players in front of ball.

**Line Judge:** Moves upfield following the runner. Observes action around the runner.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO LINE JUDGE'S AREA PART 3



**Action on the field:** Runner continues advance and is downed.

**Referee:** Moves slowly downfield and observes action of players in his area. Hustles toward dead-ball spot. If no penalty markers are down, signals Linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

**Umpire:** Continues to move downfield and observes players in his area. Hustles to hash mark to set ball for next down.

**Linesman:** Observes action of players in front of ball. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. When runner is downed, practices dead-ball officiating. Upon signal from Referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

**Line Judge:** Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner is downed. Squares off to indicate spot of forward progress and practices dead-ball officiating. Holds spot until released by Umpire.

# CREW OF THREE

# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 17

# PHILOSOPHY

Crews of three will follow the same general pattern of duties and responsibilities as crews of four and five. Thus, this section of the book only includes the major differences from five-man mechanics. Refer to those chapters for further details on what is expected in three-man mechanics. Refer also to the “ALL OFFICIALS” sections at the beginning of this manual for general information to be used regardless of crew size.

In a crew of three, there is no Umpire. Therefore, each official has a wider area of responsibility. In keeping the play “boxed-in” the crew forms a triangle (as opposed to the diamond used in a crew of four).

The Line Judge has the option of being positioned in the normal position on the sideline (“On”) or 10-15 yards in the defensive backfield no closer than the top of the numbers (“Off”) the line at the snap. He should start in the “Off” position more when the dead ball spot is on the far half of the field, than he would in crews of four or five because it provides a better triangle for viewing the line play.

The Line Judge and Linesman are the “guardians of their sidelines.” Therefore they must be initially wide to stay on the outside and box-in all players. From that wide position they must observe some of the line play and be aware of ineligible receivers downfield. The wing officials have primary responsibility for the initial contact of the tackles and ends.

The Referee must assist in watching the legality of play in the middle of the line and must follow running plays to both side zones.

On pass plays, scrimmage kicks, and relaying the ball at the end of the play, the wing officials do a lot of running. All three officials must be mobile and hustle to do the job correctly.

# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 18

# PREGAME DUTIES

**All:** Numerous games requiring three officials are scheduled on “practice fields.” Therefore, one of the first things to check is the safety of the field. If there is a serious cause of concern, the officials should notify the game management to rectify the situation. Hazardous situations must be resolved to the Referee’s satisfaction before the game begins.

It is important to conduct a pregame conference (even if brief and on the field) to ensure each official has his mind on the game and understands his crew responsibilities. At a minimum, review the “Best Practices” section in this manual. Each official should be dressed and on the field 30 minutes prior to the game.

**Referee:** Conducts pregame meeting with head coaches to verify legality of player equipment, explain that everyone is expected to exhibit good sportsmanship, etc.

Assume Umpire’s responsibilities regarding legality of player equipment. Check and approve game balls and instructs Ball Attendants (if any).

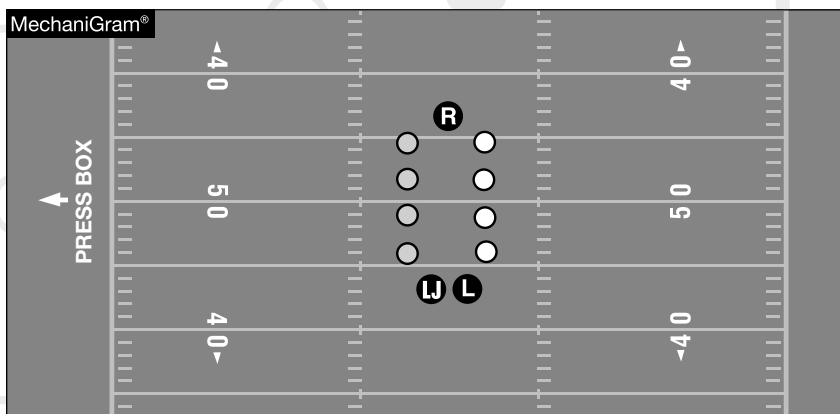
**Line Judge:** Instructs the game clock operator (Note: If time is kept on the field by the officials, the Line Judge should keep the game clock.) Accompanies the Referee to meet with head coaches

**Linesman:** Instructs the chain crew.

# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 19

# COIN TOSS



The coin toss ceremony shall begin with the officials escorting the field captains (maximum of 4) to midfield at three minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff. It is necessary to clear the field of “other” team personnel as stated in Rule 3-2-2.

