

S.O.T.F.O.A.



Touch and Flag Football
Officials Training Manual

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Football Officiating

The Job

Welcome to the challenging but rewarding job of officiating. If you love sports and are willing to work, you can develop a skill which is personally satisfying and beneficial. There are no short-cuts to officiating success any more than there is to athletic success. An enthusiastic effort on your part can lead to a stimulating addition to your life.

The continuous growth of football has created a great need for qualified officials. There is virtually no ceiling to the prospects for advancement to all levels of officiating for those who are gifted and eager to learn. League administrators know that good officiating helps to produce a healthy, sportsmanlike environment and a fair determination of the winner. They wish to hire officials who will be a credit to the sports arena. They also know that poorly trained or incompetent officials can create tensions and generate frustrations among players, coaches and spectators... sometimes with serious consequences.

The official is the essential **THIRD DIMENSION** of an athletic event. The player, the coach and the official interact, and depending upon their abilities and attitudes, combine to produce not merely a winner or a loser, but also satisfaction or disappointment, thrills or mediocrity, healthy competition or antagonism, mutual respect or mistrust.

The challenge of the prospective official is to develop his capabilities so that he/she can do what he/she is expected to do, regardless of the difficulties presented. Achieving a high degree of competence is chiefly the result of concentrated study and game experience supplemented by continuous evaluation as well as continuous efforts to improve.

Officiating is not a simple or easy avocation. It is a challenging task. New officials should prepare themselves thoroughly if they contemplate a continuing career in officiating. By the same token, a new official would be mistaken if he/she were to enter the officiating casually or for the sole purpose of financial gain. Officials should dedicate themselves toward significant goals if they expect to be successful.

Your initial goal is to develop an intelligent, realistic understanding of what component sports officiating is what it demands. Consider the following questions:

1. What is the fundamental aim of officiating?
2. What are the essential ingredients for effective officiating?
3. What qualities must a competent official possess?
4. What are the various roles which must be played while officiating?

The Fundamental Aim

The fundamental aim is to cause the game to progress smoothly within the rules. A contest frequently and unnecessarily interrupted by the official's whistle leaves no one satisfied. The official rather than the player becomes the dominant factor. Players and coaches alike respect the official who, within the playing rules, provides for continuous and uninterrupted action.

The official's overriding goal is to cause the game to progress with as little interference as possible on his part. This is not to say that rule enforcement should be neglected. The competent official should not only be concerned about penalizing rule infractions, but also preventing rule infractions before they occur.

Infractions can be prevented in two general ways:

- by establishing a subtle but unquestioned influence over the game
- by actively preventing specific infractions.

Establishing A Subtle Influence

In almost all cases, players wish to avoid rule infractions because penalties hurt (them and their team). Players, especially well-trained ones, will avoid rule infractions when they have cause to avoid them. The competent official capitalizes on the desires and abilities of the players by establishing his influence over the content EARLY IN THE GAME.

In order to accomplish this, the effective official must be completely "warmed up" on the first play of the game in order to make any necessary ruling without hesitation. He/she realizes that the quality of "early control" can influence the entire game. When the official's influence is felt from the start, the game progresses as it was meant to progress.

Two important ways in which you as an official can establish this influence are:

1. by BEING IN POSITION to call
2. by REACTING IMMEDIATELY to rule infractions, especially

BE FELT --- NOT HEARD, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

Preventative Officiating

The good official, by his/her actions and words, can frequently prevent certain fouls from happening. As a traffic officer at a busy intersection keeps traffic moving with actual arrests, so does a competent official help keep the game moving using every legitimate power at his command to prevent fouls from occurring.

It is appropriate and advisable for an official to anticipate the impending infraction and to "talk the athletes out of" committing it. Direct action can be preventative as well as curative.

Considerable experience and background in the game is necessary in order to know when and when not to issue warnings. There are moments in all sports and at all levels of play, when this type of preventative officiating can be accomplished. For example, the Headlinesman cautions a player who is encroaching slightly into the neutral zone. Such warnings not only eliminate unnecessary and unwanted infractions, but they also help to establish a positive player-official relationship.

The Referee should discuss with the (coaches or) team captains before the game any unusual plays, particularly if the officials might be in the way of the play. He/she would also check that the respective teams are not wearing illegal equipment.

A foul can frequently be prevented by making certain not to start with more or more (or fewer) than seven players on kick-offs and other plays. In situations in which there are an incorrect number of players, the official should ask the captain (or one of the on-field team members implicated) to “count your team”. Do not tell them the number of players that are on the field.

Cautioning the defending team to give a full yard is preventative officiating and should be done on short yardage plays and especially when the attacking team is on the defender’s one yard line. The rusher should also be warned if he encroaches within the five yard limit.

Sounding your whistle sharply contributes to a reduction of fouls. Calling to the players such as “That’s all” or “That’s enough” will frequently deter a player from committing unnecessary roughness before or after the ball is dead and whether or not the ball remains in or out-of bounds.

To repeat, the primary aim of competent officials is to cause the game to progress smoothly and with as little interference as possible. Preventative officiating is far superior to “whistle happy”, “flag-throwing” officiating but does NOT remove the responsibility for unhesitatingly enforcing the rules.

Essential Ingredients

Four fundamental requirements must be met if you wish to be considered a successful official:

1. you must enforce the rules intelligently.
2. you must show integrity, being fair to both sides.
3. you must build sound human relationships.
4. you must show primary concern for the individual athlete.

Intelligent Rule Enforcement

The rules have evolved from the concentrated attention of many experts over a period of years. As such, the rules command respect and demand enforcement. The official is expected to show respect for the game and for the players by KNOWING the rules and ENFORCING them. To do so otherwise usually brings unwanted consequences (e.g. disorganized games, unsportsmanlike acts and even the danger of injury).

Applying the rules requires the use of judgment on the part of the official. In particular, instances he/she will refuse to call certain apparent violations, while in other instances, he/she will call almost invisible acts. He/she is concerned about preserving the ideal of the game through rule enforcement.

The purpose of the playing rules is “TO PENALIZE A PLAYER, WHO BY REASON OF AN ILLEGAL ACT, PLACES THE OPPONENT AT A DISADVANTAGE”.

In rulings where judgment is permissible, the competent official is more concerned about the effect of the illegal act than about the act itself. For example, the rules state that the rusher must be given a direct path to the quarterback. This rule is to prevent the attacking team from unfairly interfering with the approach of the rusher towards the quarterback. An unhindered path must be allowed the rusher. However, just because an attacking player crosses the path of the rusher this

does not automatically create a foul. If this rule was applied literally, there would be a foul on many plays when the rusher caused the problem, not the offensive player. No capable official would administer the rule that way, but would judge the act in terms of the total situation and the effect that it had on the play.

The philosophy is essentially correct, because when properly employed, it assures that the spirit of the game prevails, rather than, exact and petty rule enforcement. Two cautions should be noted:

1. The philosophy does not apply to all rules or even to most rules. A player is in bounds or out of bounds. In most cases, the official is asked not to exercise his judgment, but to call immediately what he has seen.
2. When the philosophy does apply, the official must know and understand the correct rule interpretation so that his decisions are as consistent as possible. It permits the official to be flexible, both he and the game will soon be in trouble.

Absolute Integrity

The capable official wants to see the game progress correctly, without bias or inconsistency. In spite of pressures he/she will not be unduly influenced by the score, the time remaining, or the reactions of the players, coaches or fans, nor will he/she be influenced by the direction of previous decisions. To a considerable degree, he sees each movement of the competition as a moment in itself, unconnected with what has happened previously.

In certain instances, great courage and personal confidence are required in order for an official to rule with absolute integrity, but this is exactly what he/she **MUST** do. Not even the home coach appreciates a “homer” official. Regardless of the circumstances, the official must be completely honest in all phases of his job, especially in his/her appreciation of the rules, and in his/her relationship with fellow officials, players and coaches.

Officiating integrity is a product of a personal honesty and reliability. A potentially outstanding official can rise or fall according to the integrity he/she demonstrates.

SPREAD CONFIDENCE --- NOT DISTRUST.

Sound Human Relationships

It has been said with considerable truth that officiating is more like an art than a science. Building sound relationships with fellow officials, players, coaches and fans while under the fire of intense athletic rivalry calls for an “artist’s touch”.

a) Relationships with Fellow Officials

For the most part, officials are on their own at the game. If their mutual support and teamwork breakdown, problems in other relationships are certainly likely to increase.

The ability to team with fellow officials is an absolute essential to a well handled game. Uniformity of decisions is of utmost importance. Each must have complete faith in the other,

and the greatest harmony must exist. Domination by one official may cause a poorly administered game. You should welcome the assistance and support of the other, rather than resent the other making a decision which you feel is your responsibility. Your position, even though close to the play, may not have been advantageous. Always be ready to cover plays for the other official who may be momentarily caught out of position. ASSIST – DON'T RESIST – YOUR FELLOW OFFICIALS.

b) Relationships with Players

Good relationships between players and officials are of fundamental importance to effective officiating. Coaches and fans can sense the quality of the player-official relationship, and their judgment of the official is influenced by what they sense. Officials should neither be overly friendly nor aloof in their dealings with players. Players tend to mistrust an official who seems to be trying to win a popularity contest with both teams. They expect an official to act like an official who has an important job to do.

