

# FOOTBALL OFFICIALS MANUAL

FOR A  
CREW OF



5



# 2025

*Texas Association of Sports Officials*

[www.taso.org](http://www.taso.org)



# **Football Officials Manual For A Crew of 5 Officials**

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**Texas Association of Sports Officials**



**Edited and published by Texas Association of Sports Officials  
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Revised May 2025

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## **PURPOSE OF MANUAL**

The manual of football officiating is designed to make available to each TASO official, detailed information regarding the officiating techniques which, through evaluation and studied development, have come to be recognized as accepted standards of officiating performance.

This manual is an authoritative guide to the best in football officiating that will assist all officials in maintaining their effectiveness and making ready use of their potentialities.

This manual is designed to provide the best possible officiating techniques for TASO officials working Texas High School Football. TASO officials are expected to use the mechanics specified in this manual and are not authorized to deviate in any manner.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of Approved 2025 Manual Changes.....	iv
Officiating Requisites .....	5
Section 1. General Principles.....	6
Section 2. Standard Uniform.....	9
Section 3. Officiating Procedures .....	12
Section 4. Pre-Game Duties on the Field.....	14
Section 5. The Coin Toss .....	16
Section 6. General Game Duties .....	18
Section 7. Timing.....	23
Section 8. Use of Bean Bag and Hat.....	27
Section 9. Game Ball Mechanics .....	28
Section 10. Basic Positions .....	33
Section 11. Free Kicks .....	35
Section 12. Plays From Scrimmage .....	41
Section 13. Running Plays .....	43
Section 14. Forward Pass Plays .....	45
Section 15. Goal Line Plays.....	58
Section 16. Scrimmage Kicks (Punt Plays) .....	60
Section 17. Try and Field Goal PLays .....	63
Section 18. Fumbles.....	65
Section 19. Timeouts .....	66
Section 20. Measurements .....	68
Section 21. Calling Fouls and Enforcement .....	69
Section 22. Close of a Period.....	71
Section 23. One-Minute Intermissions .....	72
Section 24. Intermission Between Halves .....	73
Section 25. Extra Periods.....	74
Section 26. Post-Game Duties .....	75
Section 27. Six-Player Football .....	77
Section 28. Six-Player Football Rules.....	86
Six-Player Football Field Dimensions .....	93
Section 29. TASO Officiating Philosophies .....	94
Section 30. Foul Codes .....	103
Section 31. Pregame Conference .....	104
Section 32. Approved Signals.....	110

## SUMMARY OF APPROVED 2025 MANUAL CHANGES

**Standard Uniform (2-1):** Added wrist bands, whistle, down indicator, game information card, chain clips, coin, timing device, Battlefields to Ballfields patch, and Texas Way pin to the standard uniform. The listing for Foul Marker was also changed to indicate officials should carry two markers. Removed requirement that Official to Official Communication Systems must be approved by TASO prior to use on the field.

**Pregame Coach Meetings (3-2):** Added guidelines and direction for pregame meetings with coaches.

**The Coin Toss (5-1):** A Mock Toss should follow all aspects of a live toss, with options and flipping of the coin. Duties for **H** and **L** have changed from previous years and **L** will begin opposite the press box.

**Communication Between Officials (6-1):** Guidelines and suggestions for more efficient use of Official-to-Official Communication Systems.

**Ball Positions (9-4):** Description of numbered ball positions used for crew Communication.

**Basic Positions (10):** The Head Line Judge and Line Judge will now change sidelines after the halftime intermission. Duties assigned to each sideline will remain with the official working on that sideline.

**Swinging Gate formations (17-2):** Guidance on positions for Swinging Gate formations during try and field goal downs. Also, it adds position-specific guidance for Line Judge and Umpire.

**Two-minute timeout (19-4):** Procedures for the crew during the two-minute timeout in varsity games.

**Good Sportsmanship Reporting (26-4):** Instructions for completing reports for good sportsmanship.

**Foul Codes (Section 30):** A listing of foul codes to assist with foul reports and general reference and communication among officials.

## OFFICIATING REQUISITES

**COURAGE, A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE RULES AND MECHANICS, HUSTLE, AND TACT** are indispensable to a good official, but none more important than **GOOD JUDGMENT!**

**RULES AND MECHANICS:** An overall familiarity with the rules and full understanding of mechanics are necessary for the proper conduct of a game. The intent of each rule must be kept in mind. Each official should seek the happy medium between strict adherence and undue laxity. Situations arise in a game which cannot be foreseen, and which cannot be covered in a rule book or manual. Football “sense” must supersede the most technical application of the rules.

**COURAGE:** A smooth-running game suddenly can get out of hand because of an overly officious attitude toward players and coaches, or an undue laxity of enforcement. Conversations with a coach or a player should always be courteous without sacrificing dignity. If something is said or done which warrants a penalty, penalization should be done unobtrusively and without dramatization. A game is kept under control by proper administration of the rules, which can be best accomplished if no impression of militant supervision is created.

**HUSTLE, BUT DON'T HURRY:** Hurry should not be mistaken for hustle. There are times it is proper to speed the tempo of the game to get the ball back in play after an incomplete pass, to take a position on a foul situation, to prepare for a measurement, etc. Never hurry an injured man off the field. Never rush to get another ball before the play is over. Don't move the ball to the inbounds line without first checking for the need for a measurement. Don't pressure a captain's decision on a difficult option. Precision and care should be exercised in all situations. Hustle is essential. HURRY is a hazard.

**TACT, BUT NOT SUBMISSION:** Tact is necessary but should never be a justification for retreating from a position properly taken or a decision correctly rendered.

**POISE, BUT NOT INDIFFERENCE:** Staying loose is an asset in officiating, as in any other phase of a sport where fast reflexes are required. A relaxed appearance is a great help if it gives the impression of confidence. Care, however, should be taken to avoid the appearance of indifference. The poised official can remain inconspicuous while moving to the right place at the right time.

## **SECTION 1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

### **ARTICLE 1. KNOWLEDGE OF THE RULES:**

Rule mastery will be perfected over time and must be supplemented by ability to interpret rules and editorial changes correctly. These abilities are acquired through devotion of time and study.