**Referee:** Proceeds to the 50-yard line in the middle of the field, facing the scoreboard, if one is present. Signals the other officials and captains to proceed to the center of the field. Obtain from the visiting team its choice of heads or tails. Repeats option before actual coin toss and informs both teams that should he drop the coin, he will toss it again.

Once the winner is determined, the winner is offered his choice: defer, receive, choose a goal to defend or kick. If the choice is to defer, the Referee immediately faces the pressbox, taps the shoulder of the deferring captain and signals the declination. The remaining choices are then presented to the other captain and the final selection is made by the deferring captain. If the winner of the coin toss does not defer, no signal is immediately given.

When the final selections are made, the captains are asked to put their backs to the goal line their team will defend and the Referee gives the appropriate



signal. If the choice is to defend a goal, two signals are given: pointing both arms toward the goal line being defended, followed by the appropriate signal for the other captain.

Verify and record the results of the toss and the captain's choices. Instruct the teams to enter the field and line up. Jog (don't walk) to kickoff positions.

**Line Judge and Linesman:** Bring captains (maximum of four per team) to center of field and introduce the Referee. Line Judge introduces the captains of the team from the sideline opposite the Linesman to the Referee; Linesman introduces captains from the sideline opposite the Line Judge to the Referee. Line up on the 45-yard line facing the Referee. As soon as it is determined which team will kick, Line Judge places kicking team's ball on the its 40-yard line.

Verify and record the results of the toss and the captain's choices. Instruct the teams to enter the field and line up. Jog (don't walk) to kickoff positions.

# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 20

# KICKOFF DUTIES AND POSITIONING

**Referee:** Start in center of field at the 10-yard line (may move up for younger players). Count team R. Don't mark the ball ready unless the correct numbers of players are on the field (both teams). Referee is responsible for noting whether team K has at least four players on either side of the kicker.

Verify that the other officials are ready, then raise your arm high above head, blow your whistle and signal ready for play.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Count players (Line Judge counts team K; Linesman counts team R). Don't allow free kick down to start with the wrong number of players.

Line Judge hands the ball to the kicker and reminds him to wait for the Referee's whistle before kicking the ball. Jogs to the sideline opposite the Linesman on team K's free-kick line. Ensures that the sideline and restricted area are clear of players and spectators. Also notes that no team K player other than the kicker is more than five yards from team K's restraining line. Raise arm straight above head to signal Referee that you are ready. Lower arm on Referee's whistle.

Linesman is at team R's free-kick line opposite the pressbox. Ensures that team R is behind the free-kick line and that the sideline and restricted area are clear of players and spectators. Also notes that no team K player other than the kicker is more than five yards from team K's free kick line. Raise arm straight above head to signal Referee that you are ready. Lower arm on Referee's whistle.