The degree to which an official should try to be helpful varies considerably according to the level of play. In professional sports, a particularly helpful official would be treated with amazement and scorn, whereas, in youth contests a competent official will not hesitate to actually teach the rules at appropriate moments.

A domineering or dictatorial official upsets the players. Officials must be or at least act human and approachable. An official must show respect for the players if he/she wishes to gain respect. Hustle and enthusiasm increases players respect.

When unsportsmanlike acts occur, they should be penalized, immediately, in as calm a manner as possible. Unsportsmanlike acts usually create excitement and emotional reactions by players, coaches and fans. What is especially needed is not anger or revenge, but an accurate and efficient penalty, enforced confidently and calmly.

USE YOUR STRONG POINTS TO WIN RESPECT

c) Relationships with Coaches

As implied by the rules of most sports, contact between the coaches and officials should be businesslike, friendly, respectful and LIMITED. The coach is concerned about an official's mechanics and judgment. He is not likely to be concerned about whether or not an official wishes to be his friend. Under such circumstances, considerable tact is needed. Often the upset coach is the type that can be calmed down almost as easily as he became excited. A businesslike, but not unfriendly explanation of the decision may prevent serious consequences.

The official should not over-react to the excited coach, but he must enforce obvious infractions by the coach. If there is a choice between protecting the coach or the game, the game must be considered first.

BE PLEASANT, BUT FIRM AND FEARLESS

d) Relationships with Fans

While the official's main attention is directed to the game and the players, and partially to the coaches, the presence of fans cannot be ignored. The trend of an athletic event can be harmed by intense spectator reactions. However, this rarely occurs if the officials of the game do their work well, that is they maintain good position, are decisive in judgment, and signal clearly.

e) Summary

Sound public relations must be a part of competent officiating because sports involve human beings with opposing loyalties. Human beings possess different backgrounds, abilities and emotional responses. In fact some of them will not like official – period. Apparently the sports officials cannot satisfy everyone, nor should this be his aim. He should show respect for others, avoid antagonizing anyone, and be approachable. His main efforts should be directed toward the best officiating job he can produce.

MAKE DECISIONS CLEARLY.

Your foremost concern: the individual athlete

The master official is primarily concerned with protection of the players. In most instances his/her actions are prompted by this concern, for example:

- a) He wants to prevent injuries, and he knows that in many sports good officiating can prevent many damaging and unnecessary injuries.
- b) He wants to encourage sportsmanlike behaviour, and he understands the importance of his job in promoting such behaviour.
- c) He knows that correct rulings can motivate player improvement through the trial-and-error process.
- d) He does not discourage questions on the rules, because he knows that players don't know all the rules.
- e) He wants to keep all the players in the game, and he knows that in many cases the ejection or disqualification of a player can be prevented.
- f) He is willing to eject or disqualify a player when the rules and spirit of the game demand such action because the protection of other players and the quality of the game itself are involved. In addition, the particular player can learn from the experience of being disqualified.

The official who is able and willing to use “protection of the players” as his guide will be amazed at its effectiveness, especially in making difficult decisions. To test this theory, try it against any seemingly hopeless officiating situation that you can imagine. Ask yourself, what

should be done for the players' protection. Perhaps the indicated decision may not be completely acceptable, but it will be the best decision if it is based upon concern for the individual athlete. The new official must be constantly reminded of his responsibility to the players.

SPORTS WERE CREATED FOR THE PLAYERS – not the officials.

Qualities of a Competent Official

If one hundred different sports experts submitted their own lists of essential qualification of a master official, one might expect one hundred different lists. If asked to place a given set of qualifications in order of their importance, the same experts might again be expected to differ in their opinions. Thus the qualities selected for the following list bear no claims for infallibility or comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, such a list of qualities is meant to clarify the game-by-game requirements of successful officiating.

The purpose of the list are:

- a) to specify the requirements for effective officiating,
- b) to guide and motivate improvement,
- c) to establish guidelines for the evaluation of officials.

Good eyesight was not included, although its importance cannot be questioned. If you need glasses for perfect sight, you should use them when you officiate.

The list is in order of importance of their importance. However, the reverse order is the control which you as individual have over each. For example, you have the most control over your appearance and physical condition.

Reaction Time

Assuming that judgment is correct, decisions which are made quickly have a greater chance of being accepted without question. An official with slow re-action time is open to question. The official with fast reactions frequently can make his decision almost simultaneously with the moment of the infraction, and thus his "subtle influence" on the game is quickly and firmly established. The slow reacting official frequently compensates for his slowness by developing the poor habit of "anticipating" impending infractions and consequently calling infractions that did not occur.

The extent to which reaction time can be improved is open to question. Experimental evidence appears to indicate that:

- individuals have definite physiological limits upon the speed of their reactions and reflexes; and
- the speed of executing any given act can, within the individual's limits, can be quickened through practice.

A new official can expect some early quickening of his whistle and signals while he is learning the particular reaction. Following this initial learning period, the official's speed of reactions will become stabilized within his own individual limits. It is clear, in any case, that a person

with severe limits upon his basic reaction time will be wise not to become an official. A person without above average reaction time has little chance of becoming a top notch official.

BE YOURSELF – REACT QUICKLY.

Confidence (Poise)

Athletic contests are exciting and therefore frequently arouse the emotions of participants and fans. Contest can get out of hand when emotions run high. Officials cannot control the emotions of others, but they are expected to control their own to show poise, regardless of the circumstances.

Confidence and calmness are the basic components needed. Persons who lack personal confidence or who are excitable do not usually make good officials. Such persons add to the existing tensions by over-reacting in pressurized moments. On the other hand, the poised official contributes to a controlled atmosphere. During tense moments, he acts deliberately, almost slowly, whenever possible. The greater the momentary tension (e.g. disqualification of a player), the greater the need for calmness. Obviously to maintain poise under extreme tension is not easy. Most outstanding officials have developed the habit, consciously or unconsciously, of acting calmly at times when, in fact, they are very excited.

Athletic contests should be governed by the abilities of the players and the playing regulation, not by uncontrolled emotions. The poised official sometimes is not the only person in the position and with the authority to return the game to the “healthy excitement” of properly supervised athletic competition.

Confidence is reflected in the manner in which you carry your duties. A movement which denotes sureness, even a degree of cockiness, if not carried to extremes, transmits a feeling of confidence to others. Decisive action portrays positiveness. To be apologetic or hesitant conveys uncertainty.

Decisions should be made firmly without a show of belligerency or intensity or the attitude “I caught you that time”. The official with a chip on his shoulder is disliked and quite often distrusted.

A resonant strong voice is a great asset. A whistle should be blown to produce a sharp, staccato sound, not a feeble wheeze.

BE CALM AND POISED AT ALL TIMES.

Consistency

If a count was taken of the officiating qualities most frequently criticized by and most upsetting to coaches and players, inconsistency would lead the list. Coaches and players expect the rules to apply equally to both teams. True consistency results not from attempting to even up both sides, but from applying the “CORRECT RULE INTERPRETATION” to “EACH SEPARATE COMPETITIVE ACT”.

If an official applies accurate judgment, according to the letter and meaning of the rules to each separate decision, he will be consistent, because the CORRECT RULE INTERPRETATION is unchanging. Proper judgment and interpretation are the sources of consistency. The official who understands and applies the rules and their interpretations will gain the reputation of being consistent.

The sideline official who is hypertechnical on offside plays at one time and lenient the next, can throw the timing of both lines off. The answer to “I’ve been calling that way for ten years” is “you don’t want to be making the same mistake for another ten”.

BE CONSISTENT – HE WHO HESITATES, LOSES CONTROL OF THE GAME.

Judgment

Judgment in an individual contest should be based primarily upon a thorough knowledge and understanding of the playing rules. No official ever has said and probably ever will be able to say, “My judgment is complete and perfect”. Development of good judgment is never-ending. The official who continues to study the rules and to apply his officiating experiences to personal improvement is the official who will succeed. Good judgment is a foremost qualification of the top-notch official, because it permits him to make the correct decision unhesitatingly under any game circumstances.

Competitive playing or coaching experience in a given sport greatly helps the judgment of a new official, but such an experience is certainly not enough in itself.

A new official will first find the play appearing as a complete blur of movement, yet after continued practice, the picture will gradually clear and he will be able to discriminate between legal plays and infractions.

Judgment and consistency go hand in hand. If basic principles are established which will be the guide lines for determining the legality of play and the responsibility for acts committed, the foundation upon which to develop good judgment has been laid. If these basic principles are thoroughly understood, then sound judgment will be built up, through experience in handling games. When an official is able to make one sound decision after another, his control of the game becomes evident.

