

Acknowledgements

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 – Basic philosophy

1. Each official must fully understand the rules. However, the knowledge is not sufficient without the ability to interpret and correctly apply them. These skills can only be acquired by way of considerable effort and study.
2. In addition to the necessary rules knowledge, the official needs to know where to stand, what to look for, and of course, what to do when he sees it. With these skills, officials can provide impartial administration of one of the most exciting sporting competitions and allow it to proceed smoothly so that skillful play is not spoiled by fouls or unsportsmanlike conduct. It is fundamental that the correct use of mechanics leads to better officiating.
3. Mechanics are two things: responsibilities and positioning. Responsibilities are paramount because without each official performing his assigned duties for a particular part of each play inevitably there will be action that is not observed. To neglect a responsibility is to give players carte blanche to violate the rules with which it is associated. Positioning is almost as important, because it is fundamental that an official has the best chance of making a call correctly if he is in position to get the best view of the action. The positioning mechanics in this book are based on those of various US officiating associations, particularly the Collegiate Commissioners Association. They are thus based on many, many years of experience and have been found by extensive experiment to be the best.
4. All officials are encouraged to write a personal checklist of things they must do and look for in each position on all possible play situations. This should be reviewed and updated periodically as a reminder of what they should be doing and how best to achieve it.
5. It must not be forgotten that football is a game played by and watched by people. Football officials must develop an appreciation of the wide variety of human reactions that can arise in the charged atmosphere of a sporting competition. It is only through the development of such an appreciation that officials can learn to gain the respect of the players and coaches, and maintain the discipline so essential in such a physically exciting game as football.
6. The foundations of officiating:
 - (a) The first foundation of officiating a game is that it is played in a safe environment. The field, its surrounds, and the players and their equipment on it, must not pose an unreasonable risk to the participants, nor make a mockery of the game. This is often taken for granted.
 - (b) The second foundation is the respect that the players and coaches must have for the decisions made by the officials. Without that respect, anything the officials do is unlikely to significantly influence the players' behaviour. The penalties in the rule-book form an effective deterrent for illegal actions only if they have an impact on players and the game.
 - (c) Without these foundations it is next to impossible for the officials to apply the rules effectively to ensure a fair contest.
7. A textbook like this cannot hope to be definitive about every possible situation that might arise in a game of football. It therefore means that the officials have to decide (or themselves what is the best reaction to what happens. That doesn't mean that officials can "freelance" and do whatever they want. They have responsibilities at all times to their colleagues to be in the expected place and to be covering their priorities. Only by working together can a crew expect to officiate a game successfully. Only by being in the right place at the right time can an individual official play his role in that. This book tells you the best place to be for common situations, and how to react to common occurrences (and a few rare ones). Everything else is up to you.

1.2 – Points of emphasis

For this edition, we wish officials to take particular note of the following points.

1. **Signalling timeout:** All officials should always echo all the timeout (S3) signals given by all other officials. (Mechanic 5.6.3)
2. **Referee mechanics around ready for play:**
 - (a) Whether you are using a 40-second play clock or a 25-second one, it is important to declare the ball ready for play consistently.
 - (b) Where there is no 40-second clock, we attempt to simulate it. † The ready for play should be given no earlier than 12 seconds after the previous play has ended. (Mechanic 9.9.c.12) The one exception is if Team A are rushing to snap the ball.
 - (c) Do not declare the ball ready for play if the Umpire is still standing over it. (Mechanic 9.9.c.9) Indicate to him to get to his position.
3. **Umpire mechanics around ready for play:**
 - (a) Umpires should be in their position (not standing over the ball) prior to the snap (Mechanic 10.9.c.13) unless:
 - (i) one or more of the Referee, Linesman or Line Judge is not in position and facing the ball
 - (ii) one or more of the deep officials is a considerable distance away from their position
 - (iii) the down box is nowhere near the line of scrimmage or is showing the wrong down number
 - (iv) Team A is making a last second substitution
 - (b) Umpires should immediately get over the ball if a whistle is blown for any reason (e.g. a foul occurs, a timeout is granted, the ball blows away) or if Team A makes a last second substitution. (Mechanic 10.9.c.14)
 - (c) If the Referee or another official spots the ball, there is no reason for the Umpire to ever stand over it unless something delays play.
4. **Penalty administration:**
 - (a) If you have thrown your flag, make sure you give a long, clear timeout signal at the end of the play. (Mechanic 19.1.b.2) Other officials will echo this. Make sure the Referee and Umpire are aware of your signal.
 - (b) Unless you are holding the dead-ball spot, once continuing action has ended, go to the Referee to report your foul. (Mechanic 19.1.b.4)
 - (c) The Umpire should ensure that he knows as soon as possible the reason for a flag being thrown.
 - (d) If you have information to contribute to penalty administration (e.g. you thought the pass was uncatchable on DPI; you know there was a change of possession and are not sure the Referee does), pass it on.
5. **Hurry up plays:** Don't slow down the game. In particular, when Team A is attempting a hurry-up offence:
 - (a) A wing official marking the dead-ball spot should not come into the field unless player conduct requires it or the spot is very close to the line to gain.
 - (b) Only the Umpire should handle the ball while the clock is running. (Mechanic 10.9.c.9) The one exception to this is if the Referee is nearer to spot the ball when there has been a loss of yardage.
 - (c) All officials (and the chain crew) have a duty to get to their position, face the ball and be ready for the next play as quickly as possible.
 - (d) Do not consume time talking to players, coaches or other officials while the clock is running.
 - (e) Do not grant a measurement if it is possible to avoid it. (Mechanic 18.4)

6. **Rules application:**
- It is a foul to block an opponent in the back; it is not a foul to touch an opponent in the back.
 - For holding to be worth calling, there must be demonstrable restriction. It may be slight, but it should be demonstrable.
7. **Sideline communication:** The following items of communication between the officials and the Head Coach of a team are essential:
- For each foul against his team, the nearest wing official must inform the Head Coach of the number or position of the offending player and what the player did that was illegal. (Mechanic 19.3.9) If the enforcement involves loss of down, the Coach must be informed of this also.
 - For each unusual enforcement or judgement, an official must inform both Head Coaches, whether or not they are against his team (Mechanic 19.3.9) This may be the nearest wing official or the Referee, depending on the nature of the call.
 - "If a visual game clock is not the official timing device during the last two minutes of each half, the Referee or his representative shall notify each captain and head coach of the time remaining each time the clock is stopped by rule" (Rule 3-3-8-c). This will normally be relayed to the Head Coach via the nearest wing official.
 - At the two-minute warning, the nearest wing official must inform the Head Coach of the precise time remaining and how many timeouts each team has remaining.
 - When a team has used its final timeout of a half, the Referee must inform the Head Coach of this fact, as well as the precise time remaining. The Referee should not delegate this job to another official.
 - When a player is disqualified, the Referee accompanied by the official who called the foul (or the nearest wing official if it was the Referee) must inform the Head Coach of the number of the player disqualified and the nature of the foul. (Mechanic 19.1.b.10)
8. **Measurements:** When a measurement takes place, it *must* take place at the *precise* dead-ball spot. The Coverer must place the ball on the ground at that spot. Measurements must not be made at some spot level with the dead-ball spot and, in particular, the ball must not be moved from a side zone to between the inbounds lines before the measurement takes place. (Mechanic 18.5)

2. CHANGES TO MECHANICS

This edition of the *Manual of Football Officiating* has been updated to add new material and to better organise what we already had.

The changes embodied in this edition have come from a number of sources, including:

- issues discussed at EFAF and BAFRA clinics in recent years
- issues discussed at various IFAF and EFAF tournaments in recent years
- various NCAA/CCA announcements on rule interpretations, including the *Officiating Philosophies* document produced collectively by several CCA conferences in 2007
- experience gained by officials working in NFL Europe or otherwise working with NFL officials
- the views of an international review committee (see the foreword for a list of those involved)

2.1 – Major changes

The following is a list of the most important additions and changes:

Alternate officials	5.18.1, 5.18.2, 5.18.4
Back Judge: move more laterally	9.6.b.5, 12.3.b.8, 12.4.b.15, 12.6.b.5, 15.3.b.8, 15.4.b.14, 15.6.b.5
Ceremonies (new section)	8.3
Chain crew: normal pace should be jog	22.1.8
Clock philosophies	3.9.8
Coin toss: change of responsibilities	8.4.2.b, 8.4.3, 8.4.3.a, 8.4.3.b, 8.4.3.c
Coin toss: no huddle unless anthems played	8.4.12
Consistency (new section)	5.19
Count responsibilities equal	5.14.1
Dissent philosophy	3.5.2
Fair catch philosophies	3.9.1
Field goal: drop goal attempt	9.8.d.3
Free kick: cover end line	9.1.c.5, 11.1.c.5.a, 12.1.c.5, 13.1.c.5
Free kick: onside kick goes deep (6/7-man only)	14.1.d.2, 15.1.d.2
Free kick: umpire guides out of bounds in flight	10.1.a.17
Free kick: wing moves up (6/7-man only)	13.1.c.6
General philosophies	3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.7
Goal line: coverage within 7-yard line	11.5.b.2, 12.5.a.1, 12.5.b.1, 12.5.b.2, 13.5.b.2, 14.5.a.1, 14.5.b.1, 15.5.a.1, 15.5.b.2
Goal line: deep officials on sideline extended	14.5.b.5, 14.5.c.2
Holding philosophies	3.3.1.b, 3.3.1.c, 3.3.1.d.ii, 3.3.1.d.iii, 3.3.1.d.iv, 3.3.1.f, 3.3.2.g
Horse collar philosophies	3.3.15
Injury philosophies	3.9.10
Instant replay (new section)	3.10
Intentional grounding mechanics	9.4.c.1, 10.4.a.5, 10.4.c.2, 11.4.a.6, 11.4.c.3, 13.4.a.7, 13.4.c.3
Involved but no flag	5.5.11
Kicking philosophies	3.4.13
Last second substitution mechanics	1.2.3.b, 3.4.1.d, 9.9.d.2, 10.9.d.2, 11.9.d.2, 12.9.c.2, 13.9.d.2, 14.9.c.2, 15.9.c.2
Measurement affecting tempo	1.2.5.e, 18.4

table continued...

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Goal line: deep officials on sideline extended	14.5.b.5, 14.5.c.2
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Horse collar philosophies	3.3.15
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Involved but no flag	5.5.11
Kicking philosophies	3.4.13
Last second substitution mechanics	1.2.3.b, 3.4.1.d, 9.9.d.2, 10.9.d.2, 11.9.d.2, 12.9.c.2, 13.9.d.2, 14.9.c.2, 15.9.c.2
Measurement affecting tempo	1.2.5.e, 18.4

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Mental preparation (new section)	5.20
Passes: watch for helmet contact	11.4.a.4.f, 11.4.b.8, 12.4.a.4.e, 12.4.b.9, 13.4.a.3.f, 13.4.b.8, 14.4.a.4.e, 14.4.b.7, 15.4.a.4.e, 15.4.b.8
Passing philosophies	3.4.8.d, 3.4.8.f
Penalty enforcement obvious	19.3.1.b, 19.3.1.c, 19.4
Play clock: 40-second start signal	9.9.c.1, 10.9.c.1, 11.9.c.2, 12.9.b.2, 13.9.c.2, 14.9.b.2, 15.9.b.2
Points of emphasis (new section)	1.2
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Pre-game duties	8.1.10, 8.1.8
Retaliation philosophies	3.5.7
Returns: watch for helmet contact	9.6.a.4.e, 10.6.a.4.e, 11.6.a.5.e, 12.6.a.4.e, 13.6.a.5.e, 14.6.a.5.e, 15.6.a.4.e
Sideline interference philosophies	3.5.5.c
Spots: Use ball as marker only where ball dead	5.7.3, 11.9.c.1.c, 12.9.b.1.c, 13.9.c.1.c, 14.9.b.1.c, 15.9.b.1.c
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Tips from SOUK (new section)	6.4
Trick play philosophies	3.9.9
Unsportsmanlike acts requiring disqualification	3.5.3
Wedge philosophies	3.4.14
Zero tolerance in junior/youth football	3.5.8

In these sections, and elsewhere, the following symbols are used to denote the reason for a change:

- # mechanic changed due to CCA/IFAF change (or to bring us in line with them)
- † mechanic changed for better coverage
- § fill gap in existing mechanic
- ◇ clarification or enhancement of existing mechanic
- @ change for better communication
- * previous text deleted
- ® change due to rule change
- λ editorial correction/clarification or text moved

The change mark normally follows a change, except where there is a completely new list, in which case the change mark will be at the end of the paragraph introducing the list.

2.2 – Editorial changes

Editorial changes (those intended to clarify the presentation of particular points, or resulting from rules changes) are listed below.

Changes resulting from the reorganisation of material in chapters are NOT marked.

3.3.2.a	3.4.4.b	3.4.10	3.6.1.a	4.3.6
3.3.5.c	3.4.6.b	3.4.10.b	3.6.1.b	4.3.9
3.3.8.a.vi	3.4.9	3.5.1.d	3.6.1.c	4.3.12
3.3.8.c.viii	3.4.9.a	3.5.1.e	3.8.1	5.5.9.a
3.3.9.a.iii	3.4.9.c	3.5.4	3.8.2	5.14.4
3.3.11	3.4.9.d	3.5.5.a	3.8.5	5.17.6
3.3.12.b	3.4.9.e	3.5.6	4.2.4	5.18.6
3.4.3	3.4.9.f	3.5.6.a	4.3.1	8.1.3

table continued...

8.1.11	10.9.c.20	13.3.b.2.b	15.4.b.1	24.2.F
8.2.13	10.9.d.5	13.3.b.2.c	15.5.c.1	24.2.G
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8.4.3.c.iv	11.2.a.1	13.4.a.8	15.7.b.3	24.2.J
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9.8.a.1.f	11.5.c.7	13.9.c.1.a	16.1.1.a	
9.8.d.2	11.5.c.8	13.9.c.10	17.1.8	
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9.9.c.2	11.7.c.9.b	14.2.a.1	17.1.10	
9.9.c.9	11.7.c.9.d	14.3.b.6.a	17.2.2	
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10.1.a.10	11.9.c.1.a	14.5.b.7	18.15	
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10.3.b.4	12.2.b.1	14.7.b.4	19.3.1.f	
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10.9.c.2	12.7.d.1	14.8.d.2.b	21.2.1.h	
10.9.c.9	12.8.d.2	14.9.a.3	21.2.1.j	
10.9.c.11	12.8.d.2.a	14.9.a.6	22.1.1	
10.9.c.13	12.9.a.3	14.9.a.9	22.1.5	
10.9.c.13.c	12.9.a.6	14.9.a.11	22.1.10.b	
10.9.c.14	12.9.a.10	14.9.b.1.a	22.1.11	
10.9.c.15	12.9.b.1.a	14.9.b.1.d	22.1.15.a	
10.9.c.15.a	12.9.b.10	14.9.b.12	22.2.1	
10.9.c.15.e	13.1.a.14.d	15.2.a.1	22.3.1	
10.9.c.16	13.2.a.1	15.2.b.1	22.3.4	
10.9.c.17	13.2.a.15	15.3.b.1	23.1.2	
10.9.c.18	13.3.b.1.e	15.3.b.6	23.6.3	

3. RULES APPLICATION

3.1 – Introduction

In order to ensure that all crews consistently interpret rules the same way, the following fouls shall be called only as stipulated.

Note:

1. The intention is for these interpretations to apply in full adult games.
2. A stricter interpretation of the rules is appropriate in games involving junior/youth players and/or where the players are all obviously inexperienced.
3. A stricter interpretation of the rules is appropriate in games in which general (i.e. not just one or two players) player conduct or attitude threatens to escalate the number or type of fouls committed. This may include clamping down on "minor" fouls where frustration may lead to "major" fouls.
4. A less strict interpretation of the rules is appropriate in blowout games when one team has a large lead and is obviously dominant. However, this should not extend to ignoring safety-related or obvious fouls.
5. If a flag is thrown for a foul where these principles indicate that it should not have been, the penalty should still be enforced. Never wave a flag off, once thrown, if it signifies a foul by rule.
6. Also bear in mind section 5.2 on common sense officiating.
7. Where a rule is not mentioned in this chapter, it should be applied in a manner consistent with the following principles:[§]
 - (a) fouls affecting player safety should always be called
 - (b) fouls that are obvious to spectators should be called
 - (c) fouls that give a team or a player a clear advantage should be called
 - (d) fouls that are minor/technical and probably unrealised by the players should result in a "talk to" for a first offence

3.2 – Definitions

1. **Point of attack** is defined as follows:
 - (a) on a running play, it is the area in advance of the runner – if he changes direction the point of attack changes;
 - (b) on a forward pass play, it is anywhere in the vicinity of the passer or any player attempting to reach the passer;
 - (c) on a scrimmage kick play, it is anywhere in the vicinity of the kicker or any player attempting to reach the kicker or block the kick.
2. **Obvious:** An action is "obvious" if it would be visibly apparent to a spectator who knew the rules or to an official watching the game on video. Generally, anything that takes place in the open field, or by a player standing alone, is obvious; anything that takes place in close line play or in a pile-up is not obvious.

3.3 – Contact fouls

1. **Offensive holding:**
 - (a) Only call it when *all* of the following conditions are met:
 - (i) the foul is **visibly apparent**, i.e. if it wouldn't show up on video, don't call it;
 - (ii) the foul **affects the play**, i.e. if it is away from the point of attack, don't call it;
 - (iii) the action is **demonstrably restrictive**, i.e. if the player is not *illegally* slowed down or forced to take a longer route to his target, don't call it;
 - (iv) the foul **disadvantages the opponent**, i.e. if it actually moves the player the way he wants to go, don't call it.

- (b) Actions that constitute offensive holding include:[◇]
 - (i) **Grab and restrict** – grabbing the opponent's body or uniform in a manner that restricts his ability to go in the direction he wishes to go in.
 - (ii) **Hook and restrict** – hooking a hand or arm around the opponent's body (beyond the frame of the body presented to the blocker) in a manner that restricts his ability to go in the direction he wishes to go in.
 - (iii) **Takedown** – taking an opponent to the ground (by grabbing or hooking) when he doesn't want to go to the ground. Note that blocking the opponent to the ground by use of the hands or arms within the frame of the opponent's body (or in the back in the blocking zone) is not illegal.
 - (c) A player is **restricted** if:[‡]
 - (i) He is unable to turn or change direction due to continued, restrictive contact.
 - (ii) His upper body is turned by the blocker having his arms around him.
 - (iii) He is unable to gain separation or to disengage from the opponent by turning, twisting, stopping, etc.
 - (iv) His balance is changed or his natural foot movement is taken away.
 - (d) Don't call holding if *any* of the following conditions are met:
 - (i) the player held makes the tackle (behind the neutral zone or where there is no neutral zone);
 - (ii) the player knocks down or intercepts a pass;[‡]
 - (iii) the player recovers a fumble;[‡]
 - (iv) at the point of attack on a run, the opponents are squared up, moving with each other and none of the restrictions above are noted;[‡]
 - (v) it happens at the same time as a tackle elsewhere on the field;
 - (vi) it is behind the neutral zone and a forward pass has already been thrown, or is in the process of being thrown;
 - (vii) it is part of a double-team block (unless a takedown occurs, or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back);
 - (viii) it is the result of a defensive rip (i.e. the defensive player raising the offensive player's arm);
 - (ix) the player held makes no effort to get free of the block (i.e. he "gives up").
 - (e) **Takedowns** in the open field or within the tackle box are obvious enough to need calling whether or not they affect the play.
 - (f) Holding an opponent's jersey is *not* the same as holding the opponent. For a jersey pull to be a foul, there must be demonstrable restriction to the player's movement. [◇]
2. **Defensive holding:**
 - (a) Downfield on passing plays, everywhere is the *point of attack* – a foul on an eligible receiver can occur anywhere. [◇]
 - (b) Always call fouls that prevent the passer throwing the ball and lead to a sack.
 - (c) *Clotheslining* a receiver at the head or neck should be called as a personal foul.
 - (d) Contact that does not demonstrably impede a receiver should be ignored.
 - (e) A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be called.
 - (f) Holding should be called against defenders who clearly *illegally* restrict an offensive player from making a lead block for the runner (this includes pulling linemen on trap and sweep plays), but not where the offensive player is too far away from the play to become involved.
 - (g) Defensive holding should *not* be called for contact that occurs after the pass is thrown to the opposite side of the field (unless it is a clear attempt to restrict an offensive player as in (f) above). [◇]

3. **Illegal use of hands:** Call it the same as for offensive holding, unless the initial contact in a block is on the opponent's helmet or facemask, in which case it must always be called. Make sure you see the initial contact: it is not a foul if a player's hands slide up to a point above the opponent's shoulders. Remember, however, that continuous contact to the helmet is a personal foul.
4. **Clipping:** Only call this if you saw the blocker's last two strides before the contact (so that you are certain you know which direction he came from), *and* if you saw the opponent he hit before the block (so that you know whether he turned his back or not). You must see the point of initial contact. Remember that contact to the side is legal. See the entire act.
5. **Illegal block in the back:**
 - (a) Before calling this, apply the same conditions as you would apply for holding, but also apply the conditions for calling clipping, particularly the need to see the entire act.
 - (b) If one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back.
 - (c) Touching an opponent in the back must not be called unless it results in him being knocked down or pushed off balance sufficiently so that he stumbles or mis-steps *and* misses making a tackle or block. Remember, the foul is for illegal *block* in the back; not an illegal *touch* in the back. ◊
 - (d) Charging into a player's back away from the play may be called as unnecessary roughness. This may be called regardless of the timing of the block relative to the end of the play.
 - (e) Be particularly alert when you see an offensive player chasing a defensive player (and vice versa when the defensive player is not attempting to reach the ball).
 - (f) On a fair catch, do not call it if the foul occurs away from the play as the catch is being made.
6. **Roughing the passer:**
 - (a) If the defensive player's initial contact on the passer is at his head, it is always a foul (unless the passer ducks into it).
 - (b) If the defensive player spears the passer, call it as roughing so the penalty can be tacked on to the end of the run.
 - (c) If the defensive player's initial contact on the passer is at his knees, it is always a foul unless it is a slight contact, or the defensive player was blocked into it, or the passer does something to encourage it.
 - (d) It is a foul if a defender (in front of the passer) takes two steps before contacting the passer after the ball has been thrown/released. A defender behind the passer is given a little more leeway.
 - (e) Defensive players who make a legitimate attempt to avoid or reduce contact are given the benefit of the doubt.
 - (f) When in doubt, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
7. **Roughing/running into the kicker:**
 - (a) Generally, contact with the kicker's kicking leg will be considered as *running into the kicker*, and contact with his plant leg will be considered as *roughing the kicker*.
 - (b) Any time the kicker or holder are knocked off their feet it should be called as *roughing*.
 - (c) Where the kicker makes a move before the kick that is not part of the normal kick-motion, then it is no longer obvious that a kick will be made and there will probably be no foul unless the defensive player is out to punish him. This is also the case if the ball is snapped high or wide of the kicker.

8. **Defensive pass interference:**
 - (a) Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include:
 - (i) **Not playing the ball** – Early contact by a defender (who is not playing the ball) that impedes or restricts the receiver's opportunity to make the catch.
 - (ii) **Playing through an opponent** – Playing through the receiver (i.e. contacting him in the back or on the side of him furthest from the ball), even if attempting to play the ball.
 - (iii) **Grabbing an arm** – Grabbing the receiver's arm in a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
 - (iv) **Arm bar** – Extending an arm across the receiver's body to impede his ability to catch a pass, whether or not the defender is playing the ball.
 - (v) **Cut off** – Cutting off or riding a receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball (i.e. before the defender looks for the ball).
 - (vi) **Hook and turn** – Hooking a receiver around the waist that causes his body to turn prior to (or even slightly after) the ball arriving (even if the defender is trying to get to the ball). ◊
 - (b) Actions that do *not* constitute defensive pass interference include:
 - (i) Incidental contact by a defender's hands, arms or body in the act of moving to the ball that does not materially affect the route of the receiver. If in doubt as to whether the route was materially affected, there is no interference.
 - (ii) Inadvertent tangling of feet when both (or neither) players are playing the ball.
 - (iii) Contact occurs during a pass that is clearly uncatchable by the involved players.
 - (iv) Laying a hand on the receiver that does not turn or impede him until after the ball has arrived.
 - (v) Contact on a "hail mary" pass unless it is clear and obvious pass interference.
 - (c) Further notes:
 - (i) A stationary player (in position to catch the ball) who is displaced from his position has been fouled.
 - (ii) It is never pass interference if the defensive player touches the ball before contacting the opponent.
 - (iii) Interference must be obvious to be called.
 - (iv) Remember that the defense has as much right to the ball as the offense.
 - (v) It is crucial to identify which players are playing the ball and which are not.
 - (vi) Normally, an offensive receiver will try to catch the ball with two hands. If the defender goes up with only one hand, know what the other one is doing.
 - (vii) When judging whether a pass is catchable, imagine how far the receiver could have run, and how high or wide he could have jumped, if he had not been impeded.
 - (viii) There is no foul when contact is simultaneous with the ball being touched ("bang-bang"). When in doubt, contact is simultaneous with the ball being touched. ◊
9. **Offensive pass interference:**
 - (a) Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include:
 - (i) **Pushing off** – Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off, thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
 - (ii) **Driving through** – Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.
 - (iii) **Blocking** – Before the pass is thrown, blocking that occurs anywhere down field. After the pass is thrown, blocking that occurs down field within approximately 20 yards (more if the pass is delayed) of where the pass is thrown to. ◊

- (b) Actions that do *not* constitute offensive pass interference include:
- Incidental contact by a receiver's hands, arms or body in the act of moving to the ball that does not materially affect the route of the defender. If in doubt as to whether the route was materially affected, there is no interference.
 - Inadvertent tangling of feet when both (or neither) players are playing the ball.
 - Contact occurring during a pass that is clearly uncatchable by the involved players.
 - Blocking downfield when a screen pass is overthrown and lands beyond the neutral zone, unless such contact prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.
 - Contact on a pick play when the defensive player is already blocking the offensive player.
- (c) Further notes:
- Non-flagrant contact well away from the play should not be called.
 - Blocking down field can be called even if the passer is legally grounding the ball.
 - Do not call offensive pass interference if either foot of the blocker is within one yard of the neutral zone.
 - If in doubt as to which player initiated a block, the initiator will be the one who is upright or leaning forward and the player blocked will be knocked back.
10. **Late hit:**
- Be more likely to call it the later the hit or the more severe the contact. Slight contact immediately after the ball is dead should not be called.
 - Any deliberate push against a runner out of bounds is a foul.
 - Use of the helmet is a foul even if only slightly late.
 - When a runner is near the sideline, contact that occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds is a legal hit.
 - When a runner is out of bounds but continues running down the sideline in bounds, any subsequent hit is legal provided he has not eased up and the whistle has not blown.
11. **Facemask:**
- Incidental grasping in a pile of players should not be called unless there is twisting that makes it a 15-yard penalty.
 - Remember that a facemask foul involves *grasping* the helmet or facemask, not simply *touching* it.*
12. **Unnecessary roughness:**
- An act that occurs well away from the play may be classed as a personal foul even though the act itself is legal. In other words, it is the location of the players with respect to the play that causes the foul, not the legality of the contact.
 - Be certain that the act wasn't justified by the play situation (e.g. an interception or fumble return or a broken play). If a player is in position to influence the play^o or moving towards it, he is a fair target: if he is standing still, he is not.
 - It is not a foul if two players are each blocking each other – only contact against a player off his guard needs to be penalised.
 - For unnecessary hits away from the ball near the end of a play, make them dead-ball fouls rather than live-ball ones.
 - When a player is hit after giving himself up, a foul is warranted.
 - Fouls on the runner after a touchdown that are obviously late must be called.

13. **Roughing the snapper:**
- This foul can only occur when it is reasonably obvious that a scrimmage kick will be made. In other words, only on field goal and PAT attempts, or when a team lines up in a punting formation on 4th down.
 - Don't be picky about the one second interval. If the snapper is upright before the one second has elapsed then permit contact, but if he takes longer to recover then allow him more protection.
 - Don't call a foul if a defensive player contacts the snapper after being blocked by an adjacent offensive lineman.
 - Disqualify any player who attempts to punish by contact to the snapper's helmet or spears using the defender's own helmet.
14. **Defenceless players:** In the following situations, players should generally be regarded as being "defenceless" (especially if contact is above their shoulders):
- quarterbacks (or other obvious passers) after the pass has been thrown, or the ball has been pitched or handed off, and they do not move to participate in the play;
 - kickers and holders after the kick has been made, and they do not move to participate in the play;
 - kick returners while looking up in the air at the ball;
 - kick returners who have just touched the ball and are trying to secure it;
 - receivers who have attempted, but failed, to touch a pass;
 - receivers who have relaxed because they realise that the pass is uncatchable;
 - runners, once their forward progress is stopped and they make no further effort to advance;
 - any players who have relaxed because the ball has become dead;
 - any players who are obviously out of the play.
15. **Horse collar tackle:[‡]**
- Call it only if the defender grabs the back or side of the collar of the shoulder pads or jersey.
 - Grabbing another part of the jersey such as at the shoulder, numbers, or side of the jersey and pulling the runner down is not a foul.
 - As with other safety related fouls, if in doubt as to whether it is a foul or not, call it. If the hand is in the vicinity of the collar and you cannot tell if he has the collar or not, call a foul if the immediate pulling requirement is met.
 - However, just grabbing another part of the jersey and pulling a runner immediately down is not a foul.

3.4 – Non-contact fouls

1. **Delay of game:**
- If Team A is still in the huddle, or moving into formation, with 10 seconds to go, warn them verbally that there are 10 seconds remaining. Always throw the flag when the count reaches zero, unless the snap is very imminent (i.e. the quarterback is calling out "huts"), in which case he can have an extra second.
 - After a score, it is a delay of game if either team is not on the field (or on the field but still in the huddle) within one minute regardless of whether the ready for play has been given or not. For a first offence warn the Head Coach of the team rather than throw a flag.
 - If no players from Team B are ready to play when Team A is set to snap the ball following a timeout, penalise Team B for delay of game. Do *not* give Team A a free play. The officials on the sideline are responsible for ensuring that the captain or coach of the team knows that the timeout is about to end.
 - If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting), Team B must be given an opportunity to "match-up". If the play clock expires prior to the snap, the officials must determine

whether Team B was given ample opportunity to react to the "rushed" substitution. If Team B reacted promptly but the play clock expired, Team A will be assessed a delay of game foul: -If Team B delayed in their substitution then Team B will be assessed a delay of game foul. ‡

2. **Players not within the nine-yard lines:** On a scrimmage play don't call this unless it is obvious. On a free kick, the Umpire and the wing officials must ensure that all Team A players are within the nine-yard lines before signalling to the Referee that they are ready.
3. **False start:** Movement by an offensive player is not a false start unless either (i) he moves one or both feet; (ii) it is sudden; or (iii) it causes a defensive player to move in reaction. ‡ If a running back misses the snap count and makes a sudden movement, it is a false start. If in doubt as to whether movement was prior to the snap or not, it was *not*. Don't be picky on this. ◊
4. **Offside:**
 - (a) When a defensive player, before the snap, moves and an offensive player subsequently moves, a conference between the Umpire and the wing officials is mandatory. This is to determine if the defensive player was in the neutral zone and if the offensive player was threatened. When in question, the offensive player *is* threatened.
 - (b) When a defensive player, before the snap, crosses the neutral zone and charges towards a Team A back, it is a dead-ball offside foul. ®
 - (c) Don't rule a defensive player offside if he is stationary and only intruding on the neutral zone by a trivial amount.
 - (d) Don't be picky about offside, particularly on fields that are not marked perfectly.
 - (e) Don't call offside if the defensive player is moving forward at the snap but is not actually in the neutral zone.
5. **Illegal motion:**
 - (a) A player is in illegal motion only if his forward movement is obvious.
 - (b) A motion man angling forward while in motion at the snap has committed a live-ball foul.
6. **Ineligible receiver downfield:**
 - (a) Call it only if it is obvious.
 - (b) An ineligible receiver must be clearly more than 3 yards down field. ®
 - (c) If a lineman blocks downfield, call it as ineligible downfield unless he goes far enough to block a linebacker or defensive back in pass coverage in which case call it as offensive pass interference.
 - (d) Only regard a wide receiver as covering a tight end on the line of scrimmage if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in doubt, the tight end is *not* covered up.
 - (e) Don't call it if the offense are legally throwing the ball beyond the neutral zone to save a loss of yardage.
7. **Kick catch interference:**
 - (a) Anything that impedes the receiver from the opportunity to catch the ball should be called a foul. This includes:
 - (i) contact with the receiver (however incidental);
 - (ii) running menacingly close to the receiver;
 - (iii) standing too close to the receiver;
 - (iv) yelling while close to the receiver;
 - (v) waving arms in front of the receiver;
 - (vi) being positioned in front of the receiver in such a way that the receiver is forced to step around the opponent or change path in an effort to catch the ball.

- (b) It is not a foul where:
 - (i) a Team A player runs past the receiver without touching him or making him change course;
 - (ii) the receiver "gives up" his attempt to catch the kick too easily;
 - (iii) the receiver catches the ball and there was no contact and the extent of any non-contact interference is slight or in doubt: don't award cheap 15-yard penalties.
 - (c) A player who viciously contacts a potential kick receiver has committed a flagrant personal foul and should be disqualified. Give only the personal foul signal (not the signal for kick catch interference) in this case.
 - (d) A player who is in the process of catching a kick must be given an unimpeded opportunity to complete the catch before being contacted. This protection terminates if the player muffs the ball, unless he has given a valid fair catch signal and still has an opportunity to complete the catch. (Rule 6-5-1-a)
8. **Intentional grounding:**
 - (a) Never call it if the passer was contacted while in the act of throwing the ball, or if the ball is touched. Under these circumstances you must assume the passer intended to throw the ball to a receiver. However, if the contact was before the passer starts his throwing motion, the pass must have a more reasonable opportunity to be caught than if the contact is after he starts his motion.
 - (b) Do not call intentional grounding if the passer throws the ball away (except straight down) when not under defensive pressure. He is entitled to waste a down if he is in no danger of being sacked. The clock is not a factor.
 - (c) Don't call it if the pass is intercepted.
 - (d) If the passer throws the ball at the feet of a receiver who is not looking to catch the ball, it will *not* normally be intentional grounding.
 - (e) Getting the ball to within one yard of the neutral zone is to be regarded as close enough. Don't be technical on this.
 - (f) If a pass is touched by an ineligible receiver, it will normally just be a foul for illegal touching. However, if the passer does this in a obviously deliberate manner to avoid a loss of yardage, then a foul for intentional grounding is justified. ◊
 9. **Illegal substitution / illegal participation:** ◊
 - (a) If a replaced player is leaving the field of play or end zone but is still clearly on the field of play at the snap, then it should be called. ‡ This will be for illegal substitution, unless he has drawn opponents with him in which case it will be for illegal participation. §
 - (b) If substitutes enter the field momentarily before the ball is dead but don't interfere with play, then don't call it. †
 - (c) If the offense breaks its huddle with 12 or more players, this confuses the opposition and should always be penalised. Similarly, if the defense have 12 or more players on the field for more than 3 seconds without identifying who is going off, they should be penalised. These are dead-ball fouls for illegal substitution. §
 - (d) In general, try to make the foul illegal substitution rather than illegal participation. However, if a 12th player enters the field 3 seconds or less before the snap and no player makes a move to leave before the snap, the foul will be for illegal participation. If the officials do not detect the 12th player until after the snap, it will be a foul for illegal participation. ◊
 - (e) If the 12th player enters the field *after* the snap and participates, this is a foul for illegal tactics. §
 - (f) If the 12th player enters the field before the ball is dead (e.g. anticipating a change of possession), this is a dead-ball foul for illegal substitution. §

10. **Failure to wear mandatory equipment:**

- (a) Regard failure to have a mouthpiece or to secure all points of a chinstrap as seriously as failure to wear a helmet. If you observe a player leaving the huddle without a mouthpiece or chinstraps, remind him to secure his equipment. Players who ignore the reminder must be penalised, but give quarterbacks and other players calling signals more time to do so. Restricted lineman can be penalised as soon as they place a hand on or near the ground. The same procedure applies to players wearing opaque eye shields.
 - (b) For other non-critical mandatory equipment, instruct the player to remedy the problem the next time he is off the field. If he ignores the instruction, when he returns to the field tell him to go off and fix the problem immediately. If he does so, then fine. If his team replaces him immediately, do not penalise for an illegal substitution. If his team takes a timeout or suffers a delay of game penalty, that is their choice. If he stays and participates in a play, penalise him. [◇]
11. **Illegal equipment:** Anything that might be a risk to participant safety must be dealt with before the ball is next put in play. Other infringements may be left for the player to rectify next time he leaves the field, but must be rectified before he can be allowed to return.
 12. **Illegal forward pass:** For a passer to be ruled beyond the line of scrimmage when he releases the ball, his entire body and ball must be beyond the neutral zone.
 13. **Illegally kicking the ball:** If a player intentionally contacts the ball with knee, lower leg or foot with the objective of propelling the ball in any direction, he is kicking it. There is no foul if it touches his knee, lower leg or foot as part of an act of obtaining possession of the ball – this is not to be regarded as a kick. [‡]
 14. **Illegal wedge:** For a wedge to be illegal, it has to form either immediately before or at the time of the catch, and continue during the beginning of the return. Once the return gets upfield, players will come together as a consequence of the play – this is *not* considered as an illegal wedge. [‡]

3.5 – Unsportsmanlike conduct and fighting

1. **Celebration:**

- (a) Celebration is different from taunting – be more tolerant of it.
- (b) A "sack dance" over a tackled opponent should always be penalised.
- (c) Only penalise spiking after a score if it taunts an opponent. It need not be intentional, but does have to be in the direction of an opponent.
- (d) Celebrations that involve the ball (other than spiking it), player equipment, field equipment (including a goal), any object taken from another person, or any prop should be penalised. [◇]
- (e) Celebrations that involve a player going to the ground in a delayed (not immediately after the score) and unnecessary manner should be penalised. [◇]

2. **Dissent:** [◇]

- (a) Players play with passion and emotion – coaches share the same traits. At various times, players and coaches can be happy or sad, joyous or disappointed, satisfied or frustrated. These are normal human emotions (officials have them as well), but need self-control.
- (b) Players and coaches are entitled to be disappointed. It is only when it is excessive or challenges an official's authority that it becomes dissent.
- (c) Dissent is when players, coaches or other persons subject to the rules:
 - (i) speak in an abusive, aggressive or denegrating manner to an official;
 - (ii) assert as true something that it is contrary to rule or an official's ruling, or assert as false something that is true;
 - (iii) continue to argue a proposition after being informed that it is incorrect, or asked to stop;

- (iv) make denegrating comments about an official or a decision while speaking to each other;
 - (v) make gestures (with hands or otherwise) that signify frustration or lack of respect at an official;
 - (vi) throw/kick the ball or equipment in disgust;
 - (vii) move aggressively towards an official to remonstrate.
- Dissent differs from a player or coach asking a genuine question.
- (d) If a player or coach shows the official respect, then the official will show them the same level of respect in return.
 - (e) We distinguish between overt dissent and covert dissent. The former is obvious, usually because the speech is loud enough for many people to hear, or the gestures are clear and in the open. Covert dissent is where only the official hears it and can be treated slightly differently.
 - (f) There are six levels of response to dissent:
 - (i) **Ignore it.** If the dissent is minor, and is the first example of its kind from that player or team, then it *can* be ignored. It might be an isolated incident, never to happen again. However, there is always a risk that ignoring dissent will give encouragement to the participants to repeat it. Ignoring it is certainly not the appropriate response to repeated dissent.
 - (ii) **Pretend you didn't hear it.** Ask the player or coach to repeat their comment ("what did you say?"). If it was inappropriate, they will likely not repeat it. If they do, then there is no doubt that you must respond firmly, professionally and rapidly.
 - (iii) **Quiet word.** A quiet word with a player or coach is often more beneficial than an immediate penalty. It shows your commitment to resolving the issue without recourse to a strict application of the rules of the game.
 - (iv) **Public rebuke.** Sometimes, the player or coach needs to be spoken to loudly enough that his teammates are aware. This may be necessary in order to solicit their help in controlling his emotions.
 - (v) **Penalty.** If dissent is repeated a third time (or once in a fashion obvious to spectators) then it needs to be penalised as unsportsmanlike conduct. This should include all actions that involve audible abusive language, thrown equipment, or running towards an official.
 - (vi) **Disqualification.** If a player is penalised for dissent twice, then he will be disqualified under Rule 9-2-1. In extreme cases, an act of dissent may be so flagrant as to require immediate disqualification.
- There is no need to go through these levels in order. A serious (and obvious) act of dissent may require immediate penalty, and possibly even disqualification.
- (g) The following acts by a participant should *always* result in a foul being called:
 - (i) making an aggressive gesture towards an official;
 - (ii) speaking in an abusive, aggressive or denegrating manner to an official that can be heard clearly by spectators;
 - (iii) making "demonstrative disagreement", such as raising hands in incredulity;
 - (iv) smacking themselves to demonstrate how they were fouled;
 - (v) running directly at an official to complain about a call;
 - (vi) making excessive enquiries about a call, even in a civilised tone (as in 3.5.2.f.v above).
 - (h) Failing to deal with dissent is letting your colleagues and the sport down. Not only does dissent undermine officials, it can also severely disrupt the atmosphere and flow of a game.
 - (i) If you hear dissent directed at another official, *you* deal with it. An important part of officiating teamwork is to back up your colleagues in this way.

- (j) Engage with the captain(s) and coach(es) to make clear it is their responsibility to control their players, to prevent dissent or to stamp it out at first sign. Doing this shows that the official is attempting to work *with* the teams rather than penalise.
- (k) Where appropriate, advise coaches and players to ask genuine questions rather than make assertions about what is true or false.
- (l) If left unchecked, dissent is like a disease that will grow and undermine your authority.
3. **Unsportsmanlike acts requiring disqualification:** The following acts of unsportsmanlike conduct normally require disqualification:[◇]
- spitting at an opponent or official;
 - any abusive language that involves derogatory reference to an opponent or official's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality (except in the context of international competition), religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
4. **Other points regarding unsportsmanlike conduct:^λ**
- Do not penalise a player or team twice for the same act or series of acts. Normally, all unsportsmanlike actions by the same team during the same down, or period between downs, will result in the enforcement of only one 15-yard penalty.
 - Do not penalise the conduct of anyone other than a player or coach. If someone else is giving you a problem, ask the team or game management to deal with it.
 - Normally a kicker who simulates being roughed should be ignored. A penalty should only be administered if necessary to exert proper game control.
 - Players who unthinkingly remove their helmets on the field of play should not be penalised unless they are (i) directing anger or criticism at an opponent or an official; or (ii) celebrating. Remind them to keep their helmets on. A player removing their helmet in the vicinity of the sideline just prior to entering the team area should be ignored.
5. **Sideline interference:**
- Give a sideline interference foul only if a Head Coach repeatedly (i.e. more than once) ignores requests (while the ball is dead) to keep his team back from the sideline.[®]
 - Provided participants in the team area respond reasonably promptly to requests to get back from the sideline, there is no need to warn or penalise them, no matter how many times it happens.
 - While the ball is in play:[®]
 - Coaches, substitutes and other non-players *on the field* should always be flagged for sideline interference.
 - If they are *between the sideline and the coaching box line*, use your discretion and issue a verbal warning if they did not actually cause any problem.
 - Any contact between an official and a team member on the field or between the sideline and the coaching line should be called as illegal interference (a 15-yard penalty) even for a first offence.
6. **Fighting:^λ**
- If action is deemed to be "fighting" then the player must be disqualified. It is *not* fighting if players are merely pushing each other (i.e. no deliberate punches, kicks or blows are struck or aimed).[◇] If in doubt, it is *not* fighting. Don't use the term "punch" to describe roughness to a player or coach unless it is associated with a disqualification.[@]
 - During a fight, try to distinguish between those players (on the field at the start of the fight), substitutes and coaches who actively participate in a fight and those who are trying only to separate the combatants. The latter should not be disqualified.
 - Only disqualify a player if you are certain of his number. If two players are involved in a fight, don't disqualify one unless you know the identity of the other.

- (d) Unnecessary roughness when Team A has clearly indicated its intention to "take a knee" should normally result in disqualification of the player committing the foul.
- (e) If in doubt as to whether a player has intentionally elbowed an opponent, look at the player's hand. It is a natural reaction to make a fist before striking with the elbow. An open hand probably indicates unintentional contact.
7. **Retaliation:[§]**
- For the purposes of this section, we define retaliation as when a player commits an aggressive act in direct response to an aggressive act by an opponent on himself or a teammate. Retaliation may be physical (contact) or unsportsmanlike (non-contact). Retaliation normally occurs within a few seconds of the original act, but could in theory be delayed for a considerable length of time – in extremis, a subsequent season.
 - Normally, we want to impose the most severe punishment on the participant who started the incident (the "instigator"). The "punishment" in this context, may a warning (for a minor infringement), a penalty (for a significant infringement) or disqualification (for a serious infringement).
 - If the retaliation is of less seriousness than the original act, the retaliator should normally receive a lesser punishment than the instigator. For example, if A31 commits an unnecessary roughness foul on B45, and B45 retaliates by (a) pushing A31 away; or (b) swearing at A31, then in both cases we would likely not penalise B45, but simply warn him. This would also apply if A31 spat on B45 (a mandatory disqualification according to 3.5.3) and B45 retaliated by pushing A31. A31 would be disqualified, but B45 may only be penalised or warned.
 - However, if the retaliation prolongs or escalates the incident by being as (or more) severe than the original act, then normally the retaliator should receive the same or a higher punishment than the instigator. For example, if B45 responds by (a) committing an equally unnecessary act of roughness on A31; or (b) starting a fight with A31, then both would be severely penalised. In the case of a fight, Rules 2-32-1 and 9-5-1 together mandate disqualification of both players.
 - In any case where retaliation is delayed (to the next play or later) and deliberate, disqualification of the retaliator alone is normally required. This includes cases where the retaliator is a teammate of the player who was the victim of the original attack.
8. Apply a zero tolerance policy to acts of unsportsmanlike conduct and fighting in junior/youth football. This stance is supported by IFAF, EFAF and BAFA.[◇]

3.6 – Fouls that always involve advantage

The following fouls always involve advantage, even if it doesn't appear so, and shall be called:

1. **Illegal formation:**
- It is always a foul when Team A has five (or more) men in the backfield at the snap.[®] Team A gains a blocking advantage by being further away from the defense.
 - It is still a foul for five men in the backfield even if Team A has only 10 (or fewer) men on the field at the snap.
 - Only call the foul if the fifth man is "obviously" off the line (e.g. his head is clearly behind the rear end of the snapper) or has ignored repeated warnings (i.e. at least 2 warnings).
 - No player (other than the quarterback) should ever be ruled as being neither on the line nor in the backfield – if in doubt consider him as being in the position to make things most legal or (as a wing official) adjust your position slightly to adjust the line of scrimmage to his benefit.

- (e) Give more leeway to wide receivers and slot backs in determining whether they are on or off the line of scrimmage than you do to interior linemen or tight ends. Be particularly generous on fields that are not well marked out.
- (f) On a trick or unusual play, formations should have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be penalised unless they are completely legal.
2. **Locking legs:** It is always a foul when offensive linemen (other than the centre) lock legs at the snap on a scrimmage-kick play. It advantages the kicking team by closing down the gap to a potential kick blocker, and also leaves the linemen susceptible to leg injuries.
3. **Offensive pass interference:** Blocking downfield by the offense (against a player in pass coverage) on a forward pass play before the ball is thrown is always offensive pass interference. The defense (particularly the safeties) may see a block and read the play as a run, so drawing coverage away from the destination of the subsequent pass. (See paragraph 3.3.9 for how to call offensive pass interference while the ball is in flight.)
4. **Handing the ball forward illegally:** Handing the ball forward (except where allowed by rule) is always a foul. A team can gain significant yardage (as well as the benefits of deception) from this illegal play.
5. **Offside on free kick:**
- Officiate the Team A restraining line as a plane.
 - On an onside or other short kickoff (deliberate or unintentional), any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked is offside.
 - On a deep kickoff, do not be too technical.
6. **Team A player out of bounds:** Whenever any Team A player returns inbounds after voluntarily going out of bounds during a kick play, or an eligible receiver touches the ball illegally after voluntarily going out of bounds during a pass play, it is always a foul. A Team A player leaving the field of play gains an advantage by avoiding being blocked. Remember that a player is out of bounds even if only one foot touches the sideline or end line – this must be called.
7. **Kick catch interference:** It is always a foul when contact, however slight, is made with a player in position (or moving to position) to catch a kick in flight. His balance will have been disturbed, so hindering his ability to catch the ball cleanly. (See also paragraph 3.4.7.)

3.7 – Fouls that are 'obvious'

Although these fouls are not serious and don't create a significant advantage, they are so "obvious" to anyone watching that we would look foolish if we didn't call them:

- illegal substitution** when a player leaves the field other than across his own sideline;
- illegal substitution** when a team has 12 or more men in the huddle for more than 3 seconds (but don't nit pick the 3 second limit);
- intentional illegal touching** of a forward pass;
- false start** by a tight end or wide receiver;
- offside** by Team B at their restraining line on a free kick;
- free kick out of bounds.**

3.8 – Catches and fumbles

- A catch should not be regarded as completed if the player never demonstrates complete and firm control over the ball. When in doubt, he does not have complete and firm control. If there is any doubt over a catch and fumble ruling on a forward pass, rule the pass incomplete. [◇]
- If a forward pass touches the ground in the receiver's hands, any loss of control of the ball makes the pass incomplete. If there is no loss of control after contacting the

- ground, it is a catch. Loss of control includes the receiver's hands moving from one part of the ball to another. [◇] If no official sees the ball has hit the ground, rule the pass complete.
- If a player controls the ball and then goes to the ground or is contacted by another player (whether teammate or opponent) or official, whether possession is gained or not depends on whether he still has control of the ball after all immediate action has ceased. If the ball comes out during the interval between controlling the ball and action ceasing, then he may regain control in order to complete possession. However, a forward pass is incomplete if the ball touches the ground, or any player touching it is out of bounds, during the period while player control is lost. The same principle of control applies to the possession of any other loose ball. Do not be in a hurry to make a call – wait and see what happens and, if the ball becomes loose, then possession will not have been gained. [◇]
 - If the ball moves from the control of one player to another (whether teammate or opponent) during the act of gaining possession, the ball belongs to the player in final control (provided he had control inbounds). This is not a simultaneous possession. If the last player in control did not have control inbounds, the ball is loose out of bounds. If in doubt as to whether a player had control inbounds, he did not. [◇]
 - If the receiver gets his toe inbounds but his heel comes down a fraction later out of bounds (or vice versa) then the pass is incomplete. If the whole foot touches the ground, it all has to be inbounds for the catch to be completed. This principle does not extend to the foot and leg/knee, nor to the hand and arm/elbow – these are regarded as separate parts of the body and only the first contact with the ground is relevant. [§]
 - It is not a fumble if the ball is stripped after the runner has been thrown back. The ball is dead once the runner is so held that his forward progress is stopped.

3.9 – Other rules applications

- Don't be picky about fair catch signals. Any waving signal or raising a single arm above the head is sufficient to indicate that a fair catch has been called for. Players obviously shading their eyes from the sun have *not* signalled for a fair catch. Any "get away" signal before or after the ball touches the ground is an invalid signal. [®]
- If in doubt on a poorly marked field, the chain can be used following a free kick to measure whether a spot of first touching is illegal or not.
- If an interception is made inside the one-yard line, try to make the play a touchback rather than a momentum exception.
- On normal field goals, no more than 5 seconds should be run off the clock.
- It is a touchdown if a non-airborne runner crosses the goal line inside the pylon even if the ball crosses the goal line outside the pylon.
- Officials should not be distracted from their game duties by the possibility that a head coach may request a timeout. When a snap or free kick is imminent (i.e. when Team A is in its formation), wing officials must not turn their eyes away from the field of play. In these circumstances, the Head Coach may need to attract the attention of one of the officials in the middle of the field (Referee, Umpire, Back Judge), or even the wing official on the opposite sideline, who is facing him. A "T" hand signal (like signal S4) *and* verbalising the word "timeout" are both necessary under these circumstances. When the ball is dead and there is no threat of action on the field, a verbal request to the nearest official will be sufficient. Under no circumstances shall an official stop the clock unless he is certain that the request comes from the *Head* Coach. If the official is unsure whose voice requested the timeout, and is unable to turn round to find out, no timeout will be granted.
- During a charged timeout, coaches who come on to the field less than 9 yards from the sideline and do not go beyond the 25-yard lines are not normally to be regarded as a problem unless their behaviour draws attention to themselves.