### **ARTICLE 2. PHYSICAL CONDITION:**

Being a football official is difficult and exhausting and requires 100 percent efficiency of mind and body. An annual physical examination should be a personal requisite to ensure your health, thus allowing you to assess your ability to officiate.

### **ARTICLE 3. MENTAL REACTIONS:**

Decisions must be instantaneous, and rulings announced without delay. To ensure improved instinctive reaction to play situations, continue to review the different combinations of circumstances that may occur.

### **ARTICLE 4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Each official must have a thorough knowledge of the duties of their own position and must also be fully informed concerning the duties of each of the other officials. Each member of the crew should be prepared to assume any of the other positions whenever circumstances require rearrangement of assignments.

### **AN OFFICIAL MUST:**

- Know the down and yardage prior to each snap.
- Be ready to assist any official that is temporarily out of position.
- Observe erroneous procedure or rulings of other officials and attempt prevention and correction whenever possible. Under no circumstances should an argument develop on the field between officials.
- Know the prescribed signals and when and how they should be used.
- Secure a new ball if appropriate, after all action has ceased and be able to handle and pass the ball properly.
- Be alert to happenings away from the ball when play has left your immediate area.
- Call time-out for any player who is obviously injured or disabled. Never hurry the treatment of an injured player. Recognition of injured players is the concern of all game officials. Clock can be started if time-out is not necessary.

### **ARTICLE 5. SIGNALS:**

All signals should be given promptly, distinctly and conspicuously as they are the non-verbal communications tools we use to inform.

### **ARTICLE 6. ENFORCEMENT:**

All rules should be strictly and fairly enforced. There shall be no deviation from the NCAA Football Rules with UIL exceptions.

### **ARTICLE 7. HUSTLE:**

Keeps the game moving smoothly from start to finish. Do not permit haste to interfere with



duties or correct determinations.

#### **ARTICLE 8. BOXING IN:**

Smart officiating requires keeping the players “boxed in” and avoidance of officials being “boxed in.” “Outside looking in” is essential for sideline and end line coverage. The goal is to have each play viewed from more than one direction.

#### **ARTICLE 9. OFF BALL OFFICIATING:**

Officials should not be ball watchers. The official nearest the action should take the primary responsibility for the ball but should also be alert to action around the ball. The official that is the farthest distance away should take the widest, “big picture” view of the action, looking for unsportsmanlike acts and threats to player safety. The officials in between should work in “rings.” The closer you are to the ball, the smaller your “ring” is.

#### **ARTICLE 10. COOPERATION:**

Teamwork is essential among officials. If a ruling is puzzling, relay explanation to press box. Never issue direct or indirect newspaper interviews, statements or stories concerning games in which you are an official. Continuous verbal and non-verbal communication between all officials during the game is essential for effective game administration.

#### **ARTICLE 11. DON'T DISCUSS:**

Do not discuss with a coach the play or players of opponents in a game which you will officiate or are officiating. Coaches and other school representatives are expected to submit reports on the work of officials to the governing authority and not to make evaluations through conversation with other officials or through public statements.

#### **ARTICLE 12. OFFICIALS' “ABCs”**

- A - Ability to handle players in a firm, fair, and friendly fashion.
- B - Knowledge, understanding, and correct application of the rules.
- C - Knowledge of an adherence to approved mechanics.

#### **ARTICLE 13. WHEN IN QUESTION RULES:**

- Block below the waist (2-3-2-a).
- Block in the back is below the waist (2-3-4-a).
- Catch or recovery not completed (2-4-3-h).
- Ball not touched on kick or forward pass (2-11-4-d).
- Ball is accidentally kicked (touched) (2-16-1-d).
- Forward rather than backward pass if thrown from in or behind the neutral zone (2-19-2-a).
- Forward pass and not fumble (2-19-2-c).
- It is a catchable forward pass (2-19-4 and 7-3-8-c).
- Stop clock for injured player (3-3-6-a-1).
- The ball is dead (4-1-3-a).
- Kick catch interference (6-4-1-b and e).
- Touchback rather than safety (8-5-1-a).
- It is targeting with the crown of the helmet (9-1-3).
- Is initiating contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless player (9-1-4).

Twisting, turning, pulling facemask or helmet opening (9-1-8-b)  
Roughing the kicker rather than running into (9-1-16-a-8).

#### **ARTICLE 14. ALTERNATE OFFICIAL-**

For some games, especially such as Quarter Finals, Semi-Finals, and State Finals, an Alternate Official may be assigned in case another official is injured during a game. Alternate Officials will be considered a part of the crew, should travel and arrive at the game site with the crew, and participate in pregame activities with the crew. The Alternate Official will dress in the same uniform as the game crew and will always wear a black shirt or jacket when on the field. During scrimmage downs, the Alternate official will be positioned on the sideline opposite the press box behind the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge. For free kick downs, the Alternate official will be positioned on Team B's restraining line. The Alternate Official will assume the duties of H, L, F & S, moving up and down the field as play dictates, paying close attention to each play in preparation for the possibility of entering the game. The Alternate Official will only enter the game in situations where another official is injured and cannot continue their duties. The Alternate Official's duties will include assisting the crew in matters such as pass thrown beyond/behind the LOS, pass caught/touched beyond/behind the LOS, ineligible players downfield, game clock, timeouts, status of the ball, down and distance and should help with the proper penalty enforcement.

## SECTION 2. STANDARD UNIFORM

### ARTICLE 1. TRADITIONAL UNIFORM:

It is essential that all TASO football officials dress in a consistent manner. All members of the crew must be similarly dressed. For all varsity games the uniform worn by all officials shall include the following:

**SHIRT:** Standard black and white knit, long tail, 2¼ inch vertically striped officials' long and short sleeve shirts with pocket on the left breast (without emblem or numbers, other than small manufacturer's logo) and complete with knit black "Byron" collar and black cuffs. All shirts shall include a 2" x 3⅜" American Flag on the left sleeve and a 2" x 3⅜" Texas Flag on the right sleeve. A standard TASO logo as prescribed by the TASO Football Board of Directors shall be worn above the left breast pocket. The all-weather black and white, 2¼ inch vertically striped officials' long sleeve shirt with straight collar, pocket on the left breast, and prescribed flags and TASO logo is also approved. All shirts, flags, and the TASO logo shall be manufactured using the full sublimation printing process. Mesh shirts may be worn if entire crew is so garbed.