GOOD JUDGMENT DEVELOPS WITH PRACTICE.

Hustle

With the possible exception of good judgment, no quality commands more respect than hustle. Hustle is highly valued on the athletic scene by all concerned including your fellow officials.

Hustle is defined broadly to include such related attributes as ALERTNESS, PHYSICAL EFFORT, DEDICATION AND ENTHUSIASM.

Hustle, or the lack of it, is apparent. A hustling official will display better mechanics, see more and enjoy his work more. The opposites are true of the official who is lazy and uninterested. As

one dimensions of the sports scene, the official is expected to demonstrate this valued attribute. Whether hustle is expected or not, the hustling official will certainly do a better job.

GAIN RESPECT THROUGH HUSTLE.

Decisiveness

The decisive official converts a controversial or judgment decision into an accepted ruling merely by his decisiveness. The usual result is a continuous contest apparently decided by the skills of the players, not an interrupted game “unfairly” affected by the “questionable” decisions of an official. The experienced, competent official realizes that his judgment is not subject to formal protest in any case, and therefore he avoids any unnecessary and hopeless controversy by ruling decisively on close decisions. The closer the decision the greater the decisiveness. For example, the sideline official should signal immediately if a touchdown has been scored on a play close to the goal line.

When there is a hesitant, indecisive, delayed decision, one opponent or the other is sure to believe that the decision was incorrect. Since a decision must be made in any event, the competent official makes all his decisions decisively.

BE FIRM, PROMPT AND DEFINITE IN YOUR DECISIONS.

Courage

This quality is closely related to Objectivity and Integrity. Nevertheless, no list of necessary officiating qualities could be complete without separating and emphasizing the personal courage which is necessary for effective officiating.

It takes a degree of courage merely to don the black and white striped shirt and report to the contest. Unfortunately, officials do not arouse immediate feelings of congeniality and comradeship from the players, coaches and fans. Unknown officials have to prove themselves and everyone is aware of this. The really tough decision may occur at any moment and that is just the decision that separates the superior official from the mediocre. The superior official calls them all to the best of his ability, because he has the courage to do so. He realizes that his is empowered by the rules and obligated to the players and coaches to make difficult decisions. He is well aware that two of the most unfavourable things he can do are”

- a) avoid a decision where one is required; or
- b) make a decision merely because the players, coaches and/or fans demand it.

DON'T BACK AWAY FROM TOUGH DECISIONS.

Objectivity

As human beings, officials, like others, can be influenced by various pressures. But unlike many others, the official is not supposed to be influenced by external pressures. Perhaps an official's pre-game preparation should include mentally pledging:

“I solemnly swear to call only what I see and NOT to be swayed by what people say, by my previous calls, or by personalities (including my own)”.

Most officials benefit from consciously recognizing their own potential for being influenced and, secondly, seriously attempting to improve their objectivity in each game. Otherwise, the temptation of a given moment in the competition can lead the normally well-meaning individual to make a popular decision rather than a correct one.

Perhaps the home-plate umpire in baseball best personifies the need for objectivity. The effective umpire does not try to “even them up” when making close ball and strike decisions, even though he is in a perfect position to do so. Each pitch is a different pitch. It is a ball or a strike regardless of which player or team is at bat, what the score or the count is, or what was previously called. The less-than-great umpire, without realizing it, is tempted to “help” a team or a player, or himself, and the result is an inconsistency which seriously harms the game. Soon, no one knows what to expect.

The suggestion most commonly associated with officiating is “CALL THEM AS YOU SEE THEM” on each individual play.

CALL WHAT YOU SEE.

Rapport

Rapport refers to the quality of relating effectively to others. Good rapport with others is a desirable quality in many lines of human endeavor. Its importance in officiating certainly cannot be denied and should not be underrated.

While conscientiously meeting with the many requirements of his job, the official must not neglect human relationships. The great official can certainly show his humane and friendly nature without compromising his job, he not only can but he does. He knows that, as an official, he has enough problems without creating additional difficulties in his relationships. Each official will find his own way to build rapport with fellow officials, players, coaches and fans. His own way should reflect his own personality.

Regardless of your individual personality, rapport can be improved if you:

- a) demonstrate courtesy and respect for coaches and players;
- b) show a sense of humour at appropriate times;
- c) are approachable and receptive to questions.

BE APPROACHABLE.

Precise Knowledge of the Rules

Officials are expected to see that the game is played according to the rules. Mastery of the game rules is a continuing effort. Early in the preparation stages prospective officials study case books and discuss rules in detail in the officiating association meetings. Competent officials make it a practice to review the rule book the night before an assignment. The official finds it helpful to analyze carefully difficult sections of the rule book on the day of the game. Following the game, officials should critique their individual effort and the performance of the officiating unit. This

will allow for immediate attention to deficiencies in the understanding of the rules while situations are still fresh in the mind.

Rules should be reviewed many times before and during the season. Rules cannot be administered intelligently without knowing the official interpretations of the rule in its application of the play situation.

KNOW THE RULES – DON'T GUESS.

Duties and Mechanics

Mechanics refers to the routine procedures surrounding what the official does. The two primary areas of mechanics are signaling and positioning. When more than one official is involved “Teamwork” becomes a third area of mechanics, wherein additional signaling and positioning responsibilities are necessary.

The mechanics of positioning, signaling and teamwork are all of essential importance to professional performance. Good positioning is necessary if you are to see what you are supposed to see. Sharp, unhesitating and un-hurried signals are necessary to communicate your decisions and to build the confidence of everyone regarding your officiating ability. Commonly recognized teamwork procedures are necessary to ensure to the greatest extent possible that:

- a) every comfortable action is covered and ruled upon, and
- b) disagreement is eliminated or minimized.

When proper mechanics are performed precisely, the game progresses without confusions or unnecessary delay. Good mechanics are not too difficult to develop if correct habits are established early in the official’s career. Difficulty does occur when the new official unsuspectingly forms incorrect habits. Mechanics, good or bad, are habitual actions. It is much easier to learn the correct habit first than to unlearn an incorrect habit later.

Like the playing rules, mechanics have evolved from the efforts of many people over many years and therefore, they should command the respect and acceptance of new officials. The first two obligations of new officials are to learn the playing rules and to develop a correct habit of mechanics.

Instructions and manuals are issued by associations giving complete patterns of action for all of the officials for all situations prior to, during and at the conclusion of the game. It is the duty of every official to know exactly where he should be, what he should look for, and how he should support and cooperate with his fellow official on every play situation.

An official who is in the right place at the right time, at least looks efficient.

BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE – LOOK EFFICIENT.

Physical Condition & Appearance

No man has any right to pose as an official who is not willing to dress the part and to get into good physical condition. You personally have the most control over qualifications. They are both related to the pride and dedication of the official.

Physical Condition

The quality of the officiating job can be limited by the physical condition of the official. To put it simply, good conditioning is necessary to allow you to:

- a) be where you should be,
- b) maintain your alertness and good judgment, and
- c) hold up your end of the teamwork with your fellow officials throughout the entire game.

A tired official certainly cannot meet all the requirements of good officiating.

The primary components of good officiating condition appear to be good cardio-respiratory endurance and strong legs. Most outstanding officials put themselves through a graduated conditioning program prior to the start of the season. By doing so, they can avoid early season injuries, especially torn muscles, and can produce up to expectations at their first assignment of the year. A jogging program is suggested and would certainly enable officials, who have varying full-time jobs, to intelligently prepare themselves for the coming season.

It is not possible to be alert and to perform successfully at a high standard unless you are in top condition. Leg strength and endurance (heart power) should receive your attention.

GET FIT AND KEEP FIT.

Appearance

A certain razor company once increased its sales with a slogan – “Look Sharp – Feel Sharp – Be Sharp”. This slogan represents excellent advice to the sports officials. “Feel Sharp” has implications for physical and mental preparation, especially conditioning. “Be Sharp” suggests that an official react quickly, hustle and display good judgment and mechanics. We are presently concerned with the “Look Sharp”.

Most officials’ associations have minimum dress regulations which should be observed. An official who reports for duty in an unkempt, dirty or soiled uniform does not inspire the confidence of the players and coaches, or his fellow officials. Such officials start the game at a disadvantage.

Adequate conditioning and appearance can be attained. It makes no sense, nor is it justifiable, for an official to report for a game in unfit or sloppy condition.

BE NEAT AND CLEAN IN YOUR APPEARANCE.

A review of the qualities advocated indicates the impossibility of your becoming a PERFECT OFFICIAL. How many officials have you observed who combine all of these qualities? The point to be made here, however, is that you and any other prospective official can improve each

of the qualities. Your performance and your enjoyment of officiating will depend upon how much you improve.