8. When a foul is committed in the closing stages of a game (or the last minute or so of the first half), normal timing rules shall apply, except:[‡]
- As per Rule 3-4-3, the game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal after Team A throws an illegal forward or backward pass to conserve time. This also applies to any other foul by either team committed intentionally to conserve time, but *not* those committed "accidentally".
 - As per Rule 3-4-3, the game clock will start on the snap if the foul is by the team ahead in the score. However, this applies only to fouls committed with the intent of consuming time, and *not* to fouls committed "accidentally".
 - If in doubt, a foul was committed intentionally rather than accidentally.
 - Where a team intentionally commits fouls or violations or uses unfair tactics with the aim of conserving or consuming time to their advantage, the Referee may order the game clock to be reset to the time it would have shown if the action had not taken place (Rules 3-4-3 and 9-2-3-c).
9. Be very strict in penalising trick plays that constitute unfair tactics. Such plays include (but are not limited to):[‡]
- trick plays depending on the ball being concealed or substituted; (Rule 9-2-2-a)
 - trick plays associated with simulated substitutions; (Rule 9-2-2-b)
 - trick plays involving players' equipment; (Rule 9-2-2-c)
 - trick plays with actions or verbiage designed to confuse the defense into believing the snap is not imminent – this includes pretending to have a problem with the play that has been called, an equipment problem with a shoe, the ball, etc. and feigning an injury; it also includes assuming the role or functions of an official.
- A good rule of thumb to follow is that if an unusual act appears to be unfair, it is probably contrary to the rules.
10. A player who is injured on the last play of a period is allowed to participate in the first play of the next period (including extra periods).[‡]

3.10 – Instant replay

- If there is doubt about a score or change of possession, the Referee should stretch the time before making the ball ready for play to allow an opportunity for the replay official to consider the play. No more than 10 or 15 seconds is appropriate. The 40-second clock is not a factor in these situations. Time should *not* be stretched in situations where a 40-second clock is in use.[‡]

4. PRE-GAME CHECKLISTS

4.1 – Before the day checklist

In the days prior to the game each official should check:

- the location of the venue
- the kickoff time
- the time the crew is going to meet
- the location where the crew is going to meet
- who is going to travel together (particularly to minimise expenses)
- the competition regulations applying to the game, including its duration and whether extra periods are to be played
- the weather forecast for game day
- the type of field surface (grass/turf)
- whether there is history between the two teams[◊]
- the results of each team's recent games[◊]

In addition, for an international game, and/or one where unusually long travel is involved, and/or where an overnight stay is required, each official should check:

- their travel arrangements
- their accommodation arrangements
- any pickup or dropoff arrangements to/from airports, hotels, the stadium
- how their personal nutrition and hydration needs will be met[◊]

4.2 – Game management checklist

At the earliest possible opportunity after arriving at the venue, the officials should check all appropriate items from the following list with the representative(s) of game management:

- adequacy of playing area, field markings, padding of posts, removal of hazards, etc.
- confirm kickoff time
- the time the teams will enter the field
- whether a player identity check is to be performed and, if so, when and by whom[◊]
- stadium clocks and clock operators
- public address announcer
- team announcements and the time they will begin and end
- any VIP's or special arrangements for coin toss ceremony
- National Anthems
- half-time activities, length of interval, etc.
- end of game activities
- radio microphone
- payment of game fees
- chain, chain crew and the time they should be available
- balls, ball persons and the time they should be available
- towels
- medical facilities
- changing room security
- if the officials can have a copy of the game video
- whether drinks will be provided for the officials at half-time and the end of game[◊]

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- towels
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- changing room security
- if the officials can have a copy of the game video
- whether drinks will be provided for the officials at half-time and the end of game[◊]

4.3 – Team checklist

At least 60 minutes before kickoff, the Referee or other officials should check all appropriate items from the following list with the Head Coach and management of each team:

1. player numbering/eligibility[◇]
2. player equipment
3. everyone in the team area has appropriate credentials
4. roster form
5. coach's report card
6. numbers of captains^{*}
7. whether all quarterbacks are right-handed
8. whether all kickers are right-footed
9. unusual plays, formations or situations[◇]
10. who will be his team's first responder(s) to injured players
11. rule queries
12. sideline control, including the name of the 'get-back coach'[§]

4.4 – Medical checklist

Before kickoff, the officials should check all appropriate items from the following list:

1. location of medical personnel during the game
2. signals to be used to summon medical help to the field

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5.1 – Duties and responsibilities

General priorities (highest first):

1. Having a thorough knowledge of the duties of your own position.
2. Being aware of the duties of each of the other officials.
3. Being prepared and able to assume any one of the other positions whenever circumstances, such as injury or delayed arrival, require rearrangement of assignments.
4. Knowing the prescribed signals and when and how they should be used.
5. Being able to handle and pass the ball properly underarm up to 10 yards with a flat trajectory and nose first.

Specific duties during the game (in no particular priority):

6. Knowing the down and yardage prior to each snap.
7. Being ready to assist any official who is out of position.
8. Securing a new ball, if appropriate, after all action has ceased.
9. Being alert to happenings away from the ball when play has left your immediate area.
10. Calling time out for any player who is obviously injured.
11. Being prepared, if necessary, to call any serious foul or rule infraction that you observe, regardless of specific assignment.
12. Observing incorrect procedures or rulings by other officials and attempting to prevent and/or correct them whenever possible.
13. Communicating with colleagues, players, coaches, announcers or spectators as appropriate whenever anything unusual or out of the ordinary happens.

5.2 – Common sense officiating

1. It is important that you call every foul that you see which affects the result of the play, the safety of the players, or the discipline of the game. However, please remember that neither spectators nor players come to see officials marching up and down the field. Use your discretion, and above all your common sense. Delay throwing the flag for a second or two to give yourself time to review the play mentally.
2. Preventive officiating enables a game to flow in a disciplined manner. Whenever necessary, talk to coaches or players with regard to their conduct. Never *ignore* a foul: you must do something about every foul, even if you decide not to throw your flag, talk to the player(s) involved.
3. At appropriate times, such as when the players are lining up for a kickoff or leaving the huddle to go to the line of scrimmage, remind players to check their mouthpieces and chinstraps, and also to use their hands legally. Try not to be obtrusive about doing this.
4. Always acknowledge complaints from players. You cannot see everything on every play. If a player makes a complaint against an opponent, be prepared to observe the next encounter between them more closely. Request the assistance of other officials when necessary, but don't delay the game in making such a request.
5. When speaking to players, coaches or spectators always be polite. Your position as an official does not give you the right to be abusive or derogatory. Use soothing language to defuse hostility.
6. When you have made a decision based on your observation, your experience and your knowledge, do not back down. Pressure from coaches, players, or the spectators should not be allowed to influence your judgment. When you are wrong, admit it, but don't allow it to affect your performance.
7. Praise players for good sportsmanship, but make sure you do it to both teams.

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11. Being prepared, if necessary, to call any serious foul or rule infraction that you observe, regardless of specific assignment.
12. Observing incorrect procedures or rulings by other officials and attempting to prevent and/or correct them whenever possible.
13. Communicating with colleagues, players, coaches, announcers or spectators as appropriate whenever anything unusual or out of the ordinary happens.

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6. When you have made a decision based on your observation, your experience and your knowledge, do not back down. Pressure from coaches, players, or the spectators should not be allowed to influence your judgment. When you are wrong, admit it, but don't allow it to affect your performance.
7. Praise players for good sportsmanship, but make sure you do it to both teams.

5.3 – Tempo and injuries

1. Always try to keep the game flowing smoothly, but do not rush. Move quickly when required, but do not allow your desire for rapid action to interfere with your duties nor with correct determinations.
2. Jogging (slow running) into position almost always looks better than walking.
3. When moving into position for the next down, keep facing the ball. This will enable the Referee to declare the ball ready for play sooner, and thus speed up the game tempo.
4. When players are getting angry or frustrated, you may need to slow down the tempo of the game in order for them to cool off or have an opportunity to speak to you or their teammates (legally). Alternatively, a slight increase in the tempo of the game may be beneficial in forcing them to concentrate more on playing and less on talking. Use your experience to decide which is the appropriate course of action in a given circumstance.
5. Particularly in hot weather, encourage players to drink water during stoppages in play by reminding them of the opportunities. *Never* call a Referee's timeout solely for the purpose of allowing players to take in water. Stopping the game at an arbitrary point will always benefit one team over the other in terms of momentum. Instead, use the opportunity of an injury or penalty enforcement to allow players to go towards the sideline for a quick drink.
6. Never hurry the treatment of an injured player. The recognition of injured players is the concern of all game officials. If in doubt about a player who is on the ground, signal timeout (S3) and call the attention of the medical personnel present. If in doubt about a player who is still on his feet, do not stop the clock unless it is clear that the player is in no fit state to continue.
7. Good practice in dealing with injured players includes:
 - (a) Always act in the best interests of the injured player. This usually involves summoning his team's trainer on to the field to tend to him. If a team doesn't have its own trainer, then the medical personnel provided by game management (e.g. the ambulance crew, paramedic or stadium doctor) should be summoned.
 - (b) Other personnel (e.g. a coach or a fellow player) may want to tend to the player while the medical personnel are being summoned. Take care with this, since unless you know they are trained in first aid, there is a possibility (usually remote) that they might make the situation worse. This might particularly be the case if a broken bone or internal injuries are suspected. Nevertheless, allowing these personnel to reassure the player is normally the most appropriate thing to do.
 - (c) Before the game, ask the Head Coach of each team to identify his team's first responder(s) to players' injuries, and whether they are qualified in first aid (or better, is a paramedic, doctor or nurse). Where personnel in the team area are required to wear identifying credentials, check that the first responder(s) is(are) wearing the correct credential for their role.
 - (d) In cases where the player is legally a child, everyone has a higher duty of care towards him. Allowing a parent (or other family representative) on to the field to talk to or reassure the player while he is being examined may be a good thing to do. The need for this normally increases with the severity of the injury, the length of the stoppage and the youth of the player.
 - (e) The official who recognises an injured player should note his number and ensure that the provisions of Rule 3-3-5 are observed.
 - (f) Always follow the advice or instructions of the medical personnel present regarding the removal of players from the field. Don't rush this.
 - (g) Do not resume play while a player is being treated out of bounds within the limit lines, or deeper if there is a risk to him and the people attending him.
8. Look after your own physical and mental well-being. Drink plenty of water, especially in hot weather.

5.4 – Boxing in

1. When shifting position during the game, always try to surround the play together with the other officials. A position of "outside looking in" is essential for sideline and end line coverage. Keeping the play "boxed in" should ensure that each play is observed from more than one viewpoint.
2. While the ball is live, don't get too close to the play.
3. Keep out of the way of the players.
4. Generally, there is no need for any official to watch:
 - (a) The ball while it is in the air (other than a glance to ascertain its direction if it may be coming towards you).
 - (b) The ball after a pass is incomplete.
 - (c) The dead ball spot once it is marked. (Mechanic 5.7.1)
 - (d) The ball at the succeeding spot until the snapper is about to touch it (Exception: if the wind is strong enough to move the ball).
 - (e) The spot of a foul after a flag has been thrown to it (or level with it).
 - (f) The goal line after a touchdown (or safety) has been scored.
 - (g) The ball after a field goal is scored or missed.
 - (h) The sideline or end line after a player has been ruled out of bounds.
 - (i) A player who is out of the play and has no opponent near him.
 - (j) Substitutes and coaches in the team area.

In each case, there is a need for you to concentrate on something else more important.

5.5 – Co-operation and communication

1. It is essential that the officials work together as a team and that you communicate efficiently with each other for the purposes of effective game administration. Such communication will often be verbal, but where verbal communication is impossible or inappropriate, approved visual signals should be used.
2. You must also communicate where appropriate with players, coaches, spectators and announcers. If a ruling is puzzling or controversial, it is better to take a moment to explain it than for everyone to continue in ignorance. Your aim is to give information before someone needs to ask for it.
3. On the sidelines, appoint someone as the "Get-back coach", responsible for keeping his colleagues and players in the coaching box and team area. He can devote more time than you can to keeping people out of your way.
4. All officials should signal the down number before each down. If there is disagreement, blow your whistle before the snap, signal timeout (S3) and confer with your colleagues to establish the correct number. All officials are responsible for ensuring that the down box shows the correct number.
5. At the end of a down, if you are the Coverer and you are sure the ball is dead, blow your whistle. It should be blown with authority, not just a peep. Other officials should echo the whistle *only* if it is necessary to end continuing action in their area of coverage. Never be the first official to blow a whistle if the ball is not in your zone of responsibility. Don't toot your whistle unless you have thrown a penalty flag or otherwise need to attract the Referee's attention.
6. If you blow an inadvertent whistle, don't think no one will notice. Continue to blow and make sure the play is killed. Admit your mistake and follow the procedure laid down by rule.
7. Your body language says more than you think – be aware of it. If you are moving hesitantly (e.g. towards the spot where a catch was attempted), it is a sign that you are not sure of the call and need help. Be aware of such body language signals by colleagues and be prepared to assist them where you can. Never point at players or coaches in a disapproving or threatening manner.

8. Don't shout at people – it indicates your loss of control. Never swear at a player, coach or colleague.
9. The following points illustrate good and bad practice when two or more officials disagree on a call. If necessary, the Referee must be the final arbiter of the decision.
 - (a) Officials who disagree on a call must be called together to discuss the matter with each other. The best place for this conference is at the dead-ball spot or the spot where the contentious matter took place. The conference should be conducted calmly, without raised voices or overt gestures (including pointing).[♠] Officials not involved in the conference should keep players away, while maintaining coverage of the dead-ball spot and any other relevant spots.
 - (b) Ask the officials to describe what they saw, not just what they are ruling. One official may accept that another had a better view of the play. Make sure that all relevant facts (e.g. whether the ball was live or dead, whether the incident occurred before or after the change of possession) are mentioned.
 - (c) Distinguish between issues of fact (e.g. what happened?), issues of judgement (e.g. did it happen intentionally?) and issues of rule (e.g. what does the rulebook say we do in the given situation?).
 - (d) Cut short the conference once all the officials concerned have given their view and opinion. There is no time for repeated remarks (unless clarification is necessary) and encourage everyone to stick to the point.
 - (e) Ideally, the officials concerned will come to their own resolution and notify the Referee.
 - (f) If the officials cannot agree on the call, it is normally best to go with the call made by the official with primary responsibility for making it. Going with the call made by an "experienced" official over that made by an "inexperienced" official may cause problems in the long-term.
 - (g) Remember the "when in doubt" principles in the Rules and in section 6.1.
 - (h) Once a final decision has been made, the Referee should signal and/or announce the outcome decisively. The need for the decision to be clearly notified to everyone becomes greater the longer the conference takes. It also helps to sell the call if all of the officials nod their heads in agreement during or at the end of a discussion.
 - (i) If an official does not agree with the final decision, he must not make any statement or gesture that would give that impression.
10. All verbal communication between officials and with persons subject to the rules shall, wherever possible, be in English. If a translation into another language is necessary for someone's benefit, this should normally be given after the English statement. If a person addresses an official in a language other than English, it should be translated into English before a response is made.
11. The following are examples of situations where an official is "involved", even if they have not thrown a flag. Communicating their knowledge to the rest of the crew (especially the Referee) may well be crucial to getting the play correct.[Ⓜ]
 - (a) illegal touching of a pass or kick
 - (b) incorrect clock operation
 - (c) change of possession
 - (d) whether or not the pass or kick crossed the neutral zone
 - (e) where there are multiple flags
 - (f) whether a pass was caught or trapped
 - (g) whether a pass was catchable on a pass interference call

5.6 – Signals

1. Your signals should be clear, distinct and deliberate at all times.
2. If you are the Coverer, signal a timeout when the rules provide for stopping the clock or when a timeout is charged to a team or to the Referee.
3. Repeat *all* timeout signals given by *all* other officials.
4. The usual timeout signal is S3. However in the following circumstances, the Coverer should give the specified signal *instead* of the timeout signal:
 - (i) when a touchdown, field goal or try is scored – S5;
 - (b) when a safety is scored – S6;
 - (c) when a touchback is awarded – S7;
 - (d) when a forward pass is incomplete, or a field goal attempt is wide or short of the goal, or when there is no score on a try – S10.

These signals are sufficient to instruct the timekeeper or clock operator to stop the clock, and S3 should *not* be given in addition unless a penalty flag has been thrown, or a charged or injury timeout awarded.
5. The on-field timekeeper should stop the clock before giving or repeating any timeout signal. (Rule 3-3-2)
6. Signals such as timeout or incomplete pass should be repeated two or three times to ensure that everyone sees them. More repetitions are excessive. Do not bend at the waist when giving incomplete pass signals.
7. On scrimmage plays, use the start the clock signal (S2) *only* when the ball becomes dead in bounds within 10 feet of the sideline. As the Coverer, make the starting signal two or three times and no more. If the play ends beyond or close to the line to gain, the clock shall then be stopped. If time is short, don't waste time by giving the start the clock signal followed by the timeout signal – give the timeout signal (S3) immediately.
8. There is no need for the on-field timekeeper to echo the start the clock signal (S2). If visual confirmation is required he may use signal Sup12.
9. When giving signals at the end of a play, continue to face the players in your area of responsibility until all threat of further action has passed. If you signal clearly enough (and continue the signal for long enough) your fellow crew members, the occupants of the press box and the spectators will all see the signal whatever direction it is given in.
10. It is only the Referee's signals on penalties and unusual incidents that need to be given in the direction of the press box. Don't make signals *towards* the Referee while you still have players in your area who you need to watch.
11. Unless you are absolutely certain that the Referee knows that the line to gain has been reached, that the play ended out of bounds, that there was a change of possession, or that there was a score, repeat the signal(s) you have given once you have established eye contact with the Referee, but only when there is no threat of further action in your area.
12. Don't get excited when signalling (especially touchdowns). Be tranquil and poised. Don't become emotional. Maintain your equanimity.
13. Use the dead ball signal (S7) to indicate the end of a play if a 40-second play clock operated by someone off the field should start at the end of the play.

5.7 – Marking spots

1. There are only three ways to mark a dead-ball spot. These are (in descending order of desirability):
 - (a) with a ball (placed so its axis is parallel to the sideline);
 - (b) with your foot;
 - (c) with a bean bag.
2. Place a ball at the spot whenever possible, or mark the front tip of the ball with your downfield foot. **The Coverer must never move away from the spot except in the most exceptional of circumstances.** Then use a bean bag as a last resort.

3. Only use a ball to mark the *actual* dead-ball spot. Never place a ball on the ground at any other spot level with the dead-ball spot (except at the inbounds spot). Don't place a ball at the inbounds spot if the enforcement of a penalty has not been completed.
4. When marking forward progress with your foot do it inconspicuously. The best way is to stand with your feet level, with the instep of your downfield and upfield feet marking the front and back ends of the ball respectively. (In this context downfield means nearest the defensive team and upfield means nearest the offensive team.) If you want to extend your downfield foot slightly this is permissible, but don't draw undue attention to the position: there is nothing worse than two officials obviously indicating *different* spots. Discuss in the pre-game conference how the crew is going to resolve any conflict.
5. In normal play, forward progress usually only needs to be marked to a tolerance of one foot. Since the ball is just less than one foot long, this means there are only three positions that a ball can be in between any pair of yard lines:
 - (a) with the nose of the ball on the forward yard line;
 - (b) with the middle of the ball midway between the two yard lines;
 - (c) with the tail of the ball on the back yard line.
 Note that in this system the ball is never positioned spanning a line.
6. Officials need only mark forward progress to the nearest one of these points, except:
 - (a) where the line to gain or goal line is concerned, in which case more accuracy is necessary;
 - (b) after a change of possession (start of new series), in which case the dead-ball spot should always be marked with the nose of the ball on the nearest yard line.
7. Officials may direct the spotting of the ball at the inbounds lines by giving the spotter appropriate verbal instructions or signals, i.e.: "nose on" (Sup32), "middle" (Sup33) or "tail on" (Sup34).
8. If a series of downs started "middle", then the line to gain will be reached if the ball is at "middle" 10 yards on. Similarly for "nose on" and "tail on".
9. When marking a spot, continue to officiate. Don't stare at the ground – the spot won't move!

5.8 – Ball relays

1. After any play, the following roles need to be performed by the officials. In many cases, on a given play one official will perform more than one role and in most normal situations it is highly unlikely that all members of the crew will be involved.
 - (a) **Coverer:** an official who is covering the dead-ball spot.
 - (b) **Retriever:** an official who procures a ball from a ball person, player or, occasionally, where it is lying on the ground.
 - (c) **Spotter:** an official who places the ball at the inbounds spot.
 - (d) **Relayer:** an official who acts as middle-man in getting the ball from the Coverer or Retriever to the Spotter.
2. If you are the Coverer you should not normally handle a ball unless:
 - (a) **inside the nine-yard marks:** if the ball becomes dead at your feet you also become the Retriever, and the normal Retriever must be ready to act as Relayer;
 - (b) **outside the nine-yard marks:** if you can procure a ball from a ball person without moving your position, put the ball at your feet and leave the Retriever to obtain another ball for relay to the Spotter.
3. The Relayer should also be the Spotter if he can carry the ball to the succeeding spot before anyone else can get there.
4. Never be in a hurry to relay the ball. Accuracy is more important than speed. If you are not so good at throwing the ball accurately, you will need to make up for it by taking a few more steps to get closer to your target.

5. When the play ends between or near the inbounds lines:
 - (a) The Umpire will normally be the Retriever and Spotter.
 - (b) On a long play, the Back Judge may act as the Retriever and Spotter unless he is the Coverer. Similarly, if there is a loss on the play the Referee may act as the Retriever and Spotter unless he is the Coverer.
 - (c) If a pass is incomplete deep down the middle of the field, the deep official or wing official on each sideline should act as Relayer and send his ball person to retrieve the loose ball. The Umpire will take the ball from whichever Relayer he is facing, or faces first.
6. When the play ends well outside the inbounds lines:
 - (a) On a 4-man crew the wing official will almost always be the Coverer. The Referee and Umpire share the roles of Retriever and Spotter with whichever is nearer to the ball being the Retriever, and the other going to the inbounds spot to be the Spotter.
 - (b) A 5-man crew is similar to a 4-man crew except that on long gains the Back Judge may also be the Retriever or Spotter. The Referee, Umpire and Back Judge need to divide up their roles as follows: whoever is nearest the dead-ball spot is the Retriever; the next nearest is the Relayer or Spotter, and the furthest away may be the Spotter if he can get into position.
 - (c) On a 6 or 7-man crew, the Coverer will be either the wing official or the deep official on that side of the field. The Retriever will normally be the other sideline official on the same side. The Back Judge on a 7-man crew, plus either the Umpire or Referee (whichever is nearer) will act as Relayer(s). The Umpire or Referee should go to the inbounds spot to be the Spotter.
7. In hurry-up situations (when the clock is still running), the Umpire *must* go get the ball wherever it is inbounds, and act as both Retriever and Spotter. Other officials should not handle the ball, and must ensure that they are in position for the next down.

5.9 – Out of bounds coverage

1. When handling out-of-bounds plays, it is important that each official assumes a separate responsibility in order that duplication does not result in extra-curricular activity going unobserved. (Mechanic 5.8)
2. If you are the first man (the Coverer)
 - (a) You should first of all signal timeout (S3) and, for your own safety, move to the out-of-bounds spot only once players have run through that area.
 - (b) You should signal timeout as soon as the ball becomes dead – don't wait until you reach the dead-ball spot. You may give the timeout signal while on the move.
 - (c) Remain on (or near) the sideline at the out-of-bounds spot to watch continuing action in or near the team area. It is essential to observe continuing action. If absolutely necessary you can drop a bean bag and go further out to prevent/stop any continuing action.
 - (d) Once there is no further risk of fouls occurring, you should obtain a ball from either the runner or a ball person and use it to mark the spot.
3. If you are the second man (the next official to reach the area: on a 6 or 7-man crew this would be the other official on the same side of the field as the first man; on a 5-man crew this would be the Back Judge or Referee):
 - (a) You should go out of bounds with the runner (going out as far as the runner does) to specifically watch for and prevent fouls on him.
 - (b) If the runner (or another player) goes into the opposition's team area, stay close to him and escort him back on to the field before you even start to think about ball relay.
 - (c) As Retriever, you should normally be the one to retrieve the old ball from the runner or a new ball from the ball person and convey it either to the Coverer (to mark the spot) or else to the Relayer for relay to the inbounds spot.

- (d) If necessary you should loop around the Coverer (going further out of bounds in the process) in order to cover a runner who carries on running beyond the Coverer.
- If you are the third man (Referee on a 6-man crew; Referee or Back Judge on a 5 or 7-man crew) you should cover the action in the field of play behind the first two officials and either get a ball to the Coverer (to mark the spot) or else act as Relayer.
 - If you are the fourth man (Umpire on a 5 or 6-man crew; Umpire, Referee or Back Judge on a 7-man crew) you should observe continuing action between your position and the sideline and also move towards the sideline to assist as a potential Relayer.
 - The Referee and Umpire on a 4-man crew must co-ordinate as necessary to do the jobs of the second and third men (Retriever and Relayer) described above. In particular, the Umpire must be prepared to move towards the sideline (or even out of bounds if necessary) to be in position to deter or observe continuing action. Either the Referee or the Umpire should act as Spotter, as appropriate.

5.10 – Dealing with fights

- If by putting yourself between two players you can prevent a fight, then do so, but never do so at risk to your own safety (your number one concern). Never grasp a player's facemask to prevent or break up a fight.
- If a fight breaks out on the field, if you are the nearest official to a team area, you should regard it as your primary duty to keep substitutes and coaches from entering the fray. This will normally be the case if you are the wing or deep official on that side of the field, but on occasion you may be another official (e.g. the Referee or Back Judge) if, for example, the fight breaks out in an end zone.
- If substitutes, coaches or other personnel come on to the field they should be immediately ordered off it. If they persist and cannot be recalled, make a note of their numbers (or identities if not substitutes) so that they or their coaches may be cautioned once order has been restored. (Mechanic 3.5.6)
- If you are nearest the fight, make a note of the numbers of the players involved, taking care to distinguish participants from those players trying to break up the fight. Those players definitely observed to have participated in the fight must be disqualified once order has been restored.

5.11 – Fumbles

- Unless there has obviously been no change in team possession, if you cover a fumble recovery that is not advanced, signal to show which team has recovered the ball. If Team B has recovered the ball (or Team A has recovered after a double change of possession), signal a first down (S8) in the appropriate direction. If Team A has recovered the ball, signal the number of the next down.
- If no official has seen a player recover a fumble before a "scrum" forms on top of the ball, the ball should be awarded to the player in control of the ball once the scrum is unpiled. If players from both teams have equal control of the ball, the ball should be awarded to the team last in possession (Rule 7-2-2-b). Touching the ball does not necessarily mean that a player is in control of the ball.
- If it is necessary to "dig it out", and you are nearest official, dig for the ball. If you are the next official, signal timeout (S3) to stop the clock, and this should be echoed by the rest of the crew. As the digging official, when you determine possession, verbally relay that information to the nearest standing official, normally the Referee, who will then signal the proper direction. Only the Referee, if he is not the signalling official, may echo the direction signal. (See also section 21 for bean bag mechanics on fumbles.)
- Don't rush any decision. Before signalling a direction, take a moment to check that you have the direction right. That is why calling out a colour is a better practice.

5.12 – Written records

- All officials should record, in writing:
 - result of the toss
 - scores
 - charged team timeouts
 - sideline warnings
 - duration of the game
 - all fouls that you call (whether accepted, declined, cancelled or offset)
 - all disqualified players
 - all players penalised for unsportsmanlike conduct
- Additionally, the Line Judge (on a 4-man crew), Back Judge (on a 5-man crew) or the Field Judge (on a 6 or 7-man crew) shall record all fouls (whether the penalty is accepted, declined or cancelled) called by all members of the crew.
- In addition, at the end of the first and third periods, and before moving to the other end of the field, the Referee and Umpire should record the position of the ball and chain and the Linesman should record the position of the ball and the chain clip.

5.13 – Timing responsibilities

- Depending on the number of officials on the crew, the following officials are responsible for timings:

Responsibility	3-man	4-man	5-man	6-man	7-man
Game clock	LJ	LJ	BJ	FJ	BJ
Play clock	R	R	R	R/SJ†	R/SJ†
Duration of charged timeouts	R	U	U	U	U
Duration of interval between quarters	R	U	U	U	U
Duration of interval after score	R	U	U	U	U
Duration of interval between halves	LJ	LJ	BJ	FJ	BJ
Duration of game	LJ	LJ	BJ	FJ	BJ

- † If there are fully visible stadium play clocks (Mechanic 20.1.2) then SJ is responsible, otherwise R is.
- If there is a visible game clock, it must be regarded as the official game clock. If not, it must be switched off. Don't split hairs about time on the clock. If the stadium clock says that a period has ended, don't overrule it unless you have good and strong grounds. (Mechanic 20.1)
 - The duration of the game is defined to be the time from the opening kickoff to the final whistle, including the half-time interval and time for any stoppages or suspensions.

5.14 – Counting responsibilities

- Depending on the number of officials on the crew, the following officials are jointly responsible for counting players:‡

Responsibility	3-man	4-man	5-man	6-man	7-man
Team A on scrimmage downs	R + LJ	R + U	R + U	R + U	R + U
Team B on scrimmage downs	L + LJ	LJ + L	BJ + LJ + L	SJ + FJ	BJ + FJ + SJ
Team A on free kick downs	LJ + L	U + L	U + LJ + L	U + FJ	U + BJ
Team B on free kick downs	R + L	R + LJ	BJ + R	LJ + R + L	LJ + R + L

- It is especially important to count players on field goals, punts, tries and after every change of possession.
- Having more than 11 men on the field and not noticing it is one of the worst errors a crew can make.
- The officials who have responsibility for counting the players on each team also have the responsibility for enforcing the restriction on the number of players allowed in the huddle.‡

5.15 – Conduct

- Remember that your conduct before, during, and after each game is subject to public scrutiny. Always conduct yourself in a manner befitting an official.
- Officials bear a great responsibility for engendering public and participant confidence. You are judged by everything you do, on the field and off it, before, during and after the game. Greet and treat the personnel from each team equally. Don't banter with spectators. Don't fraternize with anyone.
- Perform warm-up exercises before the game in the privacy of the changing room or well out of sight of players and spectators. Do not test your whistle on or within hearing of the field of play. Do not toss footballs around or indulge in any other recreational activity in sight or sound of spectators, players or other personnel.
- No official is permitted to consume any prohibited drug or alcoholic beverage, or be under the influence of one, either before or during the game.
- Do not provide any team, coach or player with any information pertaining to any other team, coach or player. Do not carry gossip from one team to another, nor make statements about another crew or another official.
- Do not engage in arguments with anyone after the game regarding any decisions made. If they wish to complain, refer them to your supervisor. Questions of judgment on the part of any official are not open to argument either on the field or after the game.
- Be loyal to your fellow officials, to your officiating organization and to football.
- Report immediately to your supervisor any approach by anyone regarding the possibility of an attempted bribe or any other unethical act.

5.16 – Dealing with the media

- Always be courteous when dealing with the news media, but remember that your job is officiating and that you are not a spokesman for any team, league or officiating organization.
- You may at any time, except in the emotion-charged atmosphere of a game or its immediate aftermath, explain and discuss a rule. Do not, however, discuss a particular play, ruling or interpretation except after the game to answer specific questions from reporters attending the game. The best place to do this is in or immediately outside the officials' dressing room. Be sure the crew discusses the play in private, and makes sure all the facts are clear, before the Referee talks to the reporters.

5.17 – Philosophy of 6 and 7-man crews

- The basic principles of 6 and 7-man officiating remain the same as those of 4 or 5-man, however the addition of one or two extra officials can be an advantage or a disadvantage. It is obviously an advantage to have extra pairs of eyes on the field, maintaining order in fringe areas and giving additional perspectives on key plays. The disadvantages occur if the additional officials simply duplicate the responsibilities of the existing officials, leading to two officials ruling on the same play but potentially in contradictory fashion. Alternatively, there may be a situation where two officials each leave a tough call to the other and the indecision causes the right call to go unmade. It is thus even more crucial on a larger crew that communication is effective and that areas of responsibility are well defined.
- Having extra officials makes it easier for a crew to detect rules infringements. This better protects the safety of the players and decreases the chances of a team obtaining an unfair advantage. It should not be the aim of a larger crew to call more fouls, rather the extra officials should provide more opportunities for preventive officiating, as well as having a greater deterrent effect. This should in the long run reduce the number of fouls.

- The more officials there are, the easier it should be to detect illegal action away from the ball. It is much less likely that extra-curricular activity will occur undetected.
- It is likely that there will be a significant number of plays where some officials, particularly the ones deep downfield, are not directly involved. As one of those officials, you must therefore be prepared to concentrate on your cleanup role, and remain alert for the time when the play does come in your direction, because when it does it is likely to be a big play like a long pass or crucial kick. You can also contribute to the better administration of the game by keeping yourself involved in such duties as relaying balls, controlling sidelines, covering flags and checking penalty enforcement.
- With a larger number of officials, as a wing or deep official, it is possible for you to concentrate for longer on the action by and against eligible receivers. On a 7-man crew, you should only have to key on one receiver which should make it impossible for any foul play involving him to go unobserved. Similarly, as the play develops, you will have smaller zones to deal with and should therefore be able to provide better coverage.
- As a deep official (or the Back Judge on a 7-man crew), you must always try to stay deeper than the deepest player in your area (except FJ/SJ when you have goal line responsibility).[‡] By keeping the players boxed in between you and the wing officials, the play can be covered from front and back, providing optimum coverage.
- As the size of the crew increases, there is more chance that your initial position will be nearer the place you need to be to make a call, thereby reducing the need for you to make the call while moving at top speed. A larger crew is not however an excuse for you to remain stationary.
- When you are one of two officials covering the same sideline (or end line), it is crucial that you establish eye contact with your colleague to communicate your ruling to each other before giving any overt signals.
- When you are one of two officials covering the same intersection of two lines (e.g. at a goal line or end line pylon), you should concentrate on the crossfield line (i.e. the end line or goal line) if you are on that line, and leave the primary responsibility for the sideline to your colleague.
- Occasionally, three officials will find themselves covering the same crossfield line. In this case, if you have another official (almost certainly with his back to you) between you and the ball, don't stand behind him and don't repeat his signals (except timeout, S3).
- While only a minority of officials may be working in 6 or 7-man crews regularly, it is the responsibility of every official to be familiar with these mechanics so that they can take an effective place on a playoff or other assignment covered by a larger crew.

5.18 – Alternate officials

- Where alternate officials are assigned to a game, they may be used EITHER to perform specific mechanics OR to simply assist on the sidelines.[†]
- Alternate officials should attend the pre-game conference. Pre-game on the field, the alternate officials may assist with checking the chains, checking the balls, briefing the chain crew, briefing the ball boys, briefing the stadium clock operator(s), checking player equipment and any other task requested by the game crew.
- Where specific mechanics are needed:[‡]
 - Where an eighth official is assigned to a game as an alternate, he should stand level with the line of scrimmage on the press box side of the field and discreetly assist the crew with rulings concerning balls and runners crossing the neutral zone.
 - Where a ninth official is assigned to a game as an alternate, he should stay with the chain crew and make a note of the down number, distance and yard line before each play.

4. Where no specific mechanic coverages are required, or in addition to the above, the alternate officials should stand near the team area (at least one on each side of the field) and:[†]
- assist the game officials in communicating with the head coach (and vice versa)
 - observe any potential transgressions of the restricted area between the sideline and the coaching box, and work with the "Get-back coach" to encourage substitutes, coaches and others to remain in their proper areas
 - observe potential transgressions of the mandatory and illegal equipment rules, and warn coaches where breaches may occur
 - observe the conduct of all persons in the team area and inform the game officials of any abuse or taunting emanating from there
 - observe whether injured players leave the game and remain out of the game for at least one play
 - confirm whether requests for timeouts come from the head coach
 - liaise with television personnel where necessary
 - be aware of the time to kickoff, and the progress of the half time interval
 - observe play and assist the game officials in correcting any egregious errors, in particular:
 - penalty enforcement spots and distances
 - timing errors
 - number of timeouts left for each team
 - carry spare equipment (e.g. whistles, pens/pencils, flags, bean bags) in case a member of the game crew loses his
 - at all times look out for their own safety
5. Alternate officials should wear full uniform, but cover their shirt with a non-stripy jacket or tabard to distinguish themselves from the members of the main crew.
6. The officials should decide in the pre-game conference which positions the alternates will slot into in the event that one, two or more[‡] of the crew is incapacitated.

5.19 – Consistency

Officials are often criticised for lack of "consistency", but often what the critics mean is not what we are actually striving for.

- Aspects of consistency that we do strive for include:
 - decisions made in the 1st quarter should be the same as decisions made in the 4th quarter (with the exception of "blowout" games)
 - decisions made for/against the home team should be the same as decisions made for/against the away team
 - decisions made for/against players of high ability should be the same as decisions made for/against players of lower ability in the same game
 - all officials on the same crew should interpret the rules the same way (but this may vary in practice according to their experience)
 - all officials participating in the same tournament should interpret the rules the same way
 - the application of standard mechanics
- Aspects where we do not require consistency include:
 - calls in high-level (e.g. international or national premier league) games need not be the same as calls in lower-level games
 - similarly, we do not require consistency of interpretation between senior and junior/youth games
 - calls made while the attitude and conduct of players is positive need not be maintained when the same players switch to a less desirable attitude
 - mechanics in unique or unusual situations

- Aspects where we would like to achieve consistency but accept that we cannot reasonably expect it with our current resources include:
 - decision making by officials of differing experience
 - all officials working in different countries or different parts of the same country interpreting the rules exactly the same way

5.20 – Mental preparation

Acknowledgement: This section is based on material produced by The Football Association for its match officials.

- Top officials are those who (among their other skills) can overcome the mental pressures of a tough game. They can ignore the crowd or the importance of the occasion, or even feed off them to improve their performance. For most people, the mental pressure comes from within: it is their own reading of the situation which causes pressure, and because it is from within it can be controlled: the winners are not necessarily born this way but have trained themselves both mentally and physically.
- Consistency comes from the ability to focus on the game and ignore internal and external distractions and apply the rules correctly in each and every situation.
- The ideal official is:
 - calm under pressure
 - in control of their emotions
 - confident
 - mentally alert
 - positive
- The good official does not try to avoid pressure, rather they accept that it is part of the game at all levels. Be confident that you have the skills to deal with the situation. Pressure is not a threat but a challenge to be welcomed.
 - Do not get upset by the challenge of the players to your decisions; they are not directing their anger at you, they don't know you! Their frustration is directed at the uniform – the authoritative role you represent.
 - Show no anger, no fear, no negative emotions. The only emotion allowed to show itself is enjoyment, and remember, that is what we are there for!
 - Be strong in your decision making, take responsibility and manage the consequences whether your decisions are right or wrong.
 - Be confident, assertive but not arrogant, have a determined belief in your own ability that you can perform well. This means you will not be intimidated by the pressures of the occasion or by the antics of the players.
 - Be able to maintain concentration on the things that matter in the game, and have the ability to "switch off" no matter what the pressure.
- How do you learn to officiate under pressure? The answer is: you don't. Nobody performs well "under pressure" – the reason why our top officials at all levels of the game "shine" when the stakes are highest, the competition the fiercest and the game the toughest is not because they can do it under pressure, but because they eliminate the pressure and officiate in an "ideal mental state".
- When you are officiating at the ideal mental state:
 - you feel relaxed although the adrenaline level is high;
 - you feel a little nervousness but with a sense of calmness and confidence;
 - your decisions will be made spontaneously without conscious thought process as you will have a strong belief in your ability;
 - you will always feel as if you are in the right place at the right time;

- (e) you will maintain concentration and have an awareness of what is happening around you;
- (f) you will maintain control over your emotions and not become tense, therefore remain in total control of yourself.

If you manage the above, you will eliminate the excess of "pressure" which would otherwise prevent you from performing at your best.

7. Preparing mentally for a game:
- (a) Don't change your physical preparation, this means that you continue any physical training at your usual level, and do not change your pattern of relaxation as this is equally as important as your physical preparation.
 - (b) Do prepare yourself mentally for anything which might happen.
 - (c) Don't try to make changes to your refereeing technique. What you have done so far has been good enough to give you the opportunities you are receiving. Only make changes to your identified areas of development.
 - (d) Do a little mental rehearsal every day; see yourself refereeing in an ideal mental state.
 - (e) Don't become anxious about your nerves, you will need an adrenaline flow for the game, so look forward to the 'buzz'.
 - (f) Do anticipate that you will enjoy the game. You are going to perform well; you are going to be in control; you are going to handle any situation that arises.

6. AXIOMS OF OFFICIATING

6.1 – When in doubt principles

When in doubt:

1. the forward pass is incomplete rather than a fumble;
2. as to whether the ball touched the ground during a catch, it did not touch the ground;
3. on a simultaneous catch or recovery, whoever comes up with the ball gets it;
4. the forward pass is catchable; (Rule 2-19-4)
5. the passer has thrown the ball rather than fumbled it; (Rule 2-19-2-c)
6. the pass is forward rather than backward behind the neutral zone; (Rule 2-19-2-a)
7. the pass is backward rather than forward beyond the neutral zone or when there is no neutral zone;
8. as to touching the ball, a player has not touched it; (Rule 2-10-4)
9. call timeout for injured players; (Rule 3-3-5-b)
10. a departing player has left the field prior to the snap;
11. the player is in bounds rather than out of bounds;
12. if the runner is being held by only one player, the ball is still alive; if held by two or more, forward progress is stopped;
13. kicking team members have interfered with a receiver in position to catch the kick;
14. the one second pause has been violated;
15. offensive players are legally on the line;
16. offensive players are legally in the backfield;
17. players are legally moving rather than in illegal motion;
18. defensive signals are legal;
19. the passer has not intentionally grounded the ball;
20. the forward pass was thrown from in or behind rather than beyond the neutral zone;
21. the defensive back has legally initiated contact in passing situations;
22. it is a touchback rather than a safety;
23. the ball is dead in the field rather than a touchdown; (Rule 8-5-1-a)
24. it is a touchback rather than a momentum exception;
25. it is a legal block rather than clipping;
26. the block is legal rather than below the waist;
27. as to disintegration of the rectangular area (Rule 9-1-2-d), it is intact;
28. as to a block in the back, the contact is below the waist rather than above; (Rule 2-3-4-a)
29. the back at the snap is not positioned outside the normal tackle;
30. the foul is roughing rather than running into the kicker; (Rule 9-1-4-a-8)
31. it is legal use of hands rather than holding or illegal use of hands;
32. the ball is accidentally batted or kicked rather than intentionally; (Rule 2-15-1-a)
33. as to whether an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play;
34. there is no foul;
35. don't throw the flag;
36. don't blow the whistle.

- (e) you will maintain concentration and have an awareness of what is happening around you;
- (f) you will maintain control over your emotions and not become tense, therefore remain in total control of yourself.

If you manage the above, you will eliminate the excess of "pressure" which would otherwise prevent you from performing at your best.

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34. there is no foul;
35. don't throw the flag;
36. don't blow the whistle.

6.2 – Points to ponder

Always remember:

1. player safety is your number one concern after your own;
2. make the tough call;
3. don't get emotionally involved;
4. a pre-game conference is a must;
5. if you look like an official you'll perform like one;
6. count the players;
7. correct obvious errors;
8. see leather;
9. know the down and distance;
10. sell the call but don't over-officiate;
11. call what you see but see what you call;
12. don't guess – know;
13. if two officials are marking a spot, one could be doing something else;
14. let the mind digest what the eye has seen;
15. what effect does it have on the play?;
16. it's what you learn after you know it all that counts;
17. on the wings, don't get trapped inside;
18. in the defensive backfield, don't get beat deep;
19. after throwing your flag continue to officiate;
20. 4th down, kill the clock;
21. take a second to take a look;
22. the three virtues of a good official are attitude, consistency and competence;
23. the only part of officiating to emphasise is your signalling;
24. be decisive – indecision (or is it indecisiveness?) gives the impression of uncertainty;
25. never stand still during an entire down – people will think you are lazy;
26. if officials are close enough to touch each other there is generally something wrong;
27. don't get mad and don't get even;
28. if the fans and coaches don't know your name or who worked the game, you've had a great game;
29. it is more important to get it right than to look good;
30. don't dillydally – if you are going to get it wrong it is better to get it wrong quickly than it is to get it wrong slowly, but it's still better to get it right;
31. false pride has no place in officiating;
32. there are probably 5 “big” calls per game — make sure you get them right;
33. officials can **influence** people (affect their behaviour) because they have **power** (the ability to influence someone), and **authority** (the right to exercise power), but there can be no authority without respect for that authority and respect has to be earned — it does not come automatically with the stripes;
34. if you THINK it's a foul, it isn't, except against the QB;
35. if they get beat, they cheat!
36. you're only as good as your next call.

6.3 – Principles of effective officiating

All officials must:

1. be helpful (preventive officiating);
2. have a thorough pre-game conference;
3. be prepared to compromise;
4. avail themselves to other officials;
5. help fellow crew members as much as possible;
6. encourage less experienced officials to ask questions;
7. give advice when needed;
8. be on time;
9. know their position;
10. know that uniformity is important;
11. act in a professional manner at all times;
12. be aware of primary and secondary responsibilities;
13. be people watchers not ball watchers;
14. be clock conscious;
15. never miss a down;
16. give good signals;
17. not allow linemen to talk;
18. be in the position to make the call;
19. not turn their back to the ball;
20. blow their whistle like they mean it;
21. keep their mouth closed around the goal line;
22. keep abreast of 3-man mechanics;
23. be able to control their sideline;
24. be able to cover situations far downfield;
25. be aware of tempo;
26. know penalty enforcements;
27. never alienate a member of their crew;
28. “make it be there” – no phantom calls;
29. “get the play right” – if there is doubt, discuss it.

6.4 – Ten tips from Sports Officials UK

1. Know the rules and rules applications and apply them accurately. That way you will achieve the consistency that competitors need.
2. Be decisive and strong in your decision making. Competitors will trust decisions made confidently and assertively but not aggressively.
3. Make sure the players understand your decisions. Then you will reduce their reasons to challenge them.
4. Don't take challenges personally. Questioning your decision is not an attack on your integrity.
5. Watch for flashpoints. If you see what might cause an outburst you can prevent it.
6. If you get a decision wrong, acknowledge it. Players accept you are human – they don't trust perfection.
7. Don't try to redress injustices. Apply the rules, and let justice take care of itself.
8. Be friendly and approachable. Players will relate to a person more than they do to an official.
9. Give every event your best effort. For some competitors this is the highlight of their season.
10. Enjoy your officiating. If you don't enjoy being there, the competitors will know.

7. PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

A pre-game conference is an opportunity for the crew to get into the right frame of mind to officiate a football game: for this reason a pre-game conference should always be held.

Although the Referee normally conducts the pre-game conference, he must ensure that all members of the crew are actively involved in the discussion and that it does not turn into a monologue. When working with the same crew regularly, it is essential that the pre-game conference should be varied so that it does not become a boring ritual which everybody has heard before. Share the responsibility for the pre-game by assigning different members of the crew to talk about different points each game.

All aspects of the game must be covered during the pre-game conference; this includes both rules and mechanics. Discuss rare and unusual game situations and decide how you would cover them. Describe experiences of previous games and how you handled them.

The following checklist is provided as a guide.

7.1 – Pre-game duties

1. Coaches certification
2. Spot check players' equipment
3. Check and mark balls
4. Identify medical facilities
5. Instruction of chain crew and alternates
6. Instruction of ball boys
7. Instruction for commentator/stadium clock operator(s)
8. Inspection of field

7.2 – Coin toss procedure

1. First half procedure
2. Second half options

7.3 – Free kicks

1. Positions
2. Instructions to teams
3. Restraining lines
4. Count players
5. Starting clock
6. Momentum into end zone
7. Touchback
8. Untouched kick out of bounds
9. Blocking below waist
10. Kick catch interference
11. Fair catch
12. Handing ball forward
13. Onside kick – illegal touching
14. Free kick after safety

7.4 – Scrimmage plays – general

1. Positions
2. Count players
3. Legality of offensive formation – wing officials signals
4. Man in motion
5. Legality of snap

7.5 – Scrimmage plays – runs

1. Coverage of runner – in backfield, between tackles, sweeps, pitchout
2. Action in front of runner
3. Clean-up coverage
4. Forward progress – out of bounds
5. Goal line/short yardage situations
6. Coverage of fumbles, and ensuing advances and returns

7.6 – Scrimmage plays – passes

1. Coverage of passer – roughing
2. Passer/pass behind/beyond line of scrimmage: clarify jurisdiction
3. Forward/backward pass/fumble: clarify jurisdiction
4. Intentional grounding: clarify jurisdiction
5. Ineligibles downfield
6. Keys and zones
7. Coverage of receivers
8. Complete/incomplete
9. Pass interference – offensive, defensive
10. First touching
11. Coverage on interception – momentum into end zone, blocking below waist

7.7 – Returns

1. Reverse mechanics
2. Boxing the play in
3. Goal line responsibilities

7.8 – Punts

1. Positions
2. Coverage of kicker – running into/roughing
3. Coverage of snapper
4. Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage – ball beyond/behind neutral zone
5. Kick catch interference
6. Fair catch
7. Untouched in end zone
8. Out of bounds – marking spot
9. Illegal touching
10. Coverage of runback – ball carrier, other action, blocking below waist
11. Fakes

7.9 – Field goals & try attempts

1. Positions
2. Coverage of posts
3. Coverage of kicker/holder – running into/roughing
4. Coverage of snapper
5. Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage – ball beyond/behind neutral zone
6. Fakes
7. Coverage when defense gain possession

7.10 – General duties

1. Fumble pile-ups
2. Ball relay

7.11 – End of quarter duties

1. 1st & 3rd
2. Half
3. End of game
4. End of period ruling (if stadium clock(s))
5. Extra periods

7.12 – Timeouts

1. Records
2. Positions

7.13 – Measurements**7.14 – Fouls & enforcement**

1. Reporting – who, what, where, when
2. Recording fouls
3. Options
4. Signals
5. Enforcement

7.15 – Reserve positions in case of injury

1. If one official is hurt
2. If two officials are hurt

8. BEFORE THE KICKOFF**8.1 – Before the game – off the field**

1. Meet with the other officials at the stadium at the agreed time. This should normally be at least 1½ hours before kickoff time for a regular game, and 2-3 hours for a playoff, international or other important game.
2. As early as possible after arriving at the stadium, inspect the facilities and the playing surface, particularly for hazards and obstructions. Seek the co-operation of game management to rectify any faults.
3. [REFEREE ONLY] Lead a thorough pre-game conference to prepare the crew mentally for the game. Ensure that all members of the crew contribute to it. A pre-game conference guide can be found in section 7. [OTHERWISE] Participate in the pre-game conference. If the Referee is delayed for any reason, the conference should be led by the Linesman or the senior official present.
4. [REFEREE ONLY] [UMPIRE ONLY] Prior to the game visit each team (normally in its changing room at least one hour before kickoff).
 - (a) Identify and introduce yourself to the Head Coach.
 - (b) Verify that each Head Coach provides a roster and signs a Coaches' Certification to confirm that all players have been issued with the mandatory equipment and have been instructed in its use, etc. Confirm the game kickoff time, and any other timing details concerning the teams' arrival on the field of play.
 - (c) Review with the Coach the items listed in section 4.3.
 - (d) Review any unusual game procedures or situations with the Coach. Make a note of any trick plays that may be used.
 - (e) Keep the roster form with you in case of any challenge during the game. (Rule 13-7-1-b - BAFA only)
 - (f) [UMPIRE ONLY] Spot-check players' equipment and taping. Record numbers of players with illegal equipment or without mandatory equipment so that they can be re-checked when they get out onto the field of play.
5. [OTHERWISE] While the Referee and Umpire are visiting the Head Coaches:
 - (a) If one or both teams are running drills on the field, you may choose to take advantage of this to get into position and (without whistles, flags or overt signals, and without making your presence too obvious) practice your keys, movement and reaction to the play.
 - (b) The officials responsible for briefing the chain crew and ball boys may go out onto the field and do this.
 - (c) Return to the changing room once you have completed your tasks or the teams have finished their drills.
6. Synchronise your watch with the official who will keep the game clock.
7. Examine the game balls provided. If they are acceptable, mark each ball and pass them to the officials responsible for ensuring that they arrive at the field of play.
8. Complete any pre-game paperwork that is required by the competition or your officiating organisation.
9. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Before leaving the changing room:
 - (a) Ensure that you have the correct time. Have a countdown stop-watch available and be conversant with its use. Check that another member of the crew is carrying a spare stop-watch in case the primary one becomes defective.
 - (b) Confirm the kickoff time and relay this to the other officials. It is your responsibility to ensure that all officials arrive on the field at the correct time.