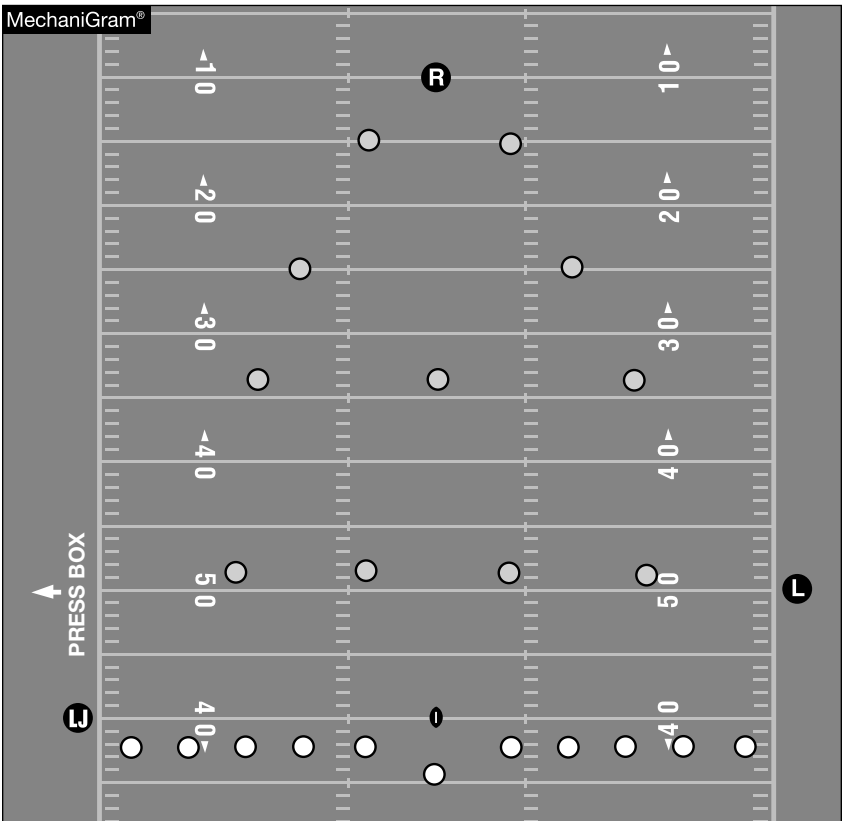
### Kickoff coverage

**Referee:** Cover the receiver and action immediately around him. Signal clock to start when kick is touched (other than first touching in neutral zone by team K). Box in the runner between the Linesman or Line Judge as he advances. Referee has primary responsibility for forward progress to team R's 30-yard line. If the runner breaks for a long gain, Referee has "wide vision" clean-up responsibilities.

If the kick is deep, retreat to goal line to rule on touchback.

If kick is deep and out of bounds, determine if team R touched the ball inbounds.

## CREW OF THREE KICKOFF DUTIES AND POSITIONING



**Linesman and Line Judge:** Be prepared to rule on encroachment, short free kicks, first touching, is the kick grounded, did it go 10 yards, was it muffed or fumbled, etc. Have bean bag in your hand.

After the kick, know its general direction and move downfield slightly trailing your team. Watch for fouls by either team — low blocks and blocks in the back are the most common problems on open-field plays. Linesman and Line Judge are responsible for the sideline from end zone to end zone.

Pick up the runner as he enters your area. You then have primary responsibility for the runner and the action immediately in front of him. Take the runner all the way to team K's goal line.

Mark forward progress when the play ends beyond team R's 30-yard line. Continue to observe the action until all is clear then be prepared to get the new ball to the Referee.

When the play is away from you in the other side zone, come onto the field; you now have "clean-up" responsibility.

**All:** Wind clock when kick is touched, other than first touching by team K in neutral zone.

For a kick out of bounds between the goal lines, sound whistle, give timeout signal and mark spot; flag if team R did not touch ball inbounds, sound whistle and signal timeout when ball becomes dead in your coverage area.