An Ideal Official

1. 100% top physical condition and impeccable appearance.
2. Perfect knowledge of the rules. Knows what the rules say and what they mean.
3. Intelligent and co-operative teamwork.
4. Complete knowledge and adherence of approved mechanics.
5. Notices everything, yet is not noticed.
6. Considerate and courteous without sacrificing firmness.
7. Is in the right place at the right time.
8. Does not walk away from close/tough decisions.
9. Consistent in his calls (tough but consistent versus lenient but consistent).
10. Use good judgment (and when in doubt, doesn't call).
11. Calls rough play and unnecessary roughness fouls without compromise.
12. Uses common sense and good judgment rather than the letter of the law on technical rulings.
13. Has a calm and confident manner which spreads confidence.
14. Makes decisions clearly.
15. Keeps game moving.
16. Keeps players "boxed in", doesn't get boxed himself.
17. Co-operates with the press-box, radio, P.A. announcers.
18. Demonstrates high personal integrity.

The Roles

As the action and tempo of a game progress and change, the official must assume several different roles, depending upon the particular circumstances. According to the particular situation, it may be necessary for the official to assume partially the role of an educator, a salesman, a psychologist or a statesman. The competent official recognizes the particular need under the given circumstance and assumes the indicated role.

EDUCATOR – he briefly explains the rule and its proper interpretation.

SALESMAN – he influences players toward fair, clean and sportsmanlike play and away from unsportsmanlike conduct.

PSYCHOLOGIST – he understands the feels of the players, coaches and spectators, and through this understanding he is able to show respect and in turn gain their respect.

STATESMAN – he speaks clearly and logically when it is necessary for him to speak.

Summation of the “JOB” of Officiating

Regardless of the level of competition, the benefits of athletic competition are greater when the competition is guided by capable officials. Such officials cause the contests to be conducted as they were meant to be, and cause the result to be based upon player ability and observance of the rules.

Officials should be guided by overall aim of causing the game to progress smoothly with as little interference as possible. The essential ingredients of effective officiating are”

- a) Intelligent Rule Enforcement
- b) Absolute Integrity
- c) Sound Human Relationships
- d) A Focus on the Protection of the Individual Athlete.

Competent officials continuously attempt to improve themselves and measure their performance against standard such as the “Qualities of a Competent Official”. They also are prepared to assume several different roles, according to the demands of the particular circumstances/

Officiating is a difficult but rewarding avocation. The primary awards will be related to personal development and satisfaction rather than to financial gain.

When officials are well trained, highly dedicated and more aware of the total requirements of their responsibilities. Athletic competition will benefit.

General Principles of Officiating

Failure to employ any of the following principles will give rise to many wrong decisions and to many unfair situations which develop during a game.

You must see the total scene

The official must see the total scene in order to be able to make a just decision. For example, the full act of pass interference must be seen before a ruling can be made. If, when the official first sees the situation, a blocker is lying across the back of the legs of an opponent, he shall not call a clipping penalty, because he had not seen the initial contact.

An official’s duty is to see all and know all. However, the human limit actions must be taken into consideration. Something may happen directly in front of an official and entirely miss his attention because at that moment he was concentrating on another phase of the play, or his vision was blocked by a player or players.

Coaches, players and fans must be made to realize that there are times when an official does not see the complete act, and he is to be commended for his refusal to render a decision when he had not seen the complete act.

Anticipation

Officials must rule on completed acts and not on anticipated acts. It is a common fault to anticipate the play to the extent that officials make decisions too hastily. Football officials have blown their whistles at times, before a tipped forward pass has touched the ground, only to see another player make a show-string catch. There is no such thing as a quick whistle; the play has or has not been completed, and no whistle should sound until the play is completed.

Officials should be alert and should be poised in readiness to act quickly, but they should make no decision until a violation or an infraction has become an accomplished fact.

Make Decisions on What You See - Anywhere

All officials should make decisions on any play which they see anywhere, except in situations where specific jurisdiction is given by the rules to one particular official.

While officials tend to focus their attention on specific phases of play or on definite areas under certain play situations it does not mean that he should be oblivious to what the other players are doing. Although particular assignments are laid out for the co-operation of officials and for co-ordination of their work, they should, so far as possible, keep the total field of play within their vision. They should make decisions on any situation that comes to their attention and the requires their action as an official. Remember, your fellow official may be momentarily blocked from seeing you saw.

DON'T IMAGINE or SUSPECT – YOU MUST SEE THE TOTAL ACT.

Code of Ethics

Believing that officiating is an important part of any athletic program, I pledge myself to act in accordance with these principles.

1. I will study the rules, observe the work of other officials, and will at all times attempt to improve myself.
2. I will build my game appointments through accepted worth, potential possibilities and inherent character rather than trading favours or attempted pressures.
3. I will honour my accepted game appointments, even though this may result in financial loss or inconvenience.
4. I will dress and maintain my appearance in a manner befitting the dignity and importance of the game.
5. I will be prepared both physically and mentally to administer the game.
6. I will shape my character and conduct to be worthy example to the younger players who play under my jurisdiction.
7. I will remember that while my work as an official is important, I must conduct myself in such a way that attention is drawn, not to me, but to the players in the game.
8. I will co-operate and be systematic, prompt and businesslike in my association with fellow officials and will do nothing to cause them or the official's association any public embarrassment.

9. I will remember that my responsibility also extends to my fellow officials and that I must work as one member of the team.
10. I will keep in mind that my first charge is the safety and general welfare of those under my supervision.
11. I will keep in mind that the game is more important than the wishes of any individual player or coach, or the ambitions of any individual official.
12. I will be fair and unbiased in my decisions, rendering these without regard to the score, or the opinions of partisan fans.
13. I will, in my actions on the field be:
 - a. Firm but not over-bearing;
 - b. Courteous, but not ingratiating;
 - c. Positive, but not rude;
 - d. Dignified, but not companionable;
 - e. Friendly, but not companionable;
 - f. Calm, but always alert.
14. I will not smoke on or in the vicinity of the playing field.
15. I will not drink any alcoholic beverages during the day prior to and the day of the game.
16. I will not give any information which might be used by a team's future opponent nor will I visit with any player during time-outs.

Teamwork

In contests that require more than one official, the ability to team with fellow officials is absolutely essential to a well-handled game. Many qualities become involved in teamwork:

1. Cooperation
2. Physical Condition & Appearance
3. Personal Integrity
4. Reliability
5. Uniformity of Decisions
6. Mechanics of Positioning
7. Constructive Criticism

Cooperation

Each official must have faith in the other, and harmony must exist between them all. If one official is sensitive and resents the other making decisions on all plays that he feels are his responsibility, harmony between them may be destroyed. Each should welcome the support of the other. Each should realize that he is not always in the most advantageous position to see all the action. Each should be ready to cover the play for the other when one is momentarily caught out of position.

There are occasions when personalities of officials clash. Their temperaments, mannerisms, tactics, seem to conflict rather than blend. Their general analyses of the play are often opposite. When these differences become evident, every effort must be made to adjust. In the event that they cannot be resolved, then these officials should not work in the same games. Each may otherwise be an excellent official in his own right.

Physical Condition & Appearance

You cannot hold up your end of the “teamwork” with your fellow officials without being in top physical condition. You will lack the hustle which is highly valued. An official without hustle appears lazy and uninterested, and this reflects on the whole officiating “team”.

An official who reports for duty in an unkept, dirty uniform, or who appears to be in poor physical condition, does not inspire the confidence of the players, coaches, or his fellow officials.

Be part of the “SHARP” TEAM – “BE SHARP” by looking sharp (appearance) and feeling sharp (top physical condition).

Integrity

You must be honest in your relationships with your fellow officials. Your personal integrity can be shown by what assignments you do NOT accept. You should not work a game when you have a close relationship with one of the teams involved. This could embarrass the whole “officiating” team.

Your relationships with your fellow officials and your association should be business like, not political. The so-called “preferred assignments” will eventually come to the gift official, regardless of political maneuverings. The official who is not gifted is merely baiting his own trap when he accepts assignments for which he is not qualified. Unfortunately, large officiating associations, by virtue of the officials anonymity, frequently create the impression that influence is more important than ability. Ultimately, such an impression is false.

Reliability

You reliability in meeting all accepted assignments and meeting them on time is an important part of teamwork. You are in the officiating dog-house if you don't honour your accepted assignments. About the only things that should prevent your being at the game at the time indicated are:

- a) death or severe illness of self or immediate family;
- b) fire, flood, impassable roads or adverse acts of providence.

It should be noted that no reference is made to your prime work commitments. Assignments should not be accepted if they will conflict in any way with your every-day work.

The only officiating “sin” more serious than appearing late for a game is not appearing at all. If you are going to be late, a telephone call will suffice to let the “team” know of your late arrival. This give the team the chance to review the coverage to be made until you arrive.

Uniformity of Decisions

The officiating team as a whole must gauge their decisions so that they are as uniform as possible. If they diverge to any great extent, the game will be conducted in an erratic fashion.