7.10 – General duties

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2. Ball relay

7.11 – End of quarter duties

1. 1st & 3rd
2. Half
3. End of game
4. End of period ruling (if stadium clock(s))
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2. Positions

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 - (c) Review with the Coach the items listed in section 4.3.
 - (d) Review any unusual game procedures or situations with the Coach. Make a note of any trick plays that may be used.
 - (e) Keep the roster form with you in case of any challenge during the game. (Rule 13-7-1-b - BAFA only)
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8. Complete any pre-game paperwork that is required by the competition or your officiating organisation.
9. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Before leaving the changing room:
 - (a) Ensure that you have the correct time. Have a countdown stop-watch available and be conversant with its use. Check that another member of the crew is carrying a spare stop-watch in case the primary one becomes defective.
 - (b) Confirm the kickoff time and relay this to the other officials. It is your responsibility to ensure that all officials arrive on the field at the correct time.

10. Check that you and all your colleagues are wearing the correct uniform and are carrying their necessary equipment. The Umpire normally leads on this.
11. Leave the changing room with the other officials in time to arrive at the field[♠] 10-20 minutes before the scheduled start time. (Earlier if the chain crew and ball boys still need to be briefed, or the field is some distance away; later if not.)
12. Assist if required in conveying the game balls to the field. One official is responsible for ensuring that the game balls are conveyed to the field (seeking the assistance of other officials if necessary). [ON A 4-MAN CREW] This is the Line Judge. [ON A 5/7-MAN CREW] This is the Back Judge. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] This is the Field Judge.

8.2 – Before the game – on the field

1. All officials should arrive at the field no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time. Be earlier than this if you anticipate any difficulties with the teams, chains, chain crew, balls, ball boys, field markings or equipment, or are required to do so by the schedule for pre-game activities.
2. Note the location of the press box. If there is not a formal press box, the side deemed to be the press box is determined solely by the position of (in usual order of priority) the primary TV camera, the announcer/commentator or the majority of spectators, *not* by which side of the field the home team chooses to use.
3. Note the location of the medical facilities.
4. Check that game management has made any necessary changes to rectify faults in the facilities or playing area.
5. [REFEREE ONLY]
 - (a) Assist [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] the Line Judge or [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] the Side Judge with re-inspecting the whole of the playing area and its immediate surrounds.
 - (b) Assist the Umpire with spot-checking players' equipment.
 - (c) Check that both teams are at the field and are ready for play.
 - (d) Verify that all the other officials have completed their duties.
6. [UMPIRE ONLY] Spot-check player equipment. Get other officials to assist you once they have completed their own duties.
7. [LINESMAN ONLY]
 - (a) Locate and check the chain for length, kinks, and knots. You should carry tape or string against which to measure the chain (between the inside edges of the stakes).
 - (b) Mark the mid-point of the chain (5 yards from each end) with a piece of tape or supplementary clip to help determine whether or not a defensive penalty will result in the line to gain being reached.
 - (c) Introduce yourself to the chain crew and brief them in the procedures detailed in section 22.1.
8. [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Re-inspect the whole of the playing area and its immediate surrounds. Note any unusual markings and notify other officials. Ensure that game management has rectified any faults.
 - (b) Ensure that the game balls are available.
 - (c) Introduce yourself to the ball persons and brief them in the procedures detailed in section 22.3. Retain possession of the balls until the ball boys are briefed – do not allow players to practice with them.
 - (d) Organise and brief the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker crew (if provided) in the procedures detailed in section 22.2.
9. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY]
 - (a) If a stadium clock is available, brief its operator (in Britain, according to BAFA Rule 13-2-5).

- (b) Instruct the announcer on signals and procedures, and inform him of the names and positions of the officials. Check and confirm with him details of the following:
 - (i) Kickoff time
 - (ii) Pre-game ceremonies (anthems, announcing teams, etc.)
 - (iii) Half-time activities (time to clear field)
- (c) Discuss with the available medical personnel what signals are to be used to summon them on to the field. Inform the other officials of the agreed signals.
10. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) If stadium play clocks are available, brief their operator (in Britain, according to BAFA Rule 13-2-6).
 - (b) Re-inspect the whole of the playing area and its immediate surrounds. Note any unusual markings and notify other officials. Ensure that game management has rectified any faults.
11. [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Assist the Line Judge with identifying and briefing the ball persons in the procedures detailed in section 22.3. Retain possession of the balls until the ball boys are briefed – do not allow players to practice with them.
12. If you have not already done so, identify and introduce yourself to the captains and coaches of the team on your side of the field.
13. [LINESMAN ONLY] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Ask the Head Coach to appoint or identify[♠] a "get-back coach" to assist you in keeping personnel well clear of the sideline during the game.

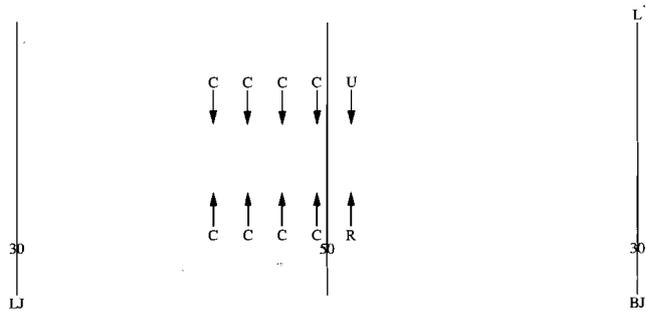
8.3 – Ceremonies

1. There are a number of different formats for ceremonies prior to kickoff. This section attempts to address the officials' roles and responsibilities at these times. Game management may vary the procedure, but equally may seek the officials' advice in how to organise the ceremony.
2. Ceremonies are often used for one or more of the following purposes:
 - (a) to introduce the teams
 - (b) to play the national anthem(s)
 - (c) to observe a minute's silence in respect of someone who has died (this includes Remembrance Sunday in the UK)
 - (d) to involve some important person (e.g. politician or celebrity)
 The coin toss may take place before, after or during these, provided that Rule 3-1-1 is not infringed.
3. Principles to aim to achieve:
 - (a) If national flags are on formal display (i.e. not just being waved by spectators), it is a good idea to face them during the playing of the national anthem(s).
 - (b) You want to avoid the situation where you are facing one team and have your back to the other. If both teams are lined up together, face the same way as them. If both teams are on/near their sideline facing the middle of the field, it is better to be at one end of the field (e.g. 30-yard line, 20-yard line, goal line or end line) facing the opposite end line, then both teams are in your view.
 - (c) The officials should line up in single file abreast. The Referee should be in the centre of the line, or at one end of it.
 - (d) All officials must remove their cap during the playing of any national anthem or holding a minute's silence. It is a matter of personal taste whether an individual official holds it over their chest, lower down, or at their side.
 - (e) If there is no master-of-ceremonies (and/or game management ask the Referee to start the anthem(s) or minute's silence), the Referee will signal the start by taking off his cap. Under these circumstances, the Referee should time the duration of the silence, and signal the end of it by replacing his cap on his head.

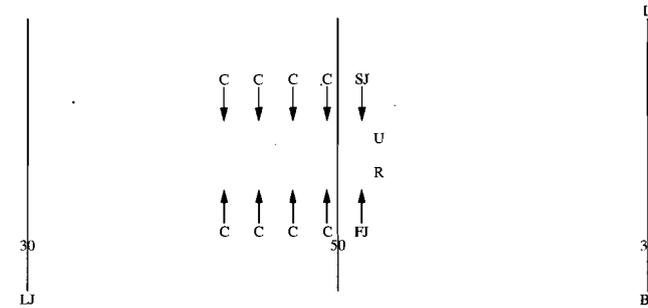
- (f) If the ceremony is entirely under the control of the officials, it is best to do the coin toss first, then play the anthem(s) or have the minute's silence once the captains have returned to their teams on the sideline. In this case the officials should line up as in (b) above.
- (g) If both a minute's silence and national anthem(s) take place, the protocol is for the minute's silence to take place before the playing of any anthem.

8.4 – Coin toss

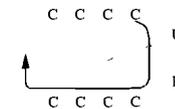
1. After completion of pre-game duties, the Referee, Line Judge, Back Judge and Field Judge go to the press box sideline and the Umpire, Linesman and Side Judge go to the opposite sideline.
2. Get the team captains of the team on your side of the field and have them ready on the sideline 5 minutes before scheduled kickoff time.
 - (a) Ensure that there are no more than four captains (excluding non-playing mascots) and that they are carrying rather than wearing their helmets.
 - (b) The captains should be lined up on the sideline. On the press box sideline, they should be lined up on the left shoulder of the Referee or Field Judge. On the sideline opposite the press box, they should be lined up on the right shoulder of the Umpire or Side Judge. †
3. Positions and duties during coin toss ceremony:
 - (a) [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] On the Referee's signal, the Referee and Umpire shall escort their respective captains to the centre of the field (see diagram below). The Umpire will introduce his captains to the Referee and then step back to a position where he can witness the toss.



- (b) [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] The Referee and Umpire shall take up position in the centre of the field. The Field Judge and Side Judge † shall escort their respective captains on to the field and introduce them to the Referee (see diagram below). Once they have done this they should retreat to join the remaining officials.



- (c) The remaining officials should monitor the players in the team area on their side of the field. †
 - (i) At least one official should be positioned on or near each 30-yard line. (They may need to be on the 25-yard line during the coin toss in order to be able to monitor the entire team.)
 - (ii) If the players enter the field, go with them and ensure that they stop at or before the 9-yard marks.
 - (iii) If one or more of the remaining officials is still carrying out their pre-game duties (such as briefing the chain crew), that takes precedence over this ceremonial duty.
 - (iv) One official will be holding the ball for the kickoff. [ON A 5/7-MAN CREW] This is the Back Judge. [ON A 4/6-MAN CREW] This is the Line Judge. †
 - (d) During the toss ceremony, only those participating in the ceremony should be inside the 9-yard lines. All other players, coaches, etc. should be in the team area or outside the 9-yard lines. (Rule 3-1-1)
4. The Referee shall introduce himself to the captains. It is not necessary for the Referee to introduce the other officials.
 5. The Referee will introduce the captains to each other. Have the home team stay still and have the visiting team come round and shake hands with them (see diagram below).



6. The Referee shall:
 - (a) show the speaking captains both sides of the coin, and clarify any doubt there may be as to which side is heads and which side is tails;
 - (b) ask the visiting captain to call the toss clearly (ask him again if his call is not clear);
 - (c) toss the coin and either catch it or let it drop to the ground in view of the captains;
 - (d) indicate the winning captain by placing a hand on or near his shoulder;
 - (e) explain the winning captain's options.
 7. The winning captain can choose to:
 - (a) defer his options to the second half;
 - (b) kick off;
 - (c) receive the ball;
 - (d) defend either goal.
- If the captain's option is unusual, confirm that you heard his choice correctly.

8. If the winning captain elects to defer his options to the second half, the Referee should, after placing a hand on or near the captain's shoulder, step well clear and give the option deferred signal (S10) towards the press box. The losing captain should then be given the remaining options.
9. The captains shall then be instructed to face each other with their backs to the goal which they will be defending.
10. The Referee will step back to be in front of the captains of the team that had the options for the half, ensuring that his position is not obscured from the press box.
 - (a) The Referee should signal the choice by make a kicking or catching motion while facing the same direction as the captains.
 - (b) There is no need to give the opposite signal for the other team.
 - (c) If the captain elects to defend a goal, point with both arms towards the goal line and then give an appropriate signal for the choice of the other captain.
11. **Summary:**
 - (a) indicate the team that has won the toss, and if they have deferred their options;
 - (b) determine who is going to receive, and at which end;
 - (c) move the captains (this tells everyone which goal each team is defending);
 - (d) indicate *either* who is receiving *or* who is kicking off, but *not* both;
 - (e) it is not necessary for spectators to be told which option each captain has chosen other than in the case of a deferral.
12. Unless there is a National Anthem/minute's silence ceremony, the officials should go directly to their kickoff positions after the coin toss ceremony has been completed. †
13. Before going to his position, [ON A 5/7-MAN CREW] the Back Judge, [ON A 4/6-MAN CREW] the Line Judge will bring the ball for the kickoff on to the field and pass it to the Umpire. §
14. At the request of game management, the toss of the coin may be performed by an individual or attended by a small group of persons. Such persons shall not, however, be permitted to perform the kickoff.

9. REFEREE

9.1 – Free kicks

9.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

Prior to the kick:

1. Determining whether, based on the state of the game, an onside kick is likely. (An onside kick is likely if the team kicking off is behind in the score late in the game.) If it is, discreetly instructing the crew to switch to onside-kick positions by pointing first to the official who needs to shift their position and then to the spot they should move to.
2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
4. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.

During the kick play:

5. Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
6. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
7. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
8. Ruling whether the ball becomes dead in the end zone or not.
9. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field. This responsibility extends up to Team A's 2-yard line.
10. Marking the spot with a bean bag of any backward pass or fumble in your area.
11. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) blocks below the waist
 - (c) illegal wedge formations®
 - (d) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (e) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (f) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick

9.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] Be in position A (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line near the centre of the field, staying clear of any players in the vicinity.
2. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Be in position C (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line outside the sideline opposite the press box side of the field.

8. If the winning captain elects to defer his options to the second half, the Referee should, after placing a hand on or near the captain's shoulder, step well clear and give the option deferred signal (S10) towards the press box. The losing captain should then be given the remaining options.
9. The captains shall then be instructed to face each other with their backs to the goal which they will be defending.
10. The Referee will step back to be in front of the captains of the team that had the options for the half, ensuring that his position is not obscured from the press box.
 - (a) The Referee should signal the choice by make a kicking or catching motion while facing the same direction as the captains.
 - (b) There is no need to give the opposite signal for the other team.
 - (c) If the captain elects to defend a goal, point with both arms towards the goal line and then give an appropriate signal for the choice of the other captain.
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 - (a) indicate the team that has won the toss, and if they have deferred their options;
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 - (e) it is not necessary for spectators to be told which option each captain has chosen other than in the case of a deferral.
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2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
4. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.

During the kick play:

5. Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
6. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
7. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
8. Ruling whether the ball becomes dead in the end zone or not.
9. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field. This responsibility extends up to Team A's 2-yard line.
10. Marking the spot with a bean bag of any backward pass or fumble in your area.
11. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) blocks below the waist
 - (c) illegal wedge formations®
 - (d) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (e) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (f) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick

9.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] Be in position A (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line near the centre of the field, staying clear of any players in the vicinity.
2. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Be in position C (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line outside the sideline opposite the press box side of the field.

Onside-kicks:

1. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] Remain in the normal position.
2. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] Move to position B (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line outside the sideline opposite the press box side of the field.
3. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Move to position A (see 24.1) near the centre of the field on Team B's goal line or deeper than the deepest returner.

Free kicks after a safety:

1. When a free kick is taken following a penalty or a safety, the same relative positions should be taken, moving up or down the field as appropriate.

9.1.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)**Prior to the kick:**

1. When all players are in position and ready for play, check that all officials have signalled their readiness. Give the ready for play signal (S1) and sound your whistle for the start of play.

During any kick play:

2. If you see any player of the kicking team voluntarily go out of bounds during the kick, drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns.
3. If the clock should start when the ball is first legally touched in the field of play, give the start clock signal (S2) if you are the nearest official or the one with the best view.

During a kick play that goes deep:

4. After the ball is kicked, observe the players in your area of responsibility (see diagrams in section 24.1). After checking its initial trajectory, do not watch the flight of the ball.
5. If the kick threatens to go into the end zone, stay on the goal line (out of the way of all players) to rule on a touchback. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] If the ball threatens the pylon, be there to be able to rule on whether the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play or the end zone. If the ball and at least one player go deep into the end zone, move to cover the end line. †
6. If a touchback occurs, move infield ahead of any receiver who has the ball, give the touchback signal (S7) and sound your whistle to prevent further action.
7. On a deep kickoff, follow the runner and keep him bracketed between you and the upfield officials.
8. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] If the ball goes out of bounds in your area go to and hold the spot, dropping your flag if appropriate. Place a ball at the spot and ensure that another official relays a ball to the Spotter.

During a kick play where the kick is short:

9. Stay deep so that you get a long view of the action. You may be the only official who observes:
 - (a) that Team A did not have at least 4 men on each side of the kicker at the kick
 - (b) a fair catch signal
 - (c) kick catch interference
 - (d) unnecessary roughness or a late hit

9.1.d – Advanced techniques

1. If there is a touchback, continue to watch the receiver in case he is fouled.
2. The deep officials may adjust their position according to such factors as the wind and the known strength of the kicker's foot. However, being on the goal line (and particularly, the pylon) before the ball gets there is a crucial requirement.

9.2 – Basic scrimmage plays**9.2.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Knowing the down and distance, and signalling the down to your colleagues. Noting the down signals given by colleagues. Checking that the down box displays the correct number. † Not allowing play to start if there is a dispute about the down number.
2. Counting Team A players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to your colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Observing false starts in general and by backs and the quarterback in particular.
4. Warning Team A verbally ("10 seconds" or "hurry up")[®] when there are 10 seconds left on the 25-second clock, and penalising them if the 25-second clock runs out.
5. Observing illegal shifts (no 1-second pause after simultaneous movement by more than one Team A player).
6. Observing the legality of the snap.
7. If there is a pre-snap foul, stopping all action by tooting on your whistle and giving the timeout signal (S3).
8. Determining whether the play is a run or a pass by reading the initial action of the interior linemen. If they move backwards it is likely that a passing play will develop. If they charge forwards or pull, it is likely that a running play will develop.
9. Being aware of where the line to gain is in relation to the line of scrimmage so that you don't have to look at the chain to know whether the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain or not.
10. Observing substitution infractions by Team A, for example:
 - (a) replaced players not leaving the huddle within 3 seconds of an incoming substitute entering it
 - (b) substitutes coming on to the field, communicating, and then leaving the field
11. Noting the jersey numbers of eligible receivers in the backfield.
12. Observing the legality of the formation, in particular the 5 players numbered 50-79 requirement.

9.2.b – Initial positioning

1. Be where you can see the ball at the snap.
2. Normal scrimmage down position is 5 yards behind the deepest offensive back (or 13-15 yards behind the line of scrimmage), at least as wide as the tight end.
3. Be on the throwing arm side of the quarterback so that you are more likely to be able to see his arm when he starts his passing motion.

9.2.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If Team A players adjust their position, ensure you can still see the ball at the snap.
2. Keep out of the way of players shifting or in motion.

9.2.d – Advanced techniques**Reasons for varying (or not) your initial position:**

1. Generally, the higher the standard of play and the faster the players, the deeper and wider you need to stand. (Compare with the position adopted by NFL Referees.)
2. Be deeper and wider if your mobility is hindered either by your condition or ground conditions (e.g. mud or uneven surface).
3. There is no need to relate your position to the position of the Umpire.

Signalling the player count:

4. The latest time to make-the player count signal is when the offensive team breaks its huddle (but it can and should be done earlier if possible).^{*}

9.3 – Running plays

9.3.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing the runner and action around him until the ball crosses the neutral zone.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.^{*}
3. Ruling (with help from the wing officials on quick passes) whether a pass is backward or forward, and signalling a backward pass (Sup5) immediately if the pass is clearly backward. Noting any backward pass signal from the wing officials.
4. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Marking the dead-ball spot (with the possible assistance of the wing officials) if the quarterback is tackled or goes out of bounds behind the neutral zone.
5. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls around and slightly in front of the point of attack,[◇] especially those made by a back, tight end or pulling lineman
 - (b) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (c) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (d) unnecessary roughness against the quarterback after he has handed off the ball

9.3.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If the action comes towards you, backpedal to keep clear, but keep the players in view at all times.
2. Don't turn your back on the play.
3. If the play goes up the middle, follow safely behind while observing players making lead blocks and those behind the play who may be in danger.
4. If the play goes to one side or the other, move laterally to be able to observe critical blocks for legality.
5. Normally, at the end of the play, close in on the action to deter dead-ball fouls. This is particularly the case on short runs into a side zone or out of bounds where you may be the second nearest official. However, on long runs, hang back so as to observe players who have been left behind by the play for unnecessary roughness.

9.3.c – Advanced techniques

1. Don't blow your whistle when the runner's back is toward you or you are obscured by other players (or officials) – he may have fumbled the ball without you seeing it. Sec leather! Be certain that the ball is dead.
2. If a pile-up of players forms, give the timeout signal (S3), converge on the pile and determine who has possession. (Mechanic 5.11)
3. If you're not the nearest official to the dead-ball spot, observe for late hits and other illegal acts. It is particularly your responsibility to observe action close to the wing officials as they are concentrating on the forward progress spot.

Particular types of running play:

4. Quick handoffs that result in short yardage gains will be the responsibility of the Umpire or wing officials with the Referee concentrating on action behind the ball.
5. On plays into the line, if the runner is driven back after his forward progress is stopped, retrieve the ball from the runner and relay it to the Coverer.
6. On pitchout option plays, when the quarterback turns up field with the ball, observe threats of fouls against the trailing back.[◇]

9.4 – Passing plays

9.4.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Ruling whether the passer has passed or fumbled the ball. If it is a fumble, marking the spot with a bean bag.^{*}
2. Ruling (with help from the wing officials) whether a pass is backward or forward, and signalling a backward pass (Sup5) immediately if the pass is clearly backward. Noting any backward pass signal from the wing official.
3. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) intentional grounding or any other illegal pass by the passer
 - (b) roughing the passer
 - (c) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the quarterback; [ON A 7-MAN CREW] especially the tackle on the Linesman's side
 - (d) safety-related fouls such as face-masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (e) late hits by any player after the ball is dead

9.4.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. When a potential passer drops back, backpedal to remain wider and deeper than him. If he rolls out to either side, go the same way, ensuring that you stay on his throwing arm side.[§] Remain behind the line of scrimmage to observe the legality of the throw, the pass protection blocking and any action against the passer, particularly after he has thrown the ball and until there is no threat of a foul.
2. Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball (e.g. "ball's gone").
3. Maintain a position to observe offensive and defensive action behind the line after the ball has gone downfield.
4. On a sack or tackle behind the line of scrimmage, get to a position level with the runner. Sound your whistle to stop play, and [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] use your bean bag to mark forward progress if you have to go with the runner as he is driven back. Keep watching the runner until any threat of a continuing action foul against him has passed.

9.4.c – Advanced techniques

1. If you believe the passer intentionally grounded the pass, consult with other officials about the position of eligible receivers and/or whether the pass crossed the neutral zone in flight. It is permissible to drop your flag at the spot of the pass while you do this. A wing official or the Umpire may inform you that an eligible receiver was in the area of the pass, or that the pass (from outside the tackle box) crossed the neutral zone. It is appropriate to wave a flag off if this happens, but ensure that players and head coaches (and spectators, if possible) are informed of the reason.[†]
2. If you observe the ball being tipped, give the tipped pass signal (S11). The signal should normally be used on passes tipped in the offensive backfield, but non-obvious (to the spectators) touching downfield could be signified this way too. It is not necessary to give it when the pass is obviously touched (e.g. when a defensive lineman bats it into the ground).[◇]
3. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW OR IN GOAL LINE COVERAGE] If there is a possibility that the pass was thrown from beyond the neutral zone, move to the spot of pass and drop a bean bag there. Keep officiating until the play is over, then come back and check the position of your bean bag in relation to the neutral zone. Consult with colleagues who may also have had a view of the location of the pass. If the pass was illegal, throw a flag at the position of the bean bag. If you are confident the pass was illegal, it is permissible to drop the flag rather than the bean bag.[†] [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] This responsibility is primarily the Line Judge's (except if he has moved to cover the goal line).[◇]
4. Do not watch the ball after the pass is thrown. Concentrate on the passer until there is no threat of further action against him.

9.5 – Goal line plays

9.5.a – Priorities (highest first)

Same priorities as on other scrimmage plays.

9.5.b – Initial positioning

1. [IF THE BALL IS SNAPPED FROM BETWEEN TEAM A'S 5 AND 10-YARD LINES] Take up a position wider than normal and be prepared to move to the goal line to rule on a possible safety. You also have responsibility to cover Team A's end line.
2. [IF THE BALL IS SNAPPED FROM INSIDE TEAM A'S 5-YARD LINE] Take up a position on the end line (the wing officials have responsibility for the goal line.)
3. [OTHERWISE] Adopt the same position and coverage as for any other scrimmage play.

9.5.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. React to the play as you would normally do for a run or pass.
2. When an official gives the touchdown signal (S5), check that no penalties have occurred, step clear of the players, and signal the score to the press box.

9.5.d – Advanced techniques

When there is a score:

1. Should any doubt exist about the score, consult all the officials concerned before signalling your decision.
2. Hold the signal (S5, or S6 for a safety) for approximately 5 seconds.
3. Only be the first official to signal a touchdown if you are the primary Coverer on the goal line (i.e. on interception/fumble/punt returns). Give a preliminary signal while continuing to monitor players in your area of responsibility, then drop the signal while you check for flags. Once you have ascertained that the touchdown is valid, give a second, final signal to the press box and hold it for 5 seconds.

9.6 – Returns

9.6.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing the runner and action around him while you are the nearest official.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
3. Observing any illegal forward pass, especially if you have a view that is level or nearly level with the ball carrier.
4. Observing blocks by players in your area of responsibility ahead of and around the ball carrier, particularly:
 - (a) illegal block in the back and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls anywhere
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) illegal forward handing
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenceless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Observing any hand-off or backward pass where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.

9.6.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Keep out of the players' way.
2. Backpedal towards Team A's goal line ahead of the play. If it is no longer possible to backpedal, turn and watch the play over your shoulder.
3. If the play advances far enough to threaten Team A's goal line, be there before the runner.
4. If the ball becomes dead in your area of responsibility, blow your whistle, give the time-out signal (S3), and then signal first down (S8) to show which team is in possession.[♠]
5. If you are not the nearest official to the dead ball spot, nevertheless move towards it and observe the continuing action after the ball becomes dead. On plays when the runner goes near the sideline or out of bounds, move laterally to cover the area around him for extra-curricular activity. If you are the second official to the area, go out of bounds after the runner and watch for and prevent fouls on him. (Mechanic 5.9)[†]

9.6.c – Advanced techniques

1. Do not get too close to the play – move away from it if necessary to maintain a safe position on the goal line.

9.7 – Punts

9.7.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. If the punter is in his end zone, observing whether he steps out of bounds prior to the snap or between snap and kick.
2. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) any action against the kicker that might be roughing or running into
 - (b) blocking below the waist, especially by backs
 - (c) before the kick,[♠] illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker, especially the end and/or wing back on the side opposite you
 - (d) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (e) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (f) illegal formation, especially linemen illegally locking legs prior to the snap
 - (g) Team A players going out of bounds during the down, especially if the kick is blocked
3. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by first observing the ball or the kicker, whichever is deeper, and action around them, and then adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.
4. Directing a downfield official to the out of bounds spot if the kicked ball goes out of bounds in flight.

During a punt return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

9.7.b – Initial positioning

1. Take a position deeper than the kicker and wider than the tight end position.
2. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Favour the Line Judge's side of the field, and be alert for illegal movement of interior linemen on the Line Judge's side. [OTHERWISE] Favour the side of the field of the kicker's kicking foot.
3. Be in a position to see the ball from snap to kick, and to be able to see the blockers and the kicker at the same time.

9.7.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

- Verbally alert defenders when the kicker has kicked the ball (e.g. "ball's gone").
- If the trajectory of the kick is towards a sideline, move quickly behind the kicker into line with the flight and be prepared to direct the official covering the sideline to the out of bounds spot using signals (Sup17, Sup18 & Sup19).
- After the kick:
 - [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Move out to cover play in the side area vacated by the Line Judge.
 - [OTHERWISE] Move to the middle of the field (between the hashes) so as to best observe a return to either side of the field. Stay back after the players move down-field.
 - In either case, be the deepest official covering the return run.
- During the punt return, react as for any other return play.
- If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.

9.7.d – Advanced techniques

- Particularly check for the correct number of players on Team A. Teams get mixed up more often on punt plays than any other.
- Warn the kicker if he is near, on or outside the endline prior to the snap.
- Ideally, when the ball is kicked, you are at a 45-degree angle to the kicker and able to observe him, the ball and players trying to block the kick.
- Watch the snap into the punter's hands, then look at the onrushing Team B players and focus on the ones who are most threatening to contact the punter.
- If there is a bad snap or the kick is blocked, move away from the ball and players trying to recover it. Move to a position to cover any or all of the Team A goal line and end line, and [ON A 4-MAN CREW] the Line Judge's side line.
- If the ball is blocked and the kicker is roughed/run into, the Umpire may be able to help you determine whether it was the player who blocked the kick who contacted the kicker.
- If the ball is snapped over the punter's head, be particularly observant for players illegally kicking a loose ball, and for holding by players of either team trying to prevent opponents recovering the ball.

9.8 – Field goal & try attempts**9.8.a – Priorities (highest first)**

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

- Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - any action against the kicker or holder that might be roughing or running into
 - illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker and holder, especially the end and/or wing back on the side opposite you
 - safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - illegal formation, especially linemen illegally locking legs prior to the snap
 - [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] false starts by interior linemen, ends and backs^o on the Line Judge's side of the formation
- Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by first observing the ball or the kicker, whichever is deeper, and action around them, and then adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

During a field goal return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

9.8.b – Initial positioning

- Be 5-10 yards wider and 3-7 yards deeper than the kicker and holder.
- [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW IF THE LINE JUDGE IS BEHIND THE POSTS] Be on the Line Judge's side of the field. [OTHERWISE] Normally be on the side of the field opposite the kicker's kicking foot.
- Ensure that you are facing towards the kicker and holder, and that you are able to observe both the snap and the holder.

9.8.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

- Maintain a position where you can see the kicker, holder and players threatening them.
- Wait until the ball is dead and there is no threat to players in your area before looking to the official(s) under the posts to find out the result of the kick.
- Once all the players are completely separated, step away from players and signal the result of the play to the press box.

9.8.d – Advanced techniques

- If the kick is good, hold the signal (S5) for approximately 5 seconds.
- Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage.^o
 - If there is a bad snap or the kick is blocked, move away from the ball and players trying to recover it. Move to a position to cover any or all of the Team A goal line and end line, and [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] the Line Judge's side line.^A
 - While the ball is loose in the backfield, stay with the ball and players trying to recover it – other officials will watch the kicker and holder.
 - [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] On a play that develops into a run to the Line Judge's side of the field, attempt to get to the goal line ahead of the runner if you can.
- If Team A attempts a surprise drop goal (i.e. there is no official behind the goal), your priority is to rule on the success/failure of the kick rather than stay with the kicker (roughing the kicker cannot by rule occur if it is not obvious a kick will be made). Run after the ball towards the goal and get the best view you can of whether the kick is successful or not. Consult with other officials (e.g. the Back Judge) who may have been in position to assist before signalling the outcome.[§]

9.9 – After each down**9.9.a – Priorities (highest first)**

- Observing dead-ball action by players of both teams.
- Encouraging the players to unpile safely, and either return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot, as appropriate.
- Checking whether the line to gain has been reached or is close, and signalling appropriately.^A
- Checking whether any penalty flags have been thrown, and, if so:
 - Giving the timeout signal (S3).
 - Finding out what fouls have been called and administering them according to the procedures in chapter 19.
 - Keeping the Umpire informed.
 - Ensuring that all penalties are enforced correctly.
- Determining whether a new series is to be awarded, based either on a colleague's signal that it definitely has, your own visual inspection of the ball in relation to the line to gain, or after a measurement you have ordered.
- Checking for injured players or other occurrences that may delay play.

7. Recognising requests for timeouts.
8. Echoing all timeout signals (S3) of your colleagues.
9. Assisting in relaying the existing ball or a new ball to the succeeding spot.
10. Spotting the ball at the succeeding spot if you are nearer to it than the Umpire.
11. Ensuring everyone is in position for the next down before declaring the ball ready for play.

9.9.b – Initial positioning

1. Shortly after the end of the previous down, you should be in a position in the vicinity of the succeeding spot. The precise position will depend on what happened on the previous play.

9.9.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If you are the Coverer, signal that the ball is dead. This will be using the dead-ball signal (S7) unless either the timeout signal (S3), touchdown/field-goal signal (S5), safety signal (S6) or incomplete pass/missed field-goal signal (S10) is appropriate instead (give only 1 signal).[®]
2. If a penalty flag has been thrown, follow the procedure in chapter 19. If a team or injury timeout has been called, follow the procedure in chapter 17. If a period has ended, follow the procedure in chapter 20.[‡]

Spotting the ball for the next down:

3. Assist in relaying a ball to the Umpire or spot the ball that he has relayed to you. (Mechanic 5.8)
4. If you are spotting the ball:
 - (a) take the forward progress from a wing official and place the ball at the succeeding spot
 - (b) following an incomplete forward pass, penalty, etc., verify with the Umpire that the lateral placement of the ball is correct.

Getting ready for the next down:

5. If you are certain the line to gain has been reached, give the first down signal (S8) and ensure that the Linesman has seen it and that the chain crew are responding to it.
6. If you are unsure whether the line to gain has been reached, move to the dead ball spot and either make a decision based on your view of the ball in relation to the line to gain, or order a measurement by repeating the timeout signal (S3) and tapping your chest. Ensure that all your colleagues are aware of your decision.
7. Make sure that you are in a position to see the ball, the Umpire and both wing officials.
8. Check with the Linesman the number of the next down. Indicate and announce the new down and (if unusual or unexpected) the approximate distance to the line to gain. It is sufficient to use one of the following terms (in increasing order): "inches", "short", "long", "ten", "two stakes".
9. Check that all other officials (particularly the Umpire) are in or near their position for the next down[◊] and are ready to officiate.
10. Move into position for the next down. Backpedal if necessary to keep your eyes on the ball. Do not take your eyes off it in case the play starts while you are not looking.
11. If necessary,[◊] check with the on-field timekeeper the status of the clock.
12. [WHEN A 25-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] Pause if necessary until approximately 12-15 seconds have elapsed since the ball became dead. This is so that the pace of game provided by a 40-second clock can be simulated where such a play clock is not available.[‡]
13. [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If the ball is not ready for play 20 seconds into the play count: (Rule 3-2-4-b-3)
 - (a) Declare a timeout (S3).

- (b) Signal that the play clock be reset to 25 seconds (Sup29).
- (c) When the ball is ready, continue as below.
14. Declare the ball ready for play by blowing the whistle and by giving the ready for play signal (S1).[◊] If the clock should start on the "Ready", blow the whistle and give the start the clock signal (S2). In unfair clock tactics situations, make sure that the timekeeper (or stadium clock operator)[◊] knows that the clock is not starting normally.
15. If there are stadium game and/or play clocks, check to see that they have started correctly.
16. Unless there is a stadium play clock, start your 25-second clock when you declare the ball ready. If Team A are not in position to snap the ball, warn them with a call of "10 seconds" or "hurry up" when there are approximately 10 seconds left.[@]

9.9.d – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting):
 - (a) Signal (Sup36) to the Umpire to get over the ball and prevent the snap.[‡]
 - (b) Drop the signal (Sup36) once it is clear that Team B has completed its substitutions (or does not make any).[‡]
3. If Team A are attempting to make a quick start to the play, inform both teams that the ball must not be snapped until the whistle is sounded. Move quickly to your position, indicate to the Umpire that he may move to his position, check that all other officials are ready, and then blow your whistle.
4. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Umpire or Back Judge (for a Team B player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.
5. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.

10. UMPIRE

10.1 – Free kicks

10.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

Prior to the kick:

1. Being aware of whether the Referee has instructed the crew to switch to onside-kick positions, and moving position (if appropriate) if he has.
2. If the free kick takes place after a score, timing the one-minute intermission, starting from when the Referee signals the score to the press box. (Rule 3-3-7-h)
3. Counting Team A players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
4. Handing the ball to the kicker (or leaving it in the middle of the field on Team A's restraining line if the kicker delays setting up for the kick).
5. Briefing the kicker, including:
 - (a) * Cautioning the kicker not to kick the ball if it falls off the tee.
 - (b) Being sure that he understands that he must not kick the ball until the Referee sounds his whistle.
 - (c) Reminding him that he is responsible for removing the kicking tee from the field at the end of the play.

(You may skip the briefing if you're sure the kicker remembers it all from previous briefings, or if the kicker is not around to be briefed.)
6. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
7. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.
8. Acknowledging (when satisfied that all is ready) the ready signals of the officials on the restraining lines, then holding your arm aloft until the ready signal is given by the Referee.
9. Being alert always for short kicks.

During the kick play:

10. [ON A 4-MAN CREW][†] Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
11. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
12. If you are on a restraining line and the kick is short:
 - (a) Knowing whether the kicked ball has touched the ground.
 - (b) Knowing where and by whom the ball was first touched.
 - (c) Observing illegal blocks by Team A.
 - (d) Marking any spot of illegal touching with a bean bag.
 - (e) [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Marking the dead-ball spot if you are the nearest official and there is little or no return run.
13. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
14. [ON A 4-MAN CREW IF THE KICK IS RETURNED] Marking the dead-ball spot *only* if the runner is tackled or goes out of bounds within the last 2 yards before Team A's goal line, or if the runner gets ahead of you.

15. Ruling a touchdown at Team A's goal line.
16. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) all actions against the kicker until a roughing the kicker foul is no longer possible by rule
 - (b) illegal touching of a short kick
 - (c) [ON A 4-MAN CREW] infractions of your restraining line
 - (d) [ON A 4-MAN CREW] blocks made by the three players from Team B who were nearest you at the kick
 - (e) [OTHERWISE] blocks made by the middle player on Team B's front line at the kick
 - (f) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (g) blocks below the waist
 - (h) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (i) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (j) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick
17. [ON A 5/6/7-MAN CREW] Directing the nearest official to the out of bounds spot if the kicked ball goes out of bounds in flight. §

10.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] After briefing the kicker and handing him the ball, move to position F (see 24.1) outside the sideline on the press box side on Team A's restraining line.
2. [OTHERWISE] Until the referee declares the ball ready for play, stand between the kicker and the ball to prevent him from kicking it. Once the ball is ready for play, move to position H (see 24.1) slightly to one side of the kicker (to his kicking foot side if possible), making sure that you do not impede his actions.

Onside-kicks:

3. Until the referee declares the ball ready for play, stand between the kicker and the ball to prevent him from kicking it. Once the ball is ready for play, move to position H (see 24.1) slightly to one side of the kicker (to his kicking foot side if possible), making sure that you do not impede his actions.

Free kicks after a safety:

4. When a free kick is taken following a penalty or a safety, the same relative positions should be taken, moving up or down the field as appropriate.

10.1.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

Prior to the kick:

1. Watch the ball prior to the kick and blow your whistle if it falls off the tee. After the ball has been blown or fallen off the tee twice, insist that the kicking team use a holder.

During any kick play:

2. If you see any player of the kicking team voluntarily go out of bounds during the kick, drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns.
3. If the clock should start when the ball is first legally touched in the field of play, give the start clock signal (S2) if you are the nearest official or the one with the best view.

During a kick play that goes deep:

4. [ON A 5/6/7-MAN CREW] If the ball goes out of bounds in flight, after the ball is kicked, go to the spot of the kick and assist other officials to locate the out of bounds spot using signals (Sup17, Sup18 & Sup19).

5. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Move downfield along the sideline while the kick is in the air. During the return, stay ahead of the runner, keeping him bracketed between you and the deep official. On a long run, be at Team A's goal line before the runner. Mark the dead-ball spot if it is between Team A's 2-yard line and the goal line, or if the runner passes you.
 6. [OTHERWISE] Move downfield slowly after the players. Keep all the players in front of you (with the exception of an unthreatened kicker).
 7. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] If the ball goes out of bounds in your area go to and hold the spot, dropping your flag if appropriate. Place a ball at the spot and ensure that another official relays a ball to the Spotter.
- During a kick play where the kick is short:
8. Maintain a position where you can see the ball and the blocks by Team A players.
 9. Particularly watch the blocks made by Team A players before they are eligible to touch the ball. (Rule 6-1-2-g)
 10. Know where and by whom the ball was first touched. Mark any spot of illegal touching with your bean bag. (Rule 6-1-3)
 11. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] If you are the nearest official when the ball becomes dead, signal timeout (S3) and mark the dead ball spot.

10.1.d – Advanced techniques

1. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] If the kick goes deep, angle across to favour the Side Judge/Linesman's side of the field as you move down the field. You and the Back Judge each take responsibility for half of the field. [ON A 5-MAN CREW WHEN USING ONSIDE-KICK POSITIONS] Similarly, if an expected onside kick is kicked deep, angle across to the Linesman's side. You and the Line Judge each take responsibility for half of the field. [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW WHEN USING ONSIDE-KICK POSITIONS] Stay in the centre of the field. You, the Side Judge and [ON A 6-MAN CREW] the Field Judge or [ON A 7-MAN CREW] the Back Judge each take responsibility for one third of the field. In all cases, observe action ahead of the runner in your portion of the field.
2. Leave the kicking tee alone but, after the ball is dead and all action has ceased, make sure that it has been removed from the field.

10.2 – Basic scrimmage plays

10.2.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Knowing the down and distance, and signalling the down to your colleagues. Noting the down signals given by colleagues. Checking that the down box displays the correct number. ^o Not allowing play to start if there is a dispute about the down number.
2. Counting Team A players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to your colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Observing false starts in general and by interior linemen in particular.
4. Observing illegal shifts (no 1-second pause after simultaneous movement by more than one Team A player).
5. Observing the legality of the snap.
6. If there is a pre-snap foul, stopping all action by tooting on your whistle and giving the timeout signal (S3).
7. Determining whether the play is a run or a pass by reading the initial action of the interior linemen. If they move backwards it is likely that a passing play will develop. If they charge forwards or pull, it is likely that a running play will develop.
8. Being aware of where the line to gain is in relation to the line of scrimmage so that you don't have to look at the chain to know whether the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain or not.

9. Observing substitution infractions by Team A, for example:
 - (a) replaced players not leaving the huddle within 3 seconds of an incoming substitute entering it
 - (b) substitutes coming on to the field, communicating, and then leaving the field
10. Observing that defensive players do not use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are trying to put the ball in play.
11. Noting the jersey numbers of eligible receivers in the backfield.
12. Observing the legality of the formation, in particular the 5 players numbered 50-79 requirement.
13. Spot checking players' equipment, and reminding them to check their chinstrap and mouthpiece if necessary.

10.2.b – Initial positioning

1. Be where you can see the ball at the snap and all interior linemen.
2. Normal scrimmage down position is in the defensive backfield approximately 5 to 7 yards deep from the line of scrimmage.
3. The position must be varied to prevent teams being able to take advantage of it.
4. Be in a position from which you can officiate without obstructing players.

10.2.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If defensive players move their position, ensure you can still see the ball and the interior linemen.
2. Keep out of the way of defensive players.
3. If Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation, verbally remind Team B players not to rough the snapper. [§]
4. If there is a foul before the snap, blow your whistle, throw your flag and signal timeout (S3). Confer with the wing officials about the call (unless there is absolutely no doubt what it is) and then inform the Referee.
5. If a lineman moves before the snap, and he may have been threatened by movement of a defensive player, confer with the Linesman and Line Judge near the succeeding spot.

10.2.d – Advanced techniques

Reasons for varying (or not) your initial position:

1. Generally, the higher the standard of play and the faster the players, the deeper and wider you need to stand. [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] You can be 10 yards off the line of scrimmage if you are comfortable there (except in goal line situations, where you must be able to get to the line of scrimmage to rule on the legality of a pass).
 2. Be deeper and wider if your mobility is hindered either by your condition or ground conditions (e.g. mud or uneven surface).
 3. There is no need to relate your position to the position of the Referee.
- Signalling the player count:
4. The latest time to make the player count signal is when the offensive team breaks its huddle (but it can and should be done earlier if possible). ^x

10.3 – Running plays

10.3.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing the action around and ahead of the runner.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
3. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack, especially those made by interior linemen

- (b) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
- (c) late hits by any player after the ball is dead

10.3.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If the action comes towards you, move laterally to get out of the way and allow the players to pass by you.
2. When the play develops between the tackles, your primary responsibility is to cover the action of players at the point of attack, then around the runner and finally between you and the ball on longer runs.
3. When the runner moves into a side zone, turn and move so that you keep the runner and his lead blockers in view. Don't move towards the ball so far that you will get in the way if the runner cuts back infield, but also go far enough that you don't get left behind if the play ultimately reaches the sideline.
4. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] You will likely be the second nearest man to the out-of-bounds spot after a long run. Move laterally far enough that you can get to the sideline quickly if action there demands it or your presence would serve to diffuse a difficult situation. †
5. Only blow your whistle if the runner's forward progress ends directly in front of you and it is likely he is obscured from the side officials. Take the exact forward progress from the side officials.

10.3.c – Advanced techniques

1. Don't blow your whistle when the runner's back is toward you or you are obscured by other players (or officials) – he may have fumbled the ball without you seeing it. See leather! Be certain that the ball is dead.
2. If a pile-up of players forms, give the timeout signal (S3), converge on the pile and determine who has possession. (Mechanic 5.11)
3. If you're not the nearest official to the dead-ball spot, observe for late hits and other illegal acts. It is particularly your responsibility to observe action close to the wing officials as they are concentrating on the forward progress spot.

Particular types of run play:

4. On plays into the line, if the runner is driven back after his forward progress is stopped, discourage players from joining the pile.
5. If the run ends near to the line to gain, assist the wing official by handing † a ball to them so that they can mark the exact dead ball spot.

10.4 – Passing plays

10.4.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Keeping out of the way of the players, particularly eligible receivers crossing the field in your vicinity.
2. Ruling whether passes are caught or incomplete when the receiver is facing you.
3. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) ineligible receivers downfield
 - (b) [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW OR IN A GOAL LINE SITUATION] illegal passes because the runner has crossed the neutral zone
 - (c) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the passer
 - (d) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (e) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (f) clear pass interference fouls, but only if you see all the action

4. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW OR IN A GOAL LINE SITUATION] Knowing whether or not a forward pass first touches anything in or behind the neutral zone, and giving the ball touched signal (S11) if it happens.
5. Advising the Referee if the pass was thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, or the pass clearly did not reach the neutral zone.

Once the pass is complete, apply the same priorities as on a running play (above).

10.4.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Move towards the line of scrimmage.
 - (a) [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW OR IN A GOAL LINE SITUATION] Move quickly all the way up to the line of scrimmage. Except on quick passes or when you are obstructed by players, you should be on the line of scrimmage before the pass is thrown.
 - (b) [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW AND NOT IN A GOAL LINE SITUATION] Move some way towards the line of scrimmage, but it is not essential for you to get all the way there.
 - (c) This movement removes you as a target, opens up your area for shallow passes and allows you to observe linemen illegally downfield.
2. When the ball is thrown, turn and observe the end of the pass. Signal incomplete pass (S10) if you see the ball touch the ground before the receiver has control of it.
3. If there is a run after the catch, react as you would on a running play (above).

10.4.c – Advanced techniques

1. Once the pass is thrown, your number one priority is to see the end of the pass. There is no further need to watch the pass blocking: the Referee will hopefully spot any personal fouls, and holding in the backfield after the pass is thrown does not normally affect the play.
2. If the pass is incomplete having been thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, or the pass clearly does not reach the neutral zone, move quickly towards the Referee to inform him of this. If there *was* a receiver in the area, and you believe the Referee may not be aware of that fact, move towards the Referee while pointing towards the eligible receiver. Calling out "number 34 was in the area of the pass" (for example) is also permissible. †
3. If you observe the ball being tipped, give the tipped pass signal (S11). The signal should normally be used on passes tipped in the offensive backfield, but non-obvious (to the spectators) touching downfield could be signified this way too. It is not necessary to give it when the pass is obviously touched (e.g. when a defensive lineman bats it into the ground). †
4. If you see the pass caught, move towards the receiver, but give no signal. If unsure, move towards the receiver but look to other officials who may have had a view. If they signal incomplete pass (S10), repeat the signal once to confirm you've seen it.
5. If the pass ends near to the line to gain, assist the wing official by handing † a ball to them at the exact dead ball spot, so that they can mark it.

10.5 – Goal line plays

10.5.a – Priorities (highest first)

Same priorities as on other scrimmage plays, plus:

1. Being prepared to assist the wing officials with forward progress, fumbles or goal line penetration if their view is obstructed.

10.5.b – Initial positioning

1. Take a position slightly closer to the neutral zone than normal, providing that you do not get in the way of players.

10.5.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If the wing officials' view is obstructed, and you are absolutely sure, you may give an unobtrusive signal to communicate what you saw. Before giving any signal, establish eye contact with the wing officials to ensure that they are not going to give a signal contradictory to yours. Give signal Sup25 to the appropriate wing official(s) only if you believe all the conditions for a touchdown have been met. Don't try to do the wing officials' job for them.

10.5.d – Advanced techniques

1. It is convention that the Umpire never gives the touchdown signal (S5). Possible exceptions to this might include:
 - (a) if a wing official falls down, or is otherwise well out of position, and not able to make the call
 - (b) on free kick returns
2. Should any doubt exist about a score, be part of the consultation among members of the crew. It is likely that you have some relevant information to offer.
3. In 3rd and 4th down short yardage situations, treat the line to gain as you would the goal line.

10.6 – Returns**10.6.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Observing the runner and action around him while you are the nearest official.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
3. Observing any illegal forward pass, especially if you have a view that is level or nearly level with the ball carrier.
4. Observing blocks by players in your area of responsibility ahead of and around the ball carrier, particularly:
 - (a) illegal block in the back and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls anywhere
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) illegal forward handing
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenceless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Observing any hand-off or backward pass where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.

10.6.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Keep out of the players' way.
2. Move towards Team A's goal line keeping out of the way of the play. Allow the runner to pass you but continue to observe action around him.
3. If the ball becomes dead in your area of responsibility, blow your whistle, give the time-out signal (S3), and then signal first down (S8) to show which team is in possession. Hold the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.

10.6.c – Advanced techniques

1. Do not get too close to the play – move away from it if necessary to maintain a safe position on the field.

10.7 – Punts**10.7.a – Priorities (highest first)**

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Noting players with numbering exceptions and, during the down, checking that they do not go downfield if a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone.
2. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) any action against the snapper that might be roughing
 - (b) before the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker, especially the end and/or wing back on the Referee's side
 - (c) during the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls against Team A players trying to get down the field
 - (d) blocking below the waist
 - (e) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (g) illegal formation, especially linemen illegally locking legs prior to the snap
3. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.
4. Knowing whether a short kick touches the ground, a player or official beyond the neutral zone.

During a punt return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

10.7.b – Initial positioning

1. Take normal scrimmage down position, ensuring that you have a clear view of the snapper.^{*}

10.7.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Maintain a position where you can watch the initial charge, check blocking by the offense and action by defensive players.
2. Pay particular attention to actions by and against the snapper and also holding and tripping by the defense which prevents offensive players getting downfield.
3. [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] On short kicks or kicks that are partially blocked and in front of you, be prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch, and watch for fair catch signals.
4. Do not turn round to watch a long kick. Stay focused on players in your area.
5. As players start to go past your position, turn and move quickly in the same direction.
6. If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.

10.7.d – Advanced techniques

1. Particularly check for the correct number of players on Team A. Teams get mixed up more often on punt plays than any other.
2. If you can, help the Referee determine whether the player who contacted the kicker was also the one who blocked the kick.

10.8 – Field goal & try attempts

10.8.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

- Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - any action against the snapper that might be roughing
 - illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker, especially the end and/or wing back on the Referee's side or [ON A 7-MAN CREW] the press box side of the formation
 - defensive players illegally attempting to block the kick (defensive restrictions)
 - blocking below the waist
 - safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - players meeting opponents with a knee
 - late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - illegal formation, especially linemen illegally locking legs prior to the snap
- After the ball is kicked, continuing to observe players until they are totally separated. Never turning around to see whether the kick is successful or not, never echoing the success/failure signals made by the official(s) ruling on the kick, never writing down the score, never getting a new ball, never doing anything other than observing the players until there is no possible threat of trouble.
- Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

During a field goal return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

10.8.b – Initial positioning

- Take normal scrimmage down position, ensuring you have a clear view of the snapper.