**PANTS:** The Pants shall be full length black pants. The pants must include a one and one-quarter inch white strip on the seam of the leg, must not be cuffed, and must continue to the shoe without a break.

**SOCKS:** When wearing approved pants, officials will wear black socks.

**SHOES AND BELT:** Predominantly black shoes and laces with appropriate soles or cleats. A black belt, a minimum of one and one-quarter inches and a maximum of two inches in width shall be worn.

### APPROVED CAPS/HATS

**CAP:** Brooklyn style solid black cap with traditional narrow white piping (without emblem or numbers, other than small manufacturer's logo) shall be worn by all but the Referee, who shall wear a Brooklyn style solid all-white cap (without emblem or numbers, other than small manufacturer's logo). The cap shall be oriented with the bill facing forward and squarely covering the forehead of the official. For state championship games only, the logo of a sanctioning body may appear on the front two panels.

**BUCKET HAT** A solid black bucket hat with white TASO logo on the front is allowed in place of the approved Brooklyn style cap for all scrimmages (including varsity scrimmages) and sub-varsity games. The decision to wear the approved bucket hat is an individual's choice. All officials in the scrimmage or game crew are NOT required to wear the same type of hat; others may also wear the approved Brooklyn style cap.

**UNDERSHIRTS:** All undershirts which show should be black. Long sleeved undershirts shall only be worn with long sleeve standard official's shirt.

**WRIST BANDS:** Wrist bands, if worn, shall be either black or white. If members of the crew choose to wear them, all members must wear the same color.

**GLOVES:** Gloves when worn shall be black.

**JACKETS:** Jackets are not considered part of the official uniform (*Exception:* When worn by an alternate official before entering the game).

**NUMBERS, LETTERS, AND EMBLEMS:** The crew may opt to wear letters or plackets for Varsity games only. The plackets must be worn by the entire crew and must be securely affixed to the back of the shirt, centered 3" below the collar. The letters shall align with the TASO mechanics manual, i.e., **R, U, H, L, B, S, and F.**

Individuals may opt to wear the RR patch, to commemorate Rogers Redding, on the back right panel of the officiating hat. The patch shall be located ¼ of an inch to the right of the back hat seam and ¼ of an inch above the bottom seam on the hat. The patches have an adhesive and should stay affixed to the hat and may also be sewn or tacked to the hat with black thread.

Members that have received the Battlefields to Ballfields scholarship may wear the 2" x ½" *US Veteran* patch they received with their scholarship to the back left panel of the officiating hat. The patch shall be located ¼ of an inch to the left of the back hat seam and ¼ of an inch above the bottom seam on the hat.

All other numbers, letters, and emblems visible on uniform or equipment are prohibited, except as may be specifically directed by the TASO Football Board of Directors or the TASO Executive Director. Requests for memorial or other special insignia or emblems must be submitted to the Executive Director for approval.

**HELMETS:** A protective helmet may be worn by the Umpire. When worn, helmets will be black, without a bill and must be fitted and secured with a black chin strap which must be secured when the ball is in play.

**FOUL MARKERS:** All officials shall be equipped with **two** light gold foul markers, 15" X 15" with a center weight and worn INCONSPICUOUSLY. It is suggested that one be worn in front tucked inside the pants, and the second carried completely inside a pocket.

**BEAN BAGS:** All officials will be equipped with one or more white or black bean bags for marking spots. Bags shall be filled with pebbles, sand or beans. The entire crew must use the same color of bean bag.

**WHISTLE:** The whistle shall be plastic. If a whistle with a lanyard is used, both shall be black. It is recommended that officials carry two whistles with the spare carried in a pants pocket.

**DOWN INDICATOR:** A black or white elastic device, or rubber band, shall be used to keep track of downs. It is highly recommended that the Umpire and Referee wear a second indicator noting the ball position for each down.

**GAME INFORMATION CARD:** The Game Information Card (or paper, pad, etc.) along with a writing implement shall be used to record important game information such as captains, results

of the toss, details for the change of periods, timeouts, scores and fouls.

**CHAIN CLIPS:** The Head Line Judge shall have two chain clips available for use on the chain.

**COIN:** The Referee should have a coin to be used for the toss. It is recommended that other members of the crew also carry a coin.

**TIMING DEVICE:** All officials with timing responsibilities (game clock and play clock) shall have a watch or other timing device. If worn and visible the timing device shall be black.

**TEXAS WAY PIN:** Members that have completed certification and have received the Texas Way pin may wear it during all TASO games. When worn, the pin shall be affixed to the front-right corner of the lapel collar.

**MICROPHONES:** Microphones worn by officials other than the **R** are prohibited. **ALL** members of the crew may wear Official to Official (O2O) communication devices.

**OFFICIAL TO OFFICIAL (O2O) COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS:** Protected wireless communication systems open only to the field crew and observers are allowed for use on the field. A list of previously approved systems is available in the Member's Portal at [taso.org](http://taso.org). All crew systems should meet the following standards. Radios must provide a system of "privacy codes," which allow for private communication and conversation within the system while also reducing interference. Push to talk operation allows more focus by officials without the distraction of open microphones. Systems should be paired with a headset and microphone and be water resistant. Black or black & white are the only acceptable colors.

## **ARTICLE 2. TASO-FOOTBALL APPROVAL:**

All uniforms meeting the above specifications are approved by the TASO-Football Division board of directors.

## **ARTICLE 3. UNIFORM CHECK:**

Check your uniform and equipment before leaving home and again check each other's uniform prior to the game. Test whistle, watch (carry spares), have game data cards, foul marker, bean bag(s), a down indicating device and pencils. Have shoes polished and entire uniform neat and clean.