# CREW OF THREE CHAPTER 21

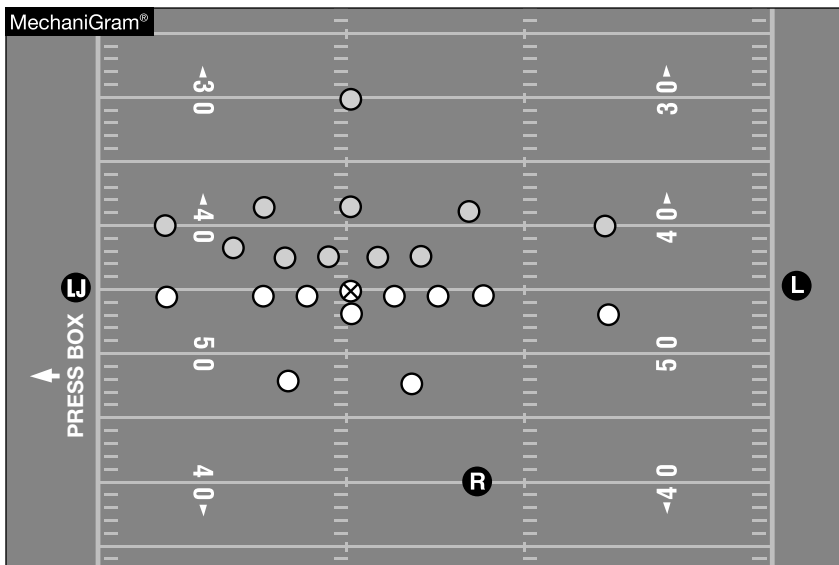
# SCRIMMAGE PLAY POSITIONING

**Referee:** Initial position is deeper than the offensive backs and opposite the Linesman when the Line Judge is playing “off.” (See MechaniGrams next page.) May start on the wide side of the field when the Line Judge is playing “on.” Play wider and/or deeper to cover the larger area.

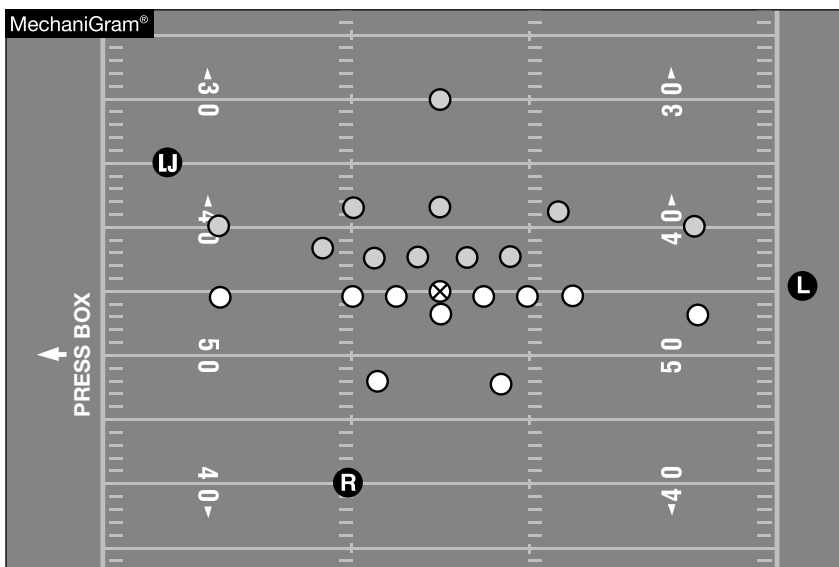
**Line Judge:** When using “off mechanics,” initial position is in toward the nine-yard marks and 10 to 15 yards deep into the defensive backfield. Ensure other officials know when you are “off” as it affects their position and coverage responsibilities. “On mechanics” may be used when the game situation warrants (helpful in ruling on alignment/positioning, encroachment, motion, forward progress, short yardage situations, etc.).

**Linesman:** Straddling the line of scrimmage off the sideline.  
**NOTE:** The Referee is responsible for determining whether the Line Judge will use off or on mechanics.

'ON' POSITIONING



'OFF' POSITIONING



# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 22

# SCRIMMAGE PLAY COVERAGE

**Referee:** Counts team A. Time the 40 or 25-second count. Referee provides a visible count for the last five seconds of the 40 or 25-second play count. Has initial responsibility for action in the center of the line. Referee must take more responsibility for watching the blocking and the actions of the onrushing defense. Observe the opposite guard and snapper for run/pass keys.

Referee is responsible for ball, runner and action around him through the neutral zone and has primary whistle responsibility between the hash marks when play ends behind the expanded neutral zone.

Follow a running play into either side zone. Keep the action "boxed in." Clean-up responsibility behind the play when a runner breaks for a long gain up the middle or when a pass is thrown downfield. Trust the other crew members to do their jobs.

Primary spotter of the ball between the hash marks. Move quickly to the spot when the ball is dead.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Count team B. Linesman and Line Judge are responsible for movement by any flanker outside the Referee's position because the Referee will be looking inside, and are responsible for their entire sideline on runs and passes.

Observe the initial action involving the tackle and tight end on your side. Action of the tackle is your primary key as to type of play that is developing. Hold your initial position until the play has developed. Do not move downfield just because the wide receiver does.

Pick up the runner as he establishes his position on sweeps to your side or advances through the neutral zone on plays in the middle.