10.8.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

- Maintain a position where you can watch the initial charge, check blocking by the offense and action by defensive players.
- Pay particular attention to actions by and against the snapper.
- Be vocal to avoid cheap shots.
- [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Move to the goal line if a run or pass develops to the Line Judge's side of the field and he is not in position there.
- When the attempt is over, start timing the one-minute intermission to the kickoff. (Rule 3-3-7-h)

10.8.d – Advanced techniques

- Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage.
 - If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Get to the goal line ahead of the runner, especially on a play to the Line Judge's side of the field.
 - Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.



10.9 – After each down

10.9.a – Priorities (highest first)

- Observing dead-ball action by players of both teams.
- Encouraging the players to unpile safely, and either return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot, as appropriate.
- Checking whether the line to gain has been reached or is close, and signalling appropriately. ^Δ
- Checking whether any penalty flags have been thrown, and, if so:
 - Giving the timeout signal (S3).
 - Reporting any fouls you have called to the Referee.
 - Knowing what fouls have been called by any colleagues.
 - Assisting the Referee with penalty enforcement, ensuring that he gives appropriate options (where necessary) or makes an appropriate decision that the option is "obvious". [◇]
 - Ensuring that all penalties are enforced correctly.
- Checking for injured players or other occurrences that may delay play.
- Recognising requests for timeouts.
- Timing the duration of a timeout. [◇]
- Echoing all timeout signals (S3) of your colleagues.
- Assisting in relaying the existing ball or a new ball to the succeeding spot.
- Spotting the ball at the succeeding spot, or relaying it to the Referee to spot it there.
- Noting the lateral placement of the ball using elastic bands or some other device.
- Standing over the ball if everyone is not in position for the next down. [◇]

10.9.b – Initial positioning

- Shortly after the end of the previous down, you should be in a position where you can observe the dead ball spot and the action around it. The precise position will depend on what happened on the previous play.

10.9.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

- [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If you are the Coverer, signal that the ball is dead. This will be using the dead-ball signal (S7) unless either the timeout signal (S3) or incomplete pass/missed field-goal signal (S10) is appropriate instead (give only 1 signal). [®]
- If a penalty flag has been thrown, follow the procedure in chapter 19. If a team or injury timeout has been called, follow the procedure in chapter 17. If a period has ended, follow the procedure in chapter 20. ^Δ
- As a play ends, move into position to assist other officials and to observe players in potentially explosive situations.
- If the play ends in bounds, move rapidly (but with regard to your own safety) towards the dead-ball spot to assist the Coverer.
- If the play ends out of bounds, move quickly towards the sideline to assist other officials either in supervising players or in obtaining a ball.
- On an incomplete pass, ensure that all action around the end of the pass is over (move quickly to cover it if necessary), then quickly move to retrieve, relay or spot the ball as appropriate.

Spotting the ball for the next down:

- Help separate players congregated around the dead-ball spot.
- Co-ordinate with the other officials to get a ball to the succeeding spot. (Mechanic 5.8)

9. In hurry-up situations, when the clock is running, go get the ball wherever it is (unless the Referee is clearly nearer).[§]
10. If there is a penalty that requires options to be given to one or both captains, get the captain and approach the Referee. Listen to the Referee explain the options.
11. While a penalty is being enforced, keep the ball in your hands rather than putting it at the dead-ball spot.[◇]
12. If you are spotting the ball:
 - (a) Take the forward progress from a wing official and place the ball at the succeeding spot. Following an incomplete forward pass, penalty, etc., verify that the lateral placement of the ball is correct.
 - (b) When placing the ball on the ground, place it laces down if there is any risk of it rolling away from its position.
 - (c) Face the Coverer, not the goal line, when spotting the ball.
 - (d) Do not delay placing the ball on the ground unless weather conditions are poor and you need to keep the ball dry.

Getting ready for the next down:

13. After every play where you have spotted the ball,[◇] check that *all* the following conditions are met and only stay over the ball if they are not:
 - (a) The down box is at the succeeding spot (or virtually there).
 - (b) The defense is ready (i.e. on the field and roughly in a formation) — this includes giving the defense the opportunity to make matching substitutions if Team A makes substitutions and rushes quickly to the line of scrimmage. Never give Team A a "free play".
 - (c) All the other officials are in position for the next down and facing or clearly about to face the ball.[◇]
 - (d) The Referee looks prepared to declare the ready for play (convey that by making eye contact with the Referee or by saying "we're ready").
14. If you did not spot the ball and all the conditions above are met, there is no need to go to stand over the ball — go directly to your pre-snap position. However, if any of the conditions are not met, move to stand over the ball until they are.[§]
15. If there is a stoppage in play, stand over the ball until the reason for the stoppage has ended, e.g.:
 - (a) the one minute of the timeout has ended (or both teams are obviously ready);^{*}
 - (b) the Referee has completed his penalty announcements;
 - (c) the injured player is clear of the field;
 - (d) the chains are back at the sideline after a measurement;
 - (e) any other stoppage in play has ended.[§]
16. Move to your pre-snap position.[§] Generally, it is *not* necessary for you to stay over the ball: (a) until the actual ready for play; or (b) until the offense breaks its huddle.[^]
17. When you are standing over the ball, face the offense.[^]
18. If Team A is in or approaching its formation,[◇] do not turn your back to the ball in case the play starts while you are not looking.
19. Make sure you know the status of the game clock and make sure the Referee does too. If the previous play was an incomplete pass, confirm this to the Referee in case he did not see the outcome of the play.
20. Field or weather conditions (e.g. rain, wind or mud) may dictate that you should stand at the succeeding spot holding the ball until the snapper leaves the huddle.[◇]
21. Verify that players' equipment complies with the rules. Visually check players entering the game.

10.9.d – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting):
 - (a) Take a position over the ball to prevent Team A from snapping it. Prevent Team A from snapping the ball until Team B has had an opportunity to react to the late substitution (normally 3 seconds).[‡]
 - (b) When Team B has completed its substitutions (or does not make any), the Referee will drop his signal (Sup36). At this point, inform the snapper not to snap the ball until he receives verbal approval from you. If he snaps the ball before he is given verbal approval, Team A will be assessed a Delay of Game foul.[‡]
3. If Team A attempts a hurry-up play, do not leave the ball until the Referee is in position and indicates that you may move to your position.
4. If the Referee does not signal the ready for play, remind him immediately.
5. If the Referee declares the ball ready for play while Team A is at the line of scrimmage[§] and you are still standing over it, remind him discretely to give you time to get into your proper position before he does so.
6. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] If there are stadium game and/or play clocks, check to see that they have started correctly.
7. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Referee (for a Team A player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.
8. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.

11. LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE (4 AND 5-MAN CREWS)

11.1 – Free kicks

11.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

Prior to the kick:

1. Being aware of whether the Referee has instructed the crew to switch to onside-kick positions, and moving position (if appropriate) if he has.
2. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. [OTHERWISE] Counting Team A players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
4. Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
5. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.
6. If you are positioned on a restraining line, ensuring that all Team A players are within the 9-yard lines prior to the kick. (Rule 6-1-2-e)
7. Only when satisfied that all is ready, and that your colleagues (particularly the Umpire) are in position, holding your arm aloft until your readiness is acknowledged by the Umpire (if you are on a restraining line) or Referee (if you are positioned downfield).
8. Being alert always for short kicks.

During the kick play:

9. Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
10. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
11. If you are on a restraining line and the kick is short:
 - (a) Knowing where and by whom the ball was first touched.
 - (b) If you are positioned on Team B's restraining line, knowing whether the kick breaks the plane of that line.
 - (c) Observing illegal blocks by Team A.
 - (d) Marking any spot of illegal touching with a bean bag.
 - (e) Marking the dead-ball spot if you are the nearest official and there is little or no return run.
12. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
13. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) Ruling whether the ball becomes dead in the end zone or not.
 - (b) Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field. This responsibility extends up to Team A's 2-yard line.
 - (c) Marking the spot with a bean bag of any backward pass or fumble in your area.

14. [OTHERWISE]

- (a) Marking the dead-ball spot *only* if the runner is tackled or goes out of bounds within the last 2 yards before Team A's goal line, or if the runner gets ahead of you.
 - (b) Ruling a touchdown at Team A's goal line.
15. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
- (a) illegal touching of a short kick
 - (b) [ON A 5-MAN CREW OR LINESMAN ON EITHER SIZE CREW] infractions of your restraining line
 - (c) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (d) blocks below the waist
 - (e) illegal wedge formations®
 - (f) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (g) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (h) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick

11.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. If the free kick takes place after a score, proceed along the sideline to your kickoff position, ensuring as you do so that the team on your side of the field is aware of the progress of the one-minute intermission. (Rule 3-3-7-h)
2. [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Be in position B (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line outside the sideline on the press box side of the field.
 - (b) [ON A 5-MAN CREW] Be in position F (see 24.1) outside the press box sideline on Team A's restraining line.
3. [LINESMAN ONLY] Be in position E (see 24.1) outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line.

Onside-kicks:

4. [LINESMAN ONLY] Remain in the normal position.
5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Move to position F (see 24.1) outside the press box sideline on Team A's restraining line.
 - (b) [ON A 5-MAN CREW] Remain in the normal position.

Free kicks after a safety:

6. When a free kick is taken following a penalty or a safety, the same relative positions should be taken, moving up or down the field as appropriate.

11.1.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

Prior to the kick:

1. If anything happens that should prevent the kick taking place (e.g. a non-participant enters or approaches the field of play), toot your whistle, give the timeout signal (S3) and deal with the problem.

During any kick play:

2. If you see any player of the kicking team voluntarily go out of bounds during the kick, drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns.
3. If the clock should start when the ball is first legally touched in the field of play, give the start clock signal (S2) if you are the nearest official or the one with the best view.

During a kick play that goes deep:

4. After the ball is kicked, observe the players in your area of responsibility (see diagrams in section 24.1). After checking its initial trajectory, do not watch the flight of the ball.

5. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) If the kick threatens to go into the end zone, stay on the goal line (out of the way of all players) to rule on a touchback. If the ball threatens the pylon, be there to be able to rule on whether the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play or the end zone. If the ball and at least one player go deep into the end zone, move to cover the end line.[†]
 - (b) If a touchback occurs, move infield ahead of any receiver who has the ball, give the touchback signal (S7) and sound your whistle to prevent further action.
 - (c) On a deep kickoff, follow the runner and keep him bracketed between you and the upfield officials.
 6. [OTHERWISE] Move downfield along the sideline while the kick is in the air. During the return, stay ahead of the runner, keeping him bracketed between you and the deep official. On a long run, be at Team A's goal line before the runner. Mark the dead-ball spot if it is between Team A's 2-yard line and the goal line, or if the runner passes you.
 7. If the ball goes out of bounds in your area go to and hold the spot, dropping your flag if appropriate. Place a ball at the spot and ensure that another official relays a ball to the Spotter.
- During a kick play where the kick is short:
8. Maintain a position where you can see the ball and the blocks by Team A players.
 9. [IF YOU ARE ON TEAM A'S RESTRAINING LINE] Particularly watch the blocks made by Team A players before they are eligible to touch the ball. (Rule 6-1-2-g)
 10. [IF YOU ARE ON TEAM B'S RESTRAINING LINE] Know where and by whom the ball was first touched. Mark any spot of illegal touching with your bean bag. (Rule 6-1-3)
 11. If you are the nearest official when the ball becomes dead, signal timeout (S3) and mark the dead ball spot.

11.1.d – Advanced techniques

1. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] If there is a touchback, continue to watch the receiver in case he is fouled.
2. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] The deep officials may adjust their position according to such factors as the wind and the known strength of the kicker's foot. However, being on the goal line (and particularly, the pylon) before the ball gets there is a crucial requirement.
3. [ON A 5-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] If an expected onside kick is instead kicked deep, move into the field and leave sideline responsibility in your area to the Back Judge.

11.2 – Basic scrimmage plays

11.2.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Knowing the down and distance, and signalling the down to your colleagues. Noting the down signals given by colleagues. Checking that the down box displays the correct number.[‡] Not allowing play to start if there is a dispute about the down number.
2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to your colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Observing false starts in general and by linemen and backs on your side of the formation in particular.
4. Observing offside by Team B players (especially those between you and the ball).
5. Observing illegal motion by Team A players on your side of the formation.

6. Observing illegal shifts (no 1-second pause after simultaneous movement by more than one Team A player).
7. Observing the legality of the snap.
8. If there is a pre-snap foul, stopping all action by tooting on your whistle and giving the timeout signal (S3).
9. Determining whether the play is a run or a pass by reading the initial action of the interior linemen. If they move backwards it is likely that a passing play will develop. If they charge forwards or pull, it is likely that a running play will develop.
10. Identifying your key player(s) (see page 155). If the formation is new or unusual, verbally or visually confirming this with the other officials.
11. Noting eligible receivers and those players who would normally be eligible by position but who are ineligible by number. In addition, noting players (normally tight ends) who would normally be eligible by number but who are not eligible because a player is lined up outside them on the line of scrimmage.
12. Being aware of where the line to gain is in relation to the line of scrimmage so that you don't have to look at the chain to know whether the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain or not.
13. Observing substitution infractions by Team B, for example:
 - (a) replaced players not leaving the huddle within 3 seconds of an incoming substitute entering it
 - (b) substitutes coming on to the field, communicating, and then leaving the field
14. Ensuring that coaches and substitutes are behind the coaching box line and that your sideline is clear of any obstructions. [LINESMAN ONLY] Noting whether the chains and down box are in their proper position, but only interrupting play if there is a serious problem.
15. Observing the legality of the formation, in particular that there are no more than 4 players in the backfield[®]
16. Indicating Team A's scrimmage line using your foot that is nearest their goal line.
17. Indicating, using the off-the-line signal (Sup1), when the Team A player closest to you is off the line of scrimmage.
18. Observing whether all Team A players have met the requirements for being within the nine-yard marks.

11.2.b – Initial positioning

1. Be where you can see the entire neutral zone, and the ball at the snap.
2. Normal scrimmage down position is in the neutral zone, on or outside the sideline.
3. [LINESMAN ONLY] Be on the side of the field opposite the press box.
4. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Be on the press box side of the field.
5. Never adopt a position that restricts the positioning or movement of players.

11.2.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. In the event of sudden movement by Team A players, come in quickly and confer with the Umpire to determine which team was responsible.
2. If one or more Team B players enter the neutral zone, watch the reaction by Team A players who may be threatened. Watch for when the Team B players get back to their own side of the neutral zone.
3. If there is a foul before the snap, blow your whistle, throw your flag and signal timeout (S3). Come in quickly to the succeeding spot to prevent any play and to confer with the Umpire and the other wing official about the call. However, if there is no possibility of doubt about what the foul is, you may give a miniature penalty signal (e.g. S18 or S19) to the Referee without coming in all the way.

11.2.d – Advanced techniques

Reasons for varying (or not) your initial position:

1. You get a much better view of everything from a wide position. It also prevents you being caught inside on a sweep play or out-pattern pass.
2. It is entirely appropriate to be six feet out of bounds, particularly if players are lined up close to the sideline. In goal line situations, you may want to be even wider.
3. If a Team A player asks you whether he is on or off the line of scrimmage, inform him how he can use your signals to tell for himself. Do not say anything to the player that might cause him to move immediately prior to the snap. The fact that you are indicating the line with your foot and not using the off-the-line signal is sufficient to indicate to all concerned that the player nearest you is *on* the line. No separate signal is necessary or desirable.

Signalling the player count:

4. The latest time to make the player count signal is when the offensive team breaks its huddle (but it can and should be done earlier if possible).
5. Normally the player count signal is shared between the Linesman, Line Judge and [ON A 5-MAN CREW] the Back Judge.

11.3 – Running plays**11.3.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Observing the runner and action around him.
2. Blowing your whistle and marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead in the middle or on your side of the field. If the ball goes to the other side of the field, backing up your colleague on the other side of the field by either estimating the dead ball spot or mirroring his spot.
3. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack, especially those made by a wide receiver, tight end, lead back or pulling lineman
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls by players on your side of the formation
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (e) unnecessary roughness against the quarterback after he has handed off or pitched the ball on a play away from you
5. Ruling (with help from the Referee on passes from deep in the backfield) whether a pass is backward or forward, and signalling a backward pass (Sup5) immediately if the pass is clearly backward. Noting any backward pass signal from the Referee.

11.3.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If the run comes to your side of the field:
 - (a) Retreat at an angle out of bounds and towards Team A's end line if necessary.
 - (b) Pick up coverage of the runner as he approaches the neutral zone in your area.
 - (c) Let the runner get ahead of you, then follow him downfield until the ball becomes dead, keeping out of the way of all the other players.
 - (d) Once the ball becomes dead, move to a point level with the forward progress spot.
 - (e) If the ball becomes dead inbounds and near the sideline, be prepared to take forward progress from your colleague using cross-field mechanics if the runner is driven back towards you. ◊

2. If the run goes up the middle:
 - (a) Stay wide but approximately level with the runner's progress.
 - (b) Come in when the play is dead to rule on forward progress. Come in until you meet resistance (do not leap over players). Exception: Don't come in if Team A is in a hurry-up offence (or should be) and the clock is still running. ◊
 - (c) Only blow the whistle if you can clearly see the ball and the player in possession. ◊
 3. If the run goes to the opposite side of the field:
 - (a) Stay wide but approximately level with the runner's progress.
 - (b) Keep your eyes open for cheap shots behind the play.
 - (c) Don't relax – be alert for reverses.
 - (d) When the ball becomes dead, move level with the dead ball spot. If your colleague on the opposite side of the field is unable to get to the out of bounds spot quickly, assist him by staying in position level with your best judgement of the forward progress spot ("cross-field" mechanics). ◊ Do not be obtrusive about this. Hold this position long enough to allow him an opportunity to mirror your spot if he is unable to judge it himself, but give it up when the Coverer obviously indicates a forward progress spot of his own.
 4. On a long run:
 - (a) Follow the play, maintaining as good a view as possible of the runner and the players near him. Be prepared to close when the ball becomes dead and mark the forward progress spot.
 5. If the run ends behind the line of scrimmage:
 - (a) Assist the Referee in determining forward progress.
 6. Remain out of bounds until you are certain the ball is becoming dead. Never turn your back on the ball.
- Covering the dead ball spot:
7. When marking forward progress, converge to the dead-ball spot when play in your area permits. Square off, i.e. move parallel to the sideline then in, rather than diagonally.
 8. Be alert to cover the forward progress spot when the runner has been thrown back, but watch the runner (and action against him), not the spot. Do not leap over players to reach the forward progress spot: keep them in front of you. Drop your bean bag *only* if you are forced to leave your spot.
 9. If the ball goes out of bounds on your side of the field, blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3). Move to the dead-ball spot once players have cleared the immediate area. Stop on the sideline and watch any continuing action in the out-of-bounds area. If absolutely necessary, mark the dead-ball spot with your bean bag and go out-of-bounds to prevent/stop continuing action. Once all action has ceased, obtain a ball and place it at the spot where the live ball crossed the sideline, then help (if needed) to retrieve/relay another ball to the Spotter. (Mechanic 5.8)

11.3.c – Advanced techniques

1. Don't blow your whistle when the runner's back is toward you or you are obscured by other players (or officials) – he may have fumbled the ball without you seeing it. See leather! Be certain that the ball is dead.
2. If a pile-up of players forms, give the timeout signal (S3), converge on the pile and determine who has possession. (Mechanic 5.11)
3. If you're not the nearest official to the dead-ball spot, observe for late hits and other illegal acts.

Particular types of run play:

4. On a pitchout option play:
 - (a) Move into the backfield to observe action against the trailing back (any offensive player in a position to receive a backward pass), until the ball is pitched or the quarterback turns upfield.
 - (b) If the ball is pitched, you are responsible for the loose ball and for action by and against the trailing back.
 - (c) If the ball is not pitched, once the quarterback turns upfield he is your responsibility as on any other running play, and the Referee will take over responsibility for the trailing back.

General tips:

5. It is better to pick up the ball carrier too soon than not soon enough. You may be forgiven for missing a hold, but you will never be forgiven for missing a fumble.
6. Even though the ball may be on the other side of the field, you may have a better view of the end of the run than the nearest official. If the runner is facing you, or has the ball in the hand nearest you, or is spun round towards you in the tackle, you may need to help out your colleague.
7. If you are the Coverer and the run ends near to the line to gain, you must come in all the way and place a ball at the *exact* dead ball spot.

11.4 – Passing plays

11.4.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Ruling whether the pass is complete or incomplete. While primarily this will be for passes to your side of the field, in practice you may need to rule on any pass where the receiver is facing or at right angles to you, regardless of his position. Similarly, if the receiver has his back to you, you may need to defer to another official with a better view than you.
2. Ruling on touchdowns on passes into the end zone.
3. Observing the initial contact by and against your key player(s).
4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) defensive and offensive pass interference
 - (b) defensive holding and illegal use of hands against eligible receivers
 - (c) illegal block below the waist fouls by players on your side of the formation
 - (d) illegal touching of a forward pass by a player who went out of bounds voluntarily
 - (e) ineligible receivers downfield
 - (f) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenseless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (g) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (h) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Ruling whether a quick quarterback pass went forward or backward and whether or not it crossed the neutral zone. Use the backward pass signal (Sup5) immediately if the pass is backward.
6. Advising the Referee if the pass was thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, or the pass clearly did not reach the neutral zone.
7. Watching for players who go out of bounds across the sideline or end line. [◇]
Once the pass is complete, apply the same priorities as on a running play (above).

11.4.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Before the pass is thrown, drift downfield cautiously no more than 5 to 7 yards, maintaining a position about halfway between the line of scrimmage and the deepest receiver in your zone. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] The more receivers there are on your side of the field, the deeper you may have to go, but always be alert to the play developing into a run or a short pass.
2. When moving downfield, sidestep wherever possible so that you remain facing the field at all times. Once the pass is thrown, it is appropriate to turn and move towards the destination of the pass.
3. [ON A 5-MAN CREW] Switch from man-to-man coverage (watching your key player) to zone coverage (watching your area of responsibility) immediately after the initial action. This is usually 2-3 seconds after the snap, once it is clear into which zones the receivers are running. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] You are of necessity adopting zone coverage from the start.
4. If the only eligible receiver in your area (e.g. a tight end) pass-blocks rather than goes downfield, delay your move and observe his blocking. Observe action by and against the next receiver (e.g. a running back) who comes into your area.
5. If a Team A receiver voluntarily goes out of bounds in your area, drop your bean bag or hat to indicate this, and observe him to see whether he is the first to touch a forward pass.
6. Once you are aware that the pass has been thrown, move into position to best be able to rule on whether the pass is complete or incomplete, and whether there is interference. While the ball is in flight, watch opposing players who are contesting for the ball, not the ball itself.
7. If the receiver is driven back, be prepared to give him his forward progress. This is especially the case when the receiver is near a sideline, and you may need to use cross-field mechanics. If the receiver is on your side of the field, the other wing official may have the best forward progress. Take your spot from him. If the receiver is on the other side of the field, you may have the best spot. Offer a spot to your colleague. [◇]
8. If you are not the nearest official, particularly watch for defenders slightly away from the ball who come in and target the receiver with the crown of their helmet or above the shoulders. [®]
9. Blow your whistle if you see the ball become dead in your area.
10. If the pass is thrown to the opposite side of the field from you, look across and be prepared to assist with rulings on complete/incomplete, pass interference, illegal helmet contact and forward progress, though only if you are 100% sure of what you see. Also maintain a view of action on your side of the field that may be unnecessary. [◇]
11. When ruling on pass receptions involving the sideline, give only one signal. Give the incomplete pass signal (S10) if the pass is ruled incomplete. Give the timeout signal (S3) if the pass is ruled complete and the runner goes out of bounds thereafter. (Mechanic 5.9) Give the start the clock signal (S2) if the pass is complete and the runner is declared down inbounds. Whichever signal is given should be repeated two or three times.
12. When contact that would have been pass interference occurs on a pass that is uncatchable, give the uncatchable pass signal (S17).
13. After an incompletion, obtain a ball from the ball person and form a relay to return the ball to the Spotter. (Mechanic 5.8)
14. If there is a run after the catch, react as you would on a running play (above).
15. Maintain a position where you can see player activity in fringe areas, particularly on wide-open plays.

11.4.c – Advanced techniques

- When an airborne player attempts to catch a pass near the sideline or end line, watch his feet first to see whether he comes down in bounds. If he does, then look to his hands to see whether he has control of the ball. If you look at his hands first, you may miss the instant when his foot touches the ground.
- Always be prepared to come back to rule on play near the neutral zone in addition to sideline action. If the potential passer decides to run, you must cover him (from a downfield position if necessary) once he is beyond the neutral zone.
- If the pass is incomplete having been thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, or the pass clearly does not reach the neutral zone, move quickly towards the Referee to inform him of this. If there was a receiver in the area, and you believe the Referee may not be aware of that fact, move towards the Referee while pointing towards the eligible receiver. Calling out "number 34 was in the area of the pass" (for example) is also permissible.[†]
- If you observe the ball being tipped, give the tipped pass signal (S11). The signal should normally be used on passes tipped in the offensive backfield, but non-obvious (to the spectators) touching downfield could be signified this way too. It is not necessary to give it when the pass is obviously touched (e.g. when a defensive lineman bats it into the ground).[‡]
- The following situations are ones where you should tend to stay close to the line of scrimmage prior to a pass being thrown:
 - if Team A is clearly poor at passing
 - if Team A is ahead in the score and likely to run to consume time
 - in short yardage on 3rd and 4th down
- The following situations are ones where you might tend to move further downfield prior to a pass being thrown:
 - if Team A is clearly competent at passing
 - if Team A is behind in the score and needs to score quickly (e.g. late in the game)
 - in long yardage on 3rd and 4th down
- If the play[‡] ends near to the line to gain, you must come in all the way and place a ball at the *exact* dead ball spot.

11.5 – Goal line plays**11.5.a – Priorities (highest first)**

Same priorities as on other scrimmage plays, plus:

- [AT TEAM B'S GOAL LINE] Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not.
- [AT TEAM A'S GOAL LINE] Ruling whether a safety is scored or not.
- Observing players' celebrations after a score.

11.5.b – Initial positioning

- Take normal scrimmage down position, but very wide so that you will not be trapped by a quick wide play. (See also 11.2.d.2.)
- You have primary responsibility for Team B's goal line if the ball is snapped from on or inside Team B's 7-yard line.
- You have primary responsibility for Team A's goal line if the ball is snapped from on or inside Team A's 5-yard line.

11.5.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

- If you have responsibility for either team's goal line, *immediately* after the snap, move directly towards it to rule on the score or an accurate forward progress.

At Team B's goal line:

- On a running play, you must be at the goal line before the runner to rule on whether the ball penetrates the plane. Do *not* move towards Team A's backfield to let players pass you.
- If you see the runner is stopped short of the goal line, blow your whistle, come in and sell the dead-ball spot. If appropriate,[‡] call out "short" to tell your colleagues of that.
- On a passing play, move immediately to the goal line then react to the play. If the pass is thrown short of the goal line, remain on the line to rule on penetration of the plane. If the pass is thrown into the end zone, move to the best position to rule on the end of the pass. If the ball is thrown to the back of the end zone, be prepared also to rule on plays near the end line.[‡]
- Indicate a score by blowing your whistle and giving the touchdown signal (S5) only when you clearly see the ball break the plane of the goal line in player possession or if you see a pass completed in the end zone.

At Team A's goal line:

- Indicate a safety by blowing your whistle and giving the safety signal (S6) only when you clearly see the runner down or out of bounds behind the goal line.

At either goal line:

- If a pile-up forms at the goal line, come into the field of play[‡] until you can see the ball. If you are the nearest official, you may need to dig for it. Check with other officials that they did not see the runner down (or fumble the ball) before he reached the goal line.
- If you have goal line responsibility and it is necessary to move out of the players' way as they come towards you, move wider without leaving the goal line.[‡]
- Do not give a score signal if you have thrown a penalty flag for a foul by the scoring team. Do not blow your whistle or give any signal if you are not sure about the outcome of the play.
- If you have goal line responsibility, straddle the goal line – don't run after the player into the end zone unless there is a threat of trouble by or against him.
- Maintain the touchdown or safety signal until you know the Referee has seen it, but keep your eyes on the players (turn as necessary) – don't look to the Referee until all action has ceased. Don't run and signal at the same time. You should not echo the signals of other officials unless the Referee cannot see their signal.
- It is especially important on goal line plays that all covering officials indicate the same point of forward progress. Communicate if in doubt. Signal only if sure.

11.5.d – Advanced techniques

- [ON A 5-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Inform the Back Judge of the number of the yard line that is the line of scrimmage. Communicate (preferably verbally) as to who has the responsibility for the goal line.
- In 3rd and 4th down short yardage situations, treat the line to gain as you would the goal line.
- If the line to gain is near the goal line, your first priority is the goal line. If necessary come back from the goal line to the line to gain once it is clear that the runner is unlikely to score.

11.6 – Returns

11.6.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing the runner and action around him while you are the nearest official.
2. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field. If the ball goes to the other side of the field, backing up your colleague on the other side of the field by either estimating the dead ball spot or mirroring his spot.
3. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
4. Observing any illegal forward pass, especially if you have a view that is level or nearly level with the ball carrier.
5. Observing blocks by players in your area of responsibility ahead of and around the ball carrier, particularly:
 - (a) illegal block in the back and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls anywhere
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) illegal forward handing
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenceless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
6. Observing any hand-off or backward pass where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.

11.6.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Keep out of the players' way.
2. Move towards Team A's goal line following the play.
3. Observe the runner while he remains in your area of responsibility. Stay wide enough to be able to retreat outside the sideline ahead of the players. Never turn your back on the ball.
4. Assist the Referee on Team A's goal line. You have sideline responsibility to the goal line.
5. If the ball becomes dead in your area of responsibility, blow your whistle, give the time-out signal (S3), and then signal first down (S8) to show which team is in possession. Hold the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.

11.7 – Punts

11.7.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. [LINESMAN ONLY] Ruling whether the kick crossed the neutral zone by knowing if it touches the ground, a player or official beyond the neutral zone.
2. Marking the end of the kick with a bean bag if you are the nearest official.
3. Ruling whether players touched the ball or not.
4. Observing any fair catch signals by players in your area.
5. Observing kick catch interference against a player in position to catch the kick, if the kick comes down in your area.
6. If the kick does not come down in your area, observing players who have *not* committed kick catch interference because they were blocked by an opponent into the receiver.
7. Marking all spots of illegal touching with a bean bag.
8. Ruling whether a momentum exception applies or not near the goal line.

9. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) blocking below the waist, especially by players on your side of the field and [LINESMAN ONLY] the up back
 - (b) during the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls against Team A players trying to get down the field
 - (c) a Team A player returning inbounds after voluntarily going out of bounds during the down (drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns)
 - (d) illegal blocks made by players who have signalled for a fair catch
 - (e) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
10. Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions on your side of the formation, and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligibly downfield if the play develops into a passing play.
11. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.
12. Being directed by the Referee to the crossing point on your sideline if the ball is kicked directly out of bounds.

During a punt return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

11.7.b – Initial positioning

1. [ON A 5-MAN CREW] Take normal scrimmage down position.
2. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINESMAN ONLY] Take normal scrimmage down position.
3. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) Be behind and to the side of the deepest receiver. Behind so that you can look through him and see the ball kicked. To the side so that you are out of his way, but still close enough to observe whether he touches the ball or not, or whether any opponent interferes with his opportunity to catch the kick. About five yards behind and five yards to the side is an appropriate distance. Remain between the receiver and your side line.
 - (b) Be prepared to adjust your position according to the strength and direction of the wind, and the ability of the kicker. Move closer to the sideline where the wind is likely to carry the kicked ball.[◊]
 - (c) Have a bean bag readily available and a second one to hand.

11.7.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. When the ball is kicked, observe its initial trajectory, but do not watch the flight of the ball. Observe players in your area of responsibility (defined by the diagrams in section 24.4) – their eyes will tell you where the ball is going.
2. [LINESMAN ONLY] Stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the line, then move downfield a maximum of 10-15 yards.
3. [ON A 5-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] After the ball is kicked move downfield a maximum of 10-15 yards.
4. If the kick goes to the opposite side of the field, drift downfield observing all action, especially away from the ball. Be alert for the runner returning to your side of the field and take responsibility for him if he enters your area.
5. If the kick is short and to your sideline, assume responsibility for the ball.
6. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] The Line Judge is responsible for all deep receivers. If there is more than one man deep, he should take position between his sideline and the nearer of them, keeping outside the nearest receiver until it is clear that receiver will not handle the ball. The Linesman must be prepared to assist with coverage of any kick that is short, particularly to his side of the field, and of any kick that goes out of bounds on his side, however deep.

7. [ON A 5-MAN CREW] The Back Judge is responsible for all deep receivers. If there is more than one man deep, he should take position between the receivers, maintaining coverage of them from the inside out. If there is one receiver deep and one (or more) shallow, the Line Judge is responsible for the shallow receivers unless one is wide to the Linesman's side of the field in which case he becomes the Linesman's responsibility. The wing officials are responsible for any kick that goes out of bounds on their side of the field, however deep.
8. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball will *not* land in your area:
- Maintain a position where you can cover play in front of and around the returner. If you are the nearest official *other than* the official covering the punt returner, move to where you can observe whether players are blocked by an opponent into interfering with a receiver in a position to catch the kick.
 - If a player in your area signals for a fair catch, watch that he does not block before he touches the ball.
 - Do not hesitate to call a foul if you clearly see one occur in the area where you are the cleanup man even though you may be a considerable distance away from the action. Communicate with your colleagues to find out their view of the action.
9. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball *will* land in your area:
- Unless you are responsible for the deepest receiver, give a punch signal (Sup28) to your colleagues to indicate that you are assuming responsibility for the kick and the nearest returner.
 - Move into position wide of (at least 10 yards unless he is near the sideline)[◇] and slightly behind the receiver to rule on the validity of the catch.
 - If the kick is first touched by a member of the kicking team, give the illegal touching signal (S16) to signify that fact. If the kick is first muffed (but not possessed) by a member of the receiving team beyond the neutral zone, you may give the legal touching signal (S11) to signify a free ball.
 - Use bean bags to mark any spots of illegal touching and/or the spot where the kick ends. Only one official, the Coverer in each case, should mark each spot and give each signal. If you have more than one spot and only one bean bag, prioritise the spot most advantageous to Team B.[◇]
 - If the ball becomes dead because it is caught or recovered by Team B after a fair catch signal, or caught or recovered by Team A, blow your whistle and give the timeout signal (S3).
 - If the ball is not caught and goes deeper than the receiver, follow the ball and be prepared to rule on its status. Stay far enough away from it that there is no danger of it touching you.
 - If the ball approaches the goal line, be on the goal line to rule on whether it enters the end zone. Other officials will cover the players.
 - If the ball does enter the end zone (untouched by Team B in the field of play) or is downed by Team B in the end zone, blow your whistle and signal touchback (S7), repeating the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.
 - If the kick is recovered by Team A, blow your whistle, signal timeout (S3) and give the illegal touching signal (S16) and the first down signal (S8). Momentary touching of the ball by a player of the kicking team should not be interpreted as control of the ball.
 - If the kick goes out of bounds in your area, blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3) immediately. If the ball goes out of bounds in flight, signal (Sup16) to the Referee to direct you to the crossing point using signals (Sup17, Sup18 & Sup19). Hold the spot and place a ball at it.
 - If the ball rolls to a stop in your area, ensure no player is attempting to recover it before blowing your whistle and signalling timeout (S3).
10. During the return, react as in the section "Returns" (above).

11.7.d – Advanced techniques

- Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage.[◇]
 - If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - Cover the goal line and end line as appropriate.
 - Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.
 - When the ball is loose in the backfield, assist the Referee by observing actions against the kicker, especially when the ball is on the opposite side of the field.
 - [ON A 5-MAN CREW] If the kick is blocked, the wing official on the same side of the field as the Referee should hold his position on the line of scrimmage and remain responsible for ruling whether the kick crosses the line. The other wing official should move into Team A's backfield to assist the Referee.

11.8 – Field goal & try attempts

11.8.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

- [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Ruling the success or failure of the field goal attempt. [ON A 5-MAN CREW] You share this responsibility with the Back Judge.
- [LINESMAN ONLY] Ruling whether the kick crossed the neutral zone, by knowing if it touches the ground, a player or official beyond the neutral zone.
- Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker and holder, especially the end and/or wing back on your side
 - blocking below the waist
 - safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - illegal formation, especially linemen illegally locking legs prior to the snap
 - [LINESMAN ONLY] false start or offside by players on the Line Judge's side of the formation in addition to your own
- Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions on your side of the formation, and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligibly downfield if the play develops into a passing play.
- Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

If the kick is returned, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

11.8.b – Initial positioning

[LINESMAN ONLY]

- Be in normal scrimmage down position.
- On a try down, set the down box on the three-yard line showing down 1, and instruct the chain crew to lay the chain on the ground outside the limit lines at around the 20-yard line, and to stand well back.

[LINE JUDGE ONLY]

- [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Be in position 5 yards behind the goal posts. You have responsibility for ruling whether or not the ball passes above the crossbar and between both uprights.
- [ON A 5-MAN CREW] Be in position one yard behind your goal post (the one nearest the press-box side of the field). You are responsible for ruling whether the ball passes

inside your upright. The Back Judge has responsibility for the other upright and whether or not the ball passes above the crossbar.

11.8.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. [LINE JUDGE ONLY WHEN BEHIND POSTS]
 - (a) Observe the ball from kick to when it becomes obvious whether the attempt will be successful or not.
 - (b) If you consider the kick to be successful, communicate ("good", nod) with your colleague behind the posts (if there is one) and together come out between the uprights (approximately one yard into the end zone) giving the score signal (S5) as you come to a stop.
 - (c) If you consider the kick to have failed, give the no score signal (S10) or, if the kick is wide to your side, only the kick wide signal (Sup15). Do *not* signal a touchback.
 - (d) Hold either signal for at least five seconds and until you know the Referee has seen it.
 - (e) [ON A 4-MAN CREW] Blow your whistle when the result of the kick is obvious.
 - (f) If the kick is short or blocked and the ball remains alive, give no signal. Move into position to officiate the kick play as a punt.
2. [LINESMAN ONLY] After the kick, jog in towards the pile of players in the middle of the field. This will force you to keep your eyes on the players and discourage you from looking to see if the kick is good or not. If trouble occurs, you will be in a better position to assist the Umpire in dealing with it.

11.8.d – Advanced techniques

1. [ON A 5-MAN CREW] On long field goal attempts (i.e. if the ball is snapped from outside Team B's 20-yard line), it is permissible for only the Back Judge to go behind the goal posts and for the Line Judge to initially be in his normal position on the line of scrimmage. This is known as the "One Judge" mechanic. The Line Judge must clearly communicate to all other members of the crew his intention in this situation.
2. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] If you wish to favour a particular post, move slightly closer to the one to which a hooked kick would go.
3. Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage. [♠]
 - (a) If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - (b) Cover the goal line and end line as appropriate.
 - (c) [LINE JUDGE ONLY WHEN BEHIND POSTS] First, move quickly along the end line to the corner pylon to be in a position to rule on the sideline. Continue to observe the action as you do so, especially that by or against your key player. Then move towards the goal line to assist with rulings there. Do *not* cut diagonally across the end zone. You have primary responsibility (with the Referee's assistance) for the sideline in the end zone.
 - (d) Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.
 - (e) [LINESMAN ONLY] When the ball is loose in the backfield, assist the Referee by observing actions against the kicker and holder. The Referee will have switched his responsibilities to watching the ball.
4. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] On a try down, instruct the alternate line-to-gain marker operators (if you have them) to lay their equipment on the ground and to stand well back.

11.9 – After each down

11.9.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing dead-ball action by players of both teams.
2. Encouraging the players to unpile safely, and either return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot, as appropriate.
3. Checking whether the line to gain has been reached or is close, and signalling appropriately. [♠]
4. Checking whether any penalty flags have been thrown, and, if so:
 - (a) Giving the timeout signal (S3).
 - (b) Reporting any fouls you have called to the Referee and Umpire.
 - (c) Covering penalty flags (and bean bags, if appropriate) thrown by colleagues.
 - (d) Ensuring that all penalties are enforced correctly.
 - (e) Keeping the Head Coach on your sideline informed of penalties, particularly against his team.
5. Checking for injured players or other occurrences that may delay play.
6. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Stopping the clock when necessary. [♠]
7. Recognising requests for timeouts.
8. Echoing all timeout signals (S3) of your colleagues.
9. Knowing whether the play ended inbounds, and informing the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12).
10. Assisting in relaying the existing ball or a new ball to the succeeding spot.

11.9.b – Initial positioning

1. Shortly after the end of the previous down, you should be in a position level with the succeeding spot.

11.9.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If you are the Coverer, check whether the line to gain has been reached. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] You should normally be in a particularly good position to rule on this. If you do this consistently, the Linesman will not need to turn to look at the chains to know whether the line to gain has been reached.
 - (a) If it has, give the timeout signal (S3). After all action has ceased, make eye contact with the Referee and signal first down (Sup35). ^{*} Hold the signal until he acknowledges it.
 - (b) If you are not sure whether the line to gain has been reached or not, signal timeout (S3) and yell "close". Encourage the Referee to come and look for himself.
 - (c) Only place a ball on the ground at the *actual* dead-ball spot — never at a spot level with it.
 - (d) If the play ended inbounds, inform the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12).
2. [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If you are the Coverer, signal that the ball is dead. This will be using the dead-ball signal (S7) unless either the timeout signal (S3), touchdown/field-goal signal (S5), safety signal (S6) or incomplete pass/missed field-goal signal (S10) is appropriate instead (give only 1 signal). [♠]
3. If a penalty flag has been thrown, follow the procedure in chapter 19. If a team or injury timeout has been called, follow the procedure in chapter 17. If a period has ended, follow the procedure in chapter 20.

Moving the down box and chains:

4. [LINESMAN ONLY]
 - (a) When certain that there has been no foul on the previous play (and that there is no other reason to wait), instruct the down marker to be moved to the new position, and check that the correct down number is displayed.
 - (b) When a first down is achieved, and a new line to gain is to be established, first instruct the down marker to be moved to the new position on the sideline. The chain crew should then be instructed to move quickly to their new position.
 - (c) Anticipate any call for a measurement and be ready to bring in the chains when signaled by Referee.
5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) Anticipate any call for a measurement and be ready to come in to mark the spot for the clip when signaled by the Referee.

Relaying the ball:

6. If you have the ball, but another official has the dead ball spot and it is close to the line to gain, hand the ball to that official and allow him to spot it at the precise location (yard line *and* lateral position) where the ball became dead.
7. Unless you are the Coverer, assist in relaying a ball to the official who will place it at the succeeding spot. (Mechanic 5.8)
8. If the ball becomes dead out of bounds or closer to the sideline than to the inbounds line do not move the ball at the dead-ball spot until a replacement ball has been positioned at the correct location on the inbounds line.

Getting ready for the next down:

9. Check that there is nothing untoward going on outside your sideline or in your team area, but don't allow this duty to detract from your primary responsibilities within the field of play.
10. Verbally or visually (using signals Sup11 or Sup12)[®] inform the Referee of the correct down and clock status (if you are the Coverer), and check that the Referee indicates it correctly. Inform him immediately if an incorrect signal is given. Be aware of the new distance to the line to gain.
11. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Remind the Referee of the clock status and, if stopped, remind him whether it should start on the snap or on the ready. Be prepared for a ruling by the Referee on when the clock should start in unfair clock tactics situations. Do *not* echo the Referee's start the clock signal (S2).
12. If substitutions are made from your side of the field, check that Team A players fulfil the nine-yard line requirements. (Rule 7-1-3-a-2)
13. Only grant requests from sideline personnel for timeouts or coach's conferences that meet the requirements of the rules. (Rule 3-3-4)
14. Move into position for the next down. If the ready-for-play has been given (or is imminent), backpedal to keep your eyes on the ball. [♠] Do not take your eyes off it in case the play starts while you are not looking.

11.9.d – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting), observe Team B's response. If they begin to substitute, alert the Referee (Sup36 and "subs on") to prevent Team A snapping the ball. When the substitution is complete, drop the signal. [‡]
3. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Referee (for a Team A player) or

the Umpire or Back Judge (for a Team B player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.

4. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.
5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY WHEN THERE IS AN ALTERNATE CREW]
 - (a) When the ball is declared ready for play for the next down, instruct the alternate down box operator to move his box to the new position.
 - (b) When a new line to gain is established and the chain is set, instruct the alternate line-to-gain marker to be moved to the new position.
6. [LINESMAN ONLY] Don't spend so much time interacting with the chain crew that you disregard your other duties watching players and communicating with colleagues.

12. BACK JUDGE (5-MAN CREW)

12.1 – Free kicks

12.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

Prior to the kick:

1. Being aware of whether the Referee has instructed the crew to switch to onside-kick positions, and moving position (if appropriate) if he has.
2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
4. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.
5. Only when satisfied that all is ready, and that your colleagues (particularly the Umpire) are in position, holding your arm aloft until your readiness is acknowledged by the Referee (or Umpire if you are on a restraining line).
6. Being alert always for short kicks.

During the kick play:

7. Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
8. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
9. If you are on a restraining line and the kick is short:
 - (a) Knowing where and by whom the ball was first touched.
 - (b) Observing illegal blocks by Team A.
 - (c) Marking any spot of illegal touching with a bean bag.
 - (d) Marking the dead-ball spot if you are the nearest official and there is little or no return run.
10. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
11. Ruling whether the ball becomes dead in the end zone or not.
12. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field. This responsibility extends up to Team A's 2-yard line.
13. Marking the spot with a bean bag of any backward pass or fumble in your area.
14. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal touching of a short kick
 - (b) infractions of your restraining line (when in onside-kick positions only)
 - (c) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (d) blocks below the waist
 - (e) illegal wedge formations[®]
 - (f) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (g) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (h) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick

12.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. Be in position B (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line outside the sideline on the press box side of the field. Be level with the Referee's position.

Onside-kicks:

2. Move to position D (see 24.1) outside the press box sideline on Team B's restraining line.

Free kicks after a safety:

3. When a free kick is taken following a penalty or a safety, the same relative positions should be taken, moving up or down the field as appropriate.

12.1.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

Prior to the kick:

1. If anything happens that should prevent the kick taking place (e.g. a non-participant enters or approaches the field of play), toot your whistle, give the timeout signal (S3) and deal with the problem.

During any kick play:

2. If you see any player of the kicking team voluntarily go out of bounds during the kick, drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns.
3. If the clock should start when the ball is first legally touched in the field of play, give the start clock signal (S2) if you are the nearest official or the one with the best view.

During a kick play that goes deep:

4. After the ball is kicked, observe the players in your area of responsibility (see diagrams in section 24.1). After checking its initial trajectory, do not watch the flight of the ball.
5. If the kick threatens to go into the end zone, stay on the goal line (out of the way of all players) to rule on a touchback. If the ball threatens the pylon, be there to be able to rule on whether the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play or the end zone. If the ball and at least one player go deep into the end zone, move to cover the end line.[†]
6. If a touchback occurs, move infield ahead of any receiver who has the ball, give the touchback signal (S7) and sound your whistle to prevent further action.
7. On a deep kickoff, follow the runner and keep him bracketed between you and the upfield officials.
8. If the ball goes out of bounds in your area go to and hold the spot, dropping your flag if appropriate. Place a ball at the spot and ensure that another official relays a ball to the Spotter.

During a kick play where the kick is short:

9. Maintain a position where you can see the ball and the blocks by Team A players.
10. Know where and by whom the ball was first touched. Mark any spot of illegal touching with your bean bag. (Rule 6-1-3)
11. If you are the nearest official when the ball becomes dead, signal timeout (S3) and mark the dead ball spot.

12.1.d – Advanced techniques

1. If there is a touchback, continue to watch the receiver in case he is fouled.
2. The deep officials may adjust their position according to such factors as the wind and the known strength of the kicker's foot. However, being on the goal line (and particularly, the pylon) before the ball gets there is a crucial requirement.

12.2 – Basic scrimmage plays

12.2.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Knowing the down and distance, and signalling the down to your colleagues. Noting the down signals given by colleagues. Checking that the down box displays the correct number. [◇] Not allowing play to start if there is a dispute about the down number.
2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to your colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Identifying your key player(s) (see page 156). If the formation is new or unusual, verbally or visually confirming this with the other officials.
4. Noting eligible receivers and those players who would normally be eligible by position but who are ineligible by number. In addition, noting players (normally tight ends) who would normally be eligible by number but who are not eligible because a player is lined up outside them on the line of scrimmage.
5. Being aware of where the line to gain is in relation to the line of scrimmage so that you don't have to look at the chain to know whether the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain or not.
6. Observing substitution infractions by Team B, for example:
 - (a) replaced players not leaving the huddle within 3 seconds of an incoming substitute entering it
 - (b) substitutes coming on to the field, communicating, and then leaving the field

12.2.b – Initial positioning

1. Be 15-20 yards or more [◇] from the line of scrimmage, inside the inbounds lines. [†]
2. Be deep and clear of players, but able to see all receivers, especially your key man.
3. Normally, you will be deeper than the deepest back, but be sure to keep out of his way.
4. Favour the strong side of the formation, or, if it is balanced, the side of the player who is your key.

12.2.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Always be in position to cover play from the inside looking out.
2. Be aware of a backfield player in motion at the snap. Adjust your position if necessary to ensure that you always have him in sight. He becomes your responsibility after the snap if he crosses the neutral zone on a pass play or if he blocks outside the tackle on a running play.
3. If there is a pre-snap foul, maintain a position where you can see all players (especially on the fringes) who may commit a late hit.

12.2.d – Advanced techniques

Reasons for varying (or not) your initial position:

1. On "take a knee" plays, come up into a double umpire position. Tell other officials that you are doing this. Use your presence to deter unsportsmanlike acts.
2. On obvious "hail mary" plays, start deeper than normal and make sure you can get to Team B's goal line or end line before any Team A player.

Signalling the player count:

3. The latest time to make the player count signal is when the offensive team breaks its huddle (but it can and should be done earlier if possible). ^{*}
4. Normally the player count signal is shared between the Linesman, Line Judge and [ON A 5-MAN CREW] the Back Judge.

12.3 – Running plays

12.3.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing action ahead of the runner.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag if possible.
3. Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not on a breakaway run.
4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack, especially those made by your key player or any wide receiver, tight end, lead back or pulling line-man
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls by your key player and other players in your area
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Getting to the goal line ahead of any runner in order to be able to rule on a touchdown.

12.3.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Move to observe actions by players behind the Umpire and ahead of the runner. Your first step must be backwards, even on a running play. [◇]
2. Don't move forwards until you know where the ball is going to become dead.
3. On line plunges up the middle, do not move too fast. Let the play come to you.
4. When a running play develops toward a sideline, move towards that sideline, keeping the runner between you, the side official and the sideline. Stay ahead of the play and keep out of the way of the safeties.
5. On long runs, try to stay ahead of the runner and keep him boxed in between you and the wing official. Keep out of the players' way.
6. If you are the nearest official when the ball becomes dead, blow your whistle and move to deal with the pile. Only if the wing officials are delayed (or obviously missed a knee down or similar event) do you need to mark the dead ball spot. [◇]
7. Be on Team B's goal line before a touchdown is scored.
8. If you are not the nearest official to the dead ball spot, nevertheless move towards it and observe the continuing action after the ball becomes dead. On plays when the runner goes near the sideline or out of bounds, cover the area around him for extra-curricular activity. [†] If you are the second official to the area, go out of bounds after the runner and watch for and prevent fouls on him. (Mechanic 5.9)
9. Maintain a position where you can observe player activity in fringe areas, particularly on wide-open plays.

12.3.c – Advanced techniques

1. Don't blow your whistle when the runner's back is toward you or you are obscured by other players (or officials) – he may have fumbled the ball without you seeing it. See leather! Be certain that the ball is dead.
2. If a pile-up of players forms, give the timeout signal (S3), converge on the pile and determine who has possession. (Mechanic 5.11)
3. If you're not the nearest official to the dead-ball spot, observe for late hits and other illegal acts. It is particularly your responsibility to observe action close to the wing officials as they are concentrating on the forward progress spot.
4. Because the Back Judge is not very often directly involved in running plays, it is important to maintain concentration throughout the game. You may be the only official to observe some action away from the ball, or behind another official's back.

12.4 – Passing plays

12.4.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Ruling whether the pass is complete or incomplete. While primarily this will be for passes to the middle of the field, in practice you may need to rule on any pass where the receiver is facing or at right angles to you, regardless of his position. Similarly, if the receiver has his back to you, you may need to defer to another official with a better view than you.
 2. Ruling on touchdowns on passes into the end zone.
 3. Observing the initial contact by and against your key player(s).
 4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) defensive and offensive pass interference
 - (b) defensive holding and illegal use of hands against eligible receivers
 - (c) illegal block below the waist fouls by any motion man and all receivers in the middle of the field
 - (d) illegal touching of a forward pass by a player who went out of bounds voluntarily (this may require consultation with a sideline colleague)
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenseless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (g) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 5. Watching for players who go out of bounds beyond the end line.
- Once the pass is complete, apply the same priorities as on a running play (above).