Uniformity can be achieved by the following:

- a) regular attendance at all association meetings and rules clinics, and an active participation therein.
- b) Arriving early before the game so that you can review mechanics and rule interpretations and begin to know your fellow officials.
- c) Never argue with a fellow official, come to a common understanding.
- d) Agree in advance about who will do what, such as which team you will count as a sideline official when benches are on one side of the field.
- e) Agree in advance as to how you can assist each other, such as deep pass coverage down the sideline when the Back Umpire needs sideline help.

If you should make an error on a call, admit it to the Referee. Don't try to bluff your way through an error. The error reflects on the whole officiating team. Remember, the Referee can simply “wash-out” the penalty flag.

Never “second guess” another official, or try to explain another official's call. The Referee will make all explanations to the captains with the assistance of the official who actually made the call. As a sideline official, if you are asked about a penalty, your replay might be “Number 54 was obstructing”. Nothing more, no explanation of how he was obstructing.

Uniformity comes from team effort. Check the yardage penalties assessed to make sure they are accurate. If there is a mistake, get to the Referee quickly and quietly so that it can be corrected.

Mechanics of Positioning

Mechanics or positioning command the respect and acceptance of every official. This “teamwork” ensures that every conceivable action is covered and ruled upon. It is the duty of every official to know exactly where he should support and cooperate with his fellow official on every play situation. An official who is in the right place at the right time, at least looks efficient. Absolute adherence to approved mechanic is essential, and the slightest deviation can result utter chaos.

A good “team” official will:

- a) arrive in time for pre-game conference with other officials.
- b) know the primary duties of his fellow officials, and instantly move to cover those duties should they be out of position.
- c) Check and guard against erroneous rulings or procedure by fellow officials, even the Referee.
- d) Know the down and yardage on every play.
- e) Be alert, when the play has ended, to happenings after the play.
- f) Retrieve the ball on the run.
- g) Call time-out for injured players and move as quickly as possible to the injured player to check what it wrong.

Constructive Criticism

Criticism of another official can lead to disharmony, not only in the officiating team but in the official’s association. Officials are continually being rated by senior officials and association instructors to determine their strengths and weaknesses. If you feel that something was lacking in the officiating team’s performance, the time to review it is immediately after the game with the whole officiating team.

Post-game discussions should be held between the officials on controversial plays or ruling. The game is fresh in your minds, you know what kind of game it was and the actions that were taken. Such discussion should take place in private away from all other persons associate with the game. The conclusions reached should not go beyond that group, with the exception of the Referee reporting, if necessary, to the applicable person.

The more experienced officials should take the initiative to help inexperienced officials. Such assistance can be appropriate and useful before and after the game, but seldom during the game.

Never, at any time, discuss other officials and their work with the press, coaches, players, team followers or your fellow officials. This not only reflects on you but also on your Official’s Association.

STRONG SPORTS OFFICIALS TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR WORK, AND ARE WILLING TO ASSIST THE LESS EXPEREINCED OFFICIAL.

Mechanics of Football Officiating (General)

As a preface to the mechanics and duties of all officials, the following points are noted:

- All official have equal jurisdiction in calling penalties
- Only the whistle terminates the play
- Insure that you see the ball and the touch or the flag
- Penalties that occur during the play (flag plays) that stop the play or do not stop the play.

Assignments

Review your responsibilities from the time of receiving an assignment. Check your equipment, uniform, whistle, penalty flag; score pad/pencil/pen; elastic bands or down counters, bean bags and watch.

Counting of Downs

Prior to the start of each play, check to ensure that all officials are displaying the correct number of the next down. The Referee will signal the number of the next down and yardage to the teams and the benches. If a conference is required, the Referee will call a time-out.

Placement of Bean Bags

The game uses three bean bags. The line of scrimmage and the line for the rusher use the same colour bean bag. The third bean bag acts as the first down marker and is of a different colour. Never move the first down marker until a first (down) has been successfully attained or a change of possession occurred.

Use of the Whistle

The whistle is used to stop the play. It must be blown with authority (a loud, sharp blast). Remember to never blow the whistle on the assumption of expectation that a touch or flag pull will be made. If you see it (... the tag), then call it.

Spotting the Ball

When the play is over and you have the location of where the ball is, inform the other officials of this.

Use of Penalty Flag

Remember, continue to officiate until the whistle has gone and the play is stopped. If you have a penalty to report to the Referee, either have another official take your spot OR mark the spot with your flag or hat.

Calling Infractions

When you see an infraction, instantly indicate that you are calling it by throwing your flag, but do NOT blow your whistle until the ball becomes dead if the penalty allows it.

When throwing your flag:

- If the point where the ball was held is required, try to throw the flag to where the ball was at the time of the infraction. Make a mental note of the spot in case your flag gets moved.
- If the point where the ball was held is not required, throw your flag high so that it can be seen.

Make every effort to get the number (or position) of the offending player, and also note whether the ball was in possession of either team. In the case of a kick, you must know if the ball was in possession or in flight.

When the ball is finally declared dead by yourself or a fellow official:

- Make certain that the bean bags are not being moved.
- Make certain that either an official or flag (hat) is holding the “dead ball spot”
- Report to the Referee, relating the infraction as you approach him/her.
- Remain calm and cover the following points:
 1. “C” – COLOUR of offending team’s jersey, or “T” – team name.
 2. “I” – INFRACTION called.
 3. “N” – NUMBER of offending player(s).
 4. “S” – STAY with the Referee to give the following if needed:
 - Point of infraction.
 - Point where the ball was held when infraction occurred.
 - What team was in possession.

Mechanics for A 2-Man System (e.g. Referee & Back Umpire)

PRE-GAME FIELD DUTIES

1. Be at the park one half hour before game time, dressed.
2. Inspect the playing field and end zone for unusual conditions such as exposed rocks, large holes or depressions or unpadded goal posts.
3. Ensure that the field is properly marked and check the end zones to determine their dimensions.
4. If yardsticks are to be used, instruct the people operating the sticks on how and when to move them.
5. Call out the team captains at least ten minutes before playing time and explain:
 - a. Any adverse field conditions and how you will deal with them.
 - b. That be retrieving and returning the ball to the officials they will save themselves playing time.
 - c. The procedure for penalty application that you will be using.

KICK-OFF DUTIES

Referee

1. Count the number of players on the kicking team and check the yardage between the first offensive and the first defensive players on the field (restraining zone).
2. The Back Umpire will signal you when ready by raising one arm. You then whistle the play in and begin the count 20-second count.
3. As the ball is kicked, watch for any offsides. Verify whether the ball traveled the necessary 20 yards (20 m). Watch for a dribbled ball and lateral passes. Be alert to call a touch.
4. If the ball is kicked out or bounds in flight, direct the Back Umpire to the point where the ball left the field of play.
5. After the play is dead, watch for any fouls and aid in spotting the ball. Then be ready for the first scrimmage play.

Back Umpire

1. Position yourself behind the deepest receiver. If there are two deep receivers, stay between them. Count the number of players on the receiving team. Signal to the Referee that you are ready by raising one arm in the air.
2. After the ball is kicked, watch to see if the ball hits the goals posts or goes out of bounds. If the ball goes out of bounds in flight, move towards it and watch for the Referee's hand signal to determine where to spot the ball.
3. If the ball is caught you must move parallel to the ball carrier, watching for lateral passes or touches.
4. Watch for any obstruction or interference on ball players coming towards the ball carrier and also for any fouls that occur after the play is dead.
5. After the play is dead, spot the ball for the following scrimmage play.

PUNTS

Referee

1. Be aware of the yardage necessary to obtain a first down and signal to the Back Umpire what down it is.
2. Make sure that the players are properly lined up on the line of scrimmage and count the number of players on the kicking team.
3. When the ball is snapped, make sure that both the offensive and defensive players are onside and that the rusher is allowed a clear path to the punter.
4. Verify that the ball crosses the line of scrimmage and then check for obstruction committed against any of the players headed downfield.
5. If the rusher makes contact with the ball, note whether the ball goes towards the punter's dead ball line (e.g. a blocked kick) or towards the opponent's dead ball line (e.g. a valid punt).
6. Watch for any roughing of the punter, regardless of whether the ball was blocked or deflected.
7. If the ball was thrown to a half back you must signal whether it is an onside or an offside pass and then move towards the halfback to watch for a punt or a run.
8. If the ball is punted towards the opponent's dead ball line, head down-field to assist the Back Umpire on "no yards" calls, lateral passes or the touch/tag itself.
9. Assist the Back Umpire in spotting the ball and then prepare for the next play.

Back Umpire

1. Position yourself within 10 yards (10 meters) of the potential receiver and count all of the players on the receiving team.
2. Be aware of the yardage necessary to obtain a first down and signal to the Referee what down it is.
3. If the ball is kicked out of bounds in flight, move upfield and watch for the Referee's signal to determine where to spot the ball.
4. If the receiver catches the ball you must watch the oncoming opponents in order to determine whether they infringe on the 5 yard (5 meter) restraining zone. **REMEMBER:** Watch the oncoming opponents and **not** the ball.
5. Move parallel to the ball carrier and rule on lateral passes, touches and fouls committed after the play is dead.
6. Spot the ball and get into position for the next play.

