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# OFFICIATING FLAG FOOTBALL

## INTRODUCTION

Flag football is a difficult, but rewarding game to officiate. It demands not only a fine performance from each official, but also intelligent and cooperative teamwork between officials.

The primary job of an official is to see that a game progresses smoothly. Don't interfere with play more than you need. Call the plays that are clearly illegal. If you aren't sure about a call, don't make it. You want to be seen as someone that knows what he is doing, not someone that likes to guess about calls.

The essentials of good officiating include:

1. The ability to handle players in a friendly, firm and fair fashion, maintaining unchallenged control of the game and unqualified discipline of its players.
2. Letter perfect knowledge, understanding and application of the rules with fair, fearless and intelligent enforcement.
3. Knowledge of and adherence to approved mechanics with a thorough mastery of the assignments and duties of each officiating position.

Setting the standard for calls is something that needs to be done from the onset of the game. Players will be looking to you for consistency and fairness. Be aware of the level you are officiating. Don't expect young players to be able to correctly execute plays the same way more experienced players can. Keep your standards of what is a legal play in accord with the level you are officiating.

There are many things you will have to remember as a flag football referee, but the most important thing is to .....

**HAVE FUN!**

# SPORT RULES AND FIELD MECHANICS

Sport rules are necessary to provide organization and fairness in any competition. They ensure that specific athletic skills are adequately measured as defined by a sport. Sports officials play a critical role in assuring a game is conducted according to these rules. Associations require that all officials enforce the rules literally as they are written. Read the new rulebook completely each year when you receive it. Then, repeat this at least once a month, all season long.

Good sports officials constantly strive to improve the skills and abilities required to competently officiate a game. The prescribed mechanics outlined in this manual are the standardized methods and techniques expected to be followed by all assigned sports officials. Field mechanics are methods designed to position an official to make the best possible call.

Remember, these mechanics hints are simply steps in the right direction to place the official in the right place at the right time to observe the action. However, it is mandatory that an official realizes that he must exercise discriminating judgment based upon the effect created by the players in a given situation and the application of the rules. There is not a need in officiating for “over-technical” officials, but rather those who use and exercise “good common sense.” It is the purpose of the rules to penalize a player who by reason of an illegal act has placed his opponents at a disadvantage. As an official, remember ...

**IT IS NOT ONLY WHAT HAPPENS,  
BUT ALSO WHAT EFFECT IT HAS ON THE PLAY.**

For most individuals, officiating flag football games is both an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Adhering to specific ideals is both necessary and helpful.

An uncompromising adherence to these ideals will enable officials to be better prepared to fulfill their responsibilities and duties in an effective manner. These ideals -- listed as “Do’s and Don’ts” -- apply to officials at all levels of competition.

# OFFICIATING “DOS”

- Acquire and maintain your knowledge of the rules and understand their correct interpretation and application. This will allow the game to progress smoothly and will reduce the possibility of injury to the participants.
- Prepare yourself both physically and mentally. This will enable you to make quick and positive decisions, increase your self-confidence, and help to eliminate unnecessary questioning by the contestants.
- Be firm, be fair, clear, and concise, in enforcing the rules of play. This will help you to gain the respect of the players, coaches, and spectators.
- Know the duties and responsibilities of your specific assignment, as well as those of the other officials. It may be necessary for you to assume the responsibilities of more than your own duties sometime during the contest.
- Communicate with both teams through the proper team representative(s). Courteous inquiries during a time-out or when you are not engaged should be answered in a kind and diplomatic manner.
- Make a concerted effort to develop a basic knowledge and understanding of human nature. This will help you to anticipate and control situations as they arise.
- Be polite in all dealings with players, coaches and team representatives, but keep a professional distance. It not only sets a good example, but also encourages cooperation among all concerned.
- Be loyal to other officials. Officiating is a team effort. Treat them with respect and consideration, as you would hope they would do for you.
- Call penalties you see regardless of pressure from fans, the score, or what others may want you to do. Your reputation should be built on the basis of your uncompromising honesty and integrity.
- Have a good time. If you do not truly enjoy the experience of officiating, you should explore other options.

# OFFICIATING “DON'TS”

- Don't take your eyes off of the play. You are not there to be a spectator.
- Don't take anything for granted. Expect anything and everything to happen.
- Don't explain decisions unnecessarily. You are in a no-win situation and explanations won't help.
- Don't argue with the players or coaches. You'll only look unprofessional.
- Don't talk back to spectators. Ignore them, dealing with them is not your responsibility.
- Don't look for trouble. Courtesy and a kind word can save a ball game.
- Don't make decisions for your partners. Provide assistance when needed but don't interfere unless they look for help.
- Don't officiate without proper equipment. You owe it to yourself, the profession and the game to look your best.
- Don't hold idle conversation with players or coaches. It is often misinterpreted and can cause trouble for you.
- Don't stand on a dime. Always hustle.
- Don't blow your whistle if you don't see all of the play. Guessing doesn't cut it in officiating.
- Don't imagine or suspect. Call only what you see, not what someone else said that they saw.
- Don't undermine or publicly criticize fellow officials. They are out there doing their best, just like you, so show them respect for their efforts. If you have concerns about a performance, speak to them in private.

# UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

An official can avoid many headaches just by dressing and looking the part of a referee. The days of out of shape and poorly dressed officials are gone.

## THE SUGGESTED UNIFORM IS:

- Striped black and white long sleeve or short-sleeve polo shirt.
- White or black pants or shorts.
- Black hat. (A plain black hat. No designs on it.)
- Black athletic shoes.
- Down indicator. (two rubber bands tied together work fine)
- Yellow penalty flag. (Sometimes having two flags is a good idea.)
- Official's bean bag.
- Whistle with lanyard. (It's always okay to have an extra whistle on hand for emergency purposes.)

It is mandatory to keep the whistle in your hand until the ball becomes dead by rule. Let the play kill itself. Do not be in a hurry to sound the whistle. It is better to be late and right.

# SCMAF MINIMUM PLAY RULE SPECIFICS

- Each player must play a minimum of five (5) consecutive minutes, which includes all offensive, defensive, and kicking plays in each half.
- Players must start his/her consecutive minutes at either the beginning or midpoint of a quarter.
- Officials will call a time out, not charged to either team, at the midpoint of the quarter or the next dead ball, for the purpose of meeting the minimum play rule.
- The official scorekeeper will determine compliance. Penalty for non-compliance will be forfeiture of the game.
- Consecutive minutes must be played within one quarter of each half.
- Consecutive minutes begun in one quarter may not be carried over into the next quarter or half.
- Late arriving athletes, if time permits, must play the minimum consecutive minutes with the half of their arrival.
- Injuries that preclude a player out of play from returning to the game are exceptions.
- The Tournament Director, with respect to satisfactorily meeting the requirement of the minimum play rule, will rule upon injuries that preclude the player out of play for more than one play.

# CONTROL OF THE GAME

There are three reasons that an official loses control of a game. This is true in any sport.

## REASON 1: MAKING TOO MANY CALLS

When officials make too many calls they find themselves controlling the direction of the game. That's when a lot of problems arise. The most important thing to remember is to let the players play the game. The referee should be in the background not the main attraction.

## REASON 2: NOT MAKING ENOUGH CALLS

This is directly opposite of reason 1. Every game is different. Some games you will throw a lot of flags and some you will throw very few. The important thing to remember is if it's a penalty the first time then it's a penalty the second time, and so on.

## REASON 3: NOT MAKING ANY CALLS

This needs very little explanation. You are not there to be a spectator. You are there to call the game. Get involved.

As you can see, a referee has to find a balance between making too many calls and not making enough calls. Good referees constantly think of this. Here are a few ideas that can help you.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT PENALTY YOU CAN CALL IN A GAME IS THE FIRST ONE.

This can set the flow of the game for you. You have to make sure that it is a penalty that everybody could see and it is an obvious penalty.