12.4.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Your progression on a pass play is (1) your key player; (2) your zone; (3) the intended receiver.[♠]
2. Backpedal to keep all receivers in front of you. After the snap, your first step should normally be backwards (unless you are on the goal line or end line). Don't move forwards until you know where the ball is likely to become dead. Ensure that you can see blocking and contact by and against any eligible receivers in the middle of the field. Never get beaten deep.
3. On long pass receptions, be prepared to rule on the goal line and the end line.
4. Switch from man-to-man coverage (watching your key player) to zone coverage (watching your area of responsibility) immediately after the initial action. This is usually 2-3 seconds after the snap, once it is clear into which zones the receivers are running.
5. If receivers run routes into the end zone, move into position on the end line.
6. If a Team A receiver voluntarily goes out of bounds in your area, drop your bean bag or hat to indicate this, and observe him to see whether he is the first to touch a forward pass.
7. Once you are aware that the pass has been thrown, move into position to best be able to rule on whether the pass is complete or incomplete, and whether there is interference. While the ball is in flight, watch opposing players who are contesting for the ball, not the ball itself.
8. If the receiver is driven back, be prepared to give him his forward progress.
9. If you are not the nearest official, particularly watch for defenders slightly away from the ball who come in and target the receiver with the crown of their helmet or above the shoulders.[®]
10. Blow your whistle if you see the ball become dead in your area.
11. If the pass is ruled incomplete, give the incomplete pass signal (S10).
12. When contact that would have been pass interference occurs on a pass that is uncatchable, give the uncatchable pass signal (S17).



13. After an incomplete, ensure that the thrown ball is removed from the field. Repeat the incomplete pass signal (S10) to the Referee (and Umpire, if necessary) in case they did not see the original signal.
14. If there is a run after the catch, react as you would on a running play (above).
15. On plays when the receiver goes near the sideline or out of bounds, cover the area around him for extra-curricular activity.[†] If you are the second official to the area, go out of bounds after the runner and watch for and prevent fouls on him. (Mechanic 5.9)[†]
16. Maintain a position where you can see player activity in fringe areas, particularly on wide-open plays.

12.4.c – Advanced techniques

1. When an airborne player attempts to catch a pass near the sideline or end line, watch his feet first to see whether he comes down in bounds. If he does, then look to his hands to see whether he has control of the ball. If you look at his hands first, you may miss the instant when his foot touches the ground.

12.5 – Goal line plays

12.5.a – Priorities (highest first)

Same priorities as on other scrimmage plays, plus:

1. Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not. This includes all passes into the end zone, plus running plays if the ball is snapped outside Team B's 7-yard line.[†]
2. Observing players' celebrations after a score.

12.5.b – Initial positioning

1. If the ball is snapped from outside the 7-yard line but inside the 15, start in the end zone and move to cover the goal line, unless a pass into the end zone is likely in which case move to cover the end of the pass or whichever line (goal line or end line) it is near.
2. If the snap is from on or inside the 7-yard line, start on the end line.

12.5.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Move to observe all players in your area of responsibility. If a pass is thrown into the end zone, move to the best position to rule on the end of the pass. If the pass is thrown into a corner of the end zone, this will normally be somewhere between the inbounds lines and the 9-yard marks.[†]
2. Indicate a score by blowing your whistle and giving the touchdown signal (S5) only when you clearly see the ball break the plane of the goal line in player possession or if you see a pass completed in the end zone.
3. If a pile-up forms at the goal line, come into the field of play[♠] until you can see the ball. If you are the nearest official, you may need to dig for it. Check with other officials that they did not see the runner down (or fumble the ball) before he reached the goal line.
4. Do not give a score signal if you have thrown a penalty flag for a foul by the scoring team. Do not blow your whistle or give any signal if you are not sure about the outcome of the play.
5. If you have goal line responsibility, straddle the goal line – don't run after the player into the end zone unless there is a threat of trouble by or against him.
6. Maintain the touchdown signal until you know the Referee has seen it, but keep your eyes on the players (turn as necessary) – don't look to the Referee until all action has ceased. Don't run and signal at the same time. You should not echo the signals of other officials unless the Referee cannot see their signal.

7. It is especially important on goal line plays that all covering officials indicate the same point of forward progress. Communicate if in doubt. Signal only if sure.
8. If the end of the play is not in your area of responsibility, move into position to assist in the clean-up of continuing action around or away from the ball.

12.6 – Returns

12.6.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing the runner and action around him while you are the nearest official.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
3. Observing any illegal forward pass, especially if you have a view that is level or nearly level with the ball carrier.
4. Observing blocks by players in your area of responsibility ahead of and around the ball carrier, particularly:
 - (a) illegal block in the back and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls anywhere
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) illegal forward handing
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenceless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Observing any hand-off or backward pass where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.

12.6.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Keep out of the players' way.
2. Move towards Team A's goal line following the play.
3. Observe the runner while he remains in the middle of the field or until he passes the nearest wing official.
4. If the ball becomes dead in your area of responsibility, blow your whistle, give the time-out signal (S3), and then signal first down (S8) to show which team is in possession. Hold the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.
5. If you are not the nearest official to the dead ball spot, nevertheless move towards it and observe the continuing action after the ball becomes dead. On plays when the runner goes near the sideline or out of bounds, move laterally to cover the area around him for extra-curricular activity. If you are the second official to the area, go out of bounds after the runner and watch for and prevent fouls on him. (Mechanic 5.9)[†]

12.7 – Punts

12.7.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Marking the end of the kick with a bean bag if you are the nearest official.
2. Ruling whether players touched the ball or not.
3. Observing any fair catch signals by players in your area.
4. Observing kick catch interference against a player in position to catch the kick, if the kick comes down in your area.

5. If the kick does not come down in your area, observing players who have *not* committed kick catch interference because they were blocked by an opponent into the receiver.
6. Marking all spots of illegal touching with a bean bag.
7. Ruling whether a momentum exception applies or not near the goal line.
8. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) blocking below the waist, especially by players in the middle of the field
 - (b) during the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls against Team A players trying to get down the field
 - (c) a Team A player returning inbounds after voluntarily going out of bounds during the down (drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns)
 - (d) illegal blocks made by players who have signalled for a fair catch
 - (e) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
9. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

During a punt return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

12.7.b – Initial positioning

1. Be behind and to the side of the deepest receiver. Behind so that you can look through him and see the ball kicked. To the side so that you are out of his way, but still close enough to observe whether he touches the ball or not, or whether any opponent interferes with his opportunity to catch the kick. About five yards behind and five yards to the side is an appropriate distance.
2. Be prepared to adjust your position according to the strength and direction of the wind, and the ability of the kicker. Move closer to the sideline where the wind is likely to carry the kicked ball.[◊]
3. Have a bean bag readily available and a second one to hand.

12.7.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. When the ball is kicked, observe its initial trajectory, but do not watch the flight of the ball. Observe players in your area of responsibility (defined by the diagrams in section 24.4) – their eyes will tell you where the ball is going.
2. The Back Judge is responsible for all deep receivers. If there is more than one man deep, he should take position between the receivers, maintaining coverage of them from the inside out. If there is one receiver deep and one (or more) shallow, the Line Judge is responsible for the shallow receivers unless one is wide to the Linesman's side of the field in which case he becomes the Linesman's responsibility. The wing officials are responsible for any kick that goes out of bounds on their side of the field, however deep.
3. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball will *not* land in your area:
 - (a) If the kick is short and to either sideline, the sideline official will assume responsibility for the ball. They will give the punch signal (Sup28) to indicate this.
 - (b) Maintain a position where you can cover play in front of and around the returner. If you are the nearest official *other than* the official covering the punt returner, move to where you can observe whether players are blocked by an opponent into interfering with a receiver in a position to catch the kick.
 - (c) If a player in your area signals for a fair catch, watch that he does not block before he touches the ball.
 - (d) Do not hesitate to call a foul if you clearly see one occur in the area where you are the cleanup man even though you may be a considerable distance away from the action. Communicate with your colleagues to find out their view of the action.

4. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball *will* land in your area:
 - (a) Move into position wide of (at least 10 yards unless he is near the sideline)[◇] and slightly behind the receiver to rule on the validity of the catch.
 - (b) If the kick is first touched by a member of the kicking team, give the illegal touching signal (S16) to signify that fact. If the kick is first muffed (but not possessed) by a member of the receiving team beyond the neutral zone, you may give the legal touching signal (S11) to signify a free ball.
 - (c) Use bean bags to mark any spots of illegal touching and/or the spot where the kick ends. Only one official, the Coverer in each case, should mark each spot and give each signal. If you have more than one spot and only one bean bag, prioritise the spot most advantageous to Team B.[◇]
 - (d) If the ball becomes dead because it is caught or recovered by Team B after a fair catch signal, or caught or recovered by Team A, blow your whistle and give the timeout signal (S3).
 - (e) If the ball is not caught and goes deeper than the receiver, follow the ball and be prepared to rule on its status. Stay far enough away from it that there is no danger of it touching you.
 - (f) If the ball approaches the goal line, be on the goal line to rule on whether it enters the end zone. Other officials will cover the players.
 - (g) If the ball does enter the end zone (untouched by Team B in the field of play) or is downed by Team B in the end zone, blow your whistle and signal touchback (S7), repeating the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.
 - (h) If the kick is recovered by Team A, blow your whistle, signal timeout (S3) and give the illegal touching signal (S16) and the first down signal (S8). Momentary touching of the ball by a player of the kicking team should not be interpreted as control of the ball.
 - (i) If the kick goes out of bounds in your area, blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3) immediately. If the ball goes out of bounds in flight, signal (Sup16) to the Referee to direct you to the crossing point using signals (Sup17, Sup18 & Sup19). Hold the spot and place a ball at it. Other officials will retrieve/relay a ball to the Spotter.
 - (j) If the ball rolls to a stop in your area, ensure no player is attempting to recover it before blowing your whistle and signalling timeout (S3).
5. During the return, react as in the section "Returns" (above).

12.7.d – Advanced techniques

1. Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage.[◇]
 - (a) If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - (b) Cover the goal line and end line as appropriate.
 - (c) Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.

12.8 – Field goal & try attempts

12.8.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Ruling the success or failure of the field goal attempt. You share this responsibility with the Line Judge (unless he remains on the line of scrimmage, in which case you have sole responsibility).
2. Observing illegal touching or batting of the ball.

3. Observing players' celebrations after a score.
4. Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligibly downfield if the play develops into a passing play.
5. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

If the kick is returned, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

12.8.b – Initial positioning

1. Be in position about one yard behind the goal post furthest from the press box. You are responsible for ruling whether the ball passes inside your upright. In addition you are responsible for ruling whether the ball passes above the crossbar. The Line Judge has responsibility for the other upright.

12.8.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Observe the ball from kick to when it becomes obvious whether the attempt will be successful or not.
2. If you consider the kick to be successful, communicate ("good", nod) with your colleague behind the posts (if there is one) and together come out between the uprights (approximately one yard into the end zone) giving the score signal (S5) as you come to a stop.
3. If you consider the kick to have failed, give the no score signal (S10) or, if the kick is wide to your side, only the kick wide signal (Sup15). Do *not* signal a touchback.
4. Hold either signal for at least five seconds and until you know the Referee has seen it.
5. Blow your whistle when the result of the kick is obvious.
6. If the kick is short or blocked and the ball remains alive, give no signal. Move into position to officiate the kick play as a punt.

12.8.d – Advanced techniques

1. On long field goal attempts (i.e. if the ball is snapped from outside Team B's 20-yard line), it is permissible for only the Back Judge to go behind the goal posts and for the Line Judge to initially be in his normal position on the line of scrimmage. This is known as the "One Judge" mechanic.
2. Be alert for cases where the kick is blocked or where there is a bad snap.[◇] This also applies if Team A switch to a run or pass formation.
 - (a) If a run or pass develops, read the play and react as appropriate.
 - (b) On an obvious running play or passing play short of the goal line, you may need to come infield and cover the goal line if necessary.
 - (c) Stay on the end line if a pass into the end zone is possible, or a drop kick attempt is feasible.[†]
3. Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.

12.9 – After each down

12.9.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing dead-ball action by players of both teams.
2. Encouraging the players to unpile safely, and either return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot, as appropriate.
3. Checking whether the line to gain has been reached or is close, and signalling appropriately.[‡]
4. Checking whether any penalty flags have been thrown, and, if so:
 - (a) Giving the timeout signal (S3).

- (b) Reporting any fouls you have called to the Referee and Umpire.
 - (c) Covering penalty flags (and bean bags, if appropriate) thrown by colleagues.
 - (d) Ensuring that all penalties are enforced correctly.
5. Checking for injured players or other occurrences that may delay play.
 6. Stopping the clock when necessary. [◇]
 7. Recognising requests for timeouts.
 8. Echoing all timeout signals (S3) of your colleagues.
 9. Assisting in relaying the existing ball or a new ball to the succeeding spot.
 10. If you are not covering the play, assisting in maintaining order on the field by moving towards[†] where the play ended.

12.9.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If you are the Coverer, check whether the line to gain has been reached.
 - (a) If it has, give the timeout signal (S3). After all action has ceased, make eye contact with the Referee and signal first down (Sup35). * Hold the signal until he acknowledges it.
 - (b) If you are not sure whether the line to gain has been reached or not, signal timeout (S3) and yell “close”. Encourage the Referee to come and look for himself.
 - (c) Only place a ball on the ground at the *actual* dead-ball spot — never at a spot level with it.
 - (d) If the play ended inbounds, inform the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12).
2. [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If you are the Coverer, signal that the ball is dead. This will be using the dead-ball signal (S7) unless either the timeout signal (S3), touchdown/field-goal signal (S5), safety signal (S6) or incomplete pass/missed field-goal signal (S10) is appropriate instead (give only 1 signal).[®]
3. If a penalty flag has been thrown, follow the procedure in chapter 19. If a team or injury timeout has been called, follow the procedure in chapter 17. If a period has ended, follow the procedure in chapter 20.

Relaying the ball:

4. If you have the ball, but another official has the dead ball spot and it is close to the line to gain, hand the ball to that official and allow him to spot it at the precise location (yard line *and* lateral position) where the ball became dead.
5. Unless you are the Coverer, assist in relaying a ball to the official who will place it at the succeeding spot. (Mechanic 5.8)
6. If the ball becomes dead out of bounds or closer to the sideline than to the inbounds line do not move the ball at the dead-ball spot until a replacement ball has been positioned at the correct location on the inbounds line.

Getting ready for the next down:

7. Remind the Referee of the clock status and, if stopped, remind him whether it should start on the snap or on the ready. Be prepared for a ruling by the Referee on when the clock should start in unfair clock tactics situations. Do *not* echo the Referee's start the clock signal (S2).
8. If there are stadium game clocks, check to see that they have stopped and started correctly.
9. Only grant requests from sideline personnel for timeouts or coach's conferences that meet the requirements of the rules. (Rule 3-3-4)
10. Move into position for the next down. If the ready-for-play has been given (or is imminent), backpedal to keep your eyes on the ball. [◇] Do not take your eyes off it in case the play starts while you are not looking.

12.9.c – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting), observe Team B's response. If they begin to substitute, alert the Referee (Sup36 and "subs on") to prevent Team A snapping the ball. When the substitution is complete, drop the signal. [‡]
3. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Referee (for a Team A player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.
4. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.

13. LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE (6 AND 7-MAN CREWS)

13.1 – Free kicks

13.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

Prior to the kick:

1. Being aware of whether the Referee has instructed the crew to switch to onside-kick positions, and moving position (if appropriate) if he has.
2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
4. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.
5. Only when satisfied that all is ready, and that your colleagues (particularly the Umpire) are in position, holding your arm aloft until your readiness is acknowledged by the Referee (or Umpire if you are on a restraining line).
6. Being alert always for short kicks.

During the kick play:

7. Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
8. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
9. If you are on a restraining line and the kick is short:
 - (a) Knowing where and by whom the ball was first touched.
 - (b) Observing illegal blocks by Team A.
 - (c) Marking any spot of illegal touching with a bean bag.
 - (d) Marking the dead-ball spot if you are the nearest official and there is little or no return run.
10. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
11. Ruling whether the ball becomes dead in the end zone or not.
12. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field. This responsibility extends up to Team A's 2-yard line.
13. Marking the spot with a bean bag of any backward pass or fumble in your area.
14. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal touching of a short kick
 - (b) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (c) blocks below the waist
 - (d) illegal wedge formations[®]
 - (e) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (g) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick

13.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. [LINESMAN ONLY] Be in position C (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line outside the sideline opposite the press box side of the field.
2. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Be in position B (see 24.1) on Team B's goal line outside the sideline on the press box side of the field.

Onside-kicks:

3. [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) [ON A 6-MAN CREW] Move to position D (see 24.1) outside the press box sideline on Team B's restraining line.
 - (b) [ON A 7-MAN CREW] Remain in the normal position.
4. [LINESMAN ONLY] Move to position E (see 24.1) outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line.

Free kicks after a safety:

5. When a free kick is taken following a penalty or a safety, the same relative positions should be taken, moving up or down the field as appropriate.

13.1.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

Prior to the kick:

1. If anything happens that should prevent the kick taking place (e.g. a non-participant enters or approaches the field of play), toot your whistle, give the timeout signal (S3) and deal with the problem.

During any kick play:

2. If you see any player of the kicking team voluntarily go out of bounds during the kick, drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns.
3. If the clock should start when the ball is first legally touched in the field of play, give the start clock signal (S2) if you are the nearest official or the one with the best view.

During a kick play that goes deep:

4. After the ball is kicked, observe the players in your area of responsibility (see diagrams in section 24.1). After checking its initial trajectory, do not watch the flight of the ball.
5. If the kick threatens to go into the end zone, stay on the goal line (out of the way of all players) to rule on a touchback. If the ball threatens the pylon, be there to be able to rule on whether the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play or the end zone. If the ball and at least one player go deep into the end zone, move to cover the end line.[†]
6. If the ball clearly goes to the opposite side of the field to you, move upfield about 10 yards to get a better/different angle on lead blocks and any illegal wedges.[†]
7. If a touchback occurs, move infield ahead of any receiver who has the ball, give the touchback signal (S7) and sound your whistle to prevent further action.
8. On a deep kickoff, follow the runner and keep him bracketed between you and the upfield officials.
9. If the ball goes out of bounds in your area go to and hold the spot, dropping your flag if appropriate. Place a ball at the spot and ensure that another official relays a ball to the Spotter.

During a kick play where the kick is short:

10. Maintain a position where you can see the ball and the blocks by Team A players.
11. Know where and by whom the ball was first touched. Mark any spot of illegal touching with your bean bag. (Rule 6-1-3)
12. If you are the nearest official when the ball becomes dead, signal timeout (S3) and mark the dead ball spot.

13.1.d – Advanced techniques

1. If there is a touchback, continue to watch the receiver in case he is fouled.
2. The deep officials may adjust their position according to such factors as the wind and the known strength of the kicker's foot. However, being on the goal line (and particularly, the pylon) before the ball gets there is a crucial requirement.

13.2 – Basic scrimmage plays**13.2.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Knowing the down and distance, and signalling the down to your colleagues. Noting the down signals given by colleagues. Checking that the down box displays the correct number. [∇] Not allowing play to start if there is a dispute about the down number.
2. Observing false starts in general and by linemen and backs on your side of the formation in particular.
3. Observing offside by Team B players (especially those between you and the ball).
4. Observing illegal motion by Team A players on your side of the formation.
5. Observing illegal shifts (no 1-second pause after simultaneous movement by more than one Team A player).
6. Observing the legality of the snap.
7. If there is a pre-snap foul, stopping all action by tooting on your whistle and giving the timeout signal (S3).
8. Determining whether the play is a run or a pass by reading the initial action of the interior linemen. If they move backwards it is likely that a passing play will develop. If they charge forwards or pull, it is likely that a running play will develop.
9. Identifying your key player(s) (see page 156). If the formation is new or unusual, verbally or visually confirming this with the other officials.
10. Noting eligible receivers and those players who would normally be eligible by position but who are ineligible by number. In addition, noting players (normally tight ends) who would normally be eligible by number but who are not eligible because a player is lined up outside them on the line of scrimmage.
11. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] Watching the tackle on your side of the formation. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] Watching the tackle if there is no tight end on your side.
12. Being aware of where the line to gain is in relation to the line of scrimmage so that you don't have to look at the chain to know whether the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain or not.
13. Observing substitution infractions by Team A, for example:
 - (a) replaced players not leaving the huddle within 3 seconds of an incoming substitute entering it
 - (b) substitutes coming on to the field, communicating, and then leaving the field
14. Ensuring that coaches and substitutes are behind the coaching box line and that your sideline is clear of any obstructions. [LINESMAN ONLY] Noting whether the chains and down box are in their proper position, but only interrupting play if there is a serious problem.
15. Observing the legality of the formation, in particular that there are no more than 4 players in the backfield[®]
16. Indicating Team A's scrimmage line using your foot that is nearest their goal line.
17. Indicating, using the off-the-line signal (Sup1), when the Team A player closest to you is off the line of scrimmage.
18. Observing whether all Team A players have met the requirements for being within the nine-yard marks.

13.2.b – Initial positioning

1. Be where you can see the entire neutral zone, and the ball at the snap.
2. Normal scrimmage down position is in the neutral zone, on or outside the sideline.
3. [LINESMAN ONLY] Be on the side of the field opposite the press box.
4. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Be on the press box side of the field.
5. Never adopt a position that restricts the positioning or movement of players.

13.2.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. In the event of sudden movement by Team A players, come in quickly and confer with the Umpire to determine which team was responsible.
2. If one or more Team B players enter the neutral zone, watch the reaction by Team A players who may be threatened. Watch for when the Team B players get back to their own side of the neutral zone.
3. If there is a foul before the snap, blow your whistle, throw your flag and signal timeout (S3). Come in quickly to the succeeding spot to prevent any play and to confer with the Umpire and the other wing official about the call. However, if there is no possibility of doubt about what the foul is, you may give a miniature penalty signal (e.g. S18 or S19) to the Referee without coming in all the way.

13.2.d – Advanced techniques

Reasons for varying (or not) your initial position:

1. You get a much better view of everything from a wide position. It also prevents you being caught inside on a sweep play or out-pattern pass.
2. It is entirely appropriate to be six feet out of bounds, particularly if players are lined up close to the sideline. In goal line situations, you may want to be even wider.
3. If a Team A player asks you whether he is on or off the line of scrimmage, inform him how he can use your signals to tell for himself. Do not say anything to the player that might cause him to move immediately prior to the snap. The fact that you are indicating the line with your foot and not using the off-the-line signal is sufficient to indicate to all concerned that the player nearest you is *on* the line. No separate signal is necessary or desirable.

13.3 – Running plays**13.3.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Observing the runner and action around him.
2. Blowing your whistle and marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead in the middle or on your side of the field. This responsibility extends up to Team B's 2-yard line. If the ball goes to the other side of the field, backing up your colleague on the other side of the field by either estimating the dead ball spot or mirroring his spot.
3. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack, especially those made by a wide receiver, tight end, lead back or pulling lineman
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls by players on your side of the formation
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (e) unnecessary roughness against the quarterback after he has handed off or pitched the ball on a play away from you

5. Ruling (with help from the Referee on passes from deep in the backfield) whether a pass is backward or forward, and signalling a backward pass (Sup5) immediately if the pass is clearly backward. Noting any backward pass signal from the Referee.

13.3.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If the run comes to your side of the field:
 - (a) Retreat at an angle out of bounds and towards Team A's end line if necessary.
 - (b) Pick up coverage of the runner as he approaches the neutral zone in your area.
 - (c) Let the runner get ahead of you, then follow him downfield until the ball becomes dead, keeping out of the way of all the other players.
 - (d) Once the ball becomes dead, move to a point level with the forward progress spot.
 - (e) If the ball becomes dead inbounds and near the sideline, be prepared to take forward progress from your colleague using cross-field mechanics if the runner is driven back towards you. [◇]
 2. If the run goes up the middle:
 - (a) Stay wide but approximately level with the runner's progress.
 - (b) Come in when the play is dead to rule on forward progress. Come in until you meet resistance (do not leap over players). Exception: Don't come in if Team A is in a hurry-up offence (or should be) and the clock is still running. [◇]
 - (c) Only blow the whistle if you can clearly see the ball and the player in possession. [◇]
 3. If the run goes to the opposite side of the field:
 - (a) Stay wide but approximately level with the runner's progress.
 - (b) Keep your eyes open for cheap shots behind the play.
 - (c) Don't relax – be alert for reverses.
 - (d) When the ball becomes dead, move level with the dead ball spot. If your colleague on the opposite side of the field is unable to get to the out of bounds spot quickly, assist him by staying in position level with your best judgement of the forward progress spot ("cross-field" mechanics). [◇] Do not be obtrusive about this. Hold this position long enough to allow him an opportunity to mirror your spot if he is unable to judge it himself, but give it up when the Coverer obviously indicates a forward progress spot of his own.
 4. On a long run:
 - (a) Follow the play, maintaining as good a view as possible of the runner and the players near him. Be prepared to close when the ball becomes dead and mark the forward progress spot.
 - (b) Occasionally, the deep official may be in a better position than you to cover the runner, in which case he may be the one to declare the ball dead and mark the forward progress. However, this should not be normal practice – keep up with the play!
 5. If the run ends behind the line of scrimmage:
 - (a) Assist the Referee in determining forward progress.
 6. Remain out of bounds until you are certain the ball is becoming dead. Never turn your back on the ball.
- Covering the dead ball spot:
7. When marking forward progress, converge to the dead-ball spot when play in your area permits. Square off, i.e. move parallel to the sideline then in, rather than diagonally.
 8. Be alert to cover the forward progress spot when the runner has been thrown back, but watch the runner (and action against him), not the spot. Do not leap over players to reach the forward progress spot: keep them in front of you. Drop your bean bag *only* if you are forced to leave your spot.
 9. If the ball goes out of bounds on your side of the field, blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3). Normally, you have forward progress all the way up to Team B's 2-yard



- line. Unless the deep official is much closer than you, move to the dead-ball spot once players have cleared the immediate area. Stop on the sideline and watch any continuing action in the out-of-bounds area. If absolutely necessary, mark the dead-ball spot with your bean bag and go out-of-bounds to prevent/stop continuing action. Once all action has ceased, obtain a ball and place it at the spot where the live ball crossed the sideline, then help (if needed) to retrieve/relay another ball to the Spotter. (Mechanic 5.8)
10. If the ball goes out of bounds in the deep official's area, go into the team area as far as the runner and observe any actions against him.

13.3.c – Advanced techniques

1. Don't blow your whistle when the runner's back is toward you or you are obscured by other players (or officials) – he may have fumbled the ball without you seeing it. See leather! Be certain that the ball is dead.
 2. If a pile-up of players forms, give the timeout signal (S3), converge on the pile and determine who has possession. (Mechanic 5.11)
 3. If you're not the nearest official to the dead-ball spot, observe for late hits and other illegal acts.
- Particular types of run play:
4. On a pitchout option play:
 - (a) Move into the backfield to observe action against the trailing back (any offensive player in a position to receive a backward pass), until the ball is pitched or the quarterback turns upfield.
 - (b) If the ball is pitched, you are responsible for the loose ball and for action by and against the trailing back.
 - (c) If the ball is not pitched, once the quarterback turns upfield he is your responsibility as on any other running play, and the Referee will take over responsibility for the trailing back.

General tips:

5. It is better to pick up the ball carrier too soon than not soon enough. You may be forgiven for missing a hold, but you will never be forgiven for missing a fumble.
6. Even though the ball may be on the other side of the field, you may have a better view of the end of the run than the nearest official. If the runner is facing you, or has the ball in the hand nearest you, or is spun round towards you in the tackle, you may need to help out your colleague.
7. If you are the Coverer and the run ends near to the line to gain, you must come in all the way and place a ball at the *exact* dead ball spot.

13.4 – Passing plays

13.4.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Ruling whether the pass is complete or incomplete. While primarily this will be for passes to your side of the field, in practice you may need to rule on any pass where the receiver is facing or at right angles to you, regardless of his position. Similarly, if the receiver has his back to you, you may need to defer to another official with a better view than you.
2. Observing the initial contact by and against your key player(s).
3. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) defensive and offensive pass interference
 - (b) defensive holding and illegal use of hands against eligible receivers
 - (c) illegal block below the waist fouls by players on your side of the formation
 - (d) illegal touching of a forward pass by a player who went out of bounds voluntarily

- (e) ineligible receivers downfield
 - (f) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenseless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (g) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (h) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
4. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Ruling whether a forward pass was thrown from behind or beyond the neutral zone. Also, being prepared to assist in determining whether the ball crossed the neutral zone prior to a forward pass.
 5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Ruling whether a forward pass crossed the neutral zone or not.
 6. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot (on your side of the field) if the ball becomes dead behind the neutral zone.
 7. Advising the Referee if the pass was thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, or the pass clearly did not reach the neutral zone.
 8. Watching for players who go out of bounds across the sideline or end line. [◇]
- Once the pass is complete, apply the same priorities as on a running play (above).

13.4.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Remain on the line of scrimmage (or take one step into the offensive backfield)[◇] to be able to rule on whether a pass was thrown from behind or beyond the neutral zone, and whether or not the pass crossed the neutral zone.
2. [LINESMAN ONLY] Move quickly downfield five yards to be in position to rule on short passes.
3. When moving downfield, sidestep wherever possible so that you remain facing the field at all times. Once the pass is thrown, it is appropriate to turn and move towards the destination of the pass.
4. Switch from man-to-man coverage (watching your key player) to zone coverage (watching your area of responsibility) immediately after the initial action. This is usually 2-3 seconds after the snap, once it is clear into which zones the receivers are running.
5. If a Team A receiver voluntarily goes out of bounds in your area, drop your bean bag or hat to indicate this, and observe him to see whether he is the first to touch a forward pass.
6. Once you are aware that the pass has been thrown, move into position to best be able to rule on whether the pass is complete or incomplete, and whether there is interference. While the ball is in flight, watch opposing players who are contesting for the ball, not the ball itself.
7. If the receiver is driven back, be prepared to give him his forward progress. This is especially the case when the receiver is near a sideline, and you may need to use cross-field mechanics. If the receiver is on your side of the field, the other wing official may have the best forward progress. Take your spot from him. If the receiver is on the other side of the field, you may have the best spot. Offer a spot to your colleague. [◇]
8. If you are not the nearest official, particularly watch for defenders slightly away from the ball who come in and target the receiver with the crown of their helmet or above the shoulders. [®]
9. Blow your whistle if you see the ball become dead in your area.
10. If the pass is thrown to the opposite side of the field from you, look across and be prepared to assist with rulings on complete/incomplete, pass interference, illegal helmet contact and forward progress, though only if you are 100% sure of what you see. Also maintain a view of action on your side of the field that may be unnecessary. [◇]
11. When ruling on pass receptions involving the sideline, give only one signal. Give the incomplete pass signal (S10) if the pass is ruled incomplete. Give the timeout signal (S3) if the pass is ruled complete and the runner goes out of bounds thereafter. (Mechanic 5.9) Give the start the clock signal (S2) if the pass is complete and the runner is declared

- down inbounds. Whichever signal is given should be repeated two or three times. Remember to look at the other official on your sideline before giving any signal that indicates a completed pass. Nod your head "yes" to him to indicate a completed pass; shake it "no" if you have it incomplete. [◇]
12. When contact that would have been pass interference occurs on a pass that is uncatchable, give the uncatchable pass signal (S17).
 13. After an incompletion, obtain a ball from the ball person and form a relay to return the ball to the Spotter. (Mechanic 5.8)
 14. If there is a run after the catch, react as you would on a running play (above).
 15. Maintain a position where you can see player activity in fringe areas, particularly on wide-open plays.

13.4.c – Advanced techniques

1. When an airborne player attempts to catch a pass near the sideline or end line, watch his feet first to see whether he comes down in bounds. If he does, then look to his hands to see whether he has control of the ball. If you look at his hands first, you may miss the instant when his foot touches the ground. Establish eye contact with your sideline colleague at the end of the play before giving any signal. (Mechanic 5.17.8)
2. Always be prepared to come back to rule on play near the neutral zone in addition to sideline action. If the potential passer decides to run, you must cover him once he is beyond the neutral zone.
3. If the pass is incomplete having been thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, or the pass clearly does not reach the neutral zone, move quickly towards the Referee to inform him of this. If there was a receiver in the area, and you believe the Referee may not be aware of that fact, move towards the Referee while pointing towards the eligible receiver. Calling out "number 34 was in the area of the pass" (for example) is also permissible. [†]
4. If you observe the ball being tipped, give the tipped pass signal (S11). The signal should normally be used on passes tipped in the offensive backfield, but non-obvious (to the spectators) touching downfield could be signified this way too. It is not necessary to give it when the pass is obviously touched (e.g. when a defensive lineman bats it into the ground). [◇]
5. If the play[◇] ends near to the line to gain, you must come in all the way and place a ball at the exact dead ball spot.

13.5 – Goal line plays

13.5.a – Priorities (highest first)

Same priorities as on other scrimmage plays, plus:

1. [AT TEAM B'S GOAL LINE] Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not.
2. [AT TEAM A'S GOAL LINE] Ruling whether a safety is scored or not.
3. Observing players' celebrations after a score.

13.5.b – Initial positioning

1. Take normal scrimmage down position, but very wide so that you will not be trapped by a quick wide play. (See also 13.2.d.2.)
2. You have primary responsibility for Team B's goal line if the ball is snapped from on or inside Team B's 7-yard line.
3. You have primary responsibility for Team A's goal line if the ball is snapped from on or inside Team A's [LINE JUDGE ONLY] 7-yard line [LINESMAN ONLY] 2-yard line.

13.5.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If you have responsibility for either team's goal line, *immediately* after the snap, move directly towards it to rule on the score or an accurate forward progress.

At Team B's goal line:

2. On a running play, you must be at the goal line before the runner to rule on whether the ball penetrates the plane. Do *not* move towards Team A's backfield to let players pass you.
3. If you see the runner is stopped short of the goal line, blow your whistle, come in and sell the dead-ball spot. If appropriate,[∅] call out "short" to tell your colleagues of that.
4. On a passing play, move immediately to the goal line then react to the play. If the pass is thrown short of the goal line, remain on the line to rule on penetration of the plane. If the pass is thrown into the end zone, move to the best position to rule on the end of the pass.
5. Indicate a score by blowing your whistle and giving the touchdown signal (S5) only when you clearly see the ball break the plane of the goal line in player possession or if you see a pass completed in the end zone.

At Team A's goal line:

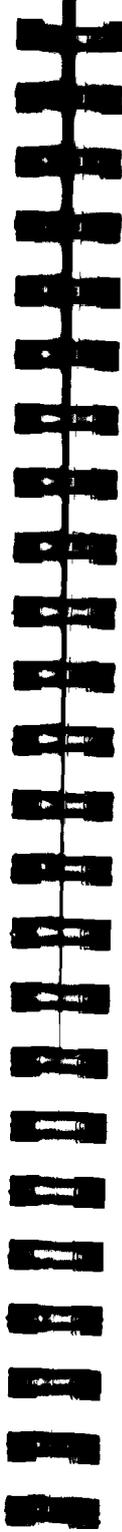
6. Indicate a safety by blowing your whistle and giving the safety signal (S6) only when you clearly see the runner down or out of bounds behind the goal line.

At either goal line:

7. If a pile-up forms at the goal line, come into the field of play[∅] until you can see the ball. If you are the nearest official, you may need to dig for it. Check with other officials that they did not see the runner down (or fumble the ball) before he reached the goal line.
8. If you have goal line responsibility and it is necessary to move out of the players' way as they come towards you, move wider without leaving the goal line.[∅]
9. Do not give a score signal if you have thrown a penalty flag for a foul by the scoring team. Do not blow your whistle or give any signal if you are not sure about the outcome of the play.
10. If you have goal line responsibility, straddle the goal line – don't run after the player into the end zone unless there is a threat of trouble by or against him.
11. Maintain the touchdown or safety signal until you know the Referee has seen it, but keep your eyes on the players (turn as necessary) – don't look to the Referee until all action has ceased. Don't run and signal at the same time. You should not echo the signals of other officials unless the Referee cannot see their signal.
12. It is especially important on goal line plays that all covering officials indicate the same point of forward progress. Communicate if in doubt. Signal only if sure.

13.5.d – Advanced techniques

1. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Inform the deep officials of the number of the yard line that is the line of scrimmage. Communicate (preferably verbally) as to who has the responsibility for the goal line.
2. On a running play towards the goal line pylon, give priority to ruling on the goal line over ruling on the sideline. The deep official on your side can help with the sideline – only you can rule on the goal line.
3. In 3rd and 4th down short yardage situations, treat the line to gain as you would the goal line.
4. If the line to gain is near the goal line, your first priority is the goal line. If necessary come back from the goal line to the line to gain once it is clear that the runner is unlikely to score.
5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Do not remain on the line of scrimmage as you would for a passing play elsewhere in the field. The Umpire should assist with passes crossing the neutral zone in goal line situations.

**13.6 – Returns****13.6.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Observing the runner and action around him while you are the nearest official.
2. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if:
 - (a) the ball becomes dead on your side of the field between Team A's 2-yard line and the goal line; or
 - (b) the runner is between you and Team A's goal line; or
 - (c) you are closer to the spot than the deep official.
 Normally the deep official will have an easier route to the spot than you because he is following the play while you have still to avoid players running towards you.
3. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
4. Observing any illegal forward pass, especially if you have a view that is level or nearly level with the ball carrier.
5. Observing blocks by players in your area of responsibility ahead of and around the ball carrier, particularly:
 - (a) illegal block in the back and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls anywhere
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) illegal forward handing
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenceless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
6. Observing any hand-off or backward pass where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.

13.6.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Keep out of the players' way.
2. Backpedal towards Team A's goal line ahead of the play. If it is no longer possible to backpedal, turn and watch the play over your shoulder.
3. If the play advances far enough to threaten Team A's goal line, be there before the runner.
4. Observe the runner while he remains in your area of responsibility. If the change of possession occurs deeper downfield than you are, backpedal down the sideline, always keeping the runner in front of you. Try and keep him boxed in between you and the deep official. Take over responsibility for the runner if he overtakes you (unless the deep official is forced to as well). Stay wide enough to be able to retreat outside the sideline ahead of the players. Never turn your back on the ball.
5. Assist the Referee on Team A's goal line. You have sideline responsibility from your position to the goal line.
6. If the ball becomes dead in your area of responsibility, blow your whistle, give the time-out signal (S3), and then signal first down (S8) to show which team is in possession. Hold the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.

13.7 – Punts

13.7.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Ruling whether the kick crossed the neutral zone by knowing if it touches the ground, a player or official beyond the neutral zone.
2. If the kick is short:
 - (a) Marking the end of the kick with a bean bag if you are the nearest official.
 - (b) Ruling whether players touched the ball or not.
 - (c) Observing any fair catch signals by players in your area.
 - (d) Observing kick catch interference against a player in position to catch the kick, if the kick comes down in your area.
 - (e) If the kick does not come down in your area, observing players who have *not* committed kick catch interference because they were blocked by an opponent into the receiver.
 - (f) Marking all spots of illegal touching with a bean bag.
3. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) blocking below the waist, especially by players on your side of the field and [LINESMAN ONLY] the up back
 - (b) before the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker, especially the tackle or wing back on your side
 - (c) during the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls against Team A players trying to get down the field
 - (d) a Team A player returning inbounds after voluntarily going out of bounds during the down (drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns)
 - (e) illegal blocks made by players who have signalled for a fair catch
 - (f) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (g) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
4. Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions on your side of the formation, and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligible downfield if the play develops into a passing play.
5. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.
6. Being directed by the Referee to the crossing point on your sideline if a short kick is kicked directly out of bounds.

During a punt return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

13.7.b – Initial positioning

1. Take normal scrimmage down position.

13.7.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. When the ball is kicked, observe its initial trajectory, but do not watch the flight of the ball. Observe players in your area of responsibility (defined by the diagrams in section 24.4) – their eyes will tell you where the ball is going.
2. Stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the line, then move downfield a maximum of 10-15 yards.
3. The deep officials will normally be responsible for the receivers, but the Line Judge and Linesman must assist on their respective sides of the field with coverage of the shallowest receivers and short kicks out of bounds.

4. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball will *not* land in your area:
 - (a) Maintain a position where you can cover play in front of and around the returner. If you are the nearest official *other than* the official covering the punt returner, move to where you can observe whether players are blocked by an opponent into interfering with a receiver in a position to catch the kick.
 - (b) If a player in your area signals for a fair catch, watch that he does not block before he touches the ball.
 - (c) Do not hesitate to call a foul if you clearly see one occur in the area where you are the cleanup man even though you may be a considerable distance away from the action. Communicate with your colleagues to find out their view of the action.
5. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball *will* land in your area:
 - (a) If the kick is first touched by a member of the kicking team, give the illegal touching signal (S16) to signify that fact. If the kick is first muffed (but not possessed) by a member of the receiving team beyond the neutral zone, you may give the legal touching signal (S11) to signify a free ball.
 - (b) Use bean bags to mark any spots of illegal touching and/or the spot where the kick ends. Only one official, the Coverer in each case, should mark each spot and give each signal. If you have more than one spot and only one bean bag, prioritise the spot most advantageous to Team B. ♦
 - (c) If the ball becomes dead because it is caught or recovered by Team B after a fair catch signal, or caught or recovered by Team A, blow your whistle and give the timeout signal (S3).
 - (d) If the kick is recovered by Team A, blow your whistle, signal timeout (S3) and give the illegal touching signal (S16) and the first down signal (S8). Momentary touching of the ball by a player of the kicking team should not be interpreted as control of the ball.
 - (e) If the kick goes out of bounds in your area, blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3) immediately. If the ball goes out of bounds in flight, signal (Sup16) to the Referee to direct you to the crossing point using signals (Sup17, Sup18 & Sup19). Hold the spot and place a ball at it. Other officials will retrieve/relay a ball to the Spotter.
 - (f) If the ball rolls to a stop in your area, ensure no player is attempting to recover it before blowing your whistle and signalling timeout (S3).
6. During the return, react as in the section "Returns" (above).

13.7.d – Advanced techniques

1. Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage. ♦
 - (a) If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - (b) Cover the goal line and end line as appropriate.
 - (c) Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.
 - (d) When the ball is loose in the backfield, assist the Referee by observing actions against the kicker, especially when the ball is on the opposite side of the field.
 - (e) If the kick is blocked, the wing official on the same side of the field as the Referee should hold his position on the line of scrimmage and remain responsible for ruling whether the kick crosses the line. The other wing official should move into Team A's backfield to assist the Referee.

13.8 – Field goal & try attempts**13.8.a – Priorities (highest first)**

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Ruling whether the kick crossed the neutral zone, by knowing if it touches the ground, a player or official beyond the neutral zone.
2. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker and holder, especially the end and/or wing back on your side
 - (b) blocking below the waist
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (e) illegal formation, especially linemen illegally locking legs prior to the snap
3. Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions on your side of the formation, and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligibly downfield if the play develops into a passing play.
4. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

If the kick is returned, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

13.8.b – Initial positioning

1. Be in normal scrimmage down position.
2. [LINESMAN ONLY] On a try down, set the down box on the three-yard line showing down 1, and instruct the chain crew to lay the chain on the ground outside the limit lines at around the 20-yard line, and to stand well back.

13.8.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. [LINESMAN ONLY] After the kick, jog in towards the pile of players in the middle of the field. This will force you to keep your eyes on the players and discourage you from looking to see if the kick is good or not. If trouble occurs, you will be in a better position to assist the Umpire in dealing with it.
2. If a run or pass develops, and the ball was snapped from inside the 15-yard line, move quickly towards the goal line. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] The Side Judge may already be at the goal line on the Linesman's side of the field.

13.8.d – Advanced techniques

1. Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage. [◇]
 - (a) If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - (b) Cover the goal line and end line as appropriate.
 - (c) Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.
 - (d) When the ball is loose in the backfield, assist the Referee by observing actions against the kicker and holder. The Referee will have switched his responsibilities to watching the ball.
 - (e) If the kick is blocked, the wing official on the same side of the field as the Referee should hold his position on the line of scrimmage and remain responsible for ruling whether the kick crosses the line. The other wing official should move into Team A's backfield to assist the Referee.
2. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] On a try down, instruct the alternate line-to-gain marker operators (if you have them) to lay their equipment on the ground and to stand well back.

13.9 – After each down**13.9.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Observing dead-ball action by players of both teams.
2. Encouraging the players to unpile safely, and either return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot, as appropriate.
3. Checking whether the line to gain has been reached or is close, and signalling appropriately. [†]
4. Checking whether any penalty flags have been thrown, and, if so:
 - (a) Giving the timeout signal (S3).
 - (b) Reporting any fouls you have called to the Referee and Umpire.
 - (c) Covering penalty flags (and bean bags, if appropriate) thrown by colleagues.
 - (d) Ensuring that all penalties are enforced correctly.
 - (e) Keeping the Head Coach on your sideline informed of penalties, particularly against his team.
5. Checking for injured players or other occurrences that may delay play.
6. Recognising requests for timeouts.
7. Echoing all timeout signals (S3) of your colleagues.
8. Knowing whether the play ended inbounds, and informing the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12).
9. Assisting in relaying the existing ball or a new ball to the succeeding spot.

13.9.b – Initial positioning

1. Shortly after the end of the previous down, you should be in a position level with the succeeding spot.

13.9.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If you are the Coverer, check whether the line to gain has been reached. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] You should normally be in a particularly good position to rule on this. If you do this consistently, the Linesman will not need to turn to look at the chains to know whether the line to gain has been reached.
 - (a) If it has, give the timeout signal (S3). After all action has ceased, make eye contact with the Referee and signal first down (Sup35). ^{*} Hold the signal until he acknowledges it.
 - (b) If you are not sure whether the line to gain has been reached or not, signal timeout (S3) and yell "close". Encourage the Referee to come and look for himself.
 - (c) Only place a ball on the ground at the *actual* dead-ball spot — never at a spot level with it.
 - (d) If the play ended inbounds, inform the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12).
2. [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If you are the Coverer, signal that the ball is dead. This will be using the dead-ball signal (S7) unless either the timeout signal (S3), touchdown/field-goal signal (S5), safety signal (S6) or incomplete pass/missed field-goal signal (S10) is appropriate instead (give only 1 signal). [®]
3. If a penalty flag has been thrown, follow the procedure in chapter 19. If a team or injury timeout has been called, follow the procedure in chapter 17. If a period has ended, follow the procedure in chapter 20.

Moving the down box and chains:

4. [LINESMAN ONLY]
 - (a) When certain that there has been no foul on the previous play (and that there is no other reason to wait), instruct the down marker to be moved to the new position, and check that the correct down number is displayed.
 - (b) When a first down is achieved, and a new line to gain is to be established, first instruct the down marker to be moved to the new position on the sideline. The chain crew should then be instructed to move quickly to their new position.
 - (c) Anticipate any call for a measurement and be ready to bring in the chains when signaled by Referee.
5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) Anticipate any call for a measurement and be ready to come in to mark the spot for the clip when signaled by the Referee.

Relaying the ball:

6. If you have the ball, but another official has the dead ball spot and it is close to the line to gain, hand the ball to that official and allow him to spot it at the precise location (yard line *and* lateral position) where the ball became dead.
7. Unless you are the Coverer, assist in relaying a ball to the official who will place it at the succeeding spot. (Mechanic 5.8)
8. If the ball becomes dead out of bounds or closer to the sideline than to the inbounds line do not move the ball at the dead-ball spot until a replacement ball has been positioned at the correct location on the inbounds line.

Getting ready for the next down:

9. Check that there is nothing untoward going on outside your sideline or in your team area, but don't allow this duty to detract from your primary responsibilities within the field of play.
10. Verbally or visually (using signals Sup11 or Sup12)[®] inform the Referee of the correct down and clock status (if you are the Coverer), and check that the Referee indicates it correctly. Inform him immediately if an incorrect signal is given. Be aware of the new distance to the line to gain.
11. If substitutions are made from your side of the field, check that Team A players fulfil the nine-yard line requirements. (Rule 7-1-3-a-2)
12. Only grant requests from sideline personnel for timeouts or coach's conferences that meet the requirements of the rules. (Rule 3-3-4)
13. Move into position for the next down. If the ready-for-play has been given (or is imminent), backpedal to keep your eyes on the ball.[♠] Do not take your eyes off it in case the play starts while you are not looking.

13.9.d – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting), observe Team B's response. If they begin to substitute, alert the Referee (Sup36 and "subs on") to prevent Team A snapping the ball. When the substitution is complete, drop the signal.[‡]
3. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Referee (for a Team A player) or the Umpire or Back Judge (for a Team B player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.
4. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.

5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY WHEN THERE IS AN ALTERNATE CREW]
 - (a) When the ball is declared ready for play for the next down, instruct the alternate down box operator to move his box to the new position.
 - (b) When a new line to gain is established and the chain is set, instruct the alternate line to gain marker to be moved to the new position.
6. [LINESMAN ONLY] Don't spend so much time interacting with the chain crew that you disregard your other duties watching players and communicating with colleagues.

14. FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE (6 AND 7-MAN CREWS)

14.1 – Free kicks

14.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

Prior to the kick:

1. Being aware of whether the Referee has instructed the crew to switch to onside-kick positions, and moving position (if appropriate) if he has:
2. Counting Team A players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
4. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.
5. Ensuring that all Team A players are within the 9-yard lines prior to the kick. (Rule 6-1-2-e)
6. Only when satisfied that all is ready, and that your colleagues (particularly the Umpire) are in position, holding your arm aloft until your readiness is acknowledged by the Umpire.
7. Being alert always for short kicks.

During the kick play:

8. Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
9. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
10. If the kick is short:
 - (a) Knowing where and by whom the ball was first touched.
 - (b) If you are positioned on Team B's restraining line, knowing whether the kick breaks the plane of that line.
 - (c) Observing illegal blocks by Team A.
 - (d) Marking any spot of illegal touching with a bean bag.
 - (e) Marking the dead-ball spot if you are the nearest official and there is little or no return run.
11. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
12. Marking the dead-ball spot *only* if the runner is tackled or goes out of bounds within the last 2 yards before Team A's goal line, or if the runner gets ahead of you.
13. Ruling a touchdown at Team A's goal line.
14. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal touching of a short kick
 - (b) infractions of your restraining line
 - (c) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (d) blocks below the waist
 - (e) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks

- (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
- (g) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick

14.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. If the free kick takes place after a score, proceed along the sideline to your kickoff position, ensuring as you do so that the team on your side of the field is aware of the progress of the one-minute intermission. (Rule 3-3-7-h)
2. [FIELD JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) [ON A 6-MAN CREW] Be in position F (see 24.1) outside the press box sideline on Team A's restraining line.
 - (b) [ON A 7-MAN CREW] Be in position D (see 24.1) outside the press box sideline on Team B's restraining line.
3. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] Be in position E (see 24.1) outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line.

Onside-kicks:

4. [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Remain in the normal position.
5. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] Move to position G (see 24.1) outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team A's restraining line.

Free kicks after a safety:

6. When a free kick is taken following a penalty or a safety, the same relative positions should be taken, moving up or down the field as appropriate.

14.1.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

Prior to the kick:

1. If anything happens that should prevent the kick taking place (e.g. a non-participant enters or approaches the field of play), toot your whistle, give the timeout signal (S3) and deal with the problem.

During any kick play:

2. If you see any player of the kicking team voluntarily go out of bounds during the kick, drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns.
3. If the clock should start when the ball is first legally touched in the field of play, give the start clock signal (S2) if you are the nearest official or the one with the best view.

During a kick play that goes deep:

4. After the ball is kicked, observe the players in your area of responsibility (see diagrams in section 24.1). After checking its initial trajectory, do not watch the flight of the ball.
5. Move downfield along the sideline while the kick is in the air. During the return, stay ahead of the runner, keeping him bracketed between you and the deep official. On a long run, be at Team A's goal line before the runner. Mark the dead-ball spot if it is between Team A's 2-yard line and the goal line, or if the runner passes you.
6. If the ball goes out of bounds in your area go to and hold the spot, dropping your flag if appropriate. Place a ball at the spot and ensure that another official relays a ball to the Spotter.