SCRIMMAGE DUTIES

Referee

Prior to the Snap:

1. Signal the down, whistle the play in and begin the 20 second time count.
2. Position yourself on the same side of the center as the rusher.
3. Count the offensive players
4. Note the yardage required for a first down.
5. Check the positioning of the rusher in relation to the ball and the center.
6. Watch how the center handles the ball prior to the snap.

After the Snap:

7. Watch for offsides.
8. Watch for any interference between the center and the rusher.
9. Take a quick look on you side of the field for any interference between receivers and defenders.
10. Be alert for a touch/tag on the quarterback. Check for fouls by the rusher or quarterback after the ball is thrown.
11. Be prepared to signal the direction of a lateral pass to the halfback. Furthermore, move towards the halfback once the lateral is made (to them).
12. Follow the play and assist in calling the touch/tag.
13. When the play is dead, either retrieve the bags or spot the ball for the next down.

Back Umpire

Prior to the Snap:

1. Verify the down.
2. Count the defensive players.
3. Note the yardage required for a first down.
4. Position yourself on the side of the field opposite to the Referee, approximately 10 to 15 yards (10 to 15 meters) from the line of scrimmage (AND/OR behind the deepest most defender... which ever is furthest).

After the Snap:

5. Watch for offsides.
6. As the players move downfield move with them.
7. Watch for any interference between the receivers and defenders. Look at the players not the ball.
8. If a pass is thrown, move towards the target area.
9. Be alert to call the touch and correctly mark the spot. Watch for laterals.
10. When the play is dead, either retrieve the bags or spot the ball for the next down.

GOAL LINE STAND

Referee

Prior to the Snap:

1. Same duties as on a scrimmage play.

After the Snap:

2. Be prepared to assist the Back Umpire in calling a touchdown, if there is a short pass or running play.

Back Umpire

Prior to the Snap:

1. Position yourself on the side of the field opposite the Referee. Move closer to the sideline.
2. Stay close to the goal line and be prepared to signal a touchdown. You are responsible for the dead ball line in the end zone, but your primary responsibility is to determine if the ball carrier crosses the goal line.

After the Snap:

3. Watch for interference between the receivers and defenders.
4. Watch for players grabbing the goal post to change direction.
5. Watch for any fouls that occur after a score has been made.

Duties and Positioning

Referee's Pre-game Conference

As the Referee, you are responsible for providing leadership and example of teamwork. Your performance and overall conduct must be impeccable. You must be consistent in calling infractions and administering penalties. Above all, your attitude to the players, captains, coaches, minor officials and fellow officials must be excellent if you wish to get the maximum performance from all participants of the game, including yourself. If these ingredients are present, it is virtually impossible to have the football game become a “problem” game.

The following pre-game conference guide should be used by the Referee.

The officiating team should assemble at least one-half hour prior to the game's start time and review the following:

1. Field conditions and field markings.
2. Review field position and responsibilities on:
 - a. Kick-off,
 - b. Scrimmage kicks,
 - c. Return kicks,
 - d. Convert attempts,
 - e. Running plays,
 - f. Forward pass plays,
 - g. Goal line plays.
3. Review rule infractions such as:
 - a. Major fouls,
 - b. Personal fouls,
 - c. Objectionable conduct,
 - d. Offside,
 - e. Obstruction,
 - f. Substitution,
 - g. Pass interference
 - h. No yards.
4. Review mechanics and signals on:
 - a. First touching of kick-off.
 - b. Marking point of origin of an offside pass.
 - c. Out of bounds play, noting that covering official should hold the spot while continuing to observe the out of bounds action. The official should not throw his/her cap or flag, to mark the spot unless absolutely necessary.
 - d. Lateral passes behind the line of scrimmage.
 - e. Procedure for measurement of a first down.
 - f. Caution all members of the crew of early whistles and back-up whistles.

- g. Reporting of penalties (procedures).
 - h. Administration of penalties.
 - i. Duties and responsibilities during time-outs and intermission between periods.
 - j. Remind crew that professional conduct can only be maintained by being courteous, but not too friendly towards the coaches and their staffs.
5. At the conclusion of the conference, all members of the crew should be ready to proceed onto the field not later than fifteen minutes prior to game time.
 6. Some last minute comments by the Referee before the start of the game (5 minutes before game time) might be:
 - a. “Everybody go their flags, whistles, horns”.
 - b. “Has the Back Umpire got bags”.
 - c. “Remember, if we make a mistake, we make it hustling”.
 7. Instruct your officials to notify captains of both teams for the coin toss.
 8. Obtain score cards from the teams.
 9. Check player equipment.

Pre-game Meeting With Captains

1. Proceed with other officials to centre field 5 minutes prior to game time for the captain’s choices.
2. Introduce yourself and other officials to the captains. Be sure to note the number and name of each captain on the scorecard.
3. Review with the captains any special arrangements, ground rules or unusual field markings.
4. Inquire if the teams require any rule clarifications or if they have any general questions. Take the time to answer all questions.
5. Determine on league procedures, proceed with the choices and/or coin toss.
6. Depending on league procedures, proceed with the choices and/or coin toss.
7. Coin Toss Procedure
 - a. If one of the teams has not been designated as “Home Team” select a team to call the coin toss.
 - b. If the team has more than one captain ask who will make the call and ask the captain to call it while the coin is in the air.
 - c. The captain who wins the toss must first decide who is to be HOME or VISITOR.
 - d. The captain of the team which is designated VISITOR must take the first choice of:
 - i. Kicking off;
 - ii. Receiving the kick-off;
 - iii. Defending an end of the field.
 - e. After obtaining the choice, the other captain has the option of one of the remaining choices.
 - f. The choices should be recorded on the game card.
 - g. Have the captains face their respective opponent’s end zone. Signal the choices of the captains by first standing beside the captain whose team will receive and then proceed to simulate the catching of a kicked ball.
 - h. Wish the captains a good game and good luck.
 - i. Proceed with other officials to your kick-off positions.

START THE GAME ON TIME.

Referee's Duties & Positioning Pre-game Field Duties

Relationships With Coaches, Captains & Players

Always treat the captains and coaches as you wish them to treat you. Be courteous, but be brief, correct and clearly spoken. Encourage the coaches to attend the pre-game field meetings, but once the game starts, all contact is solely with the captains.

In speaking with the captains, refer to them as “captain”, and with the coaches, it can either “coach” or “mister”.

Have a deep understanding of the particular game and of the feeling of the players. If a player is excited, disturbed, dejected, frustrated, etc..., try to understand why. Was the player just scored against, was a fingertip touch call against that player, was it possible that the player was the victim of an unnoticed infraction etc...?

Under no circumstance should the Referee tolerate any abuse directed to (of for the benefit of) any official by players, captains, coaches or team executives or personnel. Do not have “rabbit ears” or “be looking” for these infractions and be able to distinguish a comment of frustration or anger, such as “Hey Ref., didn’t you see the illegal interference on that touchdown?” from “Hey Ref., when are you going to open your eyes and watch the same game we’re watching?”. The former comment is, depending on the tone of voice, probably one of frustration, while the later is clearly at one or all of the officials and is abusive and should be penalized.

Remember to handle players in a firm, fair and friendly fashion.

Kick-off Duties

1. After the ball is placed at the point of kick-off, make sure the kicker is cautioned to await your whistle.
2. Check the number of players of BOTH teams. Take a position at the line of kick-off on the 45 yard (40 meter) line of the kicking team. Do not allow opening kick-offs with more or less than 7 players on either team (avoid unnecessary penalties). Always line up on the opposite side of the Headlinesman.
3. Check the captain of the receiving team for the “ready” signal, and then check the kicking team for the “ready” signal (on opening kick-off only).
4. Raise your arm aloft, check “ready” signal for all other officials. Keep arm aloft until you sound your whistle. Drop and point your arm downfield as a signal for the kicker to proceed.
5. Watch for offside by the kicking team.
6. Watch for short kicks and be ready to rule if it went the required 20 yards (20 meters).
7. After the ball is kicked, move downfield along the nearest hash mark.
8. Change your position in order to permit you to keep the play well in view. Do not move too deeply into the center of the field as you may be trapped by the play coming up the field.
9. Be prepared to cover the ball-carrier if that players breaks through the defense.
10. Check in your mind and get set to rule on the following:

- a. Kick-off out of bounds, in the field or in the end zone.
- b. Infractions by either team on a kick out of bounds.
- c. Kick-off not going the required 20 yards (20 meters).
- d. Kick-off recovered by the kicking team
- e. Laterals and accidental offside passes.
- f. Infractions such as obstruction, personal fouls, etc....
- g. Infractions with ball in possession, or ball not in possession
- h. Be sure to note the point where the ball was held at the time of the infraction, or point where possession was gained.
- i. Ball strikes the goal post assembly or goes out of bounds through the end zone.