## **ARTICLE 4. SUMMER UNIFORM:**

A "summer uniform" is a traditional uniform of black shorts with a 1 ¼ inch white stripe down the sides. Black socks will be worn with black shorts. A "summer uniform" is approved to wear in scrimmages and sub-varsity games, in accordance with Chapter policy, but all in the crew must wear the same uniform (**Exception:** An individual may choose to wear the approved bucket hat while others in the crew wear the approved Brooklyn style cap).

## SECTION 3. OFFICIATING PROCEDURES

### ARTICLE 1. BEFORE ENTERING THE FIELD

**All:** Attendance at the pregame conference at least one and a half (1.5) hours before the scheduled game time is mandatory for varsity games. Only an emergency and notice to the Referee may excuse an absence. Leave the dressing room together at least 20 minutes prior to kickoff.

**Head Line Judge:** In the absence of the **R**, you are responsible for ensuring that a pregame conference is conducted. A pregame conference guide is provided in this manual as a tool to help prepare for and deliver a pregame conference.

**Umpire:** If not provided, arrange dependable transportation to and from the stadium.

**Back Judge:** Make certain you have the correct time. Other officials will check their watches with yours. Playing time shall be kept with a game clock which may be either a stopwatch, operated by the **B** or a field clock, operated under the direction of the **B**. If they have been delivered to the locker room, take over game balls from **R**, and take them to the field just before game time. Have a stopwatch or watches ready if necessary. Ensure that you have an accurate device for timing the 25/40-second count. Meet with both clock operators 60 minutes before kickoff, (See Section 7) and review game timing procedures for both play clock and game clock.

**Referee:** Conduct a thorough meeting outlining individual and crew duties (A pregame conference guide is included at the end of this manual as a tool to help prepare for and deliver a pregame conference). The purpose of a pregame conference is to prepare the crew mentally. It is important to solidify the thinking of officials regarding procedures, rules interpretations, and enforcement. Referees will vary their approach to a pregame conference, but the value of organizing and unifying the techniques to be employed in a game cannot be overemphasized. No unauthorized visitors shall be allowed in the area during this important session.

### ARTICLE 2. PREGAME COACH MEETINGS

**Referee/Umpire:** The pregame meeting with coaches begins with the HOME coach approximately 1:15 hours before kickoff. After the HOME coach visit, seek out the VISITOR coach. The meeting with each coach should not last more than five minutes. Vital information can be obtained without spending more time with one coach over the other. Remember that people are watching, so keep it professional. An introduction should include a handshake, not a hug. Be dressed in your football uniform when conducting these meetings, unless unexpected circumstances preclude you from doing so. The Referee and Umpire shall attend both meetings. The Referee shall never conduct this meeting alone. If the Umpire is not available, take another member of the crew.

### MEETING TOPICS

- Introductions and present coach game card if you have one.
- Coach Coin Toss or Player Coin Toss?
- Ask for the first name of QB and Defensive leader or captain.
- Ball Assistants on one side or both?

- Are all players equipped according to rule? The coach should then sign the coach's card.
- If District Game, does their district use Positive Points?
- Who is the "get back coach" responsible for sideline control?
- Any special circumstances leading up to kick off or during halftime (length)?
- Any unusual play situations or formations?
- If the game is on live TV, advise them on length and the process of the timeouts.
- Review significant rule changes in the first couple of weeks of the season.
- Ask or remind them that you would like for them to share HUDL film with chapter afterwards.

Remember, the purpose of this meeting is simply to obtain pertinent information before kickoff. If they have a specific rules question, answer it. Do not ask them about specific plays they might run or let them try to tell you what the other team does. Tell them your crew will officiate what they see and leave it at that. Some coaches will try to force the conversation to get you to enter a dialogue. Do not let that happen. This is your meeting to get the information you need.



## SECTION 4. PRE-GAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD

*Pre-game activities on the field performed by officials are very important and necessary so all officials, chain crews, teams, and clock operators are ready for the start of the game and compliant with all the rules. Officials should utilize the pre-game time effectively to accomplish all tasks and not use it for activities unrelated to pre-game activities.*

### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**All:** Anytime players of both teams are on the field, up to 60 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, at least two officials shall be present on the field. Arrive on the field as a unit, no later than 15 minutes before scheduled game time; sooner if duties require. Note location of press box, team areas, and benches. Check identities of team trainers and game administrator(s). After completing pregame duties, retire to sidelines to await coin toss responsibilities. **R, H, and B** opposite the press box; **U** and **L** to press box side.

**Referee/Line Judge:** Inspect the entire field. Observe any unusual markings or serious irregularities and advise other officials. Take measures to remedy or remove any hazards from within or near the boundary lines, requesting assistance from management and from other officials as necessary.

**Umpire:** Spot check player equipment, pads, braces, pants, shirts, bandages, tapes, etc. and have the team's trainer(s) make any needed corrections.

**Referee/Umpire:** Arrange with captain of the team whose bench is on your sideline to meet you in the room or at the 50-yard line, on their sideline, 4 minutes before game time.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Organize your assistants, locate yardage chain and down marker, and have assistants ready with all equipment on the sideline opposite the press box. Check the chain for kinks, knots, and weak spots. Check the chain against 10-yard measure on the field. Check the chain for tape marker at the mid-point. Instruct your assistants to: Set down box, stakes and clip where indicated by you. Position ground markers adjacent to sideline. Box Attendant places the down box on sideline where indicated. Chains are then set on the sideline and clip attached on side of yard line closest to rear chain stake. When chains are set, box attendant retreats six feet and establishes spot where chains are to be reset after clip has been attached. On touchback situations set front stake on the 30-yard line (35-yard line after a free kick) and stretch chain back toward the 20-yard line (25-yard line after a free kick). Emphasize that your assistants should move only at your direction and move quickly when such a move is indicated.