During a kick play where the kick is short:

7. Maintain a position where you can see the ball and the blocks by Team A players.
8. [IF YOU ARE ON TEAM A'S RESTRAINING LINE] Particularly watch the blocks made by Team A players before they are eligible to touch the ball. (Rule 6-1-2-g)
9. [IF YOU ARE ON TEAM B'S RESTRAINING LINE] Know where and by whom the ball was first touched. Mark any spot of illegal touching with your bean bag. (Rule 6-1-3)

10. If you are the nearest official when the ball becomes dead, signal timeout (S3) and mark the dead ball spot.

14.1.d – Advanced techniques

1. Pay particular attention to the blocks made by the two players from Team B's front line who were nearest you at the kick.
2. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] If an expected onside kick is instead kicked deep, move into the field and leave sideline responsibility in your area to the Linesman.

14.2 – Basic scrimmage plays

14.2.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Knowing the down and distance, and signalling the down to your colleagues. Noting the down signals given by colleagues. Checking that the down box displays the correct number. [◇] Not allowing play to start if there is a dispute about the down number.
2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to your colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] If visible stadium play clocks are being used, observing their start on the Referee's ready, and observing whether they count down to zero before the ball is snapped.
4. Identifying your key player(s) (see page 156). If the formation is new or unusual, verbally or visually confirming this with the other officials.
5. Noting eligible receivers and those players who would normally be eligible by position but who are ineligible by number. In addition, noting players (normally tight ends) who would normally be eligible by number but who are not eligible because a player is lined up outside them on the line of scrimmage.
6. Being aware of where the line to gain is in relation to the line of scrimmage so that you don't have to look at the chain to know whether the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain or not.
7. Observing substitution infractions by Team B, for example:
 - (a) replaced players not leaving the huddle within 3 seconds of an incoming substitute entering it
 - (b) substitutes coming on to the field, communicating, and then leaving the field
8. Ensuring that coaches and substitutes are behind the coaching box line and that your sideline is clear of any obstructions.

14.2.b – Initial positioning

1. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] Be on the same side of the field as the Linesman.
2. [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Be on the same side of the field as the Line Judge.
3. Be in position on or just outside the sideline. Both officials should lineup on the same yard line. This would normally be 20 yards from the line of scrimmage. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] Do not be as deep as the Back Judge. [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Match the depth set by the Side Judge.

14.2.c – Advanced techniques

Reasons for varying (or not) your initial position:

1. Your initial position may be varied according to the state of the game. It is appropriate to be deeper if expecting a long pass, and shallower for short-yardage situations.
2. On "take a knee" plays, pinch in closer to the players and use your presence to deter unsportsmanlike acts.

Signalling the player count:

3. The latest time to make the player count signal is when the offensive team breaks its huddle (but it can and should be done earlier if possible).

14.3 – Running plays

14.3.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing action ahead of the runner.
2. Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not.
3. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field between Team B's 2-yard line and the goal line.
4. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
5. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack, especially those made by your key player or any wide receiver, tight end, lead back or pulling lineman
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls by your key player and other players in your area
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
6. Getting to the goal line ahead of any runner in order to be able to rule on a touchdown.

14.3.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Backpedal down the sideline, always keeping the runner in front of you. Try and keep him boxed in between you and the wing official. Take over responsibility for the runner only if he overtakes you (unless the wing official is forced to as well).
2. Stay wide enough to be able to retreat outside the sideline ahead of the players. Never turn your back on the ball.
3. If the play advances far enough to threaten Team B's goal line, be there before the runner.
4. If the run goes to the opposite side of the field, observe action behind the runner and the Umpire. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] It is permissible to move in to near the hashmarks to better observe players. However, be alert for reverses or a runner cutting back towards your side. If this happens, be sure to be back on or outside your sideline before the runner reaches it.

If the ball becomes dead on your side of the field:

5. Blow your whistle if you clearly see the runner down or out of bounds. If he is out of bounds or the line to gain has been reached, also signal timeout (S3).
6. If you are much closer than the wing official, or the ball becomes dead within 2-yards of Team B's goal line, move to the dead-ball spot once players have cleared the immediate area.
 - (a) If the play ends in bounds, square off, i.e. move parallel to the sideline then in, rather than diagonally. [◇]
 - (b) If the play ends out of bounds, stop on the sideline and watch any continuing action in the out-of-bounds area. (The wing official should go out-of-bounds to supervise activity in this area.)
 - (c) Be alert to cover the forward progress spot when the runner has been thrown back.
 - (d) Do not leap over players to reach the forward progress spot: keep the players in front of you.
 - (e) Once all action has ceased, if necessary obtain a ball and place it at the dead ball spot, then help retrieve/relay a ball to the Spotter. (Mechanic 5.8)

7. If the ball goes out of bounds in the wing official's area, go into the team area as far as the runner and observe any actions against him.

14.3.c – Advanced techniques

1. Don't blow your whistle when the runner's back is toward you or you are obscured by other players (or officials) – he may have fumbled the ball without you seeing it. See leather! Be certain that the ball is dead.
2. If a pile-up of players forms, give the timeout signal (S3), converge on the pile and determine who has possession. (Mechanic 5.11)
3. If you're not the nearest official to the dead-ball spot, observe for late hits and other illegal acts. It is particularly your responsibility to observe action close to the wing of officials as they are concentrating on the forward progress spot.

14.4 – Passing plays

14.4.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Ruling whether the pass is complete or incomplete. While primarily this will be for passes to your side of the field, in practice you may need to rule on any pass where the receiver is facing or at right angles to you, regardless of his position. Similarly, if the receiver has his back to you, you may need to defer to another official with a better view than you.
2. Ruling on touchdowns on passes into the end zone.
3. Observing the initial contact by and against your key player(s).
4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) defensive and offensive pass interference
 - (b) defensive holding and illegal use of hands against eligible receivers
 - (c) illegal block below the waist fouls by players on your side of the formation
 - (d) illegal touching of a forward pass by a player who went out of bounds voluntarily
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenseless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (g) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Watching for players who go out of bounds across the sideline or end line. [◇] Once the pass is complete, apply the same priorities as on a running play (above).

14.4.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Backpedal or sidestep down the sideline, always keeping deeper than any potential receiver to your side of the field. Ensure that you can see blocking and contact by and against any eligible receivers in your zone of the field.
2. Switch from man-to-man coverage (watching your key player) to zone coverage (watching your area of responsibility) immediately after the initial action. This is usually 2-3 seconds after the snap, once it is clear into which zones the receivers are running.
3. You have sole responsibility for the sideline from your position to Team B's end line, and joint responsibility for it between you and the wing official. Either of you may declare the runner or ball out of bounds, but unless you are much closer, it should be the wing official who marks the forward progress.
4. Be responsible for the goal line and the end line on your side of the field but do not neglect the middle of the field. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] The Back Judge will assist you with these.
5. If a Team A receiver voluntarily goes out of bounds in your area, drop your bean bag or hat to indicate this, and observe him to see whether he is the first to touch a forward pass.

6. Once you are aware that the pass has been thrown, move into position to best be able to rule on whether the pass is complete or incomplete, and whether there is interference. While the ball is in flight, watch opposing players who are contesting for the ball, not the ball itself.
7. If you are not the nearest official, particularly watch for defenders slightly away from the ball who come in and target the receiver with the crown of their helmet or above the shoulders.[®]
8. Blow your whistle if you see the ball become dead in your area.
9. If the pass is thrown to the opposite side of the field from you, look across and be prepared to assist with rulings on complete/incomplete, pass interference, illegal helmet contact and forward progress, though only if you are 100% sure of what you see. Also maintain a view of action on your side of the field that may be unnecessary. [◇]
10. When ruling on pass receptions involving the sideline, give only one signal. Give the incomplete pass signal (S10) if the pass is ruled incomplete. Give the timeout signal (S3) if the pass is ruled complete and the runner goes out of bounds thereafter. (Mechanic 5.9) Give the start the clock signal (S2) if the pass is complete and the runner is declared down inbounds. Whichever signal is given should be repeated two or three times. Remember to look at the other official on your sideline before giving any signal that indicates a completed pass. Nod your head "yes" to him to indicate a completed pass; shake it "no" if you have it incomplete. [◇]
11. When contact that would have been pass interference occurs on a pass that is uncatchable, give the uncatchable pass signal (S17).
12. After an incompletion, obtain a ball from the ball person and form a relay to return the ball to the Spotter. (Mechanic 5.8) Ensure that the thrown ball is removed from the field.
13. If there is a run after the catch, react as you would on a running play (above).
14. Maintain a position where you can see player activity in fringe areas, particularly on wide-open plays.

14.4.c – Advanced techniques

1. When an airborne player attempts to catch a pass near the sideline or end line, watch his feet first to see whether he comes down in bounds. If he does, then look to his hands to see whether he has control of the ball. If you look at his hands first, you may miss the instant when his foot touches the ground. Establish eye contact with your sideline or end line colleague at the end of the play before giving any signal. (Mechanic 5.17.8)

14.5 – Goal line plays

14.5.a – Priorities (highest first)

Same priorities as on other scrimmage plays, plus:

1. Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not. This includes all passes into the end zone, plus running plays if the ball is snapped outside Team B's 7-yard line. [†]
2. Observing players' celebrations after a score.

14.5.b – Initial positioning

If the ball is snapped from outside the 7-yard line but inside the 20:

1. Be on the sideline at the goal line. [†]
2. Be able to see at least half of the goal line, and your sideline in the end zone. (When play terminates on or near the goal line you must be on the goal line to rule on penetration of the plane.)
3. Be prepared to rule on forward progress within 2 yards of the goal line.

4. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] Also be able to see at least half of the end line. If the ball is snapped from on or inside the 7-yard line.[†]
5. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] Be on the sideline extended, approximately 2 yards beyond the end line. If there is no wideout to your side, it is permissible to move to a position where you are 45-degrees to the sideline extended and end line extended.[‡]
6. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] Be approximately 2 yards out of bounds 45-degrees to the sideline extended and end line extended.
7. Be able to observe all action in your area of the end zone, and be especially aware of action close to the sideline or end line.[†] (Mechanic 5.17.8) The wing officials will be responsible for the goal line.

14.5.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If you have goal line responsibility, remain on the line unless you need to move to a position to rule on a pass completion in the end zone.
2. If you have sideline/end line responsibility, on a running play observe lead blockers and on a passing play observe all receivers in your zone. If a receiver in your zone threatens to step out of bounds, observe him – don't rely on the Back Judge to cover the end line alone.[†]
3. Indicate a score by blowing your whistle and giving the touchdown signal (S5) only when you clearly see the ball break the plane of the goal line in player possession or if you see a pass completed in the end zone.
4. If a pile-up forms at the goal line, come into the field of play[◇] until you can see the ball. If you are the nearest official, you may need to dig for it. Check with other officials that they did not see the runner down (or fumble the ball) before he reached the goal line.
5. If you have goal line responsibility and it is necessary to move out of the players' way as they come towards you, move wider without leaving the goal line.[◇]
6. Do not give a score signal if you have thrown a penalty flag for a foul by the scoring team. Do not blow your whistle or give any signal if you are not sure about the outcome of the play.
7. If you have goal line responsibility, straddle the goal line – don't run after the player into the end zone unless there is a threat of trouble by or against him.
8. Maintain the touchdown signal until you know the Referee has seen it, but keep your eyes on the players (turn as necessary) – don't look to the Referee until all action has ceased. Don't run and signal at the same time. You should not echo the signals of other officials unless the Referee cannot see their signal.
9. It is especially important on goal line plays that all covering officials indicate the same point of forward progress. Communicate if in doubt. Signal only if sure.

14.5.d – Advanced techniques

1. Communicate verbally as to who has the responsibility for the goal line and end line before each down. In noisy situations, point at the line you have responsibility for.
2. If you have sideline/end line responsibility,[◇] on a running play towards the goal line pylon, assist the wing official by watching the runner to see if he steps out of bounds. This allows the wing official to give priority to the goal line.

14.6 – Returns

14.6.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing the runner and action around him while you are the nearest official.
2. Marking the forward progress or out of bounds spot if the ball becomes dead on your side of the field. This responsibility extends up to Team A's 2-yard line. If the ball goes

- to the other side of the field, backing up your colleague on the other side of the field by either estimating the dead ball spot or mirroring his spot.
3. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
 4. Observing any illegal forward pass, especially if you have a view that is level or nearly level with the ball carrier.
 5. Observing blocks by players in your area of responsibility ahead of and around the ball carrier, particularly:
 - (a) illegal block in the back and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls anywhere
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) illegal forward handing
 - (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenceless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 6. Observing any hand-off or backward pass where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.

14.6.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Keep out of the players' way.
2. Move towards Team A's goal line following the play.
3. Observe the runner while he remains on your side of the field or towards the middle. Try and keep him boxed in between you and the wing official.[◇] Be prepared to close when the ball becomes dead and mark the forward progress spot. The wing official may be in a better position than you to cover the runner, in which case he will normally be the one to declare the ball dead and mark the forward progress.
4. If the runner is on the opposite side of the field, observe players in the middle of the field as well as on your side.
5. If the ball becomes dead in your area of responsibility, blow your whistle, give the time-out signal (S3), and then signal first down (S8) to show which team is in possession. Hold the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.

14.7 – Punts

14.7.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Marking the end of the kick with a bean bag if you are the nearest official.
2. Ruling whether players touched the ball or not.
3. Observing any fair catch signals by players in your area.
4. Observing kick catch interference against a player in position to catch the kick, if the kick comes down in your area.
5. If the kick does not come down in your area, observing players who have *not* committed kick catch interference because they were blocked by an opponent into the receiver.
6. Marking all spots of illegal touching with a bean bag.
7. Ruling whether a momentum exception applies or not near the goal line.
8. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) blocking below the waist, especially by players on your side of the field
 - (b) during the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls against Team A players trying to get down the field

- (c) a Team A player returning inbounds after voluntarily going out of bounds during the down (drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns)
 - (d) illegal blocks made by players who have signalled for a fair catch
 - (e) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
9. Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions on your side of the formation, and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligibly downfield if the play develops into a passing play²
 10. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.
 11. Being directed by the Referee to the crossing point on your sideline if the ball is kicked directly out of bounds.

During a punt return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

14.7.b – Initial positioning

1. Be on or outside the sideline slightly deeper than the deepest receiver. Be level with the other deep official(s).
2. Ensure you can see any shallow receiver(s) in your half of the field, or, if none, the deepest potential blockers.
3. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 40-yard line, be in an initial position at the goal line pylon. Be prepared to rule on whether the kick goes out of bounds in the field of play or in the end zone.
4. Be prepared to adjust your position according to the strength and direction of the wind, and the ability of the kicker.
5. Have a bean bag readily available and a second one to hand.

14.7.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. When the ball is kicked, observe its initial trajectory, but do not watch the flight of the ball. Observe players in your area of responsibility (defined by the diagrams in section 24.4) – their eyes will tell you where the ball is going.
2. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] The Field Judge is responsible for the deepest receiver and the Side Judge is responsible for all shallower receivers except those near the Line Judge. If there are two deep receivers, the Field Judge and Side Judge each take responsibility for their nearest man. If there are more than two, the Field Judge will normally take responsibility for the two nearest him. The Field Judge and Side Judge always work from the outside in.
3. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] The Back Judge is responsible for the deepest receiver and maintains coverage from the inside out. If there are two deep receivers, the Field Judge takes responsibility for the one nearer to him and the Back Judge has the other, usually from a position between the two receivers. If there are three deep receivers, the Back Judge has the middle one and the deep officials each take the one nearest to them. If two receivers line up one in front of the other, the Back Judge has the deepest one and the Field Judge the one in front, unless that player is obviously to the Side Judge's side of the field. The Field Judge and Side Judge always work from the outside in.
4. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball will *not* land in your area:
 - (a) Hold in your original lateral position. This will assist in signalling to other officials that you are covering action in front of the returner.
 - (b) Maintain a position where you can cover play in front of and around the returner. If you are the nearest official *other than* the official covering the punt returner, move to where you can observe whether players are blocked by an opponent into interfering with a receiver in a position to catch the kick.

- (c) Move so that you can observe action around the runner if the play is away from you. Be prepared to take over responsibility for the runner if he cuts back to your side. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] Move into a Back Judge role in the centre of the field if the play remains on the opposite side, but be prepared to get back to your sideline ahead of the play if its direction changes back towards you.
 - (d) If a player in your area signals for a fair catch, watch that he does not block before he touches the ball.
 - (e) Do not hesitate to call a foul if you clearly see one occur in the area where you are the cleanup man even though you may be a considerable distance away from the action. Communicate with your colleagues to find out their view of the action.
5. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball *will* land in your area:
 - (a) Unless you are responsible for the deepest receiver, give a punch signal (Sup28) to your colleagues to indicate that you are assuming responsibility for the kick and the nearest returner.
 - (b) Move into position wide of (at least 10 yards unless he is near the sideline)⁴ and slightly behind the receiver to rule on the validity of the catch.
 - (c) If the kick is first touched by a member of the kicking team, give the illegal touching signal (S16) to signify that fact. If the kick is first muffed (but not possessed) by a member of the receiving team beyond the neutral zone, you may give the legal touching signal (S11) to signify a free ball.
 - (d) Use bean bags to mark any spots of illegal touching and/or the spot where the kick ends. Only one official, the Coverer in each case, should mark each spot and give each signal. If you have more than one spot and only one bean bag, prioritise the spot most advantageous to Team B.⁴
 - (e) If the ball becomes dead because it is caught or recovered by Team B after a fair catch signal, or caught or recovered by Team A, blow your whistle and give the timeout signal (S3).
 - (f) If the ball is not caught and goes deeper than the receiver, follow the ball and be prepared to rule on its status. Stay far enough away from it that there is no danger of it touching you.
 - (g) If the ball approaches the goal line, be on the goal line to rule on whether it enters the end zone. Other officials will cover the players.
 - (h) If the ball does enter the end zone (untouched by Team B in the field of play) or is downed by Team B in the end zone, blow your whistle and signal touchback (S7), repeating the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.
 - (i) If the kick is recovered by Team A, blow your whistle, signal timeout (S3) and give the illegal touching signal (S16) and the first down signal (S8). Momentary touching of the ball by a player of the kicking team should not be interpreted as control of the ball.
 - (j) If the kick goes out of bounds in your area, blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3) immediately. If the ball goes out of bounds in flight, signal (Sup16) to the Referee to direct you to the crossing point using signals (Sup17, Sup18 & Sup19). Hold the spot and place a ball at it. Other officials will retrieve/relay a ball to the Spotter.
 - (k) If the ball rolls to a stop in your area, ensure no player is attempting to recover it before blowing your whistle and signalling timeout (S3).
 6. During the return, react as in the section "Returns" (above).

14.7.d – Advanced techniques

1. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 40-yard line, there will be [ON A 6-MAN CREW] two or [ON A 7-MAN CREW] three officials on the goal line. The nearest official to the ball should rule on whether it crosses the goal line, while the other official(s) rule on the actions of the players around it.

2. Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage. [◇]
 - (a) If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - (b) Cover the goal line and end line as appropriate.
 - (c) Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.

14.8 – Field goal & try attempts

14.8.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. [ON A 6-MAN CREW OR THE FIELD JUDGE ON A 7-MAN CREW] Ruling the success or failure of the field goal attempt. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] The Field Judge and Side Judge share this responsibility. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] The Field Judge shares this responsibility with the Back Judge.
2. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [SIDE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) If the ball is snapped from on or inside Team B's 5-yard line:
 - (i) Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (1) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls by linemen and backs protecting the kicker, especially the end and/or wing back on your side
 - (2) defensive players illegally attempting to block the kick (defensive restrictions)
 - (3) blocking below the waist
 - (4) any action against the snapper that might be roughing
 - (5) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (6) players meeting opponents with a knee
 - (7) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (8) illegal formation, especially linemen illegally locking legs prior to the snap
 - (ii) After the ball is kicked, continuing to observe players until they are totally separated. Never turning around to see whether the kick is successful or not, never echoing the success/failure signals made by the official(s) ruling on the kick, never writing down the score, never getting a new ball, never doing anything other than observing the players until there is no possible threat of trouble.
 - (b) If the ball is snapped from outside Team B's 5-yard line:
 - (i) Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not.
3. Observing illegal touching or batting of the ball.
4. Observing players' celebrations after a score.
5. Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions on your side of the formation and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligibly downfield if the play develops into a passing play.
6. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

If the kick is returned, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

14.8.b – Initial positioning

1. [ON A 6-MAN CREW OR THE FIELD JUDGE ON A 7-MAN CREW] Take position one yard behind the goal post on your side of the field. You are responsible for ruling whether the ball passes inside your upright. [FIELD JUDGE ONLY ON A 6-MAN CREW] In addition you are responsible for ruling whether the ball passes above the crossbar.
2. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [SIDE JUDGE ONLY]
 - (a) If the ball is snapped from outside the 5-yard line, be in position outside the junction of the sideline and the goal line, on the same side of the field as the Linesman. [◇] Be prepared to rule on runs and passes from fake field goal attempts.
 - (b) If the ball is snapped from on or inside the 5-yard line, be in a double umpire position. Watch defensive players who may violate rules related to gaining leverage to block a kick.

14.8.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. [ON A 6-MAN CREW OR FIELD JUDGE ON A 7-MAN CREW]
 - (a) Observe the ball from kick to when it becomes obvious whether the attempt will be successful or not.
 - (b) If you consider the kick to be successful, communicate ("good", nod) with your colleague behind the posts and together come out between the uprights (approximately one yard into the end zone) giving the score signal (S5) as you come to a stop.
 - (c) If you consider the kick to have failed, give the no score signal (S10) or, if the kick is wide to your side, only the kick wide signal (Sup15). Do *not* signal a touchback.
 - (d) Hold either signal for at least five seconds and until you know the Referee has seen it.
 - (e) [ON A 6-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Blow your whistle when the result of the kick is obvious.
 - (f) If the kick is short or blocked and the ball remains alive, give no signal. Move into position to officiate the kick play as a punt.
2. [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] Maintain a position where you can watch the initial charge, check blocking by the offense and action by defensive players, particularly the end player and wing back on your side of the offensive formation.

14.8.d – Advanced techniques

1. Be alert for cases where the kick is blocked or where there is a bad snap. [◇]
 - (a) [ON A 6-MAN CREW OR FIELD JUDGE ON A 7-MAN CREW] Stay in position in case there is a drop kick attempt.
 - (b) [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] If you are in the double umpire position, stay in your position and observe the actions against Team A players on your side of the formation. [§]
 - (c) If the ball is recovered and advanced by Team B, follow the return up the field. [§]
2. If Team A switch to a run or pass formation:
 - (a) [ON A 6-MAN CREW OR FIELD JUDGE ON A 7-MAN CREW] Break out along the end line towards the corner pylon. At all times cover play in the end zone. [◇]
 - (b) [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] If you are in the double umpire position, drop back to the end line and assume the normal role of the Back Judge.
3. Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.

14.9 – After each down**14.9.a – Priorities (highest first)**

1. Observing dead-ball action by players of both teams.
2. Encouraging the players to unpile safely, and either return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot, as appropriate.
3. Checking whether the line to gain has been reached or is close, and signalling appropriately.¹
4. Checking whether any penalty flags have been thrown, and, if so:
 - (a) Giving the timeout signal (S3).
 - (b) Reporting any fouls you have called to the Referee and Umpire.
 - (c) Covering penalty flags (and bean bags, if appropriate) thrown by colleagues.
 - (d) Ensuring that all penalties are enforced correctly.
5. Checking for injured players or other occurrences that may delay play.
6. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Stopping the clock when necessary.²
7. Recognising requests for timeouts.
8. Echoing all timeout signals (S3) of your colleagues.
9. Knowing whether the play ended inbounds, and informing the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12).³
10. Assisting in relaying the existing ball or a new ball to the succeeding spot.
11. If you are not covering the play, assisting in maintaining order on the field by moving towards⁴ where the play ended.

14.9.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If you are the Coverer, check whether the line to gain has been reached.
 - (a) If it has, give the timeout signal (S3). After all action has ceased, make eye contact with the Referee and signal first down (Sup35).⁵ Hold the signal until he acknowledges it.
 - (b) If you are not sure whether the line to gain has been reached or not, signal timeout (S3) and yell “close”. Encourage the Referee to come and look for himself.
 - (c) Only place a ball on the ground at the *actual* dead-ball spot — never at a spot level with it.
 - (d) If the play ended inbounds, inform the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12).⁶
2. [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If you are the Coverer, signal that the ball is dead. This will be using the dead-ball signal (S7) unless either the timeout signal (S3), touchdown/field-goal signal (S5), safety signal (S6) or incomplete pass/missed field-goal signal (S10) is appropriate instead (give only 1 signal).⁷
3. If a penalty flag has been thrown, follow the procedure in chapter 19. If a team or injury timeout has been called, follow the procedure in chapter 17. If a period has ended, follow the procedure in chapter 20.

Relaying the ball:

4. If you have the ball, but another official has the dead ball spot and it is close to the line to gain, hand the ball to that official and allow him to spot it at the precise location (yard line *and* lateral position) where the ball became dead.
5. Unless you are the Coverer, assist in relaying a ball to the official who will place it at the succeeding spot. (Mechanic 5.8)
6. If the ball becomes dead out of bounds or closer to the sideline than to the inbounds line do not move the ball at the dead-ball spot until a replacement ball has been positioned at the correct location on the inbounds line.
7. Maintain order at the sideline and in the team areas.

8. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Remind the Referee of the clock status and, if stopped, remind him whether it should start on the snap or on the ready. Be prepared for a ruling by the Referee on when the clock should start in unfair clock tactics situations. Do *not* echo the Referee's start the clock signal (S2).
9. If there are stadium game clocks, check to see that they have stopped and started correctly.
10. If substitutions are made from your side of the field, check that Team A players fulfil the nine-yard line requirements. (Rule 7-1-3-a-2)
11. Only grant requests from sideline personnel for timeouts or coach's conferences that meet the requirements of the rules. (Rule 3-3-4)
12. Move into position for the next down. If the ready-for-play has been given (or is imminent), backpedal to keep your eyes on the ball.⁹ Do not take your eyes off it in case the play starts while you are not looking.

14.9.c – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting), observe Team B's response. If they begin to substitute, alert the Referee (Sup36 and "subs on") to prevent Team A snapping the ball. When the substitution is complete, drop the signal.¹⁰
3. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Referee (for a Team A player) or the Umpire or Back Judge (for a Team B player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.
4. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.

15. BACK JUDGE (7-MAN CREW)

15.1 – Free kicks

15.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

Prior to the kick:

1. Being aware of whether the Referee has instructed the crew to switch to onside-kick positions, and moving position (if appropriate) if he has.
2. Counting Team A players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Checking side areas to ensure that all non-players are out of the restricted areas, that non-participants are off the field of play, and that all team personnel are within the team area.
4. Ensuring that the chain crew (and the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker operators, where provided) have moved themselves and their equipment well out of the way and that the equipment has been placed on the ground outside the team areas and behind the limit lines.
5. Ensuring that all Team A players are within the 9-yard lines prior to the kick. (Rule 6-1-2-c)
6. Only when satisfied that all is ready, and that your colleagues (particularly the Umpire) are in position, holding your arm aloft until your readiness is acknowledged by the Umpire.
7. Being alert always for short kicks.

During the kick play:

8. Observing whether a free kick goes out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team.
9. Watching players for a fair catch signal, and being prepared to rule on any interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
10. If the kick is short:
 - (a) Knowing where and by whom the ball was first touched.
 - (b) Observing illegal blocks by Team A.
 - (c) Marking any spot of illegal touching with a bean bag.
 - (d) Marking the dead-ball spot if you are the nearest official and there is little or no return run.
11. Giving the start the clock signal (S2) only if the ball is first legally touched in the field of play in your area of responsibility.
12. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal touching of a short kick
 - (b) infractions of your restraining line
 - (c) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (d) blocks below the waist
 - (e) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
 - (g) any player of the kicking team who enters the field of play after the kick or who voluntarily goes out of bounds during the kick

15.1.b – Initial positioning

Normal kicks:

1. If the free kick takes place after a score, proceed along the sideline to your kickoff position, ensuring as you do so that the team on your side of the field is aware of the progress of the one-minute intermission. (Rule 3-3-7-h)
2. Be in position F (see 24.1) outside the press box sideline on Team A's restraining line.

Onside-kicks:

3. Remain in the normal position.

Free kicks after a safety:

4. When a free kick is taken following a penalty or a safety, the same relative positions should be taken, moving up or down the field as appropriate.

15.1.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

Prior to the kick:

1. If anything happens that should prevent the kick taking place (e.g. a non-participant enters or approaches the field of play), toot your whistle, give the timeout signal (S3) and deal with the problem.

During any kick play:

2. If you see any player of the kicking team voluntarily go out of bounds during the kick, drop your bean bag or hat to mark his exit, and your flag if he returns.
3. If the clock should start when the ball is first legally touched in the field of play, give the start clock signal (S2) if you are the nearest official or the one with the best view.

During a kick play that goes deep:

4. After the ball is kicked, observe the players in your area of responsibility (see diagrams in section 24.1). After checking its initial trajectory, do not watch the flight of the ball.
5. Angle slowly infield approximately 20 yards (level with the Umpire) as you move down the field. Observe action ahead of the runner on your side of the field.

During a kick play where the kick is short:

6. Maintain a position where you can see the ball and the blocks by Team A players.
7. Particularly watch the blocks made by Team A players before they are eligible to touch the ball. (Rule 6-1-2-g)

15.1.d – Advanced techniques

1. Pay particular attention to the blocks made by the middle player(s) from Team B's front line.
2. If an expected onside kick is instead kicked deep, move into the field and leave sideline responsibility in your area to the Field Judge.

15.2 – Basic scrimmage plays

15.2.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Knowing the down and distance, and signalling the down to your colleagues. Noting the down signals given by colleagues. Checking that the down box displays the correct number. [∇] Not allowing play to start if there is a dispute about the down number.
2. Counting Team B players and signalling the count (one of signals Sup3, Sup4 or Sup24) to your colleagues. Noting count signals from colleagues. Recounting if your count differs from that of colleagues.
3. Identifying your key player(s) (see page 156). If the formation is new or unusual, verbally or visually confirming this with the other officials.
4. Noting eligible receivers and those players who would normally be eligible by position but who are ineligible by number. In addition, noting players (normally tight ends) who

would normally be eligible by number but who are not eligible because a player is lined up outside them on the line of scrimmage.

5. Being aware of where the line to gain is in relation to the line of scrimmage so that you don't have to look at the chain to know whether the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain or not.
6. Observing substitution infractions by Team B, for example:
 - (a) replaced players not leaving the huddle within 3 seconds of an incoming substitute entering it
 - (b) substitutes coming on to the field, communicating, and then leaving the field

15.2.b – Initial positioning

1. Be 25 yards from the line of scrimmage, inside the inbounds lines. †
2. Be deep and clear of players, but able to see all receivers, especially your key man.
3. Normally, you will be deeper than the deepest back, but be sure to keep out of his way.
4. Favour the strong side of the formation, or, if it is balanced, the side of the player who is your key.

15.2.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Always be in position to cover play from the inside looking out.
2. Be aware of a backfield player (as long as he is your key player) in motion at the snap. Adjust your position if necessary to ensure that you always have him in sight. He becomes your responsibility after the snap (unless he was the widest player in the formation at the snap) if he crosses the neutral zone on a pass play or if he blocks outside the tackle on a running play.
3. If there is a pre-snap foul, maintain a position where you can see all players (especially on the fringes) who may commit a late hit.

15.2.d – Advanced techniques

Reasons for varying (or not) your initial position:

1. On “take a knee” plays, come up into a double umpire position. Tell other officials that you are doing this. Use your presence to deter unsportsmanlike acts.
2. On obvious “hail mary” plays, start deeper than normal and make sure you can get to Team B's goal line or end line before any Team A player.

15.3 – Running plays

15.3.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing action ahead of the runner.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag if possible.
3. Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not on a breakaway run.
4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) illegal use of the hands and holding fouls at the point of attack, especially those made by your key player or any wide receiver, tight end, lead back or pulling lineman
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls by your key player and other players in your area
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Getting to the goal line ahead of any runner in order to be able to rule on a touchdown.



15.3.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Move to observe actions by players behind the Umpire and ahead of the runner. Your first step must be backwards, even on a running play. †
2. Don't move forwards until you know where the ball is going to become dead.
3. On line plunges up the middle, do not move too fast. Let the play come to you.
4. When a running play develops toward a sideline, move slightly towards that sideline, keeping the runner between you, the side official and the sideline. Stay ahead of the play and keep out of the way of the safeties.
5. On long runs, try to stay ahead of the runner and keep him boxed in between you and the deep official. Keep out of the players' way.
6. If you are the nearest official when the ball becomes dead, blow your whistle and move to deal with the pile. Only if the wing officials are delayed (or obviously missed a knee down or similar event) do you need to mark the dead ball spot. †
7. Be on Team B's goal line before a touchdown is scored.
8. If you are not the nearest official to the dead ball spot, nevertheless move towards it and observe the continuing action after the ball becomes dead. On plays when the runner goes near the sideline or out of bounds, cover the area around him for extra-curricular activity. This may bring you to a position near or outside the 9-yard marks. †
9. Maintain a position where you can observe player activity in fringe areas, particularly on wide-open plays.

15.3.c – Advanced techniques

1. Don't blow your whistle when the runner's back is toward you or you are obscured by other players (or officials) – he may have fumbled the ball without you seeing it. See leather! Be certain that the ball is dead.
2. If a pile-up of players forms, give the timeout signal (S3), converge on the pile and determine who has possession. (Mechanic 5.11)
3. If you're not the nearest official to the dead-ball spot, observe for late hits and other illegal acts. It is particularly your responsibility to observe action close to the wing officials as they are concentrating on the forward progress spot.
4. Because the Back Judge is not very often directly involved in running plays, it is important to maintain concentration throughout the game. You may be the only official to observe some action away from the ball, or behind another official's back.

15.4 – Passing plays

15.4.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Ruling whether the pass is complete or incomplete. While primarily this will be for passes to the middle of the field, in practice you may need to rule on any pass where the receiver is facing or at right angles to you, regardless of his position. Similarly, if the receiver has his back to you, you may need to defer to another official with a better view than you.
2. Ruling on touchdowns on passes into the end zone.
3. Observing the initial contact by and against your key player(s).
4. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) defensive and offensive pass interference
 - (b) defensive holding and illegal use of hands against eligible receivers
 - (c) illegal block below the waist fouls by any motion man and all receivers in the middle of the field
 - (d) illegal touching of a forward pass by a player who went out of bounds voluntarily (this may require consultation with a sideline colleague)

- (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenseless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (g) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Watching for players who go out of bounds beyond the end line.
Once the pass is complete, apply the same priorities as on a running play (above).

15.4.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Your progression on a pass play is (1) your key player; (2) your zone; (3) the intended receiver.[∇]
2. Backpedal to keep all receivers in front of you. After the snap, your first step should normally be backwards (unless you are on the goal line or end line). Don't move forwards until you know where the ball is likely to become dead. Ensure that you can see blocking and contact by and against any eligible receivers in the middle of the field. Never get beaten deep.
3. On long pass receptions, be prepared to rule on the goal line and the end line.
4. Switch from man-to-man coverage (watching your key player) to zone coverage (watching your area of responsibility) immediately after the initial action. This is usually 2-3 seconds after the snap, once it is clear into which zones the receivers are running.
5. If receivers run routes into the end zone, move into position on the end line.
6. If a Team A receiver voluntarily goes out of bounds in your area, drop your bean bag or hat to indicate this, and observe him to see whether he is the first to touch a forward pass.
7. Once you are aware that the pass has been thrown, move into position to best be able to rule on whether the pass is complete or incomplete, and whether there is interference. While the ball is in flight, watch opposing players who are contesting for the ball, not the ball itself.
8. If you are not the nearest official, particularly watch for defenders slightly away from the ball who come in and target the receiver with the crown of their helmet or above the shoulders.[®]
9. Blow your whistle if you see the ball become dead in your area.
10. If the pass is ruled incomplete, give the incomplete pass signal (S10).
11. When contact that would have been pass interference occurs on a pass that is uncatchable, give the uncatchable pass signal (S17).
12. After an incompletion, ensure that the thrown ball is removed from the field. Repeat the incomplete pass signal (S10) to the Referee (and Umpire, if necessary) in case they did not see the original signal.
13. If there is a run after the catch, react as you would on a running play (above).
14. On plays when the receiver goes near the sideline or out of bounds, cover the area around him for extra-curricular activity. This may bring you to a position near or outside the 9-yard marks.[†]
15. Maintain a position where you can see player activity in fringe areas, particularly on wide-open plays.

15.4.c – Advanced techniques

1. When an airborne player attempts to catch a pass near the sideline or end line, watch his feet first to see whether he comes down in bounds. If he does, then look to his hands to see whether he has control of the ball. If you look at his hands first, you may miss the instant when his foot touches the ground. Establish eye contact with your end line colleague at the end of the play before giving any signal. (Mechanic 5.17.8)



15.5 – Goal line plays

15.5.a – Priorities (highest first)

Same priorities as on other scrimmage plays, plus:

1. Ruling whether a touchdown is scored or not. This includes all passes into the end zone, plus running plays if the ball is snapped outside Team B's 20-yard line.[†]
2. Observing players' celebrations after a score.

15.5.b – Initial positioning

1. If the ball is snapped from on or inside the 20-yard line, take up initial position on the end line. Be responsible for the entire end line and all action in your area of the end zone.
2. If the ball is snapped from inside the 7-yard line, the other deep officials will also be in position on the end line. Your responsibility for the end line is shared with the official on the side to which the play is made. (Mechanic 5.17.8)

15.5.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Move to observe all players in your area of responsibility. If a pass is thrown into the end zone, move to the best position to rule on the end of the pass. If the pass is thrown into a corner of the end zone, this will normally be somewhere between the inbounds lines and the 9-yard marks.[†]
2. Indicate a score by blowing your whistle and giving the touchdown signal (S5) only if you see a pass completed in the end zone.
3. If a pile-up forms at the goal line, come into the field of play[∇] until you can see the ball. If you are the nearest official, you may need to dig for it. Check with other officials that they did not see the runner down (or fumble the ball) before he reached the goal line.
4. Do not give a score signal if you have thrown a penalty flag for a foul by the scoring team. Do not blow your whistle or give any signal if you are not sure about the outcome of the play.
5. Maintain the touchdown signal until you know the Referee has seen it, but keep your eyes on the players (turn as necessary) – don't look to the Referee until all action has ceased. Don't run and signal at the same time. You should not echo the signals of other officials unless the Referee cannot see their signal.
6. If the end of the play is not in your area of responsibility, move into position to assist in the clean-up of continuing action around or away from the ball.

15.6 – Returns

15.6.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing the runner and action around him while you are the nearest official.
2. Observing any fumble where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.
3. Observing any illegal forward pass, especially if you have a view that is level or nearly level with the ball carrier.
4. Observing blocks by players in your area of responsibility ahead of and around the ball carrier, particularly:
 - (a) illegal block in the back and holding fouls at the point of attack
 - (b) illegal block below the waist fouls anywhere
 - (c) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (d) illegal forward handing

- (e) contacting an opponent with the crown of the helmet or targeting a defenceless opponent above the shoulders[®]
 - (f) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
5. Observing any hand-off or backward pass where you are the nearest official or have the best view, and marking the spot with a bean bag.

15.6.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Keep out of the players' way.
2. Move towards Team A's goal line following the play.
3. If the change of possession occurs in your area of responsibility, observe the runner as you would on a running play. Otherwise, observe action around and away from the play.
4. If the ball becomes dead in your area of responsibility, blow your whistle, give the timeout signal (S3), and then signal first down (S8) to show which team is in possession. Hold the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.
5. If you are not the nearest official to the dead ball spot, nevertheless move towards it and observe the continuing action after the ball becomes dead. On plays when the runner goes near the sideline or out of bounds, move laterally to cover the area around him for extra-curricular activity. This may bring you to a position near or outside the 9-yard marks.[†]

15.7 – Punts

15.7.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Marking the end of the kick with a bean bag if you are the nearest official.
2. Ruling whether players touched the ball or not.
3. Observing any fair catch signals by players in your area.
4. Observing kick catch interference against a player in position to catch the kick, if the kick comes down in your area.
5. If the kick does not come down in your area, observing players who have *not* committed kick catch interference because they were blocked by an opponent into the receiver.
6. Marking all spots of illegal touching with a bean bag.
7. Ruling whether a momentum exception applies or not near the goal line.
8. Observing fouls by all players generally in your area, but particularly:
 - (a) blocking below the waist, especially by players in the middle of the field
 - (b) during the kick, illegal use of the hands and holding fouls against Team A players trying to get down the field
 - (c) illegal blocks made by players who have signalled for a fair catch
 - (d) safety-related fouls such as face masking, tripping or chop blocks
 - (e) late hits by any player after the ball is dead
9. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

During a punt return, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

15.7.b – Initial positioning

1. Be behind and to the side of the deepest receiver. Behind so that you can look through him and see the ball kicked. To the side so that you are out of his way, but still close enough to observe whether he touches the ball or not, or whether any opponent interferes with his opportunity to catch the kick. About five yards behind and five yards to the side is an appropriate distance.

2. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 40-yard line, be in an initial position on the goal line in the middle of the field.
3. Be prepared to adjust your position according to the strength and direction of the wind, and the ability of the kicker. Move closer to the sideline where the wind is likely to carry the kicked ball.[‡]
4. Have a bean bag readily available and a second one to hand.

15.7.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. When the ball is kicked, observe its initial trajectory, but do not watch the flight of the ball. Observe players in your area of responsibility (defined by the diagrams in section 24.4) – their eyes will tell you where the ball is going.
2. The Back Judge is responsible for the deepest receiver and maintains coverage from the inside out. If there are two deep receivers, the Field Judge takes responsibility for the one nearer to him and the Back Judge has the other, usually from a position between the two receivers. If there are three deep receivers, the Back Judge has the middle one and the deep officials each take the one nearest to them. If two receivers line up one in front of the other, the Back Judge has the deepest one and the Field Judge the one in front, unless that player is obviously to the Side Judge's side of the field. The Field Judge and Side Judge always work from the outside in.
3. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball will *not* land in your area:
 - (a) If the kick is short and to either sideline, the sideline official will assume responsibility for the ball. They will give the punch signal (Sup28) to indicate this.
 - (b) Maintain a position where you can cover play in front of and around the returner. If you are the nearest official *other than* the official covering the punt returner, move to where you can observe whether players are blocked by an opponent into interfering with a receiver in a position to catch the kick.
 - (c) If a player in your area signals for a fair catch, watch that he does not block before he touches the ball.
 - (d) Do not hesitate to call a foul if you clearly see one occur in the area where you are the cleanup man even though you may be a considerable distance away from the action. Communicate with your colleagues to find out their view of the action.
4. When it appears obvious that the kicked ball *will* land in your area:
 - (a) Move into position wide of (at least 10 yards unless he is near the sideline)[‡] and slightly behind the receiver to rule on the validity of the catch.
 - (b) If the kick is first touched by a member of the kicking team, give the illegal touching signal (S16) to signify that fact. If the kick is first muffed (but not possessed) by a member of the receiving team beyond the neutral zone, you may give the legal touching signal (S11) to signify a free ball.
 - (c) Use bean bags to mark any spots of illegal touching and/or the spot where the kick ends. Only one official, the Coverer in each case, should mark each spot and give each signal. If you have more than one spot and only one bean bag, prioritise the spot most advantageous to Team B.[‡]
 - (d) If the ball becomes dead because it is caught or recovered by Team B after a fair catch signal, or caught or recovered by Team A, blow your whistle and give the timeout signal (S3).
 - (e) If the ball is not caught and goes deeper than the receiver, follow the ball and be prepared to rule on its status. Stay far enough away from it that there is no danger of it touching you.
 - (f) If the ball approaches the goal line, be on the goal line to rule on whether it enters the end zone. Other officials will cover the players.
 - (g) If the ball does enter the end zone (untouched by Team B in the field of play) or is downed by Team B in the end zone, blow your whistle and signal touchback (S7), repeating the signal until you know the Referee has seen it.

- (h) If the kick is recovered by Team A, blow your whistle, signal timeout (S3) and give the illegal touching signal (S16) and the first down signal (S8). Momentary touching of the ball by a player of the kicking team should not be interpreted as control of the ball.
 - (i) If the ball rolls to a stop in your area, ensure no player is attempting to recover it before blowing your whistle and signalling timeout (S3).
5. During the return, react as in the section "Returns" (above).

15.7.d – Advanced techniques

1. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 40-yard line, there will be three officials on the goal line. The nearest official to the ball should rule on whether it crosses the goal line, while the other official(s) rule on the actions of the players around it.
2. Be alert for blocked kicks and their recovery and advance. On fake kicks switch to normal run or pass coverage. [◇]
 - (a) If the play turns into a run or pass, react as you would do normally for that type of play.
 - (b) Cover the goal line and end line as appropriate.
 - (c) Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.

15.8 – Field goal & try attempts

15.8.a – Priorities (highest first)

Before and during the kick, applying the same priorities as on basic scrimmage plays (above), plus:

1. Ruling the success or failure of the field goal attempt. You share this responsibility with the Field Judge.
2. Observing illegal touching or batting of the ball.
3. Observing players' celebrations after a score.
4. Noting the numbers of players in eligible receiver positions and observing whether anyone else is the first to touch the ball or is ineligibly downfield if the play develops into a passing play.
5. Responding to bad snaps or blocked kicks by adopting run, pass or return priorities, as appropriate.

If the kick is returned, applying the same priorities as on returns (above).

15.8.b – Initial positioning

1. Take position one yard behind the goal post furthest from the press box. You are responsible for ruling whether the ball passes inside your upright. In addition you are responsible for ruling whether the ball passes above the crossbar.

15.8.c – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. Observe the ball from kick to when it becomes obvious whether the attempt will be successful or not.
2. If you consider the kick to be successful, communicate ("good", nod) with your colleague behind the posts and together come out between the uprights (approximately one yard into the end zone) giving the score signal (S5) as you come to a stop.
3. If you consider the kick to have failed, give the no score signal (S10) or, if the kick is wide to your side, only the kick wide signal (Sup15). Do *not* signal a touchback.
4. Hold either signal for at least five seconds and until you know the Referee has seen it.
5. Blow your whistle when the result of the kick is obvious.
6. If the kick is short or blocked and the ball remains alive, give no signal. Move into position to officiate the kick play as a punt.



15.8.d – Advanced techniques

1. Be alert for cases where the kick is blocked or where there is a bad snap. [◇]
 - (a) Stay in position in case there is a drop kick attempt.
 - (b) If the ball is recovered and advanced by Team B, follow the return up the field. [§]
2. If Team A switch to a run or pass formation:
 - (a) Break out along the end line towards the corner pylon. At all times cover play in the end zone. [◇] Assume the normal role of the Side Judge.
3. Be aware of the jersey numbers of the eligible receivers.

15.9 – After each down

15.9.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. Observing dead-ball action by players of both teams.
2. Encouraging the players to unpile safely, and either return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot, as appropriate.
3. Checking whether the line to gain has been reached or is close, and signalling appropriately. [^]
4. Checking whether any penalty flags have been thrown, and, if so:
 - (a) Giving the timeout signal (S3).
 - (b) Reporting any fouls you have called to the Referee and Umpire.
 - (c) Covering penalty flags (and bean bags, if appropriate) thrown by colleagues.
 - (d) Ensuring that all penalties are enforced correctly.
5. Checking for injured players or other occurrences that may delay play.
6. Stopping the clock when necessary. [◇]
7. Recognising requests for timeouts.
8. Echoing all timeout signals (S3) of your colleagues.
9. Assisting in relaying the existing ball or a new ball to the succeeding spot.
10. If you are not covering the play, assisting in maintaining order on the field by moving towards[†] where the play ended.

15.9.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. In the rare event that you are the Coverer, check whether the line to gain has been reached.
 - (a) If it has, give the timeout signal (S3). After all action has ceased, make eye contact with the Referee and signal first down (Sup35). ^{*} Hold the signal until he acknowledges it.
 - (b) If you are not sure whether the line to gain has been reached or not, signal timeout (S3) and yell "close". Encourage the Referee to come and look for himself.
 - (c) Only place a ball on the ground at the *actual* dead-ball spot — never at a spot level with it.
 - (d) If the play ended inbounds, inform the Referee that the clock should start on the ready by giving him the clock running signal (Sup12). ^{*}
2. [WHEN A 40-SECOND CLOCK IS BEING USED] If you are the Coverer, signal that the ball is dead. This will be using the dead-ball signal (S7) unless either the timeout signal (S3), touchdown/field-goal signal (S5), safety signal (S6) or incomplete pass/missed field-goal signal (S10) is appropriate instead (give only 1 signal). [®]
3. If a penalty flag has been thrown, follow the procedure in chapter 19. If a team or injury timeout has been called, follow the procedure in chapter 17. If a period has ended, follow the procedure in chapter 20.

Relaying the ball:

4. If you have the ball, but another official has the dead ball spot and it is close to the line to gain, hand the ball to that official and allow him to spot it at the precise location (yard line *and* lateral position) where the ball became dead.
5. Unless you are the Coverer, assist in relaying a ball to the official who will place it at the succeeding spot. (Mechanic 5.8)
6. If the ball becomes dead out of bounds or closer to the sideline than to the inbounds line do not move the ball at the dead-ball spot until a replacement ball has been positioned at the correct location on the inbounds line.

Getting ready for the next down:

7. Remind the Referee of the clock status and, if stopped, remind him whether it should start on the snap or on the ready. Be prepared for a ruling by the Referee on when the clock should start in unfair clock tactics situations. Do *not* echo the Referee's start the clock signal (S2).
8. If there are stadium game clocks, check to see that they have stopped and started correctly.
9. Only grant requests from sideline personnel for timeouts or coach's conferences that meet the requirements of the rules. (Rule 3-3-4)
10. Move into position for the next down. If the ready-for-play has been given (or is imminent), backpedal to keep your eyes on the ball. [◇] Do not take your eyes off it in case the play starts while you are not looking.

15.9.c – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting), observe Team B's response. If they begin to substitute, alert the Referee (Sup36 and "subs on") to prevent Team A snapping the ball. When the substitution is complete, drop the signal. [‡]
3. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Referee (for a Team A player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.
4. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.

16. KEY SYSTEMS

16.1 – General

1. In determining keys, the following definitions are needed:
 - (a) Strength of the formation – determined by the number of receivers on a particular side of the offensive formation. The strong side is the side with the most receivers. It has nothing to do with the number of linemen on each side of the snapper[◇] but rather the number of receivers positioned outside the tackles.
 - (b) On a 5 or 7-man crew, if there is no strong side (balanced formation), the Line Judge's side is deemed to be the strong side.
 - (c) Tight end / split end – the end man on the line of scrimmage. A *tight end* is usually lined up no more than 4 yards from the nearest offensive lineman. If he is lined up wider than he is a *split end*.
 - (d) Slot back / flanker back – a back lined up outside the nearest interior lineman or tight end. A *slot back* is usually lined up no more than 4 yards from the nearest offensive lineman. If he is lined up wider than he is a *flanker back*.
 - (e) Back in the backfield – a player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.
 - (f) Trips – three or more receivers on one side of the offensive formation outside the tackles.
2. It does not matter in determining keys whether a player is:
 - (a) on or off the line of scrimmage
 - (b) wearing an eligible number or not
3. The priority of keys to determine initial assignments for each group of officials is as follows:
 - (a) Deep officials – i.e. Side Judge and Field Judge;
 - (b) Back Judge (5 or 7-man crew);
 - (c) Wing officials – i.e. Line Judge and Linesman.
4. The general rule is do not key the same player as any official ahead of you in the order of priority. For example, on a 7-man crew, the Line Judge or Linesman should not key the same player as the Back Judge, and the Back Judge should not key on the same player as the Side Judge or Field Judge.
5. If players are stacked one behind another, the one nearest the line of scrimmage is considered to be the widest.
6. If the formation is illegal (e.g. too many players in the backfield, more than one player in motion), the crew should failsafe to keys based on the position of players at the snap.
7. If the formation is new or unusual then verbally or visually confirm keys with other officials.

16.2 – 4-man crew

1. The wing officials key all eligible receivers on their side of the field.
2. Where 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 (tight end or split end). Any flanker back, slot back or motion man is a secondary key.

16.3 – 5-man crew

1. The Back Judge always keys on the inside eligible receiver(s) outside the tackles on the strong side of the formation. This will normally be the tight end or slot back.
2. The wing officials always key on the widest player of the offensive formation on their side of the field. This will normally be either a split end or a flanker back unless the Back Judge is keying on him.