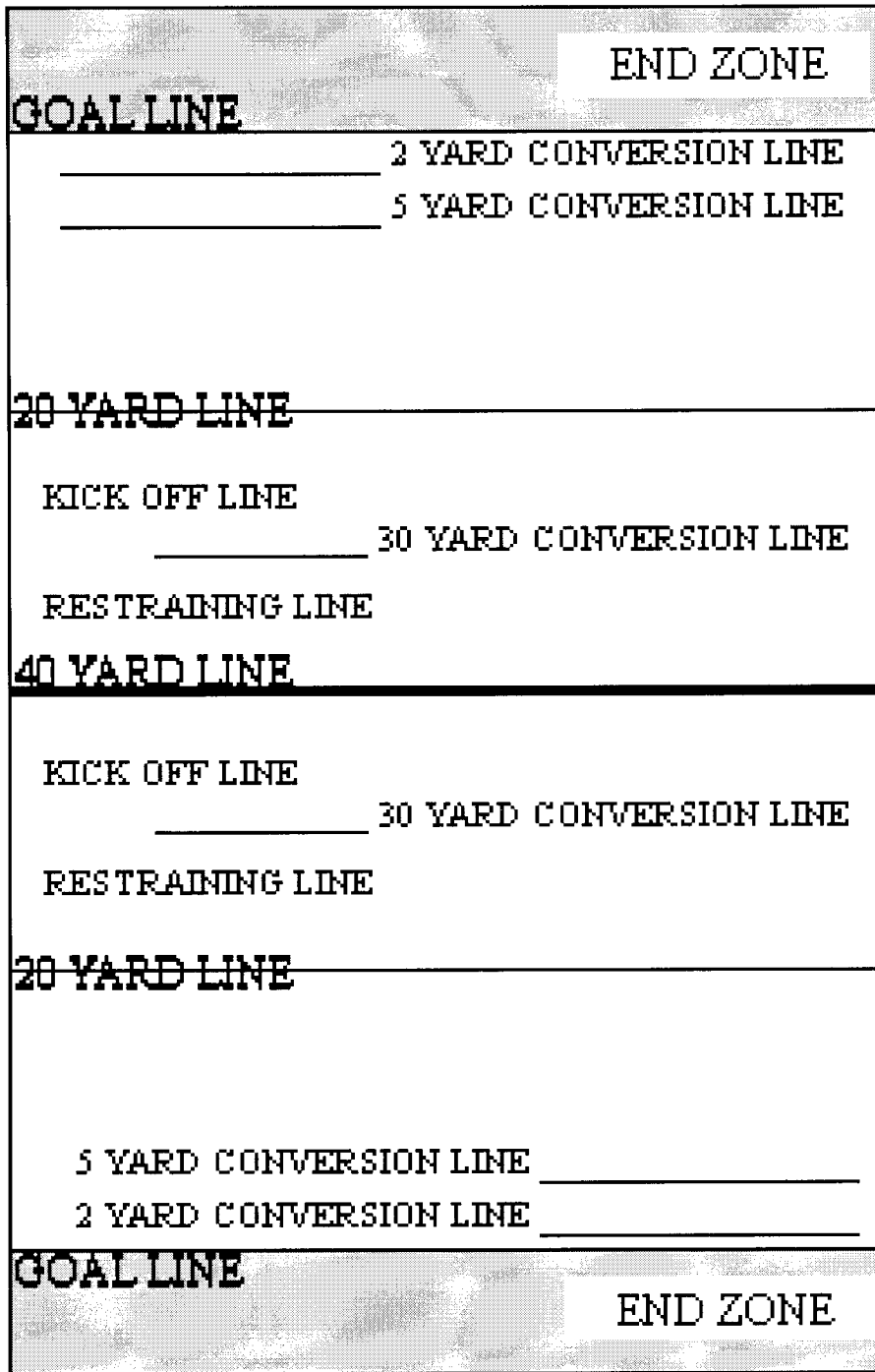
## THE WORST PENALTY YOU CAN CALL IS THE ONE TO PROVE YOU KNOW THE RULES.

Never call a penalty just to prove that you know the technical parts of the rulebook. Call the penalties that need to be called.



# FIELD DIMENSIONS

40 YARDS



10 YARDS

T  
E  
A  
M

B  
E  
N  
C  
H

T  
E  
A  
M

B  
E  
N  
C  
H

# RULINGS ON VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES

VIOLATION	PENALTY	DOWN	ENFORCE FROM	OFFICIAL'S SIGNAL
	Dead Ball Violations			
1) Encroachment	5 yards	same	L.O.S.	#7 & #18
2) Delay of Game (30 seconds)	5 yards	same	L.O.S.	#7 & #21
	Offensive Violations			
3) Illegal Procedure	5 yards	same	L.O.S.	#19 or #20
4) Intentionally grounded pass	5 yards	loss of down	Spot of Foul	#36 & #9
5) "Tucking" or other illegal arrangement of flags	12 yards	loss of down	B.E.S.	#23 & #9
6) Illegal hideout	5 yards	loss of down	B.E.S.	#28 & #9
7) Illegal forward pass	5 yards	loss of down	L.O.S.	#35 & #9
8) Direct run by quarterback	5 yards	loss of down	L.O.S.	#35 & #9
9) Delay on punt (10 seconds)	5 yards	loss of down	L.O.S.	#21 & #9
10) Diving in making blocks	12 yards	loss of down	B.E.S.	#40 & #9
11) Illegal use of hands	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#43 or #42
12) Stiff arming, hacking, guarding flags (by ball carrier)	12 yards	loss of down	B.E.S.	#38 & #9
13) Clipping	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#39
14) Offensive pass interference	12 yards	loss of down	L.O.S.	#33 & #9
15) Diving, jumping or hurdling to advance the ball	12 yards	same	L.O.S.	#44 & #9
16) Illegal punt	5 yards	loss of down	L.O.S.	#31
17) Untucked shirt by ball carrier	12 yards	loss of down	B.E.S.	#23 & #9
18) Defensive holding or illegal use of hands	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#43 or #42
19) Premature pulling of flags	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#27
20) Roughing kicker or passer	12 yards	1st down	L.O.S.	#38 or #34 & #18
21) Defensive pass interference	12 yards	1st down	L.O.S.	#33 & #8
	General Violations			
22) Unnecessary roughness kneeling or any flagrant roughness, including running over the defense by the ball carrier & playing the person instead of the flag	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#38
23) Unsportsmanlike conduct	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#27
24) Tripping	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#46
25) Intentional kicking of a free ball	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#31
26) Intentional hurdling or jumping over any other player (offense or defense) which creates an unsafe condition	12 yards	same	B.E.S.	#44

NOTE: L.O.S. - Line of Scrimmage B.E.S. - Basic Enforcement Spot

# THE BASICS OF PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

## A. DEAD BALL FOULS: (Succeeding spot)

- Foul after touchdown - Try
- Defensive foul after a successful try - Enforce on kickoff
- If a forward pass foul by "A" causes loss of down on try, no replay if successful or unsuccessful.

## B. RUNNING PLAYS: (Where run ends) - RUNS AND ILLEGAL PASSES

- "A" fouls behind end of run - Spot of foul
- "A" fouls beyond end of run - Where run ends
- "B" fouls behind end of run - Where run ends
- "B" fouls beyond end of run - Where run ends
- "A" fouls in own end zone - Safety
- Defense fouls in opponents' end zone and enforcement spot is behind the goal line--penalize from the goal line.

### EXCEPTION:

Running play behind line ending with fumble or backward pass, the foul then occurring, enforce from the previous spot.