Scrimmage Duties

1. On each down, signal the exact down using both verbal and hand communications.
2. Ensure that all substitutions are made legally and quickly.
3. Whistle the play in.
4. Position yourself behind and slightly to the side of the quarterback. If there is a halfback, always position yourself on the opposite side of the quarterback.
5. Check the position of the rusher. The rusher must be lined up one to five yards (one to five meters) from the rusher's bag to guarantee the rusher's rights.
6. Ensure that the center has the point of scrimmage bag positioned between his/her feet.
7. Immediately after the snap, watch the center/rusher activity for possible infractions.
8. Once the rusher is past the center, your position behind the quarterback allows you to watch for infractions in the short middle defensive area.
9. As the rusher closes on the quarterback, position yourself so that you will not impede either the rusher or the quarterback but still see the possible tag.
10. If the quarterback passes the ball to a halfback, step up to the line from where the ball was thrown and check to see if the ball was thrown in a forward or backward direction.
Remember – draw the line from where the ball was released to the point where the ball was first touched by the receiver. If the line of flight was backwards, indicate by pointing towards the offensive team's goal line. If the line of flight was forward, indicate by pointing towards the defensive team's goal line.
11. As soon as the ball is released to a halfback the Referee should attempt to move into a position similar to the one taken with a quarterback.
12. Watch the actions of the rusher and quarterback, after the ball has been released, for possible illegal tactics (roughing, interference, etc...).
13. If the quarterback runs with the ball, maintain a position behind and to the side making sure not to impede the rusher's pursuit of the quarterback. It is important to be as close as possible in order to see the tag.
14. Upon the completion of the play, your initial responsibility is to check for flags thrown by the other officials (... see penalties section). Do not remove the bean bags until this is done.
15. If there were no flags, proceed to point of possession. If yards were gained, ascertain if first down yardage has been made.
16. Begin next play sequence.

Goal Line Plays

1. Confirm coverage with other officials.

2. Follow scrimmage procedures #1 thru 14.
3. Watch for the ball striking the goal posts.
4. Watch for players “swinging” on the goal posts.
5. Check for infractions before signaling touchdown.

Converts

1. Ask offensive captain what kind of convert they want (e.g. 1-point from five yards out OR 2-point from ten yards out). Also ask where the captain prefers the point of the scrimmage be located (e.g. from the middle, from the right/from the left hash).
2. Inform defensive captain verbally as well as the team benches (verbally and by hand signals).

Safety Touch

1. If a player is tagged in the end zone make sure part of the ball is still in the end zone at the time of touch before signaling a safety.
2. Signal (and whistle) immediately if the safety touch is scored (to prevent players from running needlessly any further).
3. Explain next play procedures to the captains of both teams.

Kick From Scrimmage (Punt)

1. Position yourself behind and to the side of the punter.
2. Watch for possible rusher/center interference.
3. Watch for contacting the kicker infractions.
4. If possible, help with the bean bags.
5. Be responsible for blocked, missed or dribbled punts.
6. On a potential return punt situation:
 - a. Confirm that other officials are aware of their responsibilities before the play.
 - b. Don't follow the action upfield. Remain as deep as the deepest potential punt receiver (... in case of a lateral).
7. On a return punt watch for no yards and contacting the kicker infractions.

Penalties

1. After each play check for flags.
2. If a flag has been thrown, wait for the official to come to you to report the infraction(s).
3. Make sure that you obtain all facts about an infraction. It will be too late if you discover information later in the game.
4. Check for more than one flag and confirm with all officials who have thrown flags. DON'T ASSUME they have all called the same infraction.
5. Once all facts are known, inform the captain of the non-offending team of the infractions and the options available to them.
6. Implement the selected option.
7. When signaling, the Referee must have a sense of timing and be in a proper position so that everyone may clearly receive the message. There should be a definite pause between each signal. Both before and after the penalty has been applied, the signals should be given. The signal should be made from a position clear of the teams, and repeated to both sides of the field.

Back Umpire's Duties & Positioning

Pre-game Field Duties

1. Proceed with the Headlinesman for inspection of the entire field for unusual markings or irregularities. Should there be difficulties with field markings, obstructions, etc... These should be communicated to the Referee.
2. While doing field inspection look at the teams warming up for any protective equipment or casts that players may be wearing.
3. Review your findings with the Referee.
4. When using the bean bag system, the bags are the responsibility of the Back Umpire. The Back Umpire should know where the bags are at all times and should not allow any player to move them at any time. Remind the Referee to advise the team captains of this during the pre-game talk,

Kick-off Duties

Back Umpire's positioning applies only when there are three officials in the crew.

1. Position yourself deeper than the deepest receiver and in the middle of the field.
2. Count the number of players on the field for the receiving team.
3. Signal to the Referee that you are ready by raising one arm in the air. Hold that arm up until the Referee whistles the play in.
4. As soon as the ball is kicked, move behind the receiver and follow the play upfield. Do not move in too close – you may get in the receiver's way and interfere with potential laterals.
5. If the ball strikes the goal post, it is your responsibility to whistle the play (call the ball) dead.
6. Watch for the touch at all times and be prepared to mark the spot of the ball.
7. Make sure the ball is retrieved, then adjust the position of the bean bags. The first bag should be placed at the point the ball was first marked dead. The second bag should be placed 5 yards (5 meters) away from the first, and the third bag should be placed an additional 5 yards (5 meters) away from the second (or 10 yards (10 meters) away from the first bag).
8. If yardsticks are used, mark the correct spot at which the ball was dead. The Headlinesman will direct the yardsticks to be moved to the proper location.

Scrimmage Duties

Before the snap:

1. Position yourself behind the deepest defender and close to the hash mark opposite the Headlinesman.
2. Spot check the position of the bags.
3. Count the players on the field for the defensive team.
4. Know the number of the down and distance to be gained for a first down.

After the snap:

5. Watch for interference between the receivers and defenders in your zone of coverage. Look at the players, not the ball.
6. Watch for players going out of bounds and returning to the field of play.
7. If the ball is thrown, move to the target area as quickly as possible. Be alert to rule on lateral passes that develop afterwards.

8. Watch for players tipping the ball and note if any offside passes occur. Remember the location where the ball was first tipped.
9. Render all possible assistance on pass plays when the ball is thrown out of your zone. The other official may be screened out. Make your decision and wait for the signal. If it is delayed, make your call quickly. Always concede to the official that the receiver is facing when catching the ball. Don't walk away on close decisions.
10. Signal completed pass after the play is dead so that the Referee can see it. The bean bags have to be moved quickly.
11. If the pass is incomplete, signal that clearly. You can also call out "no catch". Keep the players under observation and be alert to retrieve the ball.
12. If it is a running play and the ball carrier is moving towards the side-line, your responsibility is to watch for a touch first, then check for out of bounds.
13. If the pass is intercepted, indicate the direction and run upfield with the receiver.

After the play is dead:

14. If the spot where you mark the ball is close to a first down, do not move the ball. Let the Referee make the decision. Give your opinion only if it is asked for by the Referee.
15. Retrieve the ball and return it to the line of scrimmage using an underhand motion.
16. If necessary, move the bags to the proper position.
17. Check for the correct down and prepare for the next play.

Goal Line Stand

1. Position yourself in the end zone near the sideline opposite the Headlinesman. Remember that the Headlinesman has the goal line responsibility.
2. If there is a short end zone, position yourself at the dead ball line. If the receiver catches the ball near the boundary line, watch the receiver's feet then check to see if control is established in bounds.
3. On a play near the goal line, do not signal a touchdown until the Headlineman has made a signal. Be prepared with a call in the event the Headlinesman has been screened out.
4. If a player has caught the ball out of bounds, you must signal incomplete vigorously.
5. If you call an infraction, which would nullify a touchdown, ensure that the Referee knows of this so that he may avoid giving the touchdown signal and later having to change it. Never signal a touchdown if you have an infraction that will nullify it.

First Down

1. As you spot the ball, do not get influenced by the position of the first down bag.
2. Make sure that the ball is not moved from the side zone if there is the slightest indication that a measurement will be required.
3. If it is a short pass, be prepared to defer to the Headlinesman in determining the point the ball became dead. Check, visually, with the Headlinesman to see if a spot has been determined before you indicate your position.

Safety Touch

1. You must be sure that the player was touched in the end zone.
2. Do not hesitate when making the call. Do not explain the situation to anyone but the Referee.

Punts

1. Position yourself parallel to the intended receiver and about 5 to 10 yards (5 to 10 meters) to the side.
2. Be alert for laterals.
3. Be prepared to move up quickly if there is no punt.
4. Watch the players coming towards the punt receiver and be prepared to call a “no yards” penalty. If the penalty is called, make a mental note of where the punt receiver gained possession of the ball.
5. If the ball should be punted over the head of the potential receiver, stay to the side and then move upfield, parallel with the receiver.
6. After the play is dead, mark the spot, then pace off the yards and place the bags.