If used, instruct auxiliary box operator concerning duties and use of line-to-gain indicator. Ensure that the auxiliary box is worked approximately six feet off the sideline. The Auxiliary box operator is not to move until the ball is ready for play on the succeeding down

**The following is excerpted from the UIL Manual/Football Plan:**

**Chain Crew:** With the addition of the 40/25 second clock to UIL games, it will be extremely important to get the chains set and ready for the next play. The chain crew, but most importantly,



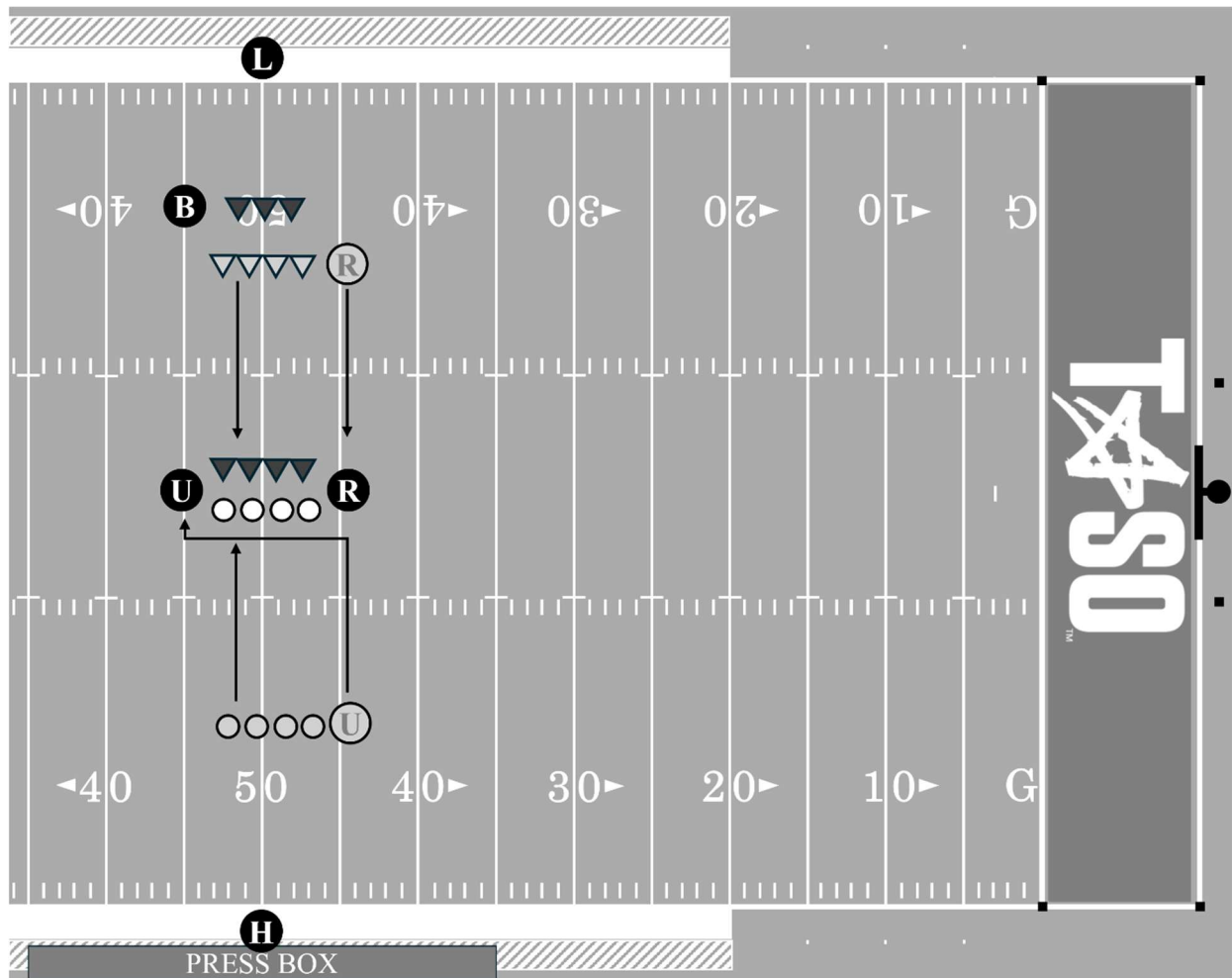
the down box/marker must hustle (and sometimes run!) to the succeeding spot. If the school is able, it would also be recommended that there be an ‘alternate’ down box on the opposite side of the field that can hold the previous spot in case it is necessary to return to that spot for some reason. In that scenario, the ‘alternate’ down box would remain at the previous line of scrimmage until the ball was marked ‘ready for play’ at the succeeding spot and then move to that spot for the ensuing snap (**Note:** Be prepared to give complete and thorough instructions to assistants if a different line to gain device is to be used in the game). See that the chain is taut and not kinked. Make no remarks to players, nor express opinions concerning any ruling. Never move the down box, chains or change the number of the down unless so directed by the **H** or **L**. Remove themselves and all equipment outside the limit line for free kicks. Chains are laid down and only the down box is used when a first down is declared inside the 10-yard line. If threatened by a player(s) coming to the sideline, the crew should drop the stakes and retreat for their own safety and well-being.

**Back Judge:** Be sure the game balls are available and instruct ball retrievers on game duties. **H** and **L** will participate in instructing ball retrievers on their side. Ball attendants shall not enter the field unless requested by the officials.

**Referee/Umpire:** Bring the captain(s) to the 50-yard line on the sideline of their team area four minutes before game time.

**Line Judge/Back Judge:** Responsible for having the team on your side of the field prior to the toss.

## SECTION 5. THE COIN TOSS



### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**Referee/Umpire:** Escort captains from your sideline to the center of the field 3 minutes prior to game time. If the toss was conducted earlier with coaches and this will be a Mock Toss, all aspects of the toss as described in this section should be carried out as if this toss was to determine choices.

**Head Line Judge/Back Judge:** After captain(s) are escorted to the center of the field, take a position at the 9-yard marks. DO NOT ALLOW TEAM MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE TOSS INSIDE THE 9-YARD MARKS ON YOUR SIDE. If team members do not approach the 9-yard marks, return to the team area. Stay between the team and the 9-yard marks. Have the game ball from the team on your side until the winner of the toss is determined.