## C. LOOSE BALL PLAYS: (Previous spot)

- "A" fouls behind snap, kick, pass or fumble - Spot of foul
- "A" fouls beyond snap, kick, pass or fumble - Previous spot
- "B" fouls behind snap, kick, pass or fumble - Previous spot
- "B" fouls beyond snap, kick, pass or fumble. - Previous spot
- "A" fouls in own end zone - Safety
- "B" fouls in A's end zone - Previous spot

### EXCEPTIONS:

- Kicking and catching interference - "R" may except awarded fair catch at spot of foul or 12 yards from previous spot and replay to take result of the play.
- Illegal forward pass- Treated the same as a running play, 5 yards and loss of down from the spot of the foul - Line of scrimmage
- Running plays beyond the line ending with a backward pass or fumble- The foul then occurring; enforce from the end of the run - Spot where the fumble or backward pass took place.
- Invalid fair catch signal- Penalize from previous spot

### SPECIFIC SITUATIONS:

- Any foul simultaneous with snap (previous spot) - 12 men on the field, illegal motion, etc.
- Unsportsmanlike foul by offense during last timed down of either half or any foul either team after such down (Succeeding spot) - Kickoff or spot in overtime.
- Live or dead ball foul by a nonplayer - Succeeding spot

## PENALTY ENFORCEMENT BASICS- CONTINUED

### D. DOUBLE FOULS:

- It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls during:
  - A. Same live ball period and no change of possession occurred.
  - B. Same live ball period in which there is a change of possession and the team in possession at the end of the down had fouled prior to gaining possession.
- It is not a double foul:
  - A. If both teams foul during a down in which there is a change of possession, the last team gaining possession may retain the ball provided:
    - 1. Its foul was not prior to the final change of possession,
    - 2. They declined the opponent's foul.
  - B. If both teams commit fouls during the same dead ball period. Enforce both fouls in order of occurrence. One could be a 12-yard and the other a 5-yard.
  - C. Unsportsmanlike fouls will always be penalized from the succeeding spot and are not part of a double or multiple foul.

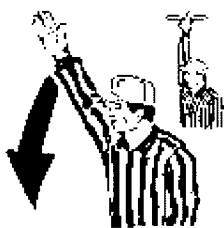





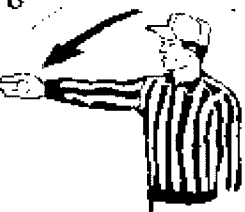

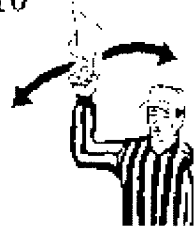

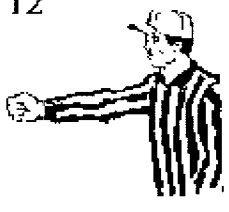

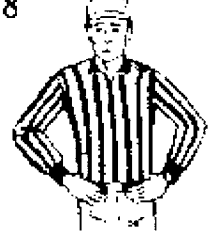




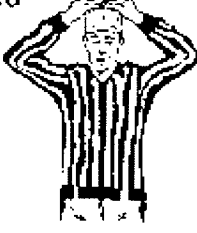
### E. LIVE BALL FOUL AND THEN A DEAD BALL FOUL:

- Live ball foul by one team followed by a dead ball foul by opponents – administered separately and in order of occurrence.
- Live ball foul and dead ball foul by same team, both fouls are administered.
- When a dead ball foul follows a down during which there was a double foul, the penalty for the dead ball foul is administered separately.





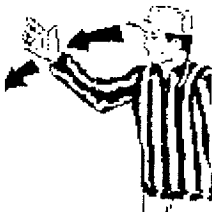











### F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The two automatic first downs are:
  - A. Pass interference by “B”
  - B. Roughing the passer
- During the last timed down of any quarter extend the quarter if:
  - A. Foul by either team and the penalty is accepted.
  - B. If there was a double foul.
  - C. If there was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be replayed. Loose ball beyond A's scrimmage line - whistle is blown. Replay if the team in possession chooses to replay. No replay if choice is to accept the result where possession was lost.
- All non-player or unsportsmanlike fouls during a touchdown play and dead fouls prior to the try will be enforced on the try (NOT THE KICK OFF). Player fouls during scoring plays will be enforced only if the penalty is accepted. (ONLY FOULS ACCEPTED ON CONVERSION ATTEMPTS CARRY OVER TO KICK OFF.)

# MECHANICS: OFFICIALS' SIGNALS

<p>1</p>  <p>Ball Ready for Play</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>Start Clock</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>Time Out Discretionary or Injury Time Out (Followed by Tapping Hands on Chest)</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>Touchdown. Point(s) after Touchdown</p>
<p>6</p>  <p>Safety</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>Ball Dead, Touchback (Move Side to Side)</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>First Down</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>Loss of Down</p>
<p>10</p>  <p>Disregard Flag</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Legal Touching of Forward Pass or Scrimmage Kick</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>Inadvertent Whistle (Face Scorer's Table)</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>End of Period</p>
<p>18</p>  <p>Encroachment, Offsides</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>Illegal Procedure, False Start, Illegal Position</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>(1 Hand) (2 Hands) Illegal Motion or Shift</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>Delay of Game</p>
<p>22</p>  <p>Substitution Infraction</p>	<p>23</p>  <p>Failure to Wear Required Equipment</p>	<p>27</p>  <p>Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Non-conduct foul</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>Illegal Participants</p>

# MECHANICS: OFFICIALS' SIGNALS

<p>29</p>  <p>Sideline Interference</p>	<p>31</p>  <p>Ball Illegally Kicked, Batted, or Touched</p>	<p>32</p>  <p>Invalid Fair Catch Signal, Illegal Fair Catch Signal</p>	<p>33</p>  <p>Forward Pass Interference, Kick Catching Interference</p>
<p>34</p>  <p>Roughing Passer</p>	<p>35</p>  <p>Illegal Pass, Illegal Forward Handing</p>	<p>36</p>  <p>Intentional Grounding</p>	<p>38</p>  <p>Personal Foul</p>
<p>39</p>  <p>Clipping</p>	<p>40</p>  <p>Blocking Below the Waist, Illegal Block</p>	<p>41</p>  <p>Chop Block</p>	<p>42</p>  <p>Holding</p>
<p>43</p>  <p>Illegal Use of Hands or Arms</p>	<p>44</p>  <p>Helping Runner, Interlocked Interference</p>	<p>46</p>  <p>Tripping</p>	<p>47</p>  <p>Player Disqualification</p>

# OFFICIATING PROCEDURES AND MECHANICS

## PRE-GAME MECHANICS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (2-PERSON CREW)

### BEFORE ON THE FIELD

#### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Verify the game assignment, date, time, location, and the position to be worked.
- Contact the other official that will assist in officiating the game.
- Check your own personal officiating equipment and get it ready for the game.
- Arrive at the game site in plenty of time before the start of the contest.
- Notify the Site Supervisor of your arrival.
- Secure the game ball(s) and any other equipment necessary for the game.

### PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

#### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Review the coin toss mechanics.
- Review the free-kick positions and responsibilities.
- Review mechanics and responsibilities on plays from scrimmage including:
  - A. Running Plays
  - B. Forward Pass Plays
  - C. Illegal Passes
- Review coverage on kicks from scrimmage:
  - A. First Touching
  - B. Fair Catch
  - C. Interference
  - D. Out-of-bounds
- Review procedures on goal line plays and conversion attempts.
- Review procedures on time-outs and interim periods.
- Review the first down procedure on zone-to gain.
- Review the procedures on administering penalties.
- Review Tie-game procedures.
- Check the starting time for the game and synchronize your watch.
- Discuss any play, rule or game situations that might arise or that an official has some concern about.
- Discuss blowing the whistle and dead ball spots.

## PRE-GAME - CONTINUED

### ARRIVAL ON THE FIELD

#### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Arrive on the field of play at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the game.
- Meet the coaches.
- Confer with the clock operator and game announcer, if utilized.
- Inspect the playing field.

#### REFEREE

- Arranges for the ball boys, if used.
- Brings the home team captains to midfield for the coin toss.
- Signals the Umpire to bring the visiting team captains to midfield for the coin toss.
- Determines which side of field he will work on and communicates this information to the umpire.
- Instructs the individual who will work with the down marker and places him on opposite sideline to his (referee) sideline.

#### UMPIRE

- Check both teams for illegal equipment.
- Check both end zone areas (cones, flags, endline)
- Escorts the visiting team captain to midfield for the pre-game coin toss after a signal from the Referee.