Rouge

1. The Back Umpire must watch for the location of the ball as the touch occurs.
2. If the ball goes off a player, do not whistle the play dead until the ball hits the ground.
3. Be alert for a punted ball striking the goal post assembly.

Return Punt from End Zone

1. Remain in the end zone with the receiver / punter.
2. Watch the five yard (5 meter) restraining zone.
3. Watch for any fouls after the ball is punted.
4. You are responsible for the call if the ball goes out of bounds, in flight, in the end zone. Make sure you are in a position to call it.

General Comments

1. Do not pursue the ball carrier too closely. Avoid getting “trapped” or “caught up” in the traffic especially on punt returns.
2. You should move quickly to the target area when a pass is thrown. Be alert for laterals and hand offs.
3. You must never turn your back to the play.
4. Learn to read patterns as they develop. Watch the players and not the ball.
5. Study the rules on pass interference. Be sure when you make the call.
6. Communicate, during the game, with the Headlinesman and the Referee, concerning downs and possible situations that may develop.
7. Assist in relaying the ball to the point of next scrimmage as quickly as possible. In short out of bounds plays, come up to give assistance.
8. Be aware of the down and distance to be gained for a first down.
9. Keep the players boxed in. When the ball is blown dead, officials away from the area should look for dead ball infractions.

Headlinesman's Duties & Positioning

Pre-game Field Duties

1. The Headlinesman should assist the other officials with the inspection of the field for unusual conditions, such as exposed rocks, unpadded goal posts, water sprinkler outlets, large holes or depressions in the field. All such conditions should be communicated to the Referee.
2. Inspect the boundary lines to ensure that the field is properly marked. The sidelines, the goal line, the center field line and the dead ball line should all be properly marked. The end zones should be checked to determine the dimensions.
3. If yardsticks are to be used, instruct the people operating the sticks on when to move them and when to change the downbox.
4. Ensure that both teams are on the same side of the field and that only players and team personnel occupy the team benches.
5. When the Referee is ready for the pre-game conference with the captains, go over to one of the team's bench area and instruct the captains to approach the Referee.

Kick-off Duties

1. Following the pre-game conference with the team captains, proceed to the position for the kick-off. Line up on the team bench side, twenty yards/ meters downfield from the point of the kick-off. Here you can determine offsides by members of the receiving team and determine if the kick-off traveled the necessary twenty yards/ meters.
2. Prior to the kick-off, count the number of players on the field for the receiving team. Signal that you are ready by raising one arm in the air, so the Referee can see it. Once the kicker begins his approach to the ball, raise both arms to shoulder level (e.g. put up the 'gates') to indicate that there can be no more substitutes.
3. You are responsible for the sideline. If the kick is deep, proceed downfield, staying outside the widest man. Get parallel to the ball carrier and follow the play upfield. You will be in a position to call touches and to determine and indicate, by appropriate signal, whether a pass is onside or offside. If the ball is on the far side of the field, move towards the center of the field, but still remain outside the widest player on the receiving team.
4. If you have remained parallel to the ball carrier as he runs upfield, you probably will be in the best position to spot the ball following the touch. Do so by positioning your foot at a spot parallel to where the ball was located at the time the player was touched. The toe should be in line with what you think is the forward point of the ball.
5. If the ball is kicked out of bounds without being touched by the receiving team, it is your responsibility to throw your flag and mark the spot where the ball went out. Hold that spot until the Referee determines whether the receiving team will take the ball at the point or have the kick-off repeated. If the ball goes out of bounds, in flight, on your side, the Referee will direct you to the position where the ball left the field of play.
6. You should ensure that a ball is available and spotted for the next scrimmage play.

Scrimmage Duties

1. Prior to the snap on a scrimmage play, position yourself by straddling the line of scrimmage next to the sideline on which the team benches are located. When the huddle breaks and you

can see how the Team A players are spread out, you can adjust your position by moving in towards the center of the field. However, you must always remain outside the widest receiver and should never move in closer than the hash mark on the bench side of the field.

2. Count the Team A players that are on the field for each play.
3. Visually inspect that the bean bags are positioned properly. In yardsticks are being used, ensure that the proper down is posted on the downbox and that the chains are fully extended.
4. When Team A breaks the huddle, raise your arms to shoulder height (e.g. to put up the 'gates') to signal that further substitution is prohibited. Keep the gates up until the center is over the ball.
5. While the gates are up, visually check to see if the Team B rusher is lined up properly.
6. Check the center as he handles the ball prior to the snap. If the ball was on the ground when Team A huddled, the center can lift it once, rotate it, and then place it back on the ground. When he lifts it again, the ball will be in play. If the ball was brought into the huddle, the center must place it on the ground and cannot lift it again except to put it into play. You must check to see if the ball is moved and lifted in any way prior to the snap.
7. Check the positions of the Team B players near the line of scrimmage. It is important to remember who can potentially be a rusher.
8. If Team A has a player lined up in the backfield as a halfback, you should take notice of any Team B player who might rush in to cover the halfback. This Team B player must start from a position that is five yards/ meters from the line of scrimmage or else wait for the rusher to cross the line of scrimmage first. The rule to remember is that the first Team B player to cross the line of scrimmage must have started from a position five yards/ meters from the line of scrimmage.
9. When calling offside on Team B, you should not throw the flag until the first Team B player has crossed the line of scrimmage. It is only at this time that a Team B offside can be declared to have occurred. It is possible for a rusher who has moved into the five yard/ meter neutral zone before the snap, to return to his original position after the snap and then rush in.
10. As the ball is snapped, check for offside on Team A or Team B. If there is none, pick up the Team A receivers in your designated zone and watch for any pass interference. If someone is offside, signal the infraction, then pick up your receivers. Always remain outside the widest Team A player. You should float downfield as you are watching the receivers.
11. As the play develops, it is important to watch the players and not the ball. If the ball is thrown downfield, go for the ball to get into a lateral position and follow the play downfield. Look for the touch and mark the position of the ball at the time the player is touched.
12. When spotting the ball, mark the spot with your tow and hold the spot until the Back Umpire or the Referee spots the ball. If the spot is close to a first down, the ball should not be brought into the hash marks until a measurement has been made.
13. The position of the first down marker should not influence the official in spotting the ball. Remember – spot first, look later.
14. If the Back Umpire is holding the spot where the touch took place, then you should retrieve the ball. If the ball has been retrieved, then look to see if you can retrieve the bean bags.
15. When retrieving the ball, you should return it by a relay system of short underhand passes. Do not attempt long passes to other officials. A neat order return of the ball looks professional and gets the play started again with minimum of delay.
16. After each play you should repeat the Referee's signal of the number of the next down. If you do not agree with the down number as signaled by the Referee, you must immediately

check with the Referee to ensure that any disagreement is solved before the ball is put into play.

Goal Line Plays

1. Your primary responsibility now becomes the goal line. Line up in the regular position, straddling the line of scrimmage, then move to the goal line after determining if there were any offsides. Hold this position on the goal line and watch for any interference in your zone of coverage.
2. If the pass is thrown close to the goal line or if the ball carrier is attempting to run into the end zone, you must determine if the forward point of the ball touches the plane of the goal line thereby achieving a touchdown. The Back Umpire and the Referee will look to you on a close play for an indication as to whether the ball is in the end zone or not. Do not hesitate to make the call.
3. If the pass is deep into the end zone and near your sideline, be sure to coordinate your work with the Back Umpire. The Back Umpire will be watching for any pass interferences, as you will also, but you alone must check the sideline to determine if possession was made in bounds.
4. The above procedures also apply on convert attempts.

Kick From Scrimmage (Punt)

1. Hold the line of scrimmage until you are certain that the ball will cross the line of scrimmage, in flight.
2. If the ball touches the ground behind the line of scrimmage, the play should be whistled dead. This applies even if the ball was blocked or deflected.
3. If the punt is good, hustle downfield. Get into a position that is parallel to the ball carrier and follow him upfield. Remember to stay outside the widest man. Do not get caught between two players of the receiving team.
4. On a short punt, you also have the responsibility for calling a “no yards” penalty.
5. Be prepared to indicate, by the appropriate signal, whether a pass is onside or offside.
6. In a situation where a return punt might take place, be sure to hold the goal line to determine if the ball becomes dead in the end zone.

Safety Touch

1. If there is a potential for a safety touch, the Referee will communicate with you as to whether you should hold the line of scrimmage and assist with the call.

General Comments

1. Do not idly watch the proceedings from your position on the sideline. Become involved in the preparations for the next play from scrimmage. Help out your fellow officials.
2. Do not pursue the ball carrier too closely. Avoid getting trapped or “caught up” in the traffic.
3. Make sure you SEE the touch before blowing your whistle. Avoid blowing the whistle just as a back-up.
4. Prevent errors whenever you can, and correct those that can be corrected.

Positioning Charts (2 Man Crew)

Kick-Off

Punt

Scrimmage Play #1

Scrimmage Play #2

Positioning Chart (3 Man Crew)

Kick-off

Punt

Scrimmage Play

Goal Line, Convert & Short Yardage