Relaying the ball:

4. If you have the ball, but another official has the dead ball spot and it is close to the line to gain, hand the ball to that official and allow him to spot it at the precise location (yard line *and* lateral position) where the ball became dead.
5. Unless you are the Coverer, assist in relaying a ball to the official who will place it at the succeeding spot. (Mechanic 5.8)
6. If the ball becomes dead out of bounds or closer to the sideline than to the inbounds line do not move the ball at the dead-ball spot until a replacement ball has been positioned at the correct location on the inbounds line.

Getting ready for the next down:

7. Remind the Referee of the clock status and, if stopped, remind him whether it should start on the snap or on the ready. Be prepared for a ruling by the Referee on when the clock should start in unfair clock tactics situations. Do *not* echo the Referee's start the clock signal (S2).
8. If there are stadium game clocks, check to see that they have stopped and started correctly.
9. Only grant requests from sideline personnel for timeouts or coach's conferences that meet the requirements of the rules. (Rule 3-3-4)
10. Move into position for the next down. If the ready-for-play has been given (or is imminent), backpedal to keep your eyes on the ball. [◊] Do not take your eyes off it in case the play starts while you are not looking.

15.9.c – Advanced techniques

1. The priority at the end of a play is to get into position ready for the next one. Only if a serious incident occurs (such as a foul or misconduct, an injury, or a breakage of the chain) should your routine be interrupted.
2. If Team A makes last second substitutions (rushing to the line of scrimmage while in the process of substituting), observe Team B's response. If they begin to substitute, alert the Referee (Sup36 and "subs on") to prevent Team A snapping the ball. When the substitution is complete, drop the signal. [‡]
3. If you want to speak to a player on the field (e.g. to warn him that he was close to fouling), it often saves time to relay the message via the Referee (for a Team A player). Don't delay the game unnecessarily by entering either team's huddle, unless a timeout is still in progress.
4. Maintain your concentration, and think about the next play.

16. KEY SYSTEMS**16.1 – General**

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 - (a) Strength of the formation – determined by the number of receivers on a particular side of the offensive formation. The strong side is the side with the most receivers. It has nothing to do with the number of linemen on each side of the snapper[◊] but rather the number of receivers positioned outside the tackles.
 - (b) On a 5 or 7-man crew, if there is no strong side (balanced formation), the Line Judge's side is deemed to be the strong side.
 - (c) Tight end / split end – the end man on the line of scrimmage. A *tight end* is usually lined up no more than 4 yards from the nearest offensive lineman. If he is lined up wider than he is a *split end*.
 - (d) Slot back / flanker back – a back lined up outside the nearest interior lineman or tight end. A *slot back* is usually lined up no more than 4 yards from the nearest offensive lineman. If he is lined up wider than he is a *flanker back*.
 - (e) Back in the backfield – a player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.
 - (f) Trips – three or more receivers on one side of the offensive formation outside the tackles.
2. It does not matter in determining keys whether a player is:
 - (a) on or off the line of scrimmage
 - (b) wearing an eligible number or not
3. The priority of keys to determine initial assignments for each group of officials is as follows:
 - (a) Deep officials – i.e. Side Judge and Field Judge;
 - (b) Back Judge (5 or 7-man crew);
 - (c) Wing officials – i.e. Line Judge and Linesman.
4. The general rule is do not key the same player as any official ahead of you in the order of priority. For example, on a 7-man crew, the Line Judge or Linesman should not key the same player as the Back Judge, and the Back Judge should not key on the same player as the Side Judge or Field Judge.
5. If players are stacked one behind another, the one nearest the line of scrimmage is considered to be the widest.
6. If the formation is illegal (e.g. too many players in the backfield, more than one player in motion), the crew should failsafe to keys based on the position of players at the snap.
7. If the formation is new or unusual then verbally or visually confirm keys with other officials.

16.2 – 4-man crew

1. The wing officials key all eligible receivers on their side of the field.
2. Where 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 (tight end or split end). Any flanker back, slot back or motion man is a secondary key.

16.3 – 5-man crew

1. The Back Judge always keys on the inside eligible receiver(s) outside the tackles on the strong side of the formation. This will normally be the tight end or slot back.
2. The wing officials always key on the widest player of the offensive formation on their side of the field. This will normally be either a split end or a flanker back unless the Back Judge is keying on him.

3. If the formation is balanced and there is only one eligible receiver to each side, the Back Judge takes the first back on a pass route out of the backfield. If there are two receivers to each side, the Back Judge takes the inside man on the Line Judge's side, and the Linesman takes the two on his side.
4. If there are three eligible receivers on the strong side, the wing official takes the third receiver if he lines up near the widest player, otherwise the third receiver is the responsibility of the Back Judge.
5. A man who goes in motion will be the responsibility of the Back Judge unless he is the widest player at the snap.

16.4 – 6-man crew

1. The deep officials always key on the widest player of the offensive formation on their side of the field.
2. The wing officials always key on the most inside receiver outside the tackles (often the tight end) on their side of the field. A running back running a pass pattern to one side of the field may be the second player.
3. If there are three receivers on the strong side, the deep official takes the third receiver if he lines up near the widest player, otherwise the third receiver is the responsibility of the wing official.
4. If there is motion, keys are determined by the position of the motion man at the snap (not by his direction). If he is the widest player then he will be the responsibility of the deep official, otherwise he is keyed by the wing official.

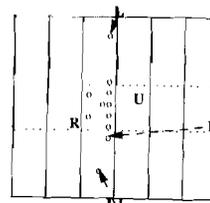
16.5 – 7-man crew

1. The Side Judge and Field Judge always key on the widest player of the offensive formation on their side of the field. This includes the motion man if his motion makes him the widest player.
2. The Back Judge normally takes the most inside receiver positioned outside the tackle on the strong side of the formation. This is normally the tight end or slot back. If the formation is balanced, the Back Judge takes the most inside receiver outside the tackle on the Line Judge's side, if there is one, and the first back out of the backfield, if not. If there is a back in motion, the Back Judge keys on him after the snap unless he is the widest player on his side of the formation.
3. The wing officials key on the second receiver on their side of the formation. Since the second receiver would never be the widest receiver, the only concern is not to double cover the Back Judge's key man. The normal coverage is therefore the nearest back in the backfield. A wing official would only key on a tight end if there were two in the formation, in which case the Back Judge will take the one on the Line Judge's side and the Linesman the one on his side.



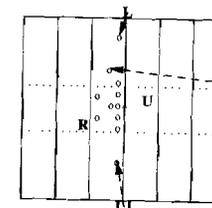
16.6 – 5-man crew examples

Figure A: Pro set



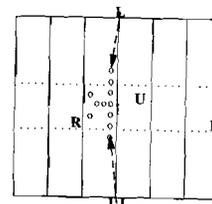
LJ's side is the strong side.

Figure B: Slot formation



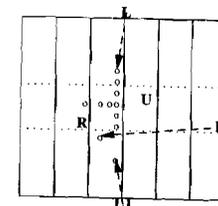
L's side is the strong side. BJ keys on the slot back on that side. L keys on the split end. LJ keys on the split end on the other side.

Figure C: Wishbone formation



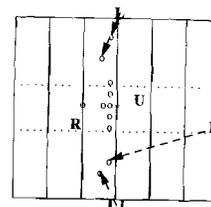
Balanced formation with one receiver each side. BJ keys on first back out of the backfield.

Figure D: Single-wing formation



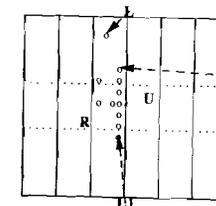
LJ's side is the strong side. BJ keys on the slot back. LJ keys on the flanker. L keys on the tight end to his side.

Figure E: Spread formation



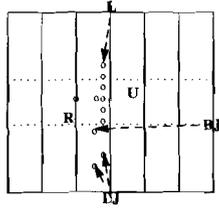
Formation is balanced with two receivers each side; strength declared to LJ's side. BJ keys on second man in on that side. LJ keys on the flanker on that side. L must key on both receivers on his side.

Figure F: Double-wing formation



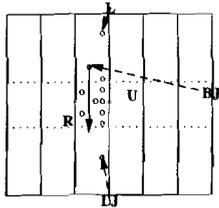
L's side is the strong side. BJ keys on the tight end on that side. LJ keys on the other tight end. L keys on the flanker back on his side.

Figure G: Triple receivers on one side (1)



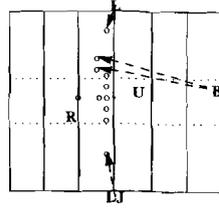
LJ's side is the strong side. BJ keys on the slot back. LJ keys both wide receivers. L keys on the tight end who is positioned on the weak side.

Figure I: Motion which changes strength



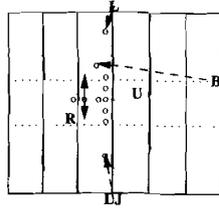
Strength is initially to L's side. L keys on split end on his side. LJ keys on split end on other side. BJ keys on the slot back and stays with him as he changes sides.

Figure H: Triple receivers on one side (2)



L's side is the strong side. BJ keys on both slot backs. L keys split end on that side. LJ keys on split end on other side.

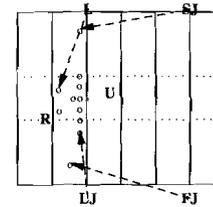
Figure J: Motion which does not change strength



Strength is initially to L's side. L keys on split end on L's side. LJ keys on split end on weak side. BJ keys on slot back, and also the motion man if he is near the slot back at the snap. If the motion man goes to the LJ's side, the strength changes, BJ has only the motion man, and L needs to key on both players on his side.

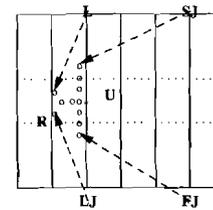
16.7 – 6-man crew examples

Figure A: Pro set



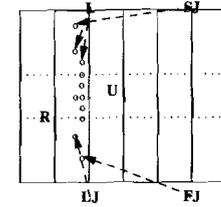
LJ's side is the strong side. FJ keys on the flanker. SJ keys on the split end. LJ keys on the tight end. L keys on the backfield.

Figure C: Double tight end and balanced backfield



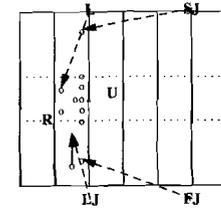
Balanced formation. SJ & FJ key on the tight ends. L & LJ key on the split backs. The remaining back (the fullback) is the responsibility of whichever wing official he moves towards at the snap.

Figure B: Spread receivers



L's side is the strong side. FJ keys on the wide receiver on the weak side. LJ keys on the second receiver on that side. SJ keys on the flanker back. L keys on the end on his side and the remaining receiver.

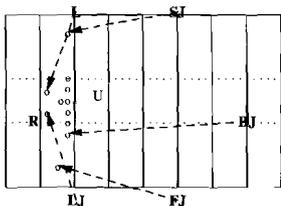
Figure D: Motion



When the motion man ceases to be the widest player in the formation he becomes the LJ's responsibility and the FJ keys on the split end.

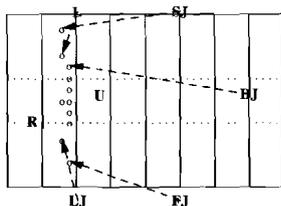
16.8 – 7-man crew examples

Figure A: Pro set



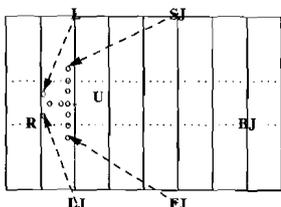
LJ's side is the strong side. FJ keys on the flanker. SJ keys on the split end. BJ keys on the tight end. L & LJ key on the backfield.

Figure B: Spread receivers



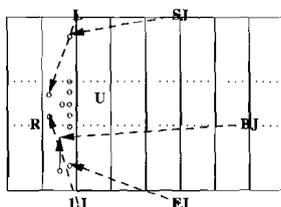
L's side is the strong side. FJ keys on the wide receiver on the weak side. LJ keys on the second receiver on that side. SJ keys on the flanker back. L keys on the second receiver on his side. BJ keys on the most inside receiver on the strong side.

Figure C: Double tight end and balanced backfield



Balanced formation with one receiver outside the tackles on each side. SJ & FJ key on the tight ends. L & LJ key on the split backs. The remaining back (the fullback) is the responsibility of whichever wing official he moves towards at the snap or the BJ if he goes downfield.

Figure D: Motion



When the flanker goes in motion the BJ and FJ exchange keys. If the motion extends inside the tackle, the LJ takes over responsibility and the BJ keys on the first back out of the backfield.

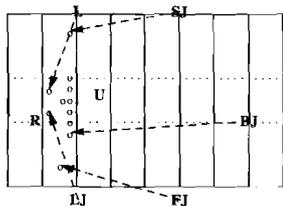
17. TIMEOUTS

17.1 – Charged timeouts

1. If, when the ball is dead, a player, substitute inside the 9-yard marks or Head Coach requests a timeout (and his team has at least one timeout left), immediately blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3). Notify the Referee of the team and number of the requesting player, or that the timeout was requested by the Head Coach.
2. If a request for a timeout is made when the ball is live, wait until the end of the play and then confirm with the requestor whether the timeout is still required. If it is, then follow the procedure above.
3. [REFEREE ONLY] Signal a requested charged timeout by facing the press box, giving the timeout signal (S3) followed by a "chucking signal" with the arms shoulder high towards the requesting team's goal line. There is no need for to sound your whistle.
4. [REFEREE ONLY] If the coach indicates that a timeout is a 30-second timeout, ensure that the opposing coach and all players are made aware. Officials must neither encourage nor discourage a coach from making a timeout a 30-second one, nor may the Referee designate a timeout as one if not requested promptly by the coach. [WING OFFICIALS ONLY] Assist the Referee by watching out for a 30-second signal from a coach.
5. [REFEREE ONLY] If the timeout is the third and final one charged to that team, in addition to the chucking signal, give three pulls on an imaginary steam whistle (without blowing your whistle). You must personally ensure that the Head Coach and the on-field captain of the team are aware that all their timeouts have been used.
6. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Ensure that all your colleagues are informed of the exact time remaining in the quarter and that they pass the information on to the Head Coach and on-field captain of each team, as appropriate.
7. All officials must record all timeouts, including the quarter and time remaining on the clock.
8. [UMPIRE ONLY] Time the timeout interval. (Mechanic 5.13) If a team huddles near the sideline (or leaves the field of play), ask the wing official to alert them when approximately 15 seconds of the timeout remain. Otherwise, alert the Referee when approximately 5 seconds of the timeout remain. §
9. During the timeout:
 - (a) [UMPIRE ONLY] Remain with the ball at the succeeding spot.
 - (b) [WING OFFICIALS ONLY] Inform the Head Coach of the team on your side of the field of the number of timeouts remaining for each team and the time remaining if a stadium clock is not visible.
 - (c) [WING OFFICIALS ONLY] [DEEP OFFICIALS ONLY] Observe the team from your side of the field, including checking the number of players in the huddle. If the team huddles near the sideline or leaves the field of play, stand near enough to them so that you can inform them when approximately 15 seconds of the timeout remain. §
 - (d) [ON A 5-MAN CREW] [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [BACK JUDGE ONLY] [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [ON A 6-MAN CREW] [UMPIRE ONLY] Inform the defensive captain of the time and the number of timeouts his team has remaining.
 - (e) [REFEREE ONLY] Inform the offensive captain of the time and the number of timeouts his team has remaining.
 - (f) If a coach enters the field to speak to his players, this should not normally be a problem provided:
 - he does not go on to the field more than nine yards;
 - he does not go beyond the 25-yard lines;
 - his players gather around him.

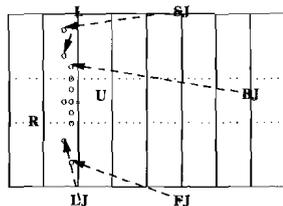
16.8 – 7-man crew examples

Figure A: Pro set



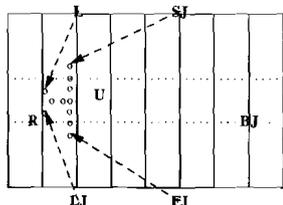
LJ's side is the strong side. FJ keys on the flanker. SJ keys on the split end. BJ keys on the tight end. L & LJ key on the backfield.

Figure B: Spread receivers



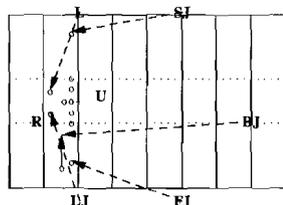
L's side is the strong side. FJ keys on the wide receiver on the weak side. LJ keys on the second receiver on that side. SJ keys on the flanker back. L keys on the second receiver on his side. BJ keys on the most inside receiver on the strong side.

Figure C: Double tight end and balanced backfield



Balanced formation with one receiver outside the tackles on each side. SJ & FJ key on the tight ends. L & LJ key on the split backs. The remaining back (the fullback) is the responsibility of whichever wing official he moves towards at the snap or the BJ if he goes downfield.

Figure D: Motion



When the flanker goes in motion the BJ and FJ exchange keys. If the motion extends inside the tackle, the LJ takes over responsibility and the BJ keys on the first back out of the backfield.

17. TIMEOUTS

17.1 – Charged timeouts

1. If, when the ball is dead, a player, substitute inside the 9-yard marks or Head Coach requests a timeout (and his team has at least one timeout left), immediately blow your whistle and signal timeout (S3). Notify the Referee of the team and number of the requesting player, or that the timeout was requested by the Head Coach.
2. If a request for a timeout is made when the ball is live, wait until the end of the play and then confirm with the requestor whether the timeout is still required. If it is, then follow the procedure above.
3. [REFEREE ONLY] Signal a requested charged timeout by facing the press box, giving the timeout signal (S3) followed by a "chucking signal" with the arms shoulder high towards the requesting team's goal line. There is no need for to sound your whistle.
4. [REFEREE ONLY] If the coach indicates that a timeout is a 30-second timeout, ensure that the opposing coach and all players are made aware. Officials must neither encourage nor discourage a coach from making a timeout a 30-second one, nor may the Referee designate a timeout as one if not requested promptly by the coach. [WING OFFICIALS ONLY] Assist the Referee by watching out for a 30-second signal from a coach.
5. [REFEREE ONLY] If the timeout is the third and final one charged to that team, in addition to the chucking signal, give three pulls on an imaginary steam whistle (without blowing your whistle). You must personally ensure that the Head Coach and the on-field captain of the team are aware that all their timeouts have been used.
6. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Ensure that all your colleagues are informed of the exact time remaining in the quarter and that they pass the information on to the Head Coach and on-field captain of each team, as appropriate.
7. All officials must record all timeouts, including the quarter and time remaining on the clock.
8. [UMPIRE ONLY] Time the timeout interval. (Mechanic 5.13) If a team huddles near the sideline (or leaves the field of play), ask the wing official to alert them when approximately 15 seconds of the timeout remain. Otherwise, alert the Referee when approximately 5 seconds of the timeout remain. §
9. During the timeout:
 - (a) [UMPIRE ONLY] Remain with the ball at the succeeding spot.
 - (b) [WING OFFICIALS ONLY] Inform the Head Coach of the team on your side of the field of the number of timeouts remaining for each team and the time remaining if a stadium clock is not visible.
 - (c) [WING OFFICIALS ONLY] [DEEP OFFICIALS ONLY] Observe the team from your side of the field, including checking the number of players in the huddle. If the team huddles near the sideline or leaves the field of play, stand near enough to them so that you can inform them when approximately 15 seconds of the timeout remain. §
 - (d) [ON A 5-MAN CREW] [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [BACK JUDGE ONLY] [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [ON A 6-MAN CREW] [UMPIRE ONLY] Inform the defensive captain of the time and the number of timeouts his team has remaining.
 - (e) [REFEREE ONLY] Inform the offensive captain of the time and the number of timeouts his team has remaining.
 - (f) If a coach enters the field to speak to his players, this should not normally be a problem provided:
 - he does not go on to the field more than nine yards;
 - he does not go beyond the 25-yard lines;
 - his players gather around him.

10. [REFEREE ONLY] After one minute (or earlier if both teams indicate readiness to resume),* be in the vicinity of the succeeding spot. Verbally inform both teams to get ready (e.g. "Defense, get ready. Offense, get ready"), blow your whistle and give the ready for play signal (S1). If the duration of the timeout is up, never *ask* the teams whether they are ready — *tell* them.
11. If a team requests a timeout when all theirs have been used, all officials must ignore the request and order the team to play on. [REFEREE ONLY] In the rare circumstance where a timeout is granted incorrectly, blow your whistle and signal the ready for play as soon as practicable after the error is detected.†

17.2 – Officials' timeouts

1. [REFEREE ONLY] If a timeout is not to be charged to either team, signal timeout (S3) and then tap your chest.
2. During an injury or other timeout, carry out the normal duties for a charged timeout, but in addition:‡
 - (a) stay out of the way of the medical personnel;
 - (b) keep uninvolved players out of the way;
 - (c) ask uninvolved coaches and substitutes to return to their team area;
 - (d) if necessary, move the ball out of the way while noting the succeeding spot and marking it (if appropriate) with a bean bag.
3. [REFEREE ONLY] Declare the ball ready for play as soon as the reason for the timeout has been met (e.g. an injured player has left the field and is in the team area, or well away from the field of play and not in any danger). [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Remind the Referee of whether the clock should start on the ready or snap.§
4. If an injury timeout is prolonged, or the game is suspended for some other reason, send the players to their team areas.
5. Only the Referee can stop the clock for a coach's conference. The conference will take place at or near the sideline. If you are the wing official on that side of the field, you must go with the Referee to witness the conference. If after the conference the ruling is not altered, the team will be charged with a timeout, in which case the procedure for a charged timeout (including giving the team their full entitlement of time) will be carried out. If a team asks for a timeout which is in fact intended to be a request for a coach's conference and the ruling is then altered, they should only be charged with a timeout if they subsequently request a further timeout.
6. If the game is disrupted for any reason, record the down, the team in possession, the position of the ball and the chain, and the time remaining. In addition: [UMPIRE ONLY] record the lateral position of the ball with respect to the inbounds lines; [LINESMAN ONLY] record the position of the chain clip.

18. MEASUREMENTS

1. If you are in doubt whether the line to gain has been reached at the end of a play from scrimmage, blow your whistle, signal timeout (S3) and notify the Referee.
2. [REFEREE ONLY] Be alert to a captain's request for a measurement, but do not grant unreasonable requests nor requests made after the ball has been declared ready for play for the next down. If you believe that the line to gain has been reached, you may attempt to gain the agreement of the defensive captain to forego the measurement. Similarly, if you believe that the line to gain has *not* been reached, you may attempt to gain the agreement of the offensive captain to forego the measurement.
3. Because of the importance of the situation after a 4th down play, a measurement should be arranged unless there is absolutely no doubt in anyone's mind as to whether or not the line to gain has been reached. After a 3rd down play, it may be almost as important.◇
4. A measurement may change the tempo of the game. Avoid measurements when the clock is running during the last 2 minutes of a half unless you are genuinely unsure of whether a first down has been gained.◇
5. For a measurement, the Coverer must place the ball at the precise dead ball spot – not a spot level with that. The ball must *never* be moved from the dead-ball spot until after the measurement is made, in particular the ball must not be moved if it becomes dead in a side zone. If it becomes dead out of bounds it shall be placed in the correct spot on the sideline.
6. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [REFEREE ONLY]
[ON A 5-MAN CREW] [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [BACK JUDGE ONLY]
[ON A 6-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Ensure that the ball is at the correct dead-ball spot, and hold it there if necessary. Mark the nose of the ball with a bean bag.‡
7. [ON A 4/5/6-MAN CREW] [REFEREE ONLY] or
[ON A 7-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Ensure that the press box has a clear view of the measurement.
8. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Move quickly to a position on the appropriate yard line to indicate where the Linesman should place the clip in order to make an accurate measurement (i.e. in line with the ball).
9. [ON A 4/5/6-MAN CREW]® [LINE JUDGE ONLY] or
[ON A 7-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] If the measurement is in a side zone, obtain a new ball from a ball person and hold it ready for use.
10. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] Remain with the down box on the sideline at the front stake and adjust its position once the outcome of the measurement is known.
11. [LINESMAN ONLY] Unless there is a flag on the play, instruct the down box operator to place the down box exactly at the position of the front stake. The down number should *not* be changed. Grasp the chain at the point where the clip is set and direct the stake operators to bring the chain to the required position on the field. Place the chain so that its position corresponds exactly to that which it occupied on the sideline, and then call "ready".
12. [UMPIRE ONLY] Take the front stake from the operator and, when the Linesman calls "ready", gently pull the chain taut.
13. [REFEREE ONLY] Determine whether the line to gain has been reached and announce your ruling. Remember that a first down is made if any part of the ball is level with or beyond any part of the front stake.
14. [REFEREE ONLY] If the ball is short of the first down and outside the hash marks, grasp the chain at the forward point of the ball and position a new ball at the hash mark, using the chain as a guide to placement.

10. [REFEREE ONLY] After one minute (or earlier if both teams indicate readiness to resume),* be in the vicinity of the succeeding spot. Verbally inform both teams to get ready (e.g. "Defense, get ready. Offense, get ready"), blow your whistle and give the ready for play signal (S1). If the duration of the timeout is up, never *ask* the teams whether they are ready — *tell* them.
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 - (c) ask uninvolved coaches and substitutes to return to their team area;
 - (d) if necessary, move the ball out of the way while noting the succeeding spot and marking it (if appropriate) with a bean bag.
3. [REFEREE ONLY] Declare the ball ready for play as soon as the reason for the timeout has been met (e.g. an injured player has left the field and is in the team area, or well away from the field of play and not in any danger). [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Remind the Referee of whether the clock should start on the ready or snap.[§]
4. If an injury timeout is prolonged, or the game is suspended for some other reason, send the players to their team areas.
5. Only the Referee can stop the clock for a coach's conference. The conference will take place at or near the sideline. If you are the wing official on that side of the field, you must go with the Referee to witness the conference. If after the conference the ruling is not altered, the team will be charged with a timeout, in which case the procedure for a charged timeout (including giving the team their full entitlement of time) will be carried out. If a team asks for a timeout which is in fact intended to be a request for a coach's conference and the ruling is then altered, they should only be charged with a timeout if they subsequently request a further timeout.
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4. A measurement may change the tempo of the game. Avoid measurements when the clock is running during the last 2 minutes of a half unless you are genuinely unsure of whether a first down has been gained.
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6. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [REFEREE ONLY]
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[ON A 6-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Ensure that the ball is at the correct dead-ball spot, and hold it there if necessary. Mark the nose of the ball with a bean bag.
§
7. [ON A 4/5/6-MAN CREW] [REFEREE ONLY] or
[ON A 7-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Ensure that the press box has a clear view of the measurement.
8. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Move quickly to a position on the appropriate yard line to indicate where the Linesman should place the clip in order to make an accurate measurement (i.e. in line with the ball).
9. [ON A 4/5/6-MAN CREW][®] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] or
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10. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] Remain with the down box on the sideline at the front stake and adjust its position once the outcome of the measurement is known.
11. [LINESMAN ONLY] Unless there is a flag on the play, instruct the down box operator to place the down box exactly at the position of the front stake. The down number should *not* be changed. Grasp the chain at the point where the clip is set and direct the stake operators to bring the chain to the required position on the field. Place the chain so that its position corresponds exactly to that which it occupied on the sideline, and then call "ready".
12. [UMPIRE ONLY] Take the front stake from the operator and, when the Linesman calls "ready", gently pull the chain taut.
13. [REFEREE ONLY] Determine whether the line to gain has been reached and announce your ruling. Remember that a first down is made if any part of the ball is level with or beyond any part of the front stake.
14. [REFEREE ONLY] If the ball is short of the first down and outside the hash marks, grasp the chain at the forward point of the ball and position a new ball at the hash mark, using the chain as a guide to placement.

15. [UMPIRE ONLY] Once the measurement is completed, return the front stake to the operator. §
16. [LINESMAN ONLY]
- If a first down has been achieved, instruct the chain crew to set up for a new first down. There is no need to return the clip to its previous position. §
 - If a first down has *not* been achieved, return the clip to its correct position on the chain clip reference mark and ensure the chain crew return the. §
17. [REFEREE ONLY] Signal the ball ready for play when the Linesman ensures that the chain is reset in the correct location.

19. CALLING FOULS

19.1 – Calling official

19.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

When observing a foul:

- Dropping or throwing a penalty marker (flag) at the proper spot where a foul is observed. On spot fouls near the goal line it is particularly important that the flag falls on the correct side of the line.
- Making a mental note of the yard line where the foul occurred.
- Noting the status of the ball, i.e. which team had possession of the ball at the moment the foul occurred, whether it was in player possession or loose, and whether the ball was live or dead.

At the end of the play:

- When the ball becomes dead, ensuring that all colleagues know that you have thrown a penalty flag.
- Staying at the dead ball spot (if you are marking it) until another official relieves you of the responsibility.
- Ensuring that the Referee and the Umpire are aware of what the foul is.
- Verifying that the Referee and Umpire enforce the foul correctly. Staying in the vicinity of the Referee to make sure he has all the necessary information or in case needs a reminder of the player's number. Checking the enforcement spot, the distance, and the direction. If you think it is wrong, informing the Referee immediately.
- Recording for each foul you call:
 - the foul (using the codes listed in section 27);
 - the number of the fouling player;
 - whether the penalty was accepted, declined, offset or cancelled by rule.

19.1.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

- If the ball is live when the foul occurred, do *not* blow the whistle until the ball becomes dead (unless the foul causes the ball to become dead).
- When the ball becomes dead, continue to toot your whistle in short blasts until all other officials know that you have seen a foul. Give the timeout signal (S3) prominently.
- If the foul is a spot foul, ask an available colleague to cover your flag.
- If you are holding the dead-ball spot, do not leave it. Make the Referee come to you, unless another official takes over responsibility for the spot from you. If you are not holding the dead-ball spot, once all action has ceased in your area, move quickly towards the Referee. §
- [REFEREE ONLY] Report the foul to the Umpire. [UMPIRE ONLY] Report the foul to the Referee. [OTHERWISE] Report the foul to the Referee, ensuring that the Umpire knows too.
- Give the following information:
 - the nature of the foul;
 - the offending team, by colour and/or by offense/defense;
 - the offending player, by number or position;
 - the spot of the foul and the likely enforcement spot;
 - whether the ball was live or dead at the time of the foul and, if appropriate, whether it occurred before or after a change of team possession or while loose from a pass, kick or fumble.

15. [UMPIRE ONLY] Once the measurement is completed, return the front stake to the operator. §
16. [LINESMAN ONLY]
 - (a) If a first down has been achieved, instruct the chain crew to set up for a new first down. There is no need to return the clip to its previous position. §
 - (b) If a first down has *not* been achieved, return the clip to its correct position on the chain clip reference mark and ensure the chain crew return the. §
17. [REFEREE ONLY] Signal the ball ready for play when the Linesman ensures that the chain is reset in the correct location.

19. CALLING FOULS

19.1 – Calling official

19.1.a – Priorities (highest first)

When observing a foul:

1. Dropping or throwing a penalty marker (flag) at the proper spot where a foul is observed. On spot fouls near the goal line it is particularly important that the flag falls on the correct side of the line.
2. Making a mental note of the yard line where the foul occurred.
3. Noting the status of the ball, i.e. which team had possession of the ball at the moment the foul occurred, whether it was in player possession or loose, and whether the ball was live or dead.

At the end of the play:

4. When the ball becomes dead, ensuring that all colleagues know that you have thrown a penalty flag.
5. Staying at the dead ball spot (if you are marking it) until another official relieves you of the responsibility.
6. Ensuring that the Referee and the Umpire are aware of what the foul is.
7. Verifying that the Referee and Umpire enforce the foul correctly. Staying in the vicinity of the Referee to make sure he has all the necessary information or in case needs a reminder of the player's number. Checking the enforcement spot, the distance, and the direction. If you think it is wrong, informing the Referee immediately.
8. Recording for each foul you call:
 - (a) the foul (using the codes listed in section 27);
 - (b) the number of the fouling player;
 - (c) whether the penalty was accepted, declined, offset or cancelled by rule.

19.1.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. If the ball is live when the foul occurred, do *not* blow the whistle until the ball becomes dead (unless the foul causes the ball to become dead).
2. When the ball becomes dead, continue to toot your whistle in short blasts until all other officials know that you have seen a foul. Give the timeout signal (S3) prominently.
3. If the foul is a spot foul, ask an available colleague to cover your flag.
4. If you are holding the dead-ball spot, do not leave it. Make the Referee come to you, unless another official takes over responsibility for the spot from you. If you are not holding the dead-ball spot, once all action has ceased in your area, move quickly towards the Referee. §
5. [REFEREE ONLY] Report the foul to the Umpire. [UMPIRE ONLY] Report the foul to the Referee. [OTHERWISE] Report the foul to the Referee, ensuring that the Umpire knows too.
6. Give the following information:
 - the nature of the foul;
 - the offending team, by colour and/or by offense/defense;
 - the offending player, by number or position;
 - the spot of the foul and the likely enforcement spot;
 - whether the ball was live or dead at the time of the foul and, if appropriate, whether it occurred before or after a change of team possession or while loose from a pass, kick or fumble.

7. If more than one official throws his flag for a foul (e.g. scrimmage line infractions, interference), all calling officials should consult with each other before reporting the foul.
 - (a) If you observe an official throw a flag which may be for pass interference and you believe the pass was uncatchable, the recommended thing to say to the official is, "Was that pass catchable?" If sure it was he should reply, "Yes, it was." If not sure that it was, he should reply, "What did you see?"
 - (b) Don't assume that everyone saw the same as you.
 - (c) If you have to throw a flag for a foul clearly in someone else's area, it is courteous to discuss it with them.
8. When a defensive player, before the snap, moves and an offensive player reacts, a conference between the Umpire and the wing officials is mandatory. This is to determine if the defensive player was in the neutral zone and if the offensive player was threatened.
9. When reporting fouls to the Referee, do not point to teams or players. After reporting, stay near the Referee in case he needs to ask you for further details. Avoid conferences except when absolutely necessary to obtain information from more than one official. Only those involved should be included.
10. In the event of a disqualifying foul:
 - (a) Accompany the Referee to notify the Head Coach of the number of the player disqualified and the nature of the foul.
 - (b) When reporting to the coach, the recommended wording is "X just disqualified himself because ..." or "X is disqualified because ...", rather than "I am disqualifying X because ...".
 - (c) [REFEREE ONLY] If you called the foul, the wing official should accompany you.
 - (d) Another official (normally the opposite wing official) should inform the opposing coach of the disqualification.

19.1.c – Advanced techniques

1. If your flag falls on the wrong spot, move it to the correct spot. Move the flag with authority – don't try to nudge it with your foot in the hope that no one will notice!

19.2 – Other officials

19.2.a – Priorities (highest first)

1. If the flag was thrown in your normal area of responsibility, or you believe the penalty may be against a player for whom you were responsible during the down (e.g. your key player at the snap, or a receiver who passed through your area of responsibility):
 - (a) making sure that you know what the penalty is;
 - (b) reporting any information relevant to it;
 - (c) not allowing the penalty to be incorrectly administered because someone else did not know what you knew or saw.
2. Covering and hold the dead-ball spot if nobody else is doing it. If a ball is not at the dead-ball spot, assisting in getting one there. Leaving the ball on the ground at the dead ball spot until it is called for.
3. [REFEREE ONLY] Identifying the official(s) who have thrown a flag, going towards them, and finding out the details of the foul they observed.
4. [UMPIRE ONLY] Identifying the official(s) who have thrown a flag, hearing what they tell the Referee and ensuring that the Referee has understood what they said.
5. Noting the yard line where the ball is dead.
6. If the foul is a spot foul, covering and holding the spot of the foul. If the foul has post-scrimmage kick enforcement, covering and holding the end of the kick.
7. If other officials are huddling to discuss a situation, keeping players away from them.

8. If all spots are covered, observing the players and assisting where needed. Getting a new ball to the Umpire.
9. Sharing an equal responsibility for rule interpretation. If you believe a foul has been called or administered incorrectly it is your responsibility to draw this to the Referee's attention without fuss, indiscretion or delay. If you have information to contribute, make sure that your colleagues, especially the Referee know about it. If an official blows a rule interpretation, the whole crew has blown it.
10. [LINE JUDGE ONLY ON A 4-MAN CREW] [BACK JUDGE ONLY ON A 5-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY ON A 6-MAN OR 7-MAN CREW] Recording all fouls called by all officials and whether they are accepted, declined, offset or cancelled by rule.

19.2.b – Reaction to what happens (movement and signals)

1. At the end of the play, repeat the timeout signal (S3) given by an official who has thrown a flag.
2. When the Umpire starts to enforce the penalty, pick up the flag (or bean bag) you are covering and return it to the official who called the foul.

19.3 – Enforcement procedure

1. [REFEREE ONLY] After receiving the report of the foul:
 - (a) Unless the enforcement is "obvious",[†] give the preliminary signal(s) in a crisp clear manner to the press box side. (A preliminary signal consists of (i) the signal for the foul; and (ii) point to the offending team.) Give the dead-ball signal (S7) before giving the foul signal for a dead-ball foul. Do *not* announce the foul over the radio microphone at this stage.
 - (b) If the enforcement is "obvious", inform the on-field captain of the offended team of the foul and where the ball will be placed. You may forego this if you believe he is already aware of the nature of the foul. If the captain objects, follow the procedure below for "non-obvious" enforcement. If the captain makes an obviously inappropriate choice, confirm that he fully understands the ramifications of it.[‡]
 - (c) If not obvious, explain to him the foul(s) and his options. If he has a genuine decision to make, make sure he is facing his team area so that he can see signals from his Coach.[§]
 - (d) Notify the captain of the offending team of the foul called and, if possible, the number or position of the offending player.
 - (e) Notify both captains and Head Coaches if the penalty involves the loss of a down.
 - (f) If he does not already know,[†] instruct the Umpire as to the spot of enforcement and the yardage to be marked off.
2. [UMPIRE ONLY]
 - (a) Ensure that you know what the foul is that has been reported to the Referee.
 - (b) If the acceptance/declination of the penalty is not obvious, call a captain of the offended team while the Referee gives the preliminary signal, so that he may be notified of the foul and the options. If the penalty is complex or may involve options for both teams, call both captains.[†]
 - (c) Obtain a new ball. Other officials may assist in relaying one to you. Hold it in your hand rather than place it on the ground.[§]
 - (d) Be present if[†] the options are given, and check that they are given correctly.
 - (e) While carrying a ball, determine the spot to which the ball should be taken and move directly to it, without stepping off each yard of the penalty. It should only be necessary to step off the penalty on badly marked fields.[†]
3. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Excepting penalties enforced on a free kick, hold the enforcement spot (e.g. the spot of the foul or the end of the run) until the penalty is completed.

4. [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] For penalties enforced on a free kick, hold the enforcement spot (e.g. the spot of the foul or the end of the run) until the penalty is completed.
5. [LINESMAN ONLY] Excepting penalties enforced on a free kick, move the same distance and direction as the Umpire, visually checking that the distance moved is correct.
6. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY] For penalties enforced on a free kick, move the same distance and direction as the Umpire, visually checking that the distance moved is correct.
7. [REFEREE ONLY]
 - (a) While the Umpire is marching off the penalty, move to a position in clear view and give the final signals to the press box side of the field only. (The Head Coach on the opposite side will be notified by the Linesman or Side Judge). Don't take too long to get into position, though occasionally taking an extra second can help you compose yourself and think about what you are going to say. Come to a complete stop before starting the announcement.
 - (b) For each foul, give the appropriate signal and then point towards the offending team's goal line.
 - (c) In the case of the following penalties, precede the appropriate signal by the personal foul signal (S38):
 - (i) facemask (S45)
 - (ii) roughing the passer (S34)
 - (iii) horse collar tackle (S25)[†]
 - (iv) roughing the kicker/snapper/holder (S30)
 - (v) chop block (S41)
 - (d) If the penalty is declined, also give the penalty declined signal (S10).
 - (e) If there are offsetting penalties, signal the home team's foul, point to that team's goal line, then signal the away team's foul, point to that team's goal line, and finally give the offsetting penalty signal (S10).
 - (f) While facing the press box, indicate the number of the next down.
 - (g) Announce the penalty, including the identity of the offending player by number (or position if the number is not known). For brevity, the numbers of the players may be omitted if there are more than two fouls. Use a radio microphone if provided. Under no circumstances use a microphone that you do not have a control switch for.
8. If there are multiple dead-ball fouls which do not cancel by rule, all penalties must be marched off and (except for fouls between series) the position of the chain reconsidered after each. Half distance enforcement should also be checked before each penalty. The chain clip, however, need only be set after the last penalty has been enforced.
9. The wing official (or deep official) on the appropriate side of the field *must* relay to the Head Coach details of the foul if it is by his team, including, where possible, the number or position of the offending player and precisely what the player did that was illegal. If the penalty involves loss of down, the Coach must be notified of that fact. The Coach must also be notified of any unusual enforcements or judgments whether or not they are against his team. Examples might include: flags waved off (disregarded); uncatchable passes; any unfair tactics or unfair acts calls. (Rules 9-2-2 and 9-2-3)
10. [REFEREE ONLY] If fouls are committed that are to be enforced at the next free kick, give the final signals (and announce the penalty) and point to the spot of the kick. [UMPIRE ONLY] Repeat the final signals before enforcing the penalty from the kickoff spot.
11. [REFEREE ONLY] If a penalty flag is to be disregarded, give the disregard flag signal (S13) to the press box. This signal is not given by the official who threw the flag (unless it was the Referee).

19.4 – Obvious and non-obvious enforcement

1. Officials may normally regard enforcement of the following penalties as "obviously" accepted:
 - (a) dead-ball penalties (except possibly those committed by teams about to punt) will be accepted;
 - (b) post-scrimmage kick penalties will be accepted;
 - (c) defensive penalties where the yardage is added to the end of the play will be accepted;
 - (d) Team A penalties that include loss of down will be accepted;
 - (e) Team B penalties that include an automatic first down will be accepted (unless declining gives better field position);
 - (f) Team A penalties that result in a safety will be accepted (unless declining gives Team B the ball in good field position);
 - (g) Team A penalties on plays where they gained a first down will be accepted.
2. Officials may normally regard enforcement of the following penalties as "obviously" declined:
 - (a) penalties where the result of the play is the same as the penalty (e.g. defensive pass interference at the spot of the catch beyond the line to gain, a safety) will be declined;
 - (b) penalties against the opponents of the team that scores a touchdown (or 2-point try) will be declined unless they carry over;
 - (c) opponents' penalties prior to the offended team gaining possession will be declined;
 - (d) defensive penalties that leave the offense in a less favourable position and less favourable down number will be declined;
 - (e) Team A penalties on plays where they lost yardage will be declined.
3. In the following cases, acceptance/declination will be obvious based on the state of the game:
 - (a) where there are multiple penalties, the one that puts the offending team in the worst position will be accepted;
 - (b) where a penalty will extend/terminate the game, it will be accepted/declined according to which team is leading;
 - (c) where a penalty will extend/terminate the first half, it will be accepted/declined according to whether either team is in position to score.
4. Note, however, that a team captain may at any time up to the ready for play overrule the officials' choice of option in the cases above.
5. Officials should normally regard enforcement of the following penalties as not "obvious":
 - (a) where the penalty removes/awards points for a field goal, safety or 1-point try;
 - (b) where better/worse field position has to be traded against more/less favourable down number;
 - (c) where Team B can choose enforcement at the previous spot or the dead-ball spot after a kick (including when a free kick has gone out of bounds) and the length of the kick and/or return does not "obviously" indicate the preferable outcome (generally, a long kick and a short return will suggest previous spot enforcement; a short kick or long return will suggest dead-ball spot enforcement);
 - (d) where (at or near the end of a quarter) a strong wind or other factors may affect which way a team wants to play the next down.

20. TIMING AND THE END OF PERIODS

20.1 – Stadium clocks

- If there are one or more visible game clocks, they will be official. (It would be silly for officials not to use a clock that is visible to the players, coaches, spectators and their colleagues.) To be considered visible, at least one clock must be visible from every spot on the field of play. If not, the stadium clock(s) will not be used.
- If there are visible play clocks, they will be official. To be considered visible, there must be play clocks behind each end line, at least one of which is visible to the quarterback from every point in the field of play inside the hashmarks. If not, the stadium play clocks will not be used.
- In most circumstances, the stadium clock operator(s) should be able to start and stop the clock more accurately than anyone on the crew. He/they should have nothing else to do.
- [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Keep your watch in approximate time with the stadium clock. The main reasons for doing this are:
 - in case the clock suddenly goes blank;
 - in case the stadium clock operator forgets to start or stop it, and as a consequence a significant amount of time is lost or gained.
- [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] You are responsible for checking that the stadium clock starts and stops when it should. (Other officials in a better position to view the clock may help you. This is most important if the game clock is behind you. Discuss in the pre-game who is going to do this.)
- Small errors in timing should just be ignored. A few seconds here or there, especially early in a period, are unlikely to bother anyone. Even at the end of a half, an error of a second or two may not matter unless it denies a team an opportunity to score, or gives them an opportunity they should not have.
- Corrections to the stadium clock should only be made when there is an important or obvious error. An error of less than one second per minute remaining in the quarter should be ignored (e.g. an error of five seconds can be ignored if there are more than five minutes remaining).
- When a correction is necessary, it should be made before the next play starts. If an error is not corrected promptly, ignore it and carry on.
- If the visible clock is malfunctioning (or in very extreme cases, if the stadium clock operator is completely incompetent), the Referee should order it to be switched off.
- Don't ruin a good game by splitting hairs about the time. It will make you look over-officious, especially if you do it repeatedly.

20.2 – Two-minute warning

- [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] If the rules provide for it, notify the Referee to issue the two-minute warning when the ball is dead and approximately two minutes remain in the half. (Exception: If a touchdown has been scored on the previous play the two-minute warning will be given after the try.)
- The notification should be made at approximately two minutes. Normally, this will be between 2:15 and 1:50 remaining in the half. It does not need to be given at precisely two minutes. By rule, it must not be given once the 25-second clock has been started. (Rule 3-3-8-b-1) For example:
 - 2:04 remaining, and the clock has just stopped for an incomplete pass. RULING: Have the warning now. It is very unlikely that another play would be completed before 2:00.



- 2:15 remaining and a play ends in bounds. RULING: Stop the clock and have the warning now. It is unlikely that another play would be completed before 2:00. The clock starts on the snap.
 - The ball is in play when the clock reaches 2:00. RULING: Have the warning when the play is completed.
 - The 25-second clock was started at 2:20 and is still running at 2:00 because the ball has not been snapped. RULING: Have the two-minute warning at the end of the following play or, if the ball is not snapped, when the delay of game penalty is enforced.
- A good rule of thumb is:
 - If the clock is stopped, have the two-minute warning if less than 2:10 is left on the clock.
 - If the clock is running but the 25-second clock has not been started, have the two-minute warning if less than 2:15 is left on the clock.
 - If the clock is running and the 25-second clock has started, have the two-minute warning after the next play.
 - [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] At the appropriate time, blow your whistle, stop your watch and signal timeout (S3). Notify the Referee that it is the two-minute warning, and inform him of the exact time remaining.
 - [REFEREE ONLY] Announce the two-minute warning and signal it to both sidelines using the TV/radio timeout signal (S4). (Rule 3-3-8-b) Ensure that the captain and Head Coach of each team have been informed of *exactly* how much time remains in the half, not just that it is the two-minute warning.
 - If the clock was stopped to issue the two-minute warning it must be started again when the ball is next snapped (or after a free kick).

20.3 – Each period

- [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Near the end of each half, ensure whenever the clock stops that all officials are kept informed of the time remaining. By rule, unless there is a stadium clock, after the two-minute warning in each half, inform the captain and Head Coach of each team of the exact time remaining each time the clock is stopped. (Rule 3-3-8-c)
- Responsibility for ruling whether the ball is snapped before or after the period ended:
 - If there are no stadium clocks, the on-field timekeeper is responsible. If his watch does not have an audible alert, he should raise it in front of his eyes so that he can monitor play and the time concurrently.
 - If there are stadium clocks, the timekeeper should remind the Referee and Umpire that they are responsible. If there are clocks in each end zone, the primary responsibility rests with the Referee. If there is a clock in only one end zone, the responsibility rests with whoever is facing it. If the clock is not in the end zone or out of the Referee and Umpire's normal view, an appropriate official has the responsibility. Which official this is should be determined in the pre-game conference.
- [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] When time expires, blow your whistle if the ball is dead. Other officials should assist in relaying a ball to the Referee in order that he can signal the end of the quarter.

20.4 – First and third periods

- [REFEREE ONLY] [UMPIRE ONLY] Go to the succeeding spot and record (in writing) the yard line on which the ball is placed, its lateral position, the number of the next down and the distance to the line to gain.
- [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Move quickly to the succeeding spot (both yard line *and* lateral position) in the opposite half of the field, and indicate the new location where the ball should next be put into play.

3. [LINESMAN ONLY] Record the yard line on which the chain clip is set, the yard line on which the ball is placed, the number of the next down and the distance to the line to gain.
4. [LINESMAN ONLY] Once you have written down the details, grasp the chain and the clip, and keeping hold of it, reverse the chain and move it and its crew to the corresponding yard line in the other half of the field. The down box should be moved to its new position at the same time (under the supervision of the Side Judge, if there is one).
5. [LINE JUDGE ONLY] The alternate down box and line-to-gain marker should also be moved, but they should remain at their end of period location until you have written down their positions.
6. [SIDE JUDGE ONLY (IF PRESENT)] Supervise the down box operator in moving the down box to its new position.
7. [UMPIRE ONLY] Accompanied by the Referee, take the ball downfield to its new location and re-spot it.
8. [BACK JUDGE ONLY] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Move downfield with the players.
9. After completion of these duties, take position for the next play. The ball should not be declared ready for play until one minute has elapsed since the end of the period. [UMPIRE ONLY] Time this intermission.

20.5 – Half time intermission

1. [LINESMAN ONLY] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] Ensure that one captain from the team on your side of the field reports to the Referee before leaving the playing area.
2. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Confirm to the Referee the duration of the interval, the correct time of day, and the correct time that the second half will commence.
3. [REFEREE ONLY] Relay this information to the captains, with the instruction that the teams must be back on the field ready to restart at the scheduled time.
4. [REFEREE ONLY] When the field is clear of players and coaches, signal the start of the intermission by giving the start the clock signal (S2). [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER ONLY] Start your watch on this signal. If there is a stadium clock, it too should be started and shall count down the time remaining in the interval.
5. Maintain possession of the game balls during the interval.
6. [REFEREE ONLY] [UMPIRE ONLY] Not more than five minutes before the end of the interval, visit each team (in the place where they have spent the interval, if necessary) and establish the options for the second half. Go first to the team having first choice of option in the second half, and then their opponents. [REFEREE ONLY] Ensure that both teams know who is kicking off and which goal each team is defending.
7. The other officials should go directly to the field and ensure that the chain crew, alternate crew and ball boys are present. The responsible official(s) shall ensure that the game balls are taken back to the field.
8. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY]
[ON A 5-MAN CREW] [ON A 7-MAN CREW] [BACK JUDGE ONLY]
[ON A 6-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE ONLY] Make sure that a ball is available for the kickoff.

20.6 – End of game

1. [REFEREE ONLY] Signal the end of the game. [LINESMAN ONLY] Recover your chain clip. [UMPIRE ONLY] Recover the game ball last used. [WING OR DEEP OFFICIALS ONLY] Recover the spare game balls from the ball persons. §
2. After the Referee has signalled the end of the game, immediately get together in pairs (or larger groups) and leave the field at a leisurely and uniform pace (set by the nearest official to the dressing room).
 - (a) If an official is carrying the dressing room key, he should ensure he is the first one to reach the dressing room. §

- (b) You should neither seek nor avoid coaches and players.
 - (c) If hassled by anyone, keep walking.
 - (d) Do not remain on or near[§] the field to chat with players, coaches, spectators or anyone.
3. Any request for discussion regarding the officiating of the game must be directed towards the Referee. [REFEREE ONLY] Be prepared to discuss any rules interpretation (in the dressing room, not on the field), but politely refuse to discuss judgment calls.
 4. All officials should complete any administrative duties required of them.
 5. Officials are responsible after the game to ensure that the balls and any other equipment are returned to game management.

21. USE OF BEAN BAGS

21.1 – General principles

1. All officials shall carry at least one bean bag to use to mark spots other than spots of fouls. [BACK JUDGE ONLY] [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE ONLY] You are particularly likely to require more than one.
2. Never throw a bean bag overarm. If possible, run to the approximate yard line level with the spot and *drop* it. If this is not possible, toss it underarm.
3. Make a mental note of the yard line whenever possible.
4. If the bean bag falls on the wrong spot, move it to the correct spot. Move the bean bag with authority – don't try to nudge it with your foot in the hope that no one will notice.