### THE COIN TOSS

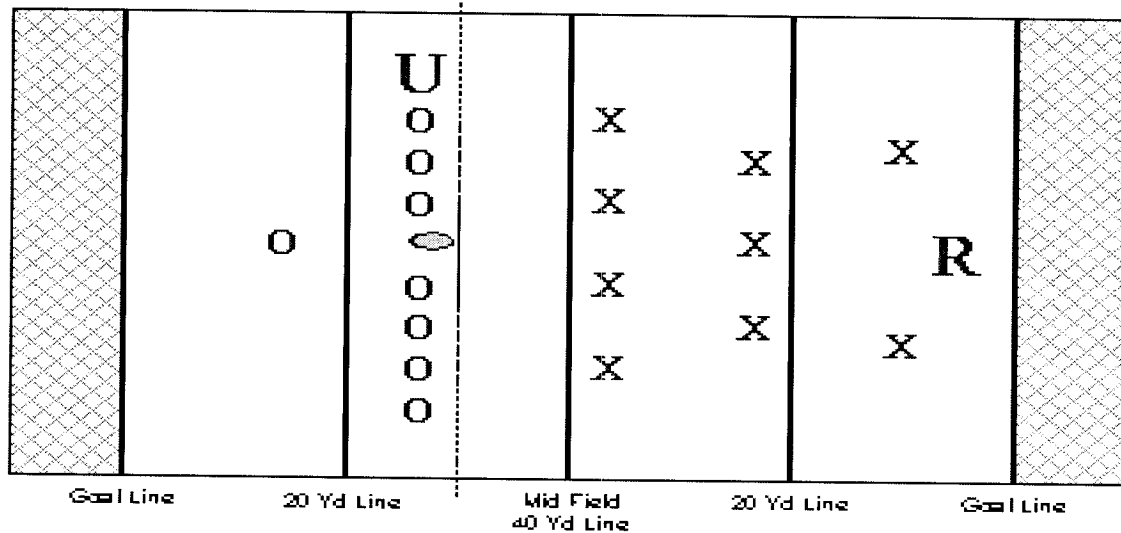
- INTRODUCTIONSA. The Referee introduces the home team captains to the Umpire. The Umpire introduces the visiting team captains to the Referee and then assumes a position on or about the 35-yard line.
  - B. The Referee introduces the team captains to each other.
  - C. Ask the team captains if they have any questions relating to the game.
  - D. Explain the coin toss procedure.
- THE TOSS
  - A. The Referee flips the coin in the air and lets it drop to the ground.
  - B. The visiting team captain calls either “heads” or “tails” while the coin is in the air.
  - C. The Referee places one hand on the shoulder of the winner of the coin toss and offers the following options:
    1. Kick
    2. Receive
    3. Choice of goal to defend
  - D. The team captains then assume a position facing the direction of the goal line they will advance towards.
  - E. The Referee indicates the choice for each team by utilizing a catching or kicking signal.
  - F. Both officials record the result of the toss and upon a signal from the Referee, move to their respective kick-off positions.



# FREE KICKS

## POSITIONS OF OFFICIALS ON A FREE KICK

30 Yd Restraining Line



KEY: O = Offense, X = Defense, R = Referee, U = Umpire, DB = Down Box

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REFEREE

- Assumes a position in the center of the field near the goal line of the receiving team.
- Counts the players on the receiving team and makes sure at least three (3) players are within 5 yards of their restraining line.
- Motions the other official to the sidelines opposite the Down Box.
- Raises one arm above the head to request the ready signal from the other official.
- Lowers the arm and blows the whistle signaling that everyone is ready for play and to kick the ball.
- Watches at the kick to see that at least three (3) players on the receiving team remain within their restraining lines until the ball is kicked.
- Watches for the ball going out-of-bounds or over the goal line into end zone.
- Trails the ball carrier, if the ball is caught in the field of play.
- Watches for any infraction of the rules.
- Gives a blast on the whistle when the ball becomes dead.
- Spots the ball after the play is whistled dead and proceeds to implement the procedure utilized BEFORE THE SNAP of the ball by the Referee on RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage.

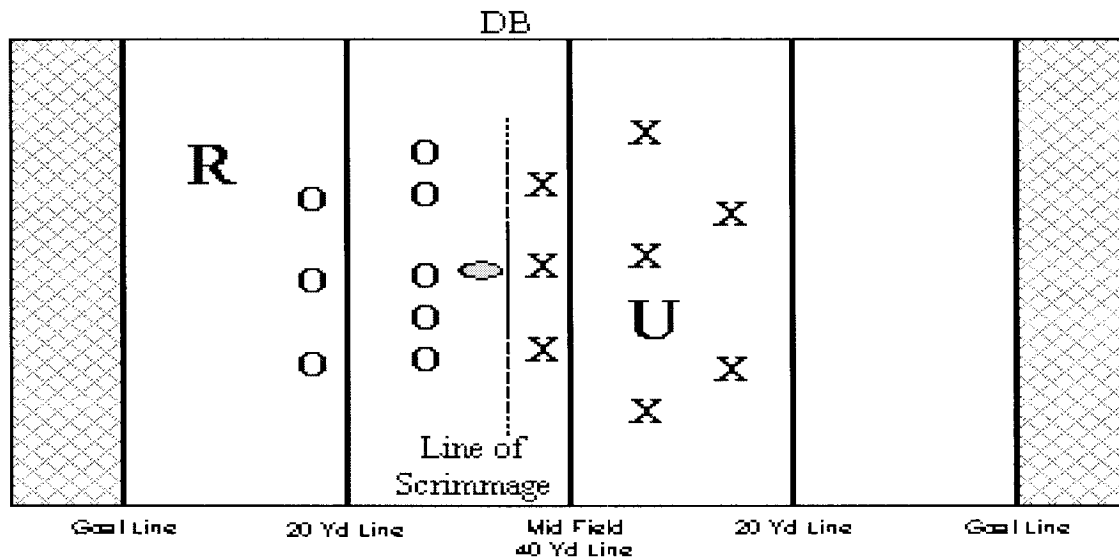
## FREE KICKS - CONTINUED

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UMPIRE

- Assumes a position over the ball on the restraining line of the kicking team.
- Counts the players on the kicking team.
- Instructs the kicker to wait for the Referee's ready signal before kicking the ball.
- Moves to the sideline on the restraining line of the kicking team, opposite the Down Box upon a signal from the Referee.
- Raises and holds one arm above the head when signaling everyone is ready for play.
- Watches for offsides on the kicking team on the kick-off.
- Watches for first touching of the ball by a member of the kicking team before it crosses the receiving team's restraining line or has been touched by a player of the receiving team.
- Watches for a short free kick and for first team touching after the ball has traveled 10 yards.
- Watches for kicks going out-of-bounds on the same side of the field as positioned.
- Follows the ball carrier on the same side of the field as positioned if the ball carrier runs to the Umpire's side of the field.
- Watches for any infraction of the rules.
- Gives a blast on the whistle when the ball becomes dead.
- Assists the other official in retrieving and spotting the ball.
- Proceeds to implement the procedure utilized BEFORE THE SNAP of the ball by the Umpire on RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage.

# RUNNING PLAYS FROM SCRIMMAGE: BEFORE THE SNAP

## POSITION OF OFFICIALS ON A RUNNING PLAY FROM SCRIMMAGE



KEY: O = Offense, X = Defense, R = Referee, U = Umpire, DB = Down Box

- R
- Spots the ball.
  - Announces the number of the down and the distance to go for a first down.
  - Moves away from the ball and gives the ready-for-play signal accompanied by a blast of the whistle.
  - Starts and checks the 30-second count until the ball is put into play while moving into position.
  - Assumes a position on the line of scrimmage relative to the formation being used.
    - A. This position is usually 5 to 10 yards outside of the defensive end on the side of the field opposite the Down Box.
    - B. This position should always be outside of all the players on the field even if it places the Referee on the sideline.
  - Checks the down marker for correct down and proper alignment with the ball.
  - Watches for illegal procedure prior to the snap.
    - A. The offensive line must be totally still for one second prior to the snap of the ball.
    - B. All the offensive linemen must be within one foot of the line of scrimmage.
    - C. Watches for "Encroachment," "False Starts" and "Illegal Shifts."
  - Watches and checks the legality of the player going in motion.
  - Watches the legality of the snap (before, during, and at the snap).