Primary whistle responsibility is in your side zone and to the middle of the field beyond the expanded neutral zone. There should be only one whistle at the end of the play. Do not be the first whistle when it is out of your area of primary responsibility. Blow the whistle when the runner's progress is stopped

and he is controlled by the defense. The correct use of the whistle cannot be overstated — slow down, allow the play to kill itself.

On plays that end out of bounds, sound your whistle and signal timeout as you move to the out-of-bounds spot. Keep your eyes on the players at all times (not the spot on the ground). It is preferable to have your body facing down the sideline with your head turned to view the players who are out of bounds.

When marking forward progress, look at the players, not the ground, as you square up and move in to the spot. Stand upright, facing toward the middle of the field, with your feet about shoulder width apart. Your most downfield foot indicates your forward progress mark. Use your voice in a neutral way to let players know you are there and that the play is over.

Be active in retrieving the ball and moving to the inbounds line (and beyond) to spot the ball. It is OK (expected) for you to move a few steps up or down the field to retrieve the ball and then move back to the spot.

The only time you should hold your spot and have the ball brought to you is when you are marking a “close, close, close” forward progress.

Be alert to retrieving the ball after an incomplete pass and plays out of bounds. Players will help with the ball if you ask them immediately at the end of the play.

Linesman and Line Judge must work diligently to maintain control of their sideline at all times during the game. Players should stay in the team box. Coaches only in the “coaches area.” The sidelines outside of the team box should always be clear. Be polite, don’t yell, but be persistent. Utilize a sideline warning if warranted. Request help from the head coach in keeping the sideline clear. An unruly sideline can interfere with game action, or your concentration as an official. It also presents safety issues for officials, players, and spectators alike.

Linesman and Line Judge have primary whistle responsibility for forward pass plays as the Referee will be watching the quarterback until he is clear, then switch to “clean up” behind the play.

**Line Judge:** Maintain wide position outside of all players as the play develops. “Off mechanics” gives you a different angle to view the initial line play and gives you a head start when a long pass or a breakaway play develops.

When using “On” mechanics, count the offensive line for the required seven players. Time the timeouts and time between quarters.

Work with the Referee regarding handling of the ball for penalty enforcements.

**Linesman:** You are solely responsible for all scrimmage line situations (illegal position, encroachment, man in motion, eligible receivers, did the ball cross the neutral zone, etc.) when the Line Judge’s initial position is off the line.

Since the Referee and Line Judge play wider and deeper, the Linesman is in the best position to mark forward progress as runner advances.

Anytime a new line-to-gain is established the Linesman is to go to the sideline and personally mark the new spot for the chains and down box.

At the end of the play, verify the next down with the Referee, and then signal the down box to advance to next down.

**All:** Keep the play boxed in. Usually two sets of eyes should be looking in the vicinity of the point of attack. The third official must maintain coverage of players and action away from the ball (“clean-up”).

All officials have expanded areas of responsibility for signaling the end of the down by blowing the whistle. Do not be a “ball watcher” and habitually blow the whistle when it is not in your area of primary responsibility.

Because any official may spot the ball, the spotting official should make sure the other crew members are close to their pre-snap positions before placing the ball on the ground. If appropriate, the spotting official can tell the offense not to snap the ball until he is back in position. Once in position, he can verbally alert the offense that it is OK to snap the ball.

All officials must be alert to dead-ball activity at the end of a play. Use your voice and your physical presence to be visible at the end of plays. That will prevent most problems and unsportsmanlike behavior. Do not let problems escalate because of inattention to “clean-up” responsibilities or dead-ball situations.

Hustle and add to the smoothness of the crew.

Verify status of the clock.

Change your down indicator when the Referee gives the ready signal. Know the down and distance and the position of the ball. Verify down box and chains are correctly set.

When counting players, signal 11 players with a closed fist, arm extended toward the team you counted. Wing officials should drop the count signal by the time the offense gets to the line of scrimmage.

### **Pass Coverage**

**Referee:** Identify eligible backs. Stay wide and deep. Be in position to rule on the legality of action involving blocking backs and lineman that retreat into the backfield. Move with the quarterback as he rolls out. Do not get caught inside if he reverses field or retreats. As always, you are primarily responsible for observing action by and against the quarterback.