**Line Judge:** Remain on the sideline.

**Umpire:** Introduce your captain(s) to **R** and remain with the **R** to witness toss and verify choices.

**Referee:** Introduce yourself to the captains on your sideline. When captains reach the middle of the field, introduce captains to each other. Advise captains of any irregularities or special ground rules. Have captains face each other with their backs to the sidelines. Ask visiting captain to call the toss. Ask the home captain to repeat what the visiting captain called. If either captain, **R** or **U** disagrees, seek clarification BEFORE making the toss. Allow the coin to hit the ground. If warranted by field conditions, **R** may catch the toss. Indicate the winning captain by placing a hand on their shoulder. Explain and obtain their option. Explain options to the losing captain and obtain their choice. Should a captain who wins the toss defer the choice until the second half, **R** indicates the winner of the toss by placing a hand on that captain's shoulder, step clear of the captains, turn to the press box and signal "choice declined" [S 10]. Subsequently request first choice from the opposing captain and then present remaining options to the other captain.

Face the press box and place captains in position facing each other with backs to the goal which they will defend. Signal choice of choosing captain by swinging leg simulating a kick or making a catching motion while facing the same direction as the winning captain. If the choosing captain elects to defend a goal, point with both arms extended toward the goal line and then gives an appropriate signal for the choice of the other captain.

## **ARTICLE 2. TOSS COMPLETED**

**All:** When the toss is completed, other officials will join the **R** and **U** at mid-field and make a written record of the toss results. When moving to your kickoff position, go directly to your sideline and move teams and coaches back to clear the sideline before going to your kickoff position. **B** will move to their position through the center of the field. Start the game at scheduled time.

## SECTION 6. GENERAL GAME DUTIES

### ARTICLE 1. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN OFFICIALS

Communication between officials before and during the game takes many different forms, such as formal signals (touchdown), non-verbal (eye-to-eye with a head shake) and verbal (face to face or over wireless device). Regardless of its form, communication is essential for smooth flow and good game management.

Formal approved signals are an efficient means of delivering critical information to the crew. Signals for confirming the next down after each dead ball, substitutions, player counts, dead ball, in bounds (rolling clock), out of bounds/line to gain achieved (timeout), incomplete, 4<sup>th</sup> down rules reminder (rolling fists) and Team A not in formal scrimmage kick formation. Officials may also extend an arm toward the Team A goal line if the #1 receiver on their side is in the backfield or cross forearms if the line to gain is more than 10- yards. If moving, it is recommended that the official come to a stop before delivering a crisp, clean signal.

While formal signals are a form of non-verbal communication, sometimes gaining eye contact with a fellow official or a head nod confirming you have a catch, or a touchdown is invaluable when ruling on a close play.

Electronic “Official to Official” (O2O) communication has become a tremendous asset to crews on the field, but it can never replace crisp signals, good mechanics, and a face-to-face conversation when needed. And regardless of the amount of encryption or the number of privacy codes, the crew should always assume someone else, including coaches and fans, are listening. Each crew member’s radio should be in “press-to-talk” mode, and it is recommended to press the button, pause, and then speak. Better reception is usually gained when a speaker uses a slow, deliberate pace, doesn’t scream or yell, and doesn’t speak over others (especially the Referee during penalty announcements).

The O2O can be very efficient in communicating foul information to the Referee, especially pre-snap fouls such as FST or DOF. After stopping the play and dropping their flag, the calling official should deliver the foul signal to the **R** and then relay the offending player’s number over O2O. If there are multiple flags and/or fouls, calling officials should always come together to discuss and these are not situations for the O2O.

Examples of suggested uses:

- Team A substitution... “Subs”
- If Team B then substitutes... “Match”
- **H** or **L** when pass is touched near the neutral zone... “touched behind” or “touched beyond”
- **R** or **U** when a back is stationary in the tackle box... “number 24 is in”
- **H** when line to gain is less than 5 yards... “five will get you one”
- Sideline official before try or after touchback... “position 4” (or position 1, 2, 3 or 5)
- Clock milestones (usually **L**, **B**, or **S**) ... “under two minutes” or “under one minute”
- Official in area of potential ING pass... “number 3 in the area,” “pass crossed neutral zone”
- “Fourth down fumble rule.”
- Sideline officials for penalty enforcement... “Coach accepts” or “Coach declines”

- **R** when teams are slow to return to the field... “Bring them out.”
- “Home has 2 timeouts remaining and visitor has 1.”
- After injury or helmet off... “number 73 is out for one down.”
- When sideline official rules line to gain is close but achieved... “first down”
- Ruling official after play near the sideline... “clock is hot” or “clock on the snap”

The O2O system is an efficient tool to broadcast important game information to the entire crew. Use it for situations like clock errors, an incorrect down or possible improper penalty enforcement. It is also valuable to help answer questions from a coach. Any information that needs to be communicated to a coach on the opposite sideline, such as “grab and restrict on the hold” or “arm bar” for DPI, can be done with the O2O. An unusual situation that should be explained to the coach shall always be done face-to-face and never over the O2O.

When used properly, the O2O system is a valuable tool for officials to quickly broadcast important information to their crew. Care should be taken to avoid overuse.

## **ARTICLE 2. SUBSTITUTIONS AND COUNTING PLAYERS**

**All:** All officials are responsible for the legality of substitutions. **R** and **U** are responsible for the correct number of Team A players. **B** is responsible for the correct number of Team B players. **H** and **L** are responsible for the correct number of players for the team on their sideline.

On free kicks, **U** and **B** count the players on the kicking team. **R**, **L** and **H** count the players on the receiving team. Use the fist signal [SO2] when the team you are counting has 11 players on the field. The open palm signal will be used when the team you are counting has fewer than 11 players on the field.

**Substitutions:** In situations where Team A is either in a no huddle formation or has already broken the huddle and substitute(s) enter the field, **B** and either **H** or **L** (the officials working Team A’s sideline) should signal, by arms held with closed fists extended horizontal to the ground [SO12], that Team A is substituting and Team B is allowed the opportunity to do so as well. If it is apparent that Team B will respond with substitutes **R** will then signal in the same manner, indicating to the **U** that action is required. **U** should move to a position over the ball when seeing either this situation or signal. Upon completion of the substitution process by both teams, **R** will release **U** by dropping arms and pointing at **U**.