### UMPIRE

- Assists the Referee in spotting the ball.
- Assumes a position in the defensive backfield appropriate to the situation.
  - A. This position is usually 10 to 15 yards deep behind the defensive line and between the defensive ends favoring the side opposite the Linesman.
  - B. The position assumed is such that it will not interfere with the vision or movement of the defensive backs.
- Watches for "Illegal Procedure" prior to the snap.

## RUNNING PLAYS FROM SCRIMMAGE: AFTER THE SNAP

### REFEREE

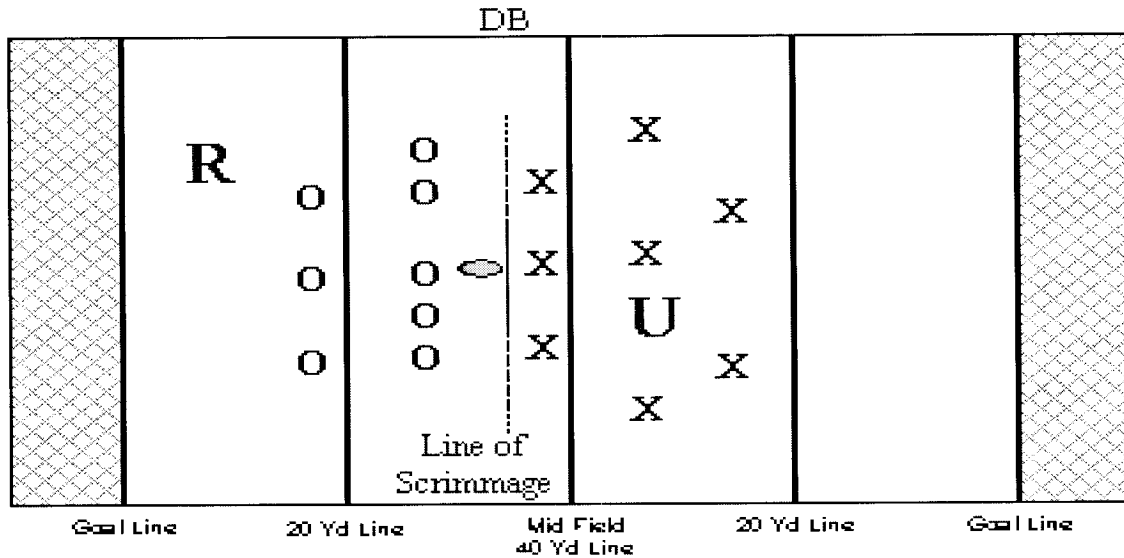
- Watches initially for “Illegal Use of the Hands” at the snap.
- Watches the ball and the ball carrier and does not rush in too soon after the snap.
- Does not follow the runner too closely on runs to the Umpire’s side of the field. The Referee then watches the action away from the ball.
- Trails the runner on a run to the Umpire’s side of the field.
- Observes the initial charge at the line of scrimmage.
- Watches for “Encroachment,” “Illegal Procedure,” “Illegal Use of Hands,” “Holding,” and other fouls committed near the line of scrimmage.
- Checks to see if a player going in motion is clearly going lateral or backward.
- Determines the foremost progress of the ball on runs up the middle.
- Drops a marker and carries out the duties until the ball is whistled dead, when a foul is committed. Both the spot where the foul occurred and where the ball becomes dead should be noted.
- Gives a blast on the whistle when the ball becomes dead.
- Assists in getting the ball to the in-bounds spot if no foul has occurred.
- Signals for a time-out on any situation that occurs which stops the clock
- Gets the complete information when a foul is called by another official then gives the preliminary signal.
- Administers the penalty.
- Spots the ball and then implements the procedure utilized by the Referee BEFORE THE SNAP of the ball.

### UMPIRE

- Watches initially at the snap for “Illegal Use of Hands,” “Holding” and other fouls committed near the line of scrimmage.
- Retreats as fast as possible and picks up the runner on runs to the Umpire’s side of the field.
- Follows the play and watches the action away from the ball on runs to the opposite side of the field. Picks up the runner on reverse.

## FORWARD PASS PLAY: BEFORE THE SNAP

### POSITION OF OFFICIALS ON A FORWARD PASS PLAY FROM SCRIMMAGE



KEY: O = Offense, X = Defense, R = Referee, U = Umpire, DB = Down Box

#### REFEREE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage.

#### UMPIRE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage including:
  - A. In obvious passing situations, the Umpire assumes a position deeper in the defensive backfield.
  - B. The depth of the position may be 10 to 15 yards behind the defensive line.

## FORWARD PASS PLAY: AFTER THE SNAP

### REFEREE

- Watches both the ball and the passer.
- Observes the initial line play.
- Drifts to the outside but stays near the line of scrimmage until the ball is thrown. Then drifts downfield and cover a pass on the Referee's side of the field.
- Determines if the pass is either:
  - A. forward
  - B. Lateral
  - C. Illegal
- Determines if the passer was behind the line of scrimmage when the ball was released.
- Observes all blocks behind the line of scrimmage.
- Watches for "Roughing the Passer."
- Trails the play on a completed pass.
- Observes the runner and covers the sideline to watch for a possible out-of-bounds on a completed pass on the Referee's side of the field.
- Picks up a breakaway runner on an intercepted pass.
- Gives the signal on an uncompleted pass.
- Performs other additional duties as indicated in procedures on RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage.
- Spots the ball and then implements the procedures utilized by the Referee BEFORE THE SNAP of the ball.

### UMPIRE

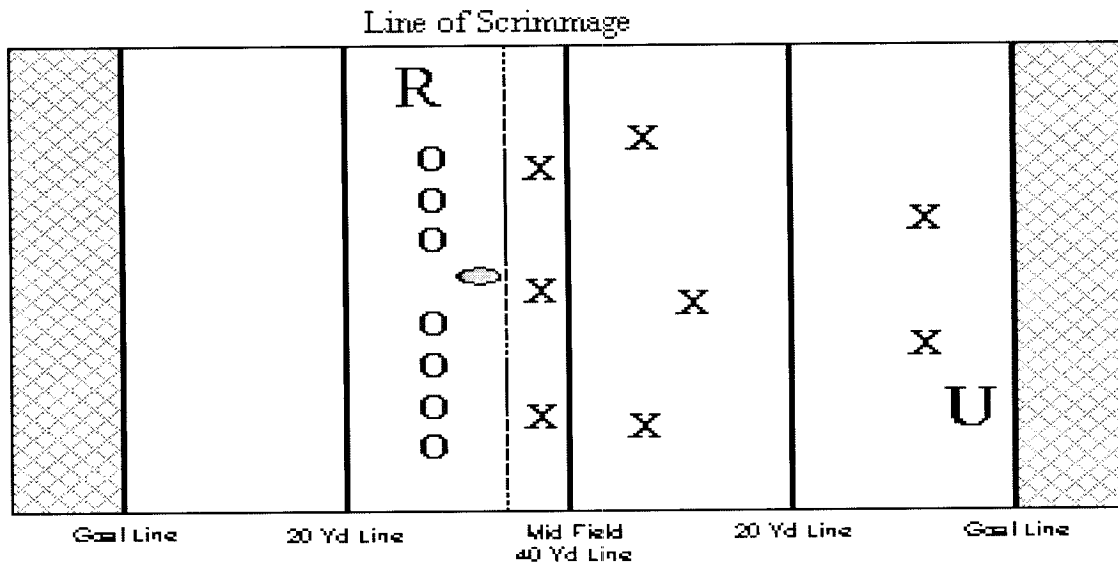
- Observes the initial charge of the line.
- Watches for any fouls committed on the line of scrimmage.
- Drops back into the secondary to observe the potential pass receivers.
- Watches for "Pass Interference," both offensive and defensive.
- Follows the runner closely if the pass is completed.
- Observes the runner and covers the sideline to watch for a possible out-of-bounds on a completed pass on the Umpire's side of the field.
- Blows the whistle sharply when the ball becomes dead.
- Blows the whistle and gives the correct signal when the pass is incomplete.

### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Follow the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage AFTER THE SNAP of the ball.

# ANNOUNCED FREE KICK FROM SCRIMMAGE: BEFORE THE SNAP

## POSITION OF OFFICIALS ON AN ANNOUNCED FREE KICK



KEY: O = Offense, X = Defense, R = Referee, U = Umpire, DB = Down Box

### UMPIRE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS FROM SCRIMMAGE including:
  - A. Assuming a position opposite the deepest member of the receiving team on the Down Box side of the field.
  - B. Being responsible for the receiver, the sideline and the goal line on the same side of the field as positioned.

### REFEREE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage including:
  - A. Assuming a position near the line of scrimmage about 10 yards to the side of the offensive team members. This position enables the Referee to watch the kicker, the snapper and the line of scrimmage and sideline on the same side of the field as positioned.

## ANNOUNCED FREE KICK FROM SCRIMMAGE: AFTER THE SNAP

### REFEREE

- Watches both the ball and the kicker simultaneously until the ball is kicked.
- Follows the flight of the ball.
- Watches to see if the kicked ball crosses beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Trails the play downfield observing the rear action away from the ball.
- Picks up the breakaway runner.
- Wave the official to the correct spot on the sideline when a ball is kicked out-of-bounds in the air. This official should be lined up with the Referee to help insure accuracy.
- Gives a blast on the whistle when the ball becomes dead.
- Instructs the down marker to be moved as soon as the ball is whistled dead and after verifying that no penalty markers have been dropped.
- Spots and waits over the ball until the down marker is moved and set.
- Signals first down and the zone-to-gain.
- Proceeds to implement the procedures utilized by the Referee BEFORE THE SNAP of the ball.

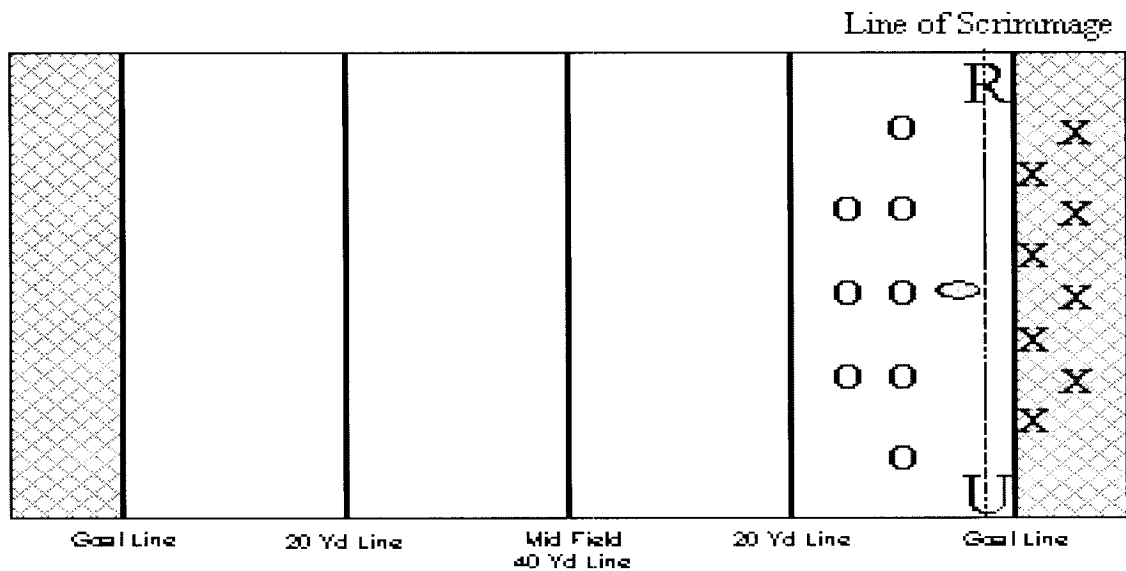
### UMPIRE

- Follows the flight of the kicked ball.
- Watches for the fair catch signal or fair catch interference.
- Watches for a fumble by the receiver.
- Watches for kicks going out-of-bounds or in the end zone on the Umpire's side of the field.
- Trails the play after the ball is caught.
- Picks up the runner on the same side of the field as positioned.
- Follows the play on the runback watching for "Illegal Use of Hands," "Clipping" or other fouls.
- Gives a blast on the whistle when the ball becomes dead.
- Moves to the sideline spot instructed by the Referee if the kicked ball goes out-of-bounds in the air.
- Marks the spot on the sideline if the kicked ball goes out-of-bounds on the ground and gives a blast on the whistle.
- Assists the other official in retrieving and spotting the ball.
- Takes a position behind the defense on the opposite side of the Referee and implements the procedures utilized by the Umpire BEFORE THE SNAP of the ball



## GOAL LINE PLAYS: BEFORE THE SNAP

### POSITION OF OFFICIALS ON GOAL LINE PLAYS



KEY: O = Offense, X = Defense, R = Referee, U = Umpire, DB = Down Box

### REFEREE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage including:
  - A. Assuming a position near the line of scrimmage about 10 yards to the side of the offensive team members. This position enables the Referee to watch the kicker, the snapper and the line of scrimmage and sideline on the same side of the field as positioned.

### UMPIRE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage including:
  - A. Assuming a position on the goal line opposite Referee and outside the widest lineman.

## GOAL LINE PLAYS: AFTER THE SNAP

### REFEREE

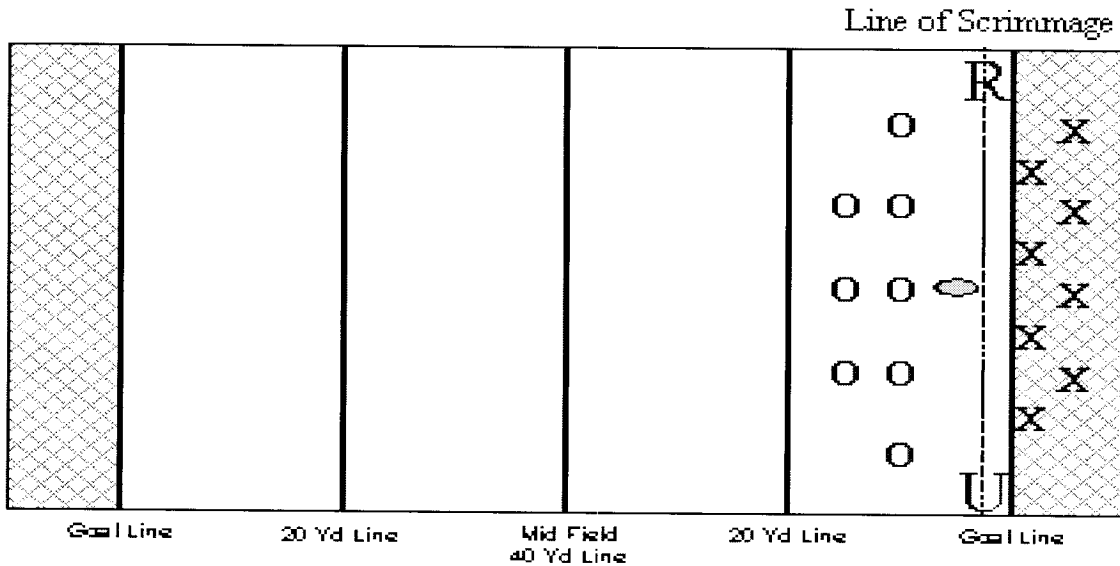
- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage including:
  - A. Observing the play on and behind the line of scrimmage.
  - B. Watching and marking the forward progress of the ball.
  - C. Watching for fumbles and change of possession.
  - D. Deciding and signaling promptly and correctly if a touchdown, safety or touchback occurs.
  - E. Watching the forward progress of the ball and the runner when the run is on the same side as initially positioned.
  - F. Covering passes on the same side of the field as positioned. Gets out of way of potential receivers by retreating as fast as possible toward the side and end line.
  - G. Signaling correctly and promptly what occurs.