Know if the pass is forward or backward. Rule on the legality of the pass (intentional grounding, thrown from beyond line, etc.).

Continue to observe player action behind neutral zone. Do not watch the flight of the ball downfield.

Trust the rest of the crew to do their jobs.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Know the eligible receivers — ends, flankers and closest back — by position and number. Key off restricted lineman for run or pass.

Rule forward or backward on quick passes toward you.

Observe downfield action by both offense and defense. Holding by the defense and illegal blocking by the offense are the most common situations. Be prepared to rule on interference by either team.

Move slowly downfield to cover passes on your side. You must split your coverage between the deep receivers and the action near the line of scrimmage. Do not initially go deep with the receiver.

Once the ball is in the air, concentrate your attention on the action in the area where it is going. Hustle to catch up with the deep ones.

After the catch, your responsibilities are the same as for a running play in that area. On deep passes or passes to your side zone, you are pretty much on your own.

When you know the pass is incomplete, blow your whistle and signal incomplete. The other officials will signal stop the clock.

When a play ends inbounds near a sideline and a first down has been achieved, the covering official should give the “wind-the-clock” signal followed by the stop-the-clock signal.



# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 23

# SHORT YARDAGE AND GOAL LINE SITUATIONS

**Referee:** Position and coverage same as for a regular scrimmage play.

**Linesman:** Position and coverage same as for a regular scrimmage play.

**Line Judge:** Position shall be on the line of scrimmage at the snap. It is OK to pinch (come onto the field toward the numbers) a little, but don't get caught inside if the play bounces out toward you.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Forward progress is critical; therefore it is appropriate that you pick up the ball and runner sooner and more exclusively than you would on other plays. When you are certain of your forward progress spot, do not allow the ball to be spotted incorrectly. If the spot is short of the line to gain, "sell" the spot by pointing to it and running in as you blow your whistle.

If you don't see the ball (blocked out by a pile of players), move in toward the pile and look for help. If one of the other officials is sure of the correct spot, he will

make the call. If not dig the ball out and spot it accordingly.

In goal line situations (ball snapped inside the five-yard line), positioning and coverage are similar to short yardage situations. Line Judge should not use "off" mechanics.

At the snap, wing officials start toward the goal line and lead the play. Move back to the dead-ball spot and give progress if the play is short of the goal line.

When signaling a touchdown, move in a few steps as the play allows, holding the signal for three or four steps.

When the play is close, have something. Sell your call.

# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 24

# PUNT POSITIONING AND COVERAGE

**Referee:** Initial position is opposite the Linesman, at least 10 yards wide and slightly behind the kicker. Count team A.

Observe the snapper and the running backs for any illegal movement before or at the snap.

Observe the immediate action of the defense against the snapper (he is “protected” when offense is in scrimmage-kick formation).

Observe the blocking and actions of the players behind the snapper and the defensive rush.

Be prepared to cover a run or broken play — you must help with the short sideline since the Line Judge is deep.

Know if the ball is kicked (or fumbled). Know if the kick is tipped.

Be prepared to rule on roughing or running into the kicker.

When the kick is away and the kicker is clear, move to the middle and slowly follow the mass of players downfield. Your view of the return is from the inside out.

If kick is blocked, keep the play boxed in between yourself and Linesman.

**Linesman:** Take regular position on the line and officiate as if a scrimmage play. Count the team on your sideline. You have primary responsibility for the legality of the formation and encroachment.

Have a bean bag in your hand.