## **ARTICLE 3. WRITTEN RECORDS AND OTHER GENERAL GAME DUTIES**

**All:** Make a written record of charged time-outs, fouls you call and all UNS fouls. The position of the ball at end of first and third periods, including down and distance, is the responsibility of the **R**, **H**, and **U**. **B** is responsible for recording elapsed time and making certain the status of the clock is correct.

Convey any message you have for other officials promptly. Avoid any position which suggests a huddle of officials, unless necessary. Be alert for players being out of bounds before a snap or free kick. Watch for fouls, being certain to know the spot where run or scrimmage kick ended, Spot of foul, position or number of offending players, whether the ball was loose, in possession or dead when the foul occurred. Ensure that the clock is stopped.

Be ready for any type of play or unusual development. Always be prepared to rule on muffs, fumbles backward and illegal forward passes and know which team possessed a fumble or backward pass before it went out of bounds between goal lines. On recovered fumbles, the nearest official must rule on possession by prompt signal. If possible, point to recovering player to assist press box. Be alert to rule on dead ball behind a goal line. Indicate the ruling with a prompt signal.

Signal time-out [S3] when the rules provide for stopping the clock or when time-out is charged to a team or to the **R**. Repeat the time-out signal of other officials. Covering officials will use the dead ball signal [S7] with their downfield arm when the play ends and there is no other reason to stop the clock. A “winding” signal [S2] may be used when the ball becomes dead close to the sideline, and the covering official rules that the ball remained inbounds and there is no other reason to stop the clock.

Check for false starts and feints. Leave no doubt in the minds of players or other officials as to any ruling you make. Be especially alert for acts of misconduct (Rule 9). Before the ball is put in play, adjust your position as necessary to ensure you can clearly see your key and area of responsibility. There can be no excuse for failing to be in a good position before the ball is put into play.

**Calling Official:** Indicate by a touchdown signal [S5] (without reference to any official) when the ball is legally in possession of a player on or behind their opponent’s goal line.

#### ARTICLE 4. PRE-SNAP DUTIES

**All:** Before every down each official should work through their pre-snap duties. These duties include knowing the down and distance on each down.

**Referee:** Count Team A, signaling **U** with 11 players or less. Ensure Team B has the opportunity to adjust to a substitution by Team A. Identify the tackle as your initial key for blocking. Identify the tackle box and backs or receivers that are outside, thus restricted from blocking below the waist. Identify any numbering issues in the backfield, such as player with a 50-79 number that is not eligible for a forward pass. Establish a position 12 to 14 yards deep and 12 to 14 yards wide of the original position of the ball.

**Umpire:** Cover the ball to prevent a snap prior to the ball being ready for play. Ensure Team B has the opportunity to adjust to a substitution by Team A. Count Team A, signaling **R** with 11 or less. Ensure five linemen numbered 50-79 are present and, on the LOS, (**Exception:** Scrimmage Kick Formation). Identify formation and strengths, lining up in a position to see the snap. Take a position 5 to 10 yards from the ball, clear of Team B players and in a position to see the ball at the snap.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Ensure the correct down is on the down box. Count the team on your sideline (offense or defense). If team on your sideline is on defense, signal **B** using the approved signal for the number of players on the field. Identify the eligible receivers and keys on your side of the football by number. Prepare to rule formations, false starts, encroachment and

offside. Identify if you have an unbalanced (more or less than three) line and signal the opposite official. Rule on the eligibility of the linemen on your side of the football. Assist receivers take the proper position with an extended foot to indicate the LOS. Take a position on the line of scrimmage, out of bounds, off the sideline.

**Back Judge:** Know clock status and ensure the play clock is started correctly. Count Team B and signal the **H** or **L** as appropriate. Identify the receivers and strength of the formation based on your keys. Take a position approximately 20-25 yards from the line of scrimmage. Before the ball is put in play, adjust your position as necessary to ensure you can clearly see your key and area of responsibility. There can be no excuse for failing to be in a good position before the ball is put into play.

## ARTICLE 5. AFTER EACH SCRIMMAGE DOWN

**Referee:** After each scrimmage down, **R** should go quickly to the appropriate position and observe the offensive huddle, then check the down and distance with the **L** and announce and indicate the new down. If the play clock is to be started on the **R**'s signal, **R** should then declare the ball ready for play by sounding the whistle and giving the ready for play signal [S1] (or wind the clock). **R** should only go to the line of scrimmage for non-routine events, close measurement, etc. Under unusual circumstances this procedure may vary and require discretionary action by **R**. If by rule, the clock should be started on the ready for play after Team A is awarded a first down, then declare the ball ready for play by starting the clock [S2] with a soft whistle when the **U** has placed the ball at the succeeding spot.

Upon assuming position for the next down, re-check the number of downs with other officials, showing numbers of fingers with a closed fist to indicate fourth down. Assume the position where you can see the ball and the offensive tackle on your side of the ball at the snap. Check the legality of backfield formation and one second stop following shift or huddle. Know which backs are eligible to touch a forward pass. On spread formations, **R** is responsible for the backfield group directly behind the ball as to illegal motion and eligibility. Check blocking behind the line after the snap. Be alert for pass thrown toward you. Do not pursue the ball too closely. You are responsible for the ball and runner behind the line of scrimmage. After crossing the neutral zone, the ball carrier will be the responsibility of the sideline officials and subsequently the downfield officials. Be alert to play behind the ball. Unless you are in position to determine that the ball is legally in possession on or behind the opponent's goal line, check for fouls by other officials, signal time-out and proceed as usual. Do not overlap coverage with **H** or **L** when the ball becomes dead beyond the neutral zone. Be responsible for the official score. With **B**, check time consumed in snapping and free kicking the ball, and call play clock infraction. **B** takes regular scrimmage plays, FGs and tries; **R** has free kick.

**Umpire:** When the offensive team is attempting to run a hurry-up play, after the ball is spotted, **U** will inform both teams simultaneously that the ball may not be snapped until the whistle is sounded OR the **U** advises the offense that play can begin. **U** will stand over the ball until **R** has backed away from the neutral zone and then indicates for the **U** to back out of the way. As soon as **U** is clear of the neutral zone and in position to officiate, **R** will declare the ball ready for play (or wind the clock) and simultaneously sound the whistle OR the **U** will advise the offense play can begin.