### UMPIRE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for RUNNING PLAYS from scrimmage including:
  - A. Watching and marking the forward progress of the ball.
  - B. Watching for fumbles and change of possession.
  - C. Deciding and signaling promptly and correctly if a touchdown, safety or touchback occurs.
  - D. Watching the forward progress of the ball and the runner when the run is on the same side as initially positioned.
  - E. Covering passes on the same side of the field as positioned. Gets out of way of potential receivers by retreating as fast as possible toward the side and end line.
  - F. Signaling correctly and promptly what occurs.

# CONVERSION ATTEMPTS: BEFORE THE SNAP

## POSITION OF OFFICIALS ON CONVERSION ATTEMPTS



KEY: O = Offense, X = Defense, R = Referee, U = Umpire, DB = Down Box

### REFEREE

- Determines from the offensive team captain whether they will be attempting a one or two-point conversion.
- Informs defensive team captain the conversion choice of the offensive team.
- Spots the ball on the two yard line for a one-point conversion attempt or on the five yard line for a two-point conversion attempt.
- Follows the same procedures utilized for GOAL LINE PLAYS when a running play or passing play is attempted.

### UMPIRE

- Follows the same procedure utilized for GOAL LINE PLAYS when a running or passing play is attempted.

## AFTER THE SNAP

### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Both follow the same procedures used for a GOAL LINE PLAY when either a run or pass is attempted until the ball become dead.

# PROCEDURES ON ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

## WHEN A PENALTY OCCURS

### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Drop a penalty marker at the spot of the infraction when they call a foul.
- Note the player committing the foul and the status and position of the ball at the time of the foul.
- Continue to follow the play until the ball is whistled dead.
- Give the time-out signal.

## WHEN THE BALL BECOMES DEAD

### OFFICIAL CALLING THE INFRACTION

- Informs the Referee immediately of:
  - A. nature of the foul
  - B. offending player and team
  - C. status and position of the ball at the time of the foul
- Stays near the Referee to make sure the correct information was received.

### REFEREE

- Gives the preliminary signal of the infraction after getting information pertaining to it from the official making the call.
- Calls the Captains together and explains the options as follows:
  - A. A foul has been called on Number \_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_ team.
- Then address the captain of the offended team and state:
  - A. If you take the play, it will be \_\_\_\_ team's ball, \_\_\_\_ down, and \_\_\_\_ yards to go for a first down.
  - B. If you take the penalty, it will be \_\_\_\_ team's ball, \_\_\_\_ down, and \_\_\_\_ yards to go for a first down.
  - C. The captain of the offended team then indicates the decision.
- Enforce the penalty after hearing the captain's decision by:
  - A. stepping off the proper yardage,
  - B. placing the ball down,
  - C. giving the correct signal for the foul,
  - D. and then announcing the down and yards to go.

### UMPIRE

- Checks the penalty enforcement.
- Knows the correct down.
- Watches to see that no one comes on to the field of play.
- Retrieves and returns the foul marker to the other official, if nearby.
- Secures the ball and hands it to the Referee at the spot where the penalty will be measured from.
- Holds the spot where the penalty was measured from in order to double check the yardage assessment.
- Moves to a position behind the defensive team in preparation for the following play.

## PROCEDURES FOR TIME OUTS

### REQUEST FOR A TIME OUT

#### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Give the Time Out signal.
- Stop the clock.

### DURING THE TIME OUT

#### REFEREE

- Checks with the Umpire for the number of time-outs and the time remaining, the down and the distance-to-gain.
- Watches for substitutions and illegal communications
- Reports the down, the distance, the time-outs remaining to each huddle.
- Gives the ready-for-play signal after 60 seconds.
- Checks the number of players on the offensive team when play resumes.

#### UMPIRE

- Maintains a position by the ball, near the defensive team.
- Watches for substitutions and illegal communications on the same side as positioned.
- Counts the number of players on the defensive team when play resumes.

#### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Avoid huddling with other officials unless a conference is necessary.
- Do not visit with players or coaches unless they request information.

## PROCEDURES FOR SUBSTITUTION FOR MINIMUM PLAY

### AT MIDPOINT OF FIRST QUARTER OR NEXT DEAD BALL/MIDPOINT OF SECOND QUARTER OR NEXT DEAD BALL

#### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Give the Time Out signal.
- Stop the clock.

### DURING THE TIME OUT

#### REFEREE

- Go to Official scorekeeper to determine if compliance has been made with all players.
- Go to coaches to ask for substitutions that must be made.
- Allow substitutions in to the game.
- Gives the ready for play signal after substitutions are made.
- Checks the number of players on the offensive team when play resumes.

#### UMPIRE

- Maintains a position by the ball, near the defensive team.
- Counts the number of players on the defensive team when play resumes.

# PROCEDURES FOR END OF PERIODS AND BETWEEN QUARTERS

## END OF PERIOD

### REFEREE

- Informs both captains and coaches of the 2-minute warning in the second and fourth quarters of play.
- Responsible for end of period, if facing the clock.
- Announces end of period, if no gun, by holding the ball overhead at end of play when time has expired.

### UMPIRE

- Notifies the Referee when there is approximately two minutes remaining in the second and fourth periods of play.
- Notifies the Referee when there are about 30 seconds remaining in the game.
- Signals the Referee when time expires and the ball becomes dead.

## BETWEEN QUARTERS

### REFEREE

- Writes down the yardline, the down number, and the distance-to-gain.
- Measures the distance from the nearest yardline (or zoneline) to the foremost point of the ball and estimate the distance from the in-bounds line.
- Spots the ball at the corresponding point on the other half of the field with the direction reversed.

### UMPIRE

- Assists the Referee in determining the position of the ball at the end of the quarter.
- Records the yardline, the down number and the distance-to-gain.
- Goes to the yardline where the ball will be put into play to start the next period.
- Checks to see if the down marker is okay.
- Watches for and does not allow unnecessary people to come onto the field.

# PROCEDURES FOR BETWEEN HALVES AND END OF GAME

## BETWEEN HALVES

### UMPIRE

- Secures the game ball.
- Keeps the time during the intermission.
- Assists in getting the team captains to the Referee for the second half choice.
- Assumes a position in the center of the field.
- Follows the same procedure utilized for kick-offs to start the game and after touchdowns.

### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Assemble for a private conference to discuss and review any problems or situations that have or might occur.
- Return to the field at least two minutes before the second half is to begin.

### REFEREE

- Checks with the other official to confirm which team lost the pre-game coin toss.
- Meets with both team captains when they return to the field.
- Gives the choice of kicking or receiving to the captain who lost the pre-game coin toss.
- Relays the choices to start the second half of play to the coaches and spectators.

## END OF GAME

### BOTH OFFICIALS

- Stay on field as teams shake hands.
- Secure and provide for the return of all equipment.
- Leave the field of play together.
- Neither avoid nor seek contact with either the coaches, players, or spectators.
- Do not make any public statements concerning the game.
- Report any flagrant irregularities that occurred during the game to the proper authorities.



## UNIQUE SITUATIONS - CONTINUED

**MULTIPLE FORWARD PASS PLAYS** - There may be any number of legal forward passes during a down, but each pass must be thrown from in or behind the neutral zone.

**EVERYONE IS ELIGIBLE** - Any offensive position will be allowed, the defensive line-up is not restricted and all players of the offensive team are eligible pass receivers.

**INADVERTENT WHISTLE** - When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, and when:

- The ball is in player possession - the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
- The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, illegal kick, or illegal forward pass - the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
- During a legal forward pass or free or protected scrimmage kick - the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.
- If a foul occurs during any of the above downs, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle.

# UNIQUE PENALTIES OF YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL

**HURDLING** - Intentional hurdling or jumping over another player creating an unsafe situation. This penalty is considered helping the runner.