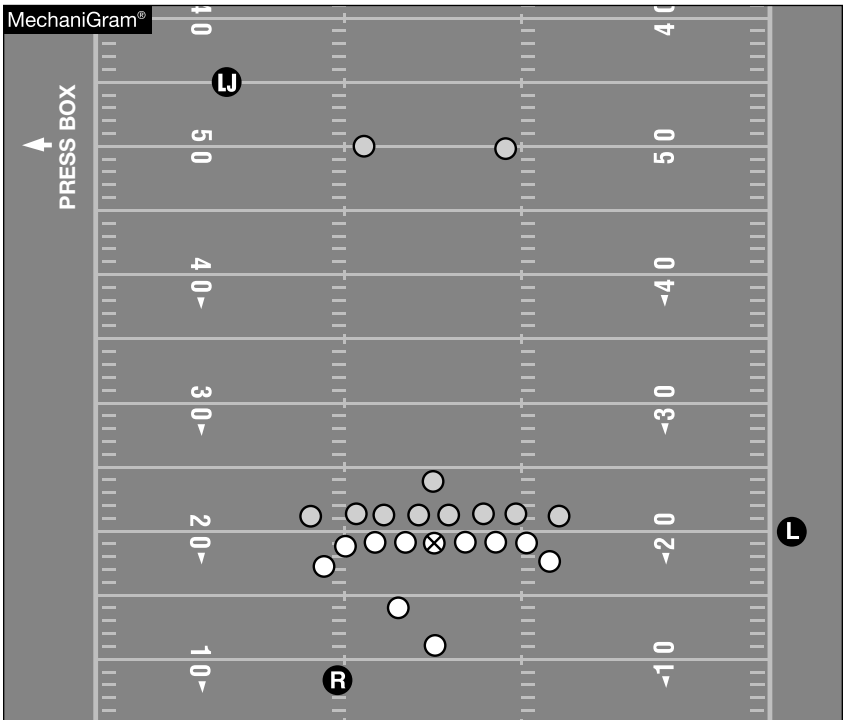
Hold your initial position until the ball crosses the neutral zone. You are responsible for knowing whether or not the kick crosses the line of scrimmage.

Be prepared to rule on who touches (or is touched by) the ball when it is a short kick.

Once the kick crosses the line, start advancing downfield and watch the action as players move toward the deep receivers. Be alert for a fair catch signal by a short receiver, blocks in the back, low blocks and clipping. You have a large area of the field to observe at this time.

Be ready to cover the runner and action immediately in front of him if the

## CREW OF THREE PUNT POSITIONING AND COVERAGE



play comes into your side zone or up the middle of the field.

You have “clean-up” responsibilities if the runner is in the side zone away from you.

You are guardian of your sideline.

Upon the Referee’s signal at the end of the play, move the chain crew to the new spot.

**Line Judge:** Initial position is at least 10 yards wide of and five yards behind the deepest receiver. Count the team on your sideline. You may move in toward your hash mark depending on position of the ball. You still have sideline responsibility for all downfield situations.

Have a bean bag in your hand.

Remind the receiver to clearly signal if he wants a fair catch.

Be alert and in position to rule on fair catch signal, touching of the kick by

team R, first touching by team K, muff or fumble, kick out of bounds, etc.

You are responsible for team R’s goal line and must rule touchback for kicks into the end zone.

Cover the runner and forward progress until he moves into another official’s zone. Then take on a wider perspective and observe blocking and action going to the runner.

Quickly move to the spot when the play ends deep. You are the only one down there.

You are guardian of your sideline.

Be ready to rule on where the kick goes out of bounds. The Referee may help, but you are in better position to know where the ball crossed the sideline.

# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 25

# FIELD GOAL AND TRY POSITIONING

**Referee:** Take a wide position in the offensive backfield opposite the Linesman. Count team K.

**Linesman:** Take regular position on the line. Count the team on your sideline.

**Line Judge: Option 1:** Initial position is six feet beyond the endline under the crossbar. Count the team on your sideline. **Option 2:** If the Referee chooses to rule on the kick, Line Judge will stay on the line. Count the team on your sideline.

### Field Goal and Try Coverage

**Referee:** Before the snap, observe lineman locking legs and any illegal movement of the ball.

After the snap, shift your attention to the holder and kicker. Know if the holder's knee was down when he received the snap. If Line Judge is ruling

on kick, you are responsible for calling roughing the kicker or holder. Otherwise, rule on kick.

Cover Line Judge's sideline if a broken play runs to that side.