21.2 – Marking spots

1. The Coverer (and no other) shall use a bean bag to mark:
 - (a) the end of a scrimmage kick in bounds. This is the postscrimmage kick enforcement spot.
 - (b) the spot where possession was lost on a fumble. This is the end of the related run and may be the succeeding spot if the ball goes out of bounds, or the basic spot for fouls occurring during the run or while the ball is loose;
 - (c) the spot where a backward pass or handoff occurs beyond the neutral zone or when there is no neutral zone. This is the end of the related run and is the basic spot for fouls occurring during the run.
 - (d) the spot where an eligible pass receiver goes out of bounds voluntarily. Dropping your hat is an alternative to using a bean bag in this case. This is an indication that a foul will occur should he touch a forward pass in bounds before it has touched an opponent.
 - (e) the spot where a Team A player goes out of bounds during a free or scrimmage kick voluntarily. Dropping your hat is an alternative to using a bean bag in this case. This is an indication that a foul will occur if he returns in bounds. (If the player comes back in bounds immediately after going out of bounds a bean bag is unnecessary and the official need only drop his flag to mark the spot of the foul.)
 - (f) all spots where a Team A player illegally touches a free or scrimmage kick. Multiple spots may need more than one bean bag, or use your bean bag to mark the most advantageous of these spots. These are the spots where Team B may elect to take the ball as the result of the violation.
 - (g) the spot where a player catches or recovers a kick, pass or fumble between his 5-yard line and goal line when the momentum exception rule applies. This is the dead-ball spot if the ball subsequently becomes dead in the end zone in his team's possession if the player's momentum carried him into the end zone.
 - (h) the spot of forward progress when the runner is driven back (but not routinely – only if there is a problem forming in the pile and you need to leave the forward progress spot to deal with it). This is the dead ball spot.
 - (i) the spot of forward progress if the quarterback is sacked. This is the dead ball spot.
 - (j) the dead-ball spot if the official has to leave the spot to recover the ball or to observe action. This should be a rare occurrence - do not do it routinely. [◇] This may include the spot of recovery of a kick by Team A if the recovering player attempts to advance the ball.
2. Unless the spot is also one of the spots listed above, bean bags should *not* be used to mark:
 - (a) the spot where an interception is made



- (b) the spot where a free kick ends – give the start the clock signal (S2) if appropriate
 - (c) the spot where a fumble is recovered
 - (d) the spot where a kick or pass hits the ground
 - (e) the spot where a kick is muffed by a Team B player — use the legal touching signal (S11) instead
 - (f) the spot of a backward pass or muff in the backfield
- None of these can be possible enforcement spots.

22. CHAIN CREW AND BALL PERSONS

22.1 – Chain crew

1. This section lists the instructions that an official (normally the Linesman) gives to the chain crew before the game. Under some circumstances it may be appropriate to delay the kickoff until this is done. Under circumstances that are clearly due to the home team's mismanagement, it also may be appropriate to penalise the home team. (Rule 3-4-1-b and BAFA Rule 13-4-3)[§]
2. Introduce yourself to the chain crew before the game. Note their names and use them frequently during the game. Stress to them the importance of their job. Continually praise and thank them, particularly when they do something quickly and promptly.
3. Make the down box operator responsible for the whole crew. Normally, he should be the most experienced person on the crew.
4. Demonstrate to the chain crew the signals that you will use to indicate (i) the down number; (ii) stay!; (iii) move the chain.
5. During the game,[∅] avoid handling the chain or down box. Use verbal instructions to the operators to have them move them to the correct position.
6. **Instruct the chain crew never to move the down marker or chain, or change the down number, except at the direction of the Linesman or Referee.** If they are told to move and they can see that a flag has been thrown, they must stay where they are and draw the official's attention to the flag. When they do move, they must move quickly and with no fuss to their new position.
7. Instruct the crew that the chain never moves on 2nd, 3rd or 4th down; only the down box does. It is also possible (e.g. after a penalty) for there to be a 1st down and for the chain *not* to move.
8. Instruct the chain crew that their expected normal pace is to jog from position to position. In a "hurry up" situation, they should try to move faster.[§]
9. Instruct the down box operator that between downs:
 - (a) He must not move until signalled to do so.
 - (b) He must position the down box level with the Linesman's downfield heel.
 - (c) He should change the number on the down box to that indicated by the Linesman.
 - (d) Ideally, he should change the number while moving the box to the new position — i.e. the box should show the old number at the old position, and the new number at the new position.
 - (e) In order to keep the sideline clear for the safety of players, officials and the chain crew, it is crucial that the down box is always positioned *six feet* out of bounds (except when setting the chain for a new series). This must be stressed to the down box operator.
10. Instruct the crew that when a new series of downs is awarded:
 - (a) The down box should be moved first to the spot indicated by the Linesman (the front edge of the stake level with the front of the ball).
 - (b) The chain should then be positioned,[∅] setting the rear-most stake exactly where the down box is. The front stake should then be placed to extend the chain to its full length.
 - (c) The down box operator should give hold of his box to the rear stake man in order that he may position the chain clip. (If a fourth member of the chain crew is available, he may be designated as clip operator). The clip must be positioned *precisely* in the middle of a 5-yard line, normally the one nearest to the rear stake.
 - (d) In order to keep the sideline clear for the safety of players, officials and the chain crew, it is crucial that the chain is then moved to a position *six feet* out of bounds.



- The chain clip should be positioned on the chain clip reference mark (if there is one). This must be stressed to the chain crew.
11. If possible, the chain clip operator or down box operator (or an additional person) should be asked to record the number of the down and the yard line of each succeeding spot. If this is not possible, it is permissible for the down box operator to use a marker (e.g. a golf tee or a bean bag) to indicate the position of the down box. Finally, the down box operator should be encouraged to memorise the yard line at which they are located.[∅]
 12. Instruct the crew that if play develops (or seems likely to develop) in their direction they are to move quickly away from the sideline and to drop their equipment to the ground as they go. Emphasise the safety aspects of this, and explain how the chain can be reset using the clip.
 13. Instruct the crew that at the end of the 1st and 3rd periods:
 - (a) The Linesman will record the down number, the distance to the line to gain, the yard line and the line on which the clip is set.
 - (b) The Linesman will grasp the chain at the point where the clip is set and instruct the stake operator *furthest* from the midfield line to lead the way to the corresponding line in the other half of the field, reversing the chain in the process.
 - (c) The Linesman will position the clip on the correct yard line, then instruct the crew to extend the chain. The chain must then be moved to its position on the chain clip reference points six feet out of bounds.
 - (d) The down box will be moved to its new position as the ball is moved.
 14. Instruct the crew that when a free kick takes place they are to remove themselves and their equipment outside the limit line. The chain and down marker should be placed on the ground. They may be told to stand near the receiving team's 20-yard line in order to be near the likely position of the ensuing first down.
 15. Instruct the crew that when a measurement for a first down takes place:
 - (a) The down box is to be positioned where the front stake is located, unless there is a flag down. (This is to provide a backup for the location of the chain.)[∅] The number shown on the down box shall be that of the previous down. (If there is a flag down, [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] the Side Judge or [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] the Linesman should drop a bean bag at the location of the front stake.)[§]
 - (b) The Linesman will grasp the chain at the point where the clip is set.
 - (c) The Linesman and stake operators will rapidly carry the chain onto the field of play. The front stake operator will hand his stake to the appropriate official (normally the Umpire).
 - (d) If a first down is awarded, the stake operators must carry the chain quickly back to the sideline and set up for the new series of downs.
 - (e) If a first down is not awarded and the ball is dead outside the hash marks, the chain will be moved under the direction of the Referee to a position where the ball can be spotted. The Referee will grasp the chain at the point level with the nose of the ball.
 - (f) If a first down is not awarded, the Linesman and the stake operators will quickly return the chain to the sideline. The Linesman will ensure that the clip is accurately repositioned. The chain will then be moved to the chain clip reference points six feet out of bounds.
 - (g) Once the decision has been signalled by the Referee the down box will then be positioned level with the front of the ball.
 16. When the goal line is the line to gain, or on try downs, only the down box will be used. The chain should be laid on the ground outside the limit lines at around the 20-yard line and the stake operators should stand well back so as not to distract the down box operator.

17. When the chain crew have been instructed in the above procedures, they should be put through a number of trial/dummy runs to ensure that they have understood their instructions. Use whatever time is available before the kickoff to practice these procedures with the chain crew.
18. Remind the chain crew that, for the purposes of the game, they are officials and must remain impartial. They must make no remarks to players and express no opinions on official rulings.
19. If a member of a chain crew fails to perform to an acceptable standard, inform game management that a replacement must be provided.

22.2 – Alternate operators

1. This section lists the instructions that an official (normally the Line Judge) gives to the alternate down box and line-to-gain operators (where available) before the game. Under some circumstances it may be appropriate to delay the kickoff until this is done. Under circumstances that are clearly due to the home team's mismanagement, it also may be appropriate to penalise the home team. (Rule 3-4-1-b and BAFA Rule 13-4-3)[§]
2. Introduce yourself to the operators before the game. Note their names. Stress to them the importance of their job.
3. Instruct the alternate down box operator that he must work approximately six feet off the sideline and that he must mirror the position of the down box on the opposite side of the field.
4. Instruct the alternate line-to-gain operator that he must mirror the position of the stake denoting the line to gain. He too must keep six feet from the sideline.
5. Remind the alternate operators that, for the purposes of the game, they are officials and must remain impartial. They must make no remarks to players and express no opinions on official rulings.
6. If an alternate operator fails to perform to an acceptable standard, inform game management that a replacement must be provided or that the alternate operators shall be dispensed with.

22.3 – Ball persons

1. This section lists the instructions that an official (normally the Field Judge or Line Judge) gives to the ball persons before the game. Under some circumstances it may be appropriate to delay the kickoff until this is done. Under circumstances that are clearly due to the home team's mismanagement, it also may be appropriate to penalise the home team. (Rule 3-4-1-b and BAFA Rule 13-4-3)[§]
2. Introduce yourself to the ball persons before the game. Note their names. Stress to them the importance of their job.
3. Appoint one ball person to be responsible for each sideline. In addition each ball person should be made responsible for the end line to his/her left (when facing the field) in field goal and try situations.
4. Instruct the ball persons that if the ball becomes dead out of bounds, or in bounds outside the nine-yard marks,⁴ they are to give a ball as quickly as possible to the nearest requesting official. If the dead ball goes out of bounds, or is dead because of an incomplete pass, the ball person should then retrieve it. If the dead ball is in bounds the ball person should wait with the official covering its spot until it is no longer required and then take it off the field.
5. Instruct the ball persons that they must keep up with the play at all times, normally staying near the position of the wing official on their side of the field. On each play, they should start just to the Team A side of the wing official or mid-way between the wing official and deep official.

6. Instruct the ball persons that on field goal and try attempts, the one responsible for that end line should place his ball at the foot of a goal post and take position well behind the posts in order to recover the ball after the kick.
7. Instruct the ball persons that in inclement weather or field conditions they must ensure that their ball is kept dry and clean. It is the responsibility of game management to supply towels for this purpose.
8. Inform the ball persons that they may be asked to retrieve an official's bean bag if it has been dropped some distance from the end of the play. Instruct them that they must never touch the bean bag without being asked to do so.
9. If you have more than one ball person on your sideline, one should be made responsible for holding the spare ball and feeding it to the officials, and the other made responsible for retrieving the ball last in play.
10. Remind the ball persons that, for the purposes of the game, they are officials and must remain impartial. They must make no remarks to players and express no opinions on official rulings.
11. Instruct the ball persons not to give balls to players. Players may not practice with nor interfere with the game balls.
12. If a ball person fails to perform to an acceptable standard, inform game management that a replacement must be provided.

23. MECHANICS FOR 3-MAN CREWS

The fewer officials there are the more likely it is that some play action or foul is going to go unobserved. The key to 3-man officiating is to recognise what duties are of highest priority and be prepared to omit lower priority ones when time is short.

23.1 – General

1. The officials must decide among themselves who is going to be responsible for briefing stadium clock operators, commentators, chain crew, alternate crew and ball persons.
2. The officials should agree clock operation duties. Normally the Line Judge will run the game clock and the Referee the play clock and timeouts. [◊]
3. All officials must be prepared to adapt to play circumstances. The crucial aim is to keep the play boxed in so that it can be observed from more than one angle.
4. On measurements, the Line Judge must take the front stake and the Linesman position the clip. The Referee must ensure the ball is not moved, before moving to rule on the measurement.

23.2 – Free kicks

1. The Line Judge should be on the press box sideline on Team A's restraining line. The Linesman should be on the opposite sideline on Team B's restraining line. These two have responsibility for their respective sideline, and for marking forward progress on the return. The Referee should be downfield in the centre of the field covering the goal line.

23.3 – Scrimmage downs

1. This formation has the advantage that it incorporates the normal positioning adopted by officials on a 4-man crew, except that it omits one of those officials (usually the Umpire).
2. The Linesman and Line Judge begin in their normal positions. They are jointly responsible for the line of scrimmage. They are responsible for their sideline on both running and passing plays, and must move to either goal line if that is threatened. On passing plays they may go downfield to observe receivers and whether the pass is complete or not on their side of the field.
3. The Referee begins in his normal position, except that he may choose to begin in the Umpire's normal position if it is necessary to observe interior line play from the defensive side of the neutral zone. On running plays he should observe blocking from the inside out. On passing plays he is entirely responsible for action in the vicinity of the passer. After the ball is thrown he is responsible for the protection of the passer and must not turn to observe the pass (even if in the Umpire position).

23.4 – Goal line plays

1. On goal line plays, two officials (the Linesman and the Line Judge) should be in position to move to the goal line at the sideline, officiating the play from the outside in. The Referee should observe the play from the inside out.

23.5 – Punts

1. The Linesman begins in his normal position and performs his normal duties.
2. The Line Judge must drop deep downfield to the position normally adopted on a punt play on a 4-man crew. He must be prepared to rule on the end of the kick and the ensuing return.
3. The Referee should favour the press box side of the field and observe action against the snapper and then the kicker.

23.6 – Field goal & try attempts

1. One official, normally the Line Judge, should be behind the goal and is entirely responsible for ruling on the success or failure of the attempt.
2. The Referee must favour the press box side of the field and be responsible for that sideline should a run or pass develop. He should observe action against the kicker and holder.
3. The Linesman is responsible for action against the snapper and may come infield [◊] after the ball is snapped to better observe this.

24. AREAS OF COVERAGE

The following diagrams serve to illustrate the principles described in the previous chapters.

They are of two main types:

- static diagrams show the areas of responsibility of each of the officials – in other words which official has the primary duty to watch the ball and the runner when it/he is in that area;
- the example play diagrams show the positions of the officials and the key players at various points in time as the play develops.

The areas of responsibility shown are those at the start of the play. As the play develops, these change, usually so that the nearest official is concentrating on the ball carrier and the other officials on the action around him.

In each diagram, yard lines across the field are drawn at five yard intervals.

24.1 – Basic free kick areas of responsibility

Figure A: The 8 basic free kick positions

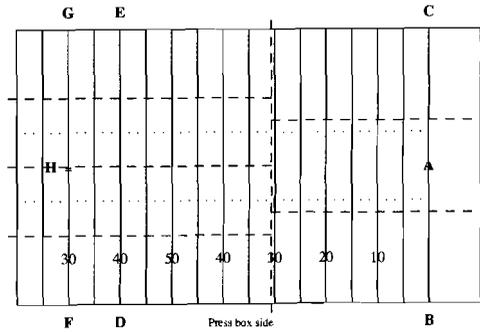


Figure B: 4-man crew (normal positions)

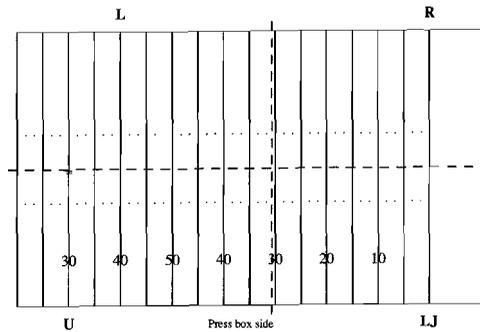


Figure C: 4-man crew (onside-kick positions)

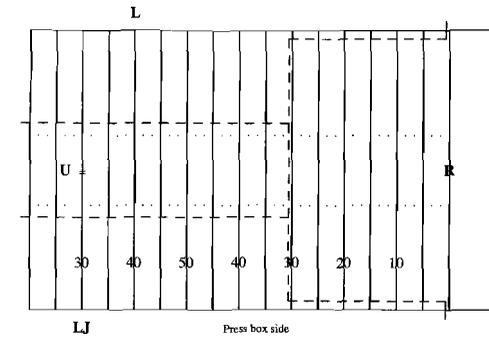


Figure D: 5-man crew

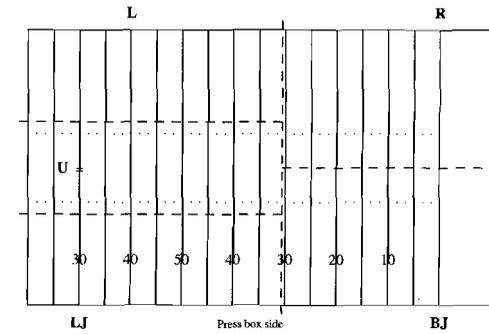


Figure E: 5-man crew (onside-kick positions)

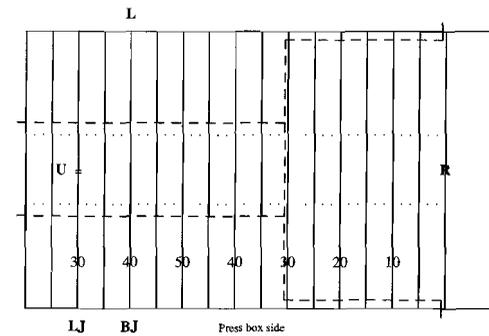


Figure F: 6-man crew

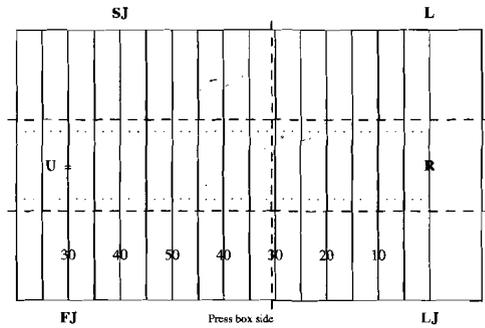


Figure G: 6-man crew (onside-kick positions)

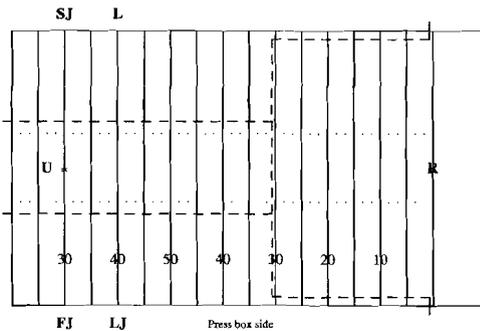


Figure H: 7-man crew

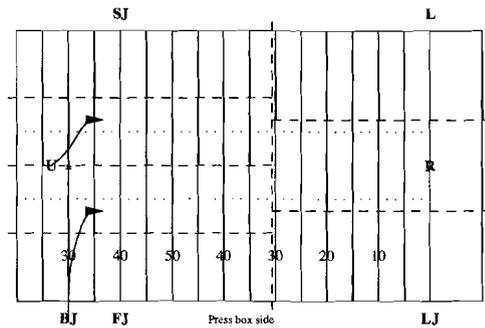


Figure I: 7-man crew (onside-kick positions)

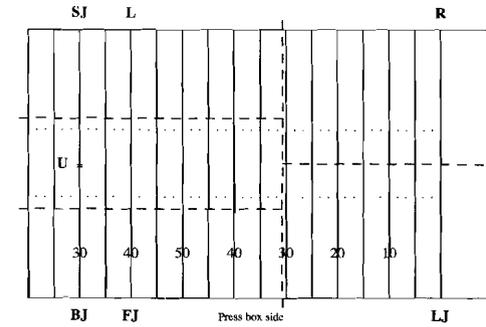
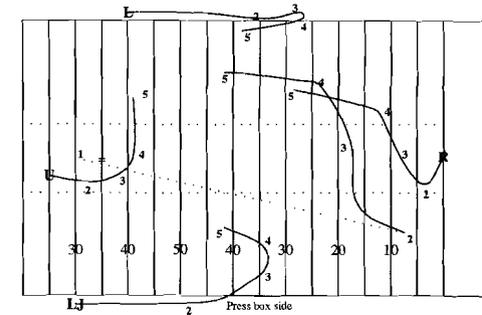
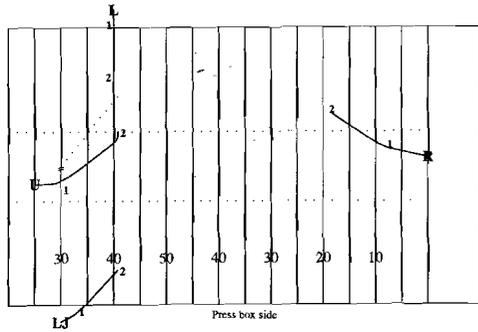


Figure J: Example play: (4-man crew, onside-kick positions) free kick deep to press box side returned across field



As the ball is kicked off (1) the officials are in their initial positions. While the ball is in flight the officials begin to move to cover their areas of responsibility. The ball is descending in the Referee's area so he watches the potential receivers for fair catch signals. The other officials watch the blocks by and against the players moving downfield and for any illegal wedge forming in front of the returner. The Referee observes the catch of the kick (2) and watches the returner while he is in his area. As the returner runs across the field (3), the officials adjust their positions to keep the play boxed in. The Linesman and Umpire observe lead blocks on the return until the runner moves into the Linesman's area of coverage (4). At this point the Linesman takes the ball until the runner is tackled (5) while the Referee switches to watching action around the runner. The Line Judge maintains a wide view of the field.

Figure K: Example play: (4-man crew, onside-kick positions) short kick to Linesman's side of the field



When the officials see that the ball has been kicked short (1), the Linesman, Umpire and Line Judge all move into a position to see the ball and action around it. The Referee moves upfield observing peripheral action. When the kick is recovered (2), the Linesman and Umpire will move rapidly to the dead-ball spot to be prepared to rule on possession. The Referee and Line Judge continue to monitor action around and away from the ball.

24.2 – Basic scrimmage down areas of responsibility

Figure A: 4-man crew

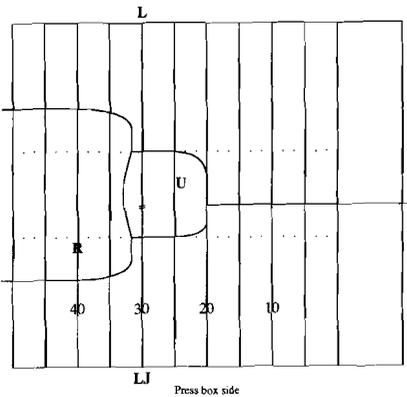


Figure B: 5-man crew

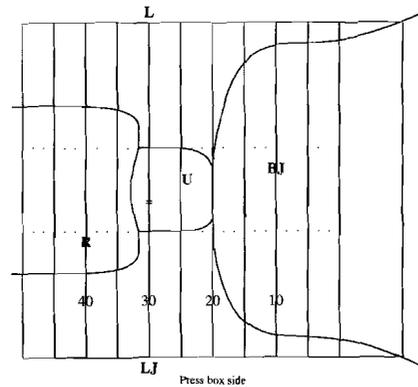
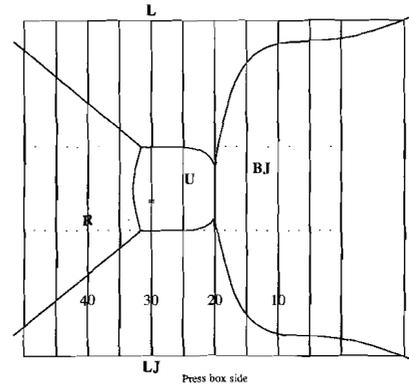


Figure C: 5-man crew (pass play coverage zones)



Officials have **primary** coverage of any or all receivers in their area (as shown in the diagram left), but (with the exception of the Referee, and on long passes, the Umpire) are expected to provide secondary coverage of the area around the end of any forward pass.

Figure D: 6-man crew

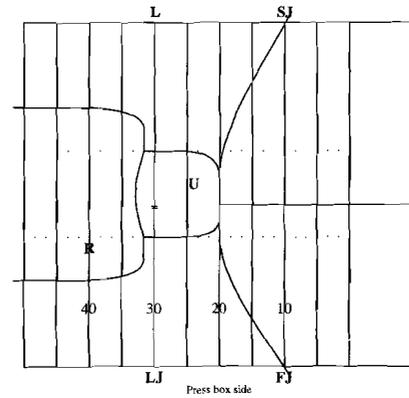


Figure E: 7-man crew

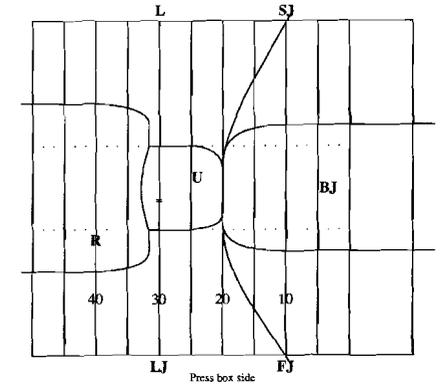
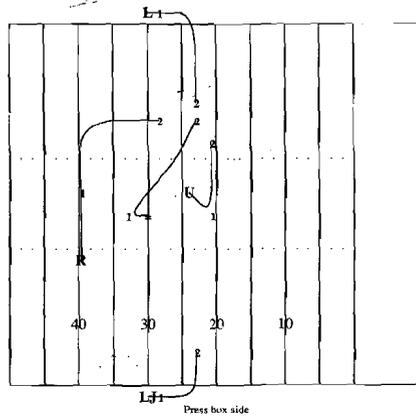
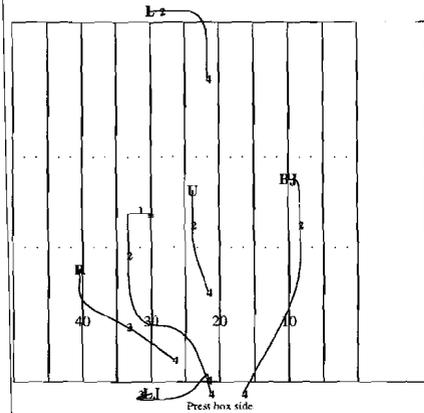


Figure F: Example play: (4-man crew) run up the middle of the field



As the play develops (1), the Umpire moves laterally to stay away from the hole at the point of attack. As the runner approaches the neutral zone, the Linesman takes over responsibility for him and moves to the dead-ball spot when he is tackled (2) to mark the forward progress. The Umpire and Referee observe action ahead of and around the runner.

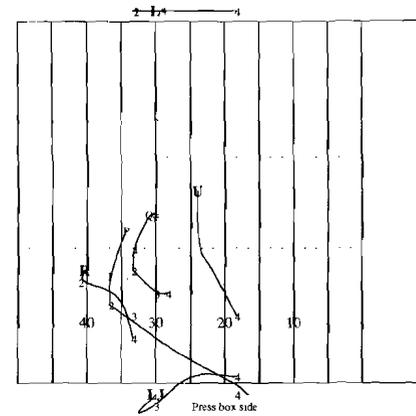
Figure G: Example play: (5-man crew) sweep to Line Judge's side of the field



At the snap (1) the officials read their keys to determine what the play is. Once it is determined to which side of the field the play is being run (2), the Line Judge makes sure he is well out of the way and the Back Judge moves across the field to observe lead blocks. The Umpire turns and watches the play from the inside. When the runner turns up field (3), responsibility for him passes from the Referee to the Line Judge. The Referee switches to watching blocks around the runner while the Line Judge follows the runner up the sideline. When the runner goes out of bounds (4), the Line Judge marks the dead-ball spot and observes continuing action against the runner. The Referee and Back Judge move quickly into the vicinity to assist in

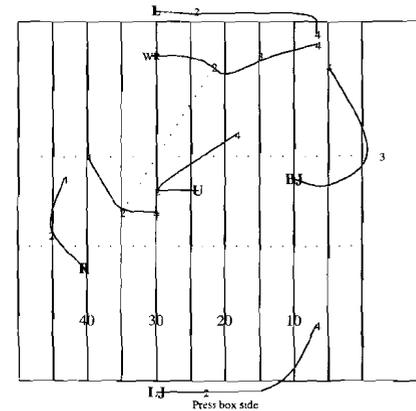
coverage, with the Back Judge going into the team area if necessary. The Umpire moves downfield to a spot level with the dead-ball spot. Throughout the play the Linesman is responsible for action in the centre of the field behind the Referee and Umpire.

Figure H: Example play (4-man crew) pitchout option play



The Referee maintains coverage as the quarterback (Q) rolls out to the Line Judge's side of the field (1). The Line Judge steps into the backfield to observe the trailing back (P). If the ball is pitched to the outside back (2) the Referee watches for continuing action against the quarterback while the Line Judge takes the ball and the runner. If the ball is not pitched then the Line Judge watches the trailing back until the quarterback crosses the neutral zone (3) and then takes responsibility for him. The Linesman takes a position to assist on ruling whether the pitch goes backwards or forwards. The Umpire at all times watches the action at the point of attack and in front of the runner.

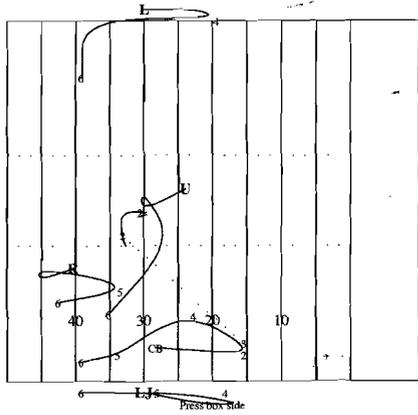
Figure I: Example play: (5-man crew) pass downfield to Linesman's side of field



As the quarterback drops back into the pass pocket (1) the Referee drops back correspondingly to keep out of the way, maintaining coverage of players in the backfield. The Umpire steps up into the neutral zone in order to be able to rule on whether the pass crosses it. The wing officials move downfield slightly to be in position to cover the receivers. The Back Judge moves back to keep the potential receivers between himself and the wing officials. When the quarterback throws the ball (2) the Referee must continue to watch him in case of roughing the passer fouls. The Umpire turns and watches the pass in flight in order to be able to rule on whether it is caught or incomplete. The Linesman and Back Judge also watch the receiver and

those around him for illegal action. After the pass is complete and the runner is progressing downfield he is the Linesman's responsibility (3). Other officials watch the action around the ball and the Referee cleans up any action remaining around the line of scrimmage. When the runner is tackled (4), the Linesman moves to the dead-ball spot and the Back Judge assists with coverage and, after all action has ceased, with relaying a ball to the inbounds spot.

Figure J: Example play: (4-man crew) interception return



As the officials read pass (1), the Referee backs up to stay clear of the passer, the Umpire steps up towards the neutral zone and the wing officials move downfield slightly after the receivers and defenders. At the time the pass is thrown (2) the Line Judge and Linesman are watching for contact between all eligible receivers on their side of the field. With the pass in the air the Umpire pivots to watch the point where it comes down and the Line Judge, having determined the most likely receiver, watches for pass interference, etc. When the pass is intercepted by the cornerback (CB) (3), the Line Judge has responsibility for the runner and the Umpire watches blocking on the return (4). When the runner is tackled (6), the Line Judge has

the dead-ball spot, and after ensuring that there are no continuing action fouls, the Referee assists in retrieving/relaying a ball to the inbounds spot. Throughout the return the Linesman observes action away from the ball.

24.3 – Basic goal line responsibilities

Figure A: 4-man crew

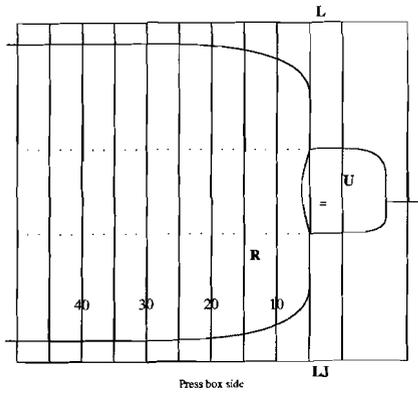


Figure B: 5-man crew

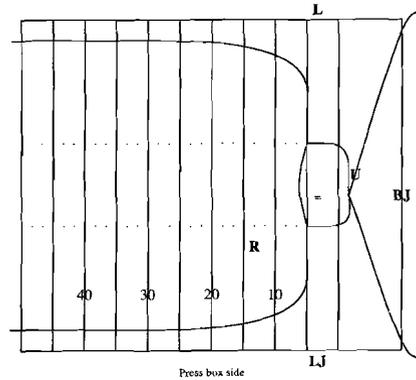


Figure C: 6-man crew

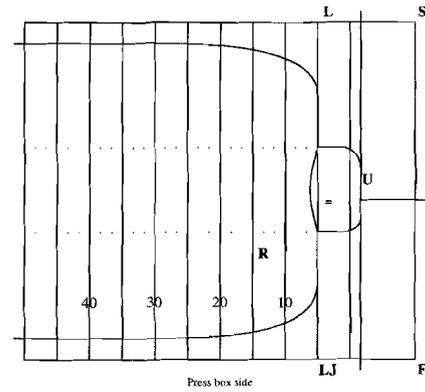


Figure D: 7-man crew (ball between 7 & 20-yard lines)

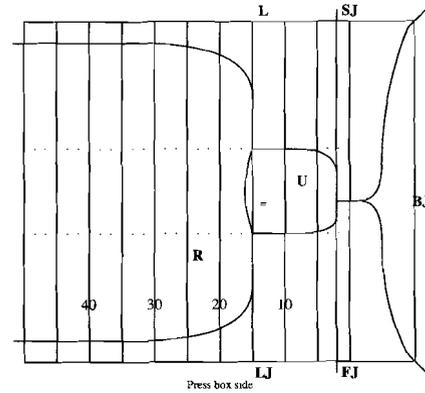
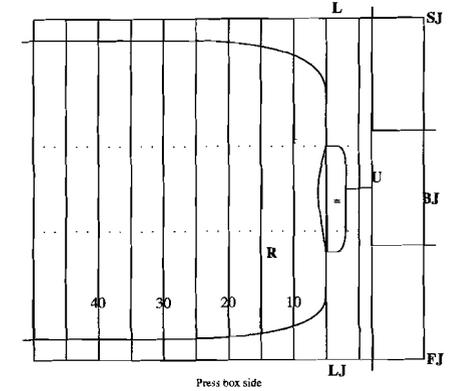


Figure E: 7-man crew (ball inside 7-yard line)



24.4 – Basic punt responsibilities

Figure A: 4-man crew

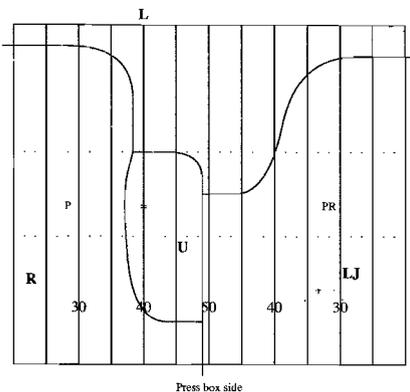


Figure B: 5-man crew

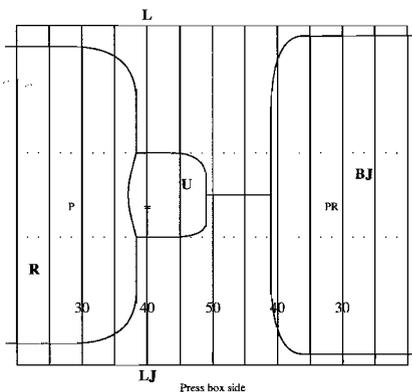


Figure C: 6-man crew

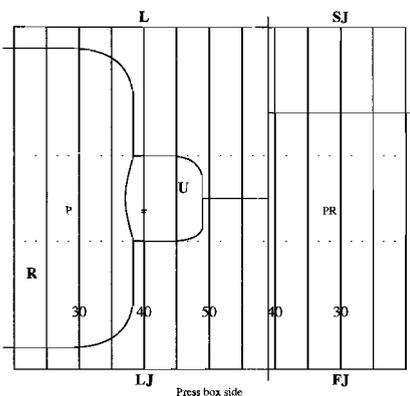


Figure D: 7-man crew

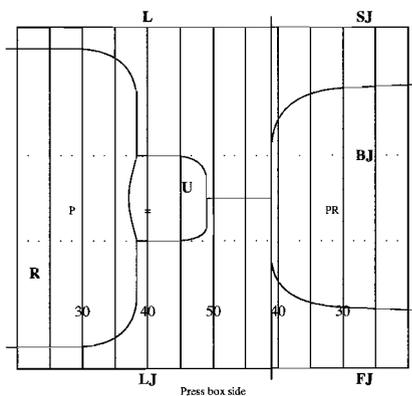
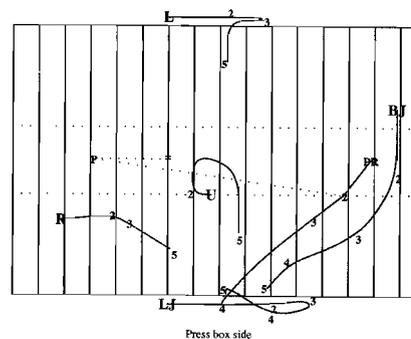


Figure E: Example play: (5-man crew) punt return



The Referee concentrates on action in the backfield especially against the kicker after the ball is kicked (1). When the ball is kicked the Line Judge moves downfield 10-15 yards. The Back Judge takes a position in front of the deep receiver so that he can observe the catch (2), and has responsibility for the runner until the runner crosses the yard line occupied by the Line Judge (3). The Line Judge follows the runner until he goes out of bounds (4) with the Referee and Umpire observing action ahead of the runner and the Back Judge watching for continuing action fouls behind and around the runner. The

Linesman observes players away from the ball. The Line Judge will mark the dead-ball spot while the Referee and Back Judge assist in returning the ball to the inbounds spot (5) once all action has ceased.

24.5 – Basic field goal or try attempt responsibilities

(Arrows show direction officials should move if Team A switch to a run/pass formation)

Figure A: 4-man crew

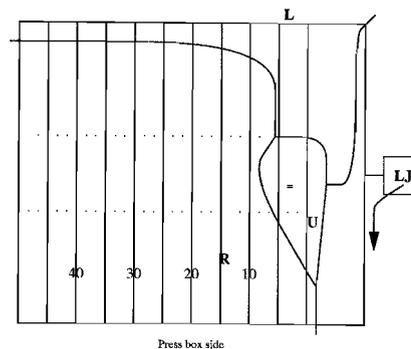


Figure B: 5-man crew

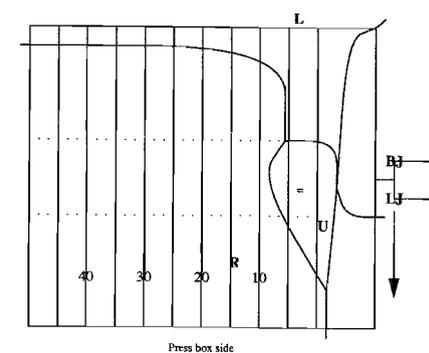


Figure C: 6-man crew

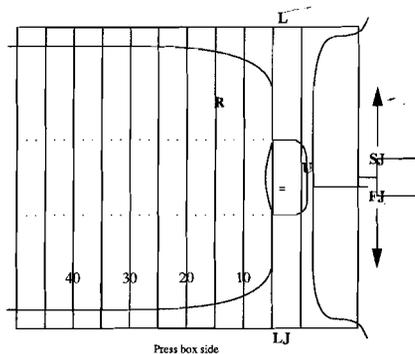


Figure D: 7-man crew

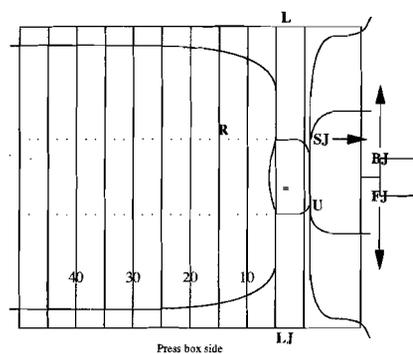
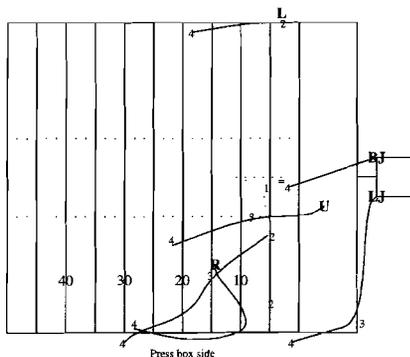


Figure E: Example play: (5-man crew) blocked field goal attempt



The field goal attempt is blocked behind the line of scrimmage (1). The Referee immediately reacts by moving towards the press box sideline, maintaining a position clear of action around the ball. The Umpire stays on the goal line ready to rule if the ball is advanced, and the Linesman also moves to the goal line for the same reason. The Line Judge moves towards the corner pylon while the Back Judge moves up to the end line. The ball is recovered by the defense (2) and advanced away from the end zone. The Referee has sideline responsibility and covers the runner, while the Umpire moves to observe action around the runner. As the other officials move to cover continuing action away from the ball (3) the Referee follows the runner up the sideline until the runner is forced out of bounds (4). The Umpire and Line Judge must get into position to observe action around the runner, even if from a distance. The Linesman and Back Judge observe the players around the original line of scrimmage.

25. SUPPLEMENTARY SIGNALS

The official football signals (S1 to S47) are described in the rulebook, but in practice officials supplement these with signals of their own or other people's invention in order to aid communication in situations where verbal communication is either impossible or undesirable.

All signals are means of visually communicating a message. The source of the message is the official who gives the signal. The destination of the message may be, in different cases, other officials, players, coaches or spectators. Visual signals may have to be used where either distance or noise prevent audible signals from being heard, or where an audible signal is inappropriate.

No.	Message	Signal
Sup1	the Team A player nearest me is off the line of scrimmage	arm outstretched (with hand open) approximately 90° to the ground, pointing into Team A backfield
Sup3	the team I am responsible for counting has 11 players on the field	clenched fist between waist and shoulder height with upward pointing thumb; \diamond arm outstretched to side (see also Sup24)
Sup4	the team I am responsible for counting has more than 11 players on the field	hand on top of head
Sup5	the last pass in the backfield was a backward pass	punch arm into backfield
Sup6	Team A have more than 10 yards to go to the line to gain (2-stakes)	wagging index fingers discretely at chest height
Sup8	the clock stops after the next play	crossed wrists in front of chest
Sup9	Team A is attempting a kick at goal	form hands into A shape with fingertips touching
Sup10	Team A is "going for it" – they are not attempting a kick in a 4th down or PAT situation	roll hands (like S19) above head
Sup11	the game clock starts on the snap	click fingers
Sup12	the game clock starts on the ready or is running	circular motion of finger from wrist
Sup13	the catch was complete	clutch hands to chest in catching motion
Sup14	the pass was caught out of bounds (incomplete)	throw arms to out of bounds side
Sup15	the field goal attempt was no good (wide)	as Sup14
Sup16	please guide me to the out of bounds spot	one hand in air
Sup17	come up the sideline towards me	beckon with palm of hand towards self
Sup18	move down the sideline away from me	gesture with palm of hand away from self
Sup19	stop, you are at the out of bounds spot	hack down
Sup20	advance the stadium clock (i.e. it is slow with respect to the official clock)	signal S2 until the clock shows the correct time, then give signal S3

Figure C: 6-man crew

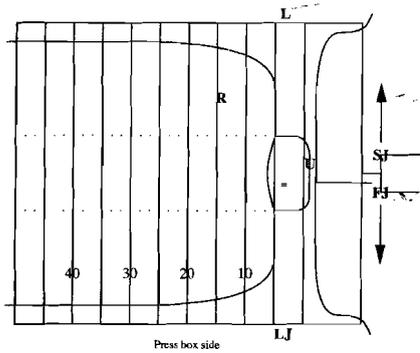


Figure D: 7-man crew

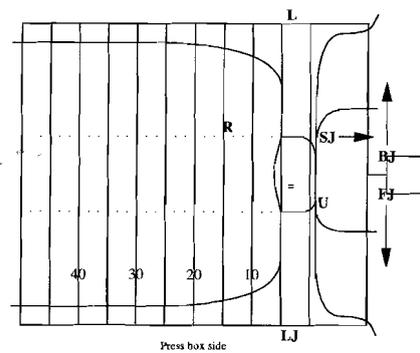
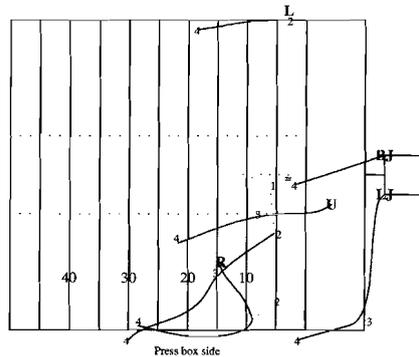


Figure E: Example play: (5-man crew) blocked field goal attempt



The field goal attempt is blocked behind the line of scrimmage (1). The Referee immediately reacts by moving towards the press box sideline, maintaining a position clear of action around the ball. The Umpire stays on the goal line ready to rule if the ball is advanced, and the Linesman also moves to the goal line for the same reason. The Line Judge moves towards the corner pylon while the Back Judge moves up to the end line. The ball is recovered by the defense (2) and advanced away from the end zone. The Referee has sideline responsibility and covers the runner, while the Umpire moves to observe action around the runner. As the other officials move to cover continuing action away from the ball (3) the Referee follows the runner up the sideline until the runner is forced out of bounds (4). The Umpire and Line Judge must get into position to observe action around the runner, even if from a distance. The Linesman and Back Judge observe the players around the original line of scrimmage.

25. SUPPLEMENTARY SIGNALS

The official football signals (S1 to S47) are described in the rulebook, but in practice officials supplement these with signals of their own or other people's invention in order to aid communication in situations where verbal communication is either impossible or undesirable.

All signals are means of visually communicating a message. The source of the message is the official who gives the signal. The destination of the message may be, in different cases, other officials, players, coaches or spectators. Visual signals may have to be used where either distance or noise prevent audible signals from being heard, or where an audible signal is inappropriate.

No.	Message	Signal
Sup1	the Team A player nearest me is off the line of scrimmage	arm outstretched (with hand open) approximately [∠] 90° to the ground, pointing into Team A backfield
Sup3	the team I am responsible for counting has 11 players on the field	clenched fist between waist and shoulder height with upward pointing thumb; [∠] arm outstretched to side (see also Sup24)
Sup4	the team I am responsible for counting has more than 11 players on the field	hand on top of head
Sup5	the last pass in the backfield was a backward pass	punch arm into backfield
Sup6	Team A have more than 10 yards to go to the line to gain (2-stakes)	wagging index fingers discretely at chest height
Sup8	the clock stops after the next play	crossed wrists in front of chest
Sup9	Team A is attempting a kick at goal	form hands into A shape with fingertips touching
Sup10	Team A is "going for it" – they are not attempting a kick in a 4th down or PAT situation	roll hands (like S19) above head
Sup11	the game clock starts on the snap	click fingers
Sup12	the game clock starts on the ready or is running	circular motion of finger from wrist
Sup13	the catch was complete	clutch hands to chest in catching motion
Sup14	the pass was caught out of bounds (incomplete)	throw arms to out of bounds side
Sup15	the field goal attempt was no good (wide)	as Sup14
Sup16	please guide me to the out of bounds spot	one hand in air
Sup17	come up the sideline towards me	beckon with palm of hand towards self
Sup18	move down the sideline away from me	gesture with palm of hand away from self
Sup19	stop, you are at the out of bounds spot	hack down
Sup20	advance the stadium clock (i.e. it is slow with respect to the official clock)	signal S2 until the clock shows the correct time, then give signal S3

No.	Message	Signal
Sup21	delay the stadium clock (i.e. it is fast with respect to the on-field clock)	signal S21 to hold (delay) the stadium clock, then give signal S2 to restart it when the on-field clock catches up
Sup22	turn the stadium clock off	cut throat signal
Sup23	take a knee play notification	tap raised knee
Sup24	the team I am responsible for counting has 10 (or fewer) players on the field	clenched fist with downward pointing thumb; arm outstretched to side (see also Sup3)
Sup25	I believe all the conditions for a touch-down are met	fists together (in front of chest) ^o with thumbs up
Sup26	the receiver touched the ball inbounds but did not have control of it until he was out of bounds	move hands (palms up) alternately up and down in front of chest
Sup27	the down box is displaying the wrong number	give signal S17 (uncatchable forward pass) before the snap
Sup28	I have responsibility for the kick returner/ball	punch in the direction of the receiving team's end line
Sup29	reset play clock to 25 seconds	pump one arm vertically with palm of hand facing upwards
Sup30	reset play clock to 40 seconds	pump two arms vertically with palms of hands facing upwards
Sup31	fourth down fumble rule is in effect	roll hands (like S19) in front of chest
Sup32	nose of ball is on yard line	tap nose with fingers
Sup33	middle of ball is midway between two yard lines	tap belt buckle with fingers
Sup34	tail of ball is on yard line	tap hip with fingers
Sup35	Team A has made the line to gain (first down)	point with index finger in front of chest in direction of Team B's end line
Sup36	Substitution disadvantage: Team A is making a last second substitution	Two closed fists with arms spread wide

Signals Sup11 and Sup12 are intended primarily for communication between the Referee and the on-field timekeeper.

Signals Sup16 to Sup19 are intended for kick out of bounds situations.

Signals Sup20 to Sup22 are intended for communication with the stadium clock operator.

Signals Sup2 and Sup7 are no longer used.

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27. PENALTY CODES

By code:

Code	Foul
BAT	Illegal batting
DH	Holding, defense
DOD	Delay of game, defense
DOF	Offside, defense
DOG	Delay of game, offense
DPI	Pass interference, defense
DSQ	Disqualification
ENC	Encroachment (offense)
EQV	Equipment violation
FBG	Fighting before game
FFH	Fighting, first half
FGT	Fighting
FHT	Fighting, half-time
FSH	Fighting, second half
FST	False start
IBB	Illegal block in the back
IDP	Ineligible downfield on pass
IFK	Illegal free kick formation
IFP	Illegal forward pass
IKB	Illegally kicking ball
ILF	Illegal formation
ILM	Illegal motion
ILP	Illegal participation
ILS	Illegal substitution
ING	Intentional grounding
INL	Interlocking legs
ISH	Illegal shift
ISP	Illegal snap
ITP	Illegal touching of a forward pass
KCI	Kick catch interference
KIK	Illegal kick
KOB	Free kick out of bounds
OFK	Offside, kicking team
OH	Holding, offense
OPI	Pass interference, offense
PF/BBW	Personal foul, blocking below the waist
PF/BTH	Personal foul, blow to the head
PF/BUT	Personal foul, butting/ramming with helmet
PF/CHB	Personal foul, chop block
PF/CLP	Personal foul, clipping
PF/FMM	Personal foul, facemask, 15 yards
PF/HCT	Personal foul, horse collar tackle
PF/HDR	Personal foul, hit on defenceless receiver
PF/HTF	Personal foul, hands to the face
PF/HUR	Personal foul, hurdling
PF/ICB	Personal foul, illegal crackback
PF/ICS	Personal foul, illegal contact with snapper
PF/LEA	Personal foul, leaping

Code	Foul
PF/LEV	Personal foul, leverage
PF/LYO	Personal foul, late hit out of bounds
PF/LTP	Personal foul, late hit/piling on
PF/RFK	Personal foul, roughing free kicker
PF/RPS	Personal foul, roughing the passer
PF/RRK	Personal foul, roughing the kicker/holder
PF/SKE	Personal foul, striking/kneeing/elbowing
PF/TRP	Personal foul, tripping
PF/UNR	Personal foul, other unnecessary roughness
RNH	Running into the kicker/holder
SLI	Sideline interference, 5 yards
SLM	Sideline interference, 15 yards
UC/ABL	Unsportsmanlike act, abusive language
UC/BCH	Unsportsmanlike act, bench
UC/DEA	Unsportsmanlike act, delayed/excessive act
UC/RHT	Unsportsmanlike act, removal of helmet
UC/STB	Unsportsmanlike act, spiking/throwing ball
UC/TAU	Unsportsmanlike act, taunting/baiting
UC/UNS	Unsportsmanlike act, other
UFT	Unfair tactics

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