**GUARDING THE FLAGS** - The offensive player gaining an unfair advantage by guarding their flag with the hand or ball. This penalty is considered a personal foul.

**UNTUCKED SHIRT BY THE BALL CARRIER** - A ball carrier that deliberately untucks his or her shirt to cover their flag. This penalty is considered an untucked shirt by the ball carrier. Note: The official should notify a player when their shirt becomes untucked.

**TUCKING OR ILLEGAL ARRANGEMENT OF FLAGS** - A ball carrier that deliberately arranges his flags in an unsportsmanlike manner. This penalty is considered failure to wear required equipment.

**PREMATURE PULLING OF FLAGS** - A player that deliberately pulls the flag of an offensive player before gaining possession of the ball. This penalty is considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

# PRACTICE EXAM

## SCMAF FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

### CIRCLE ONE

- T F 1. Prior to the kickoff, officials raise their arms to indicate to the referee that they are ready.
- T F 2. Prior to the game, the head coach shall verify to the referee and umpire that all players are legally equipped.
- T F 3. An invalid fair catch signal is penalized from the previous spot.
- T F 4. Fumbles may be recovered and advanced by the defense.
- T F 5. It is not always a safety if a team commits a penalty in its own end zone.
- T F 6. All dead ball fouls must be administered.
- T F 7. The SCMAF flag football field is 80 yards by 40 yards with 10 yard end zones.
- T F 8. All players except the kicker must wear shoes.
- T F 9. Officials may take a time out when heat or humidity may create a health risk to players.
- T F 10. The winner of the coin toss cannot defer the option to the second half.
- T F 11. Coaches may roam the entire sideline as long as they don't interfere with play.
- T F 12. The referee's preliminary signal is given before discussing penalty options with the captain.
- T F 13. All players are eligible pass receivers except the quarterback.
- T F 14. Two forward passes thrown by Team A during the down is illegal.
- T F 15. The signal officials give to indicate to each other the clock is not to start, is crossed wrists held over the head.
- T F 16. Two man mechanics use either a double referee system or a referee and a line judge.
- T F 17. Following any long gain or change of possession, the covering official should inform the referee the result of the play.

# ANSWER KEY

1. T

2. T

3. T

4. F

5. T

6. T

7. T

8. F

9. T

10. F

11. F

12. T

13. F

14. F

15. T

16. T

17. T

18. F

19. F

20. F

21. T

22. F

23. T

24. T

25. F

26. F

27. F

28. F

29. F

30. T

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

80% Passing Score Required

2005 SCMAF FLAG FOOTBALL  
OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION TEST #2  
RULES 1-5

Circle one

- T F 1. The SCMAF flag football field is 100 yards by 40 yards with 10 yard end zones. (SCMAF V-B)
- T F 2. Offsides is a term to indicate a player is illegally in the neutral zone in games conducted under Federation Rules. (2-8)
- T F 3. A muff is considered any touching of the ball by the receiving team. (VI-2-C)
- T F 4. A forward pass has gone beyond the neutral zone if at any time during the pass, any part of the ball is beyond the neutral zone. (2-28-3)
- T F 5. Replaced players have ten seconds to leave the playing field. (3-7-2)
- T F 6. Prior to the start of the game, the head coach shall verify to the Referee and umpire that all players are legally equipped. (1-5-4)
- T F 7. The clock starts on the Ready for Play signal following an accepted delay of game penalty. (3-4-3i)
- T F 8. A-87 and B-3 leap off the ground and simultaneously secure the ball, they both touch the ground at the same time, but B-3 touches on the side line. Ruling - completed pass by A. (2-4-2)
- T F 9. It is legal, on a scrimmage kick, to make fair catch anywhere on the playing field. (2-9-1, 6-5-2)
- T F 10. To make a legal catch, a player who catches the ball, while airborne, must have the ball in his possession when he first returns to the ground. He must have both feet in-bounds. (2-4-1)
- T F 11. Penalty colored gloves are legal if the opposing coach grants permission. (1-5-3a)
- T F 12. All coaches must remain in the team box at all times. (SCMAF VIII-A)
- T F 13. SCMAF rules call for 5 and 10 yard penalties. (SCMAF Penalty Chart P. 28)
- T F 14. A period is extended for one untimed down if there was a live ball foul by either team during the last timed down, and the penalty was accepted. (3-3-3a)
- T F 15. Touching of the ball by an official in the field of play is a dead ball (2-42)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

80% Passing Score Required

2005 SCMAF FLAG FOOTBALL  
OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION TEST #3  
RULES 6-10

*Circle one*

- T F 1. All dead ball fouls must be administered. (10-4-1)
- T F 2. Inadvertent whistle options shall be in effect if there is an accepted penalty during the down. (SCMAF XII-R)
- T F 3. Player A5 inadvertently loses his/her flags. He/she is then handed the ball. Ruling: Ball dead immediately. (SCMAF XII-N-1A)
- T F 4. For Team A, pass interference restrictions begin when the ball is in the air. (7-5-7)
- T F 5. The Penalty for an illegal forward pass is enforced from the spot of the pass. (7-5-3)
- T F 6. SCMAF quarters are 5 minutes regulation time. (SCMAF X-A)
- T F 7. An invalid fair catch signal is penalized from the previous spot. (6-5-7 Pen., 10-4-3d)
- T F 8. All players are eligible pass receivers except the quarterback. (SCMAF XII-K-1)
- T F 9. Two forward passes thrown by Team A during the down is illegal. (7-5-1, XII-K-5)
- T F 10. Unused time-outs may not be carried over into overtime periods. (SCMAF X-C)
- T F 11. Regulation clock is used the last three minutes of the game. (SCMAF X-C)
- T F 12. Kickoffs are dead upon recovery by the offense. (SCMAF XII-D3)
- T F 13. The offense has twenty yards to go on all first down plays. (SCMAF XII-E)
- T F 14. It is unsportsmanlike if a player attempts to focus attention upon himself with any delayed, excessive, or prolonged act. (9-5-1C)
- T F 15. The snap of the ball is a loose ball play. (10-3-1-a)

**FLAG FOOTBALL**  
**2005 OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION TEST #3**  
**RULES 6-10**  
**PAGE 2**

- T F 16. Cross body blocks are illegal. (SCMAF XII-B-1)
- T F 17. It is not always a safety if A commits a penalty in its own end zone. (10-5-3)
- T F 18. The ball carrier must attempt to evade the defense players. He/she may not charge into a defensive player. The penalty for charging is 10 yards. (SCMAF XII-C-1)
- T F 19. Team B may run an intercepted pass out of its own end zone. (SCMAF XII-K-3)
- T F 20. A backward pass may be recovered in the air and advance by Team B. (SCMAF XII-N-1F)
- T F 21. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by two opponents then the ball becomes dead and belongs to the offense. (7-5-2)
- T F 22. Fumbles may be recovered and advanced by the defense. (SCMAF XII-G-1-3)
- T F 23. QB A7 throws an intentional backward pass out of bounds to conserve time. Penalty: Illegal pass. (7-5-2)
- T F 24. A substitute who enters the playing area during a fight shall be disqualified. (9-8-1k)
- T F 25. B may commit pass interference before the pass leaves the passers hand. (7-5-7)

**2005 SCMAF  
FLAG FOOTBALL  
OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION TEST  
ANSWER KEY**

**Test #1  
Mechanics**

1. F
2. F
3. F
4. F
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. T
9. T
10. F
11. F
12. F
13. T
14. F
15. F
16. F
17. T
18. T
19. F
20. F
21. F
22. F
23. F
24. F
25. F

**Test #2  
Rules 1-5**

1. F
2. F
3. F
4. F
5. F
6. T
7. F
8. T
9. F
10. F
11. F
12. F
13. F
14. T
15. F
16. F
17. F
18. T
19. F
20. F
21. T
22. F
23. F
24. F
25. F

**Test #3  
Rules 6-10**

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. F
9. F
10. T
11. F
12. T
13. F
14. T
15. F
16. T
17. F
18. F
19. T
20. T
21. T
22. F
23. F
24. T
25. F