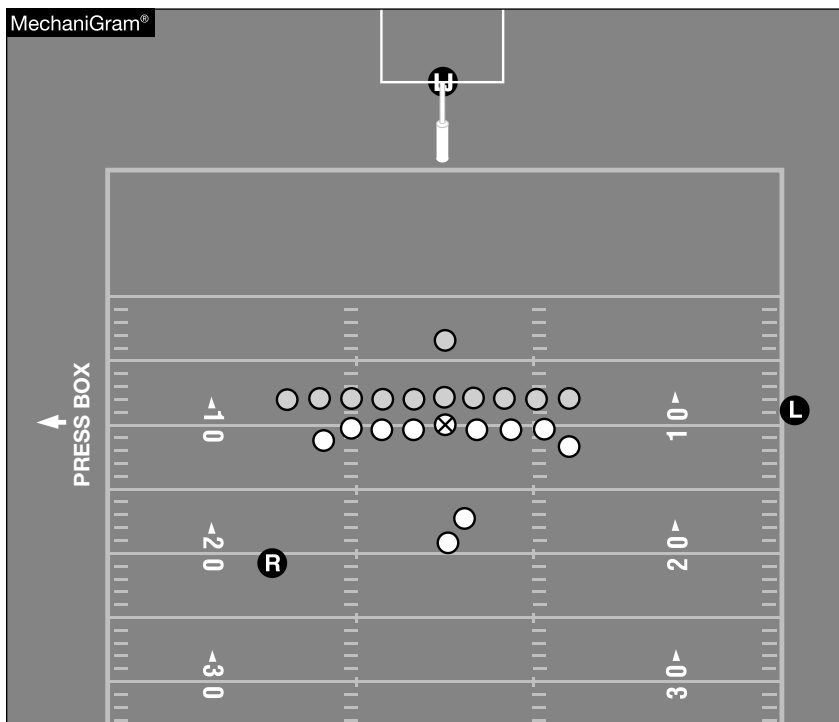
**Linesman:** Responsible for ensuring team K has seven linemen and watches the entire line for encroachment.

Responsible for the mass of players in the middle after the kick is away.

Primary responsibility for forward progress on broken plays. In case of a fake field goal, move quickly to the goal line. You are responsible for the goal line from sideline to sideline if the Line Judge is under the crossbar. If the Line Judge stays on the line, you are responsible for roughing the kicker and holder.

If a pass play develops you are responsible for ineligible linemen downfield and for determining if the pass crossed the neutral zone.

## CREW OF THREE FIELD GOAL AND TRY POSITIONING



If a field goal attempt is blocked you are responsible for determining if the kick crossed the neutral zone.

At the end of a "normal" kick try, hustle in toward the mass of players to observe unnecessary contact or unsportsmanlike action. Your presence and your voice are the best preventive officiating tools.

**Line Judge:** Watch for illegal contact on the snapper.

When under the crossbar, rule on the success or failure of the kick.

In case of a broken play or fake field goal, move quickly at an angle to the goal line pylon at his sideline.

# CREW OF THREE

## CHAPTER 26

# MEASUREMENTS

All officials should be alert to “close, close, close” situations. The official marking forward progress should move to the spot and have the ball handed to him for placement on the ground. Stay with the ball until the Referee determines if a measurement is necessary. Once the ball is spotted on the ground, it stays there until after the measurement. Don’t move it!

If there are no penalty flags, the Linesman has the box man move to the spot of the front stake. If there is a penalty on the play, instruct the box man to remain at the previous spot. The down that was just completed should be showing on the box.

Bring the chains on the field, hold the clip and the chain. The Line Judge should provide the spot for the Linesman to set his clip then move up to the vicinity of the ball to assist the Referee. The Linesman should place the clip on the back side of the yardline the Line Judge has indicated and notify the Referee when ready for the chains to be stretched out.

The Referee takes the forward stake from the chain crew member. When the Linesman has the clip positioned on the

appropriate yardline, the Referee should stretch the chain and complete the measurement.

If it is determined to be a first down, the Linesman may release the chains to go back to the sideline. The Linesman marks the new spot at the sideline for the box man. After measurements that come up short, the Linesman is to place the chains back at their previous position behind the sideline using the clip. When the measurement is short and in a side zone, the Referee will hold the chain at the forward point of the ball and relocate it at the inbounds line. The Line Judge should handle the forward stake in that instance.

### **Timeouts**

The Linesman and Line Judge position themselves near the teams on their respective sidelines during timeouts. The Referee remains near the ball.