If **R** omits ready signal when needed to make the ball ready for play, **U** should remind him immediately. Observe ineligibles on the scrimmage line. Determine in pregame conference sharing this responsibility with **H** and **L**. Be primarily responsible for detecting any illegal advance on forward passes. Assume primary responsibility for determining the legality of defensive signals. Take your initial position to observe the ball at snap. Be alert to the legality of player equipment. Take primary responsibility for lateral placement of the ball at the previous spot after an incomplete pass, penalty, etc. Determine legality of ball before it is put in play for each down.

**Head Line Judge:** Check down marker for correct number and indicate placement to assistant. Be sure there are no fouls or other reasons for holding the previous position before signaling the assistant. Signal the number of each down by holding one arm aloft with the correct number indicated by extended fingers. Closed fist indicates fourth down. Anticipate any call for a measurement, and be on the sideline ready to bring the chain when signaled by **R**. Each time a new line-to-gain is established, personally mark the spot on the sideline where the down box is to be set, ensuring that it is set correctly and then moved off sideline. When a first down is awarded inside the B-10, only the down box will be used. The chain crew will ensure the down indicator is returned to the proper spot if forced to move.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Be alert to all possible pass receivers. Know and observe the eligible receivers on your side of the field. Be responsible for players who spread to your side of the field. Be certain that all players are boxed in at the snap and that all offensive players have complied with the 9-yard mark restrictions. Stay wide as you mark progress with downfield foot (unobtrusively, not making a production out of it). Do not jump over players. If necessary, come into the field as far as you can. Hold the spot with foot until you are sure **U**, or another official has the spot. Be aware of the importance of assisting **R** in marking forward progress behind the neutral zone, particularly when the goal line is involved. Check for encroachment, offside, and other scrimmage infractions. Assist **U** on the legality of numbers for interior offensive linemen on split or wide formations. Check for backs or linemen illegally in motion. Check backs on your side of the ball for illegal motion and flankers on your side for one second stop after breaking the huddle or ending motion. Be certain that all Team A players observe the one-second shift requirement.

**Back Judge:** Be alert for all pass receivers. Give attention to play on tight end or ends moving off the line of scrimmage and to continuing action downfield as well as play near the sidelines and out of bounds. Be aware of offensive players having complied with the 9-yard mark restrictions.

**Referee/Umpire:** Determine the legality of each ball before it is put in play for each down.

**All:** Before free kick or snap which starts any period, complete all prescribed duties.



## SECTION 7. TIMING

### ARTICLE 1. GAME TIMING

**Back Judge:** All game timing is under the direction of **B** who is primarily responsible for recording elapsed time and making certain the status of the game clock is correct. Make certain you have the correct time. Other officials will check their watches with yours. Confirm starting time with home management and arrange for punctual arrival of officials on field. Have a stopwatch (or watches) ready, if necessary. When a clock operator is assigned and a field clock is official, be certain that clock equipment is in good condition. Arrange for relaying information and for signaling the operator, especially regarding 10-second runoffs. Playing time shall be kept with a game clock which may be either a stopwatch operated by **B**, or a field clock operated under the direction of **B**. The time for the intermission between halves is the responsibility of the **B**. All time intervals, team time-outs and between periods are the responsibility of **B**.

**Referee/Line Judge:** The game and 25 second clock operators will report to **R** and **B** prior to the game. They will be instructed: A) Report to the official's dressing room at the stadium 60 minutes before game time to synchronize timer's watch with official game time as established by the **B**. B) To advise officials as to the location of the clock operator in the press box or on the sideline, and to determine procedure for communications with timer and check this procedure preceding game. C) To discuss the coordination of starting and stopping the clock in accordance with the playing rules and for relevant signals related to the 10-second runoff. The **R** extends both arms forward and slightly above shoulders with palms facing out and will flash all fingers on both hands towards the press box to signal a 10-second runoff is needed. This should be used when no microphone or other communication is available with the clock operator.

Be prepared to assume the timing of the game on the field in the event the field clock becomes inoperative. The clock operator shall have an extra stopwatch available in case of failure of the game clock. They shall immediately contact the officials by field telephone or PA announcement and then give the **R** and **B** the correct data regarding the official time. **B** will then pick up the correct game time on their timing device. Should the field clock become inoperative, the public address announcer will indicate to the crowd that the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected and subsequent announcement is made over the PA system. **B** will alert the PA announcer concerning remaining time as often as possible. Synchronize all pre-game and half-time activities with the official game clock.

**Referee:** Start the field clock 60 minutes before game time. The Intermission timing (28 min max in UIL) will start when the players and coaches have cleared the field, and the **R** gives the "start the clock" [S2] signal from the end zone.

### GAME PROCEDURES FOR TIMERS

**Timers:** On all free kicks, start the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down. In this case, the clock will not start. The nearest official(s) will signal the legal touching of the ball by indicating that the clock should start. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being touched by the receivers in the end zone. Usually, this occurs when a receiver carries the ball out of the end zone. It could occur on a muff or fumble, however. In any case, **R** or **L** will indicate that the

clock should start [S2]. Under NCAA football playing rules the official who declares the ball dead will be the first official to signal a time-out when the team in possession of the ball meets the requirements for first down. Key on that official as the clock will usually stop on long gainers. Any official may signal a team time-out, so be prepared to stop the clock. The clock is not stopped on plays near a boundary line unless an official signals. Many times, the ball goes out of bounds after having been declared dead in the field of play and no timeout legally occurs. If a pass is touched or caught out of bounds, the incomplete signal [S10] will stop the clock. Be alert for the covering official's signals.

Game officials and clock operators are to be sure that a time-out is indicated, and the clock is stopped under the following circumstances:

- Whenever a team or an official's time-out is charged.
- After any score.
- When a live ball goes out of bounds.
- On a penalty.
- When either team is awarded a first down.
- Following an incomplete pass.
- At the discretion of **R**.

After the clock has been stopped, it will start again on the **R**'s "Start the Clock" signal [S2], or if no such signal is given, the game clock will be started on the snap, or legal touching of a free kick. In case of a pile-up anywhere on the field, be alert, an official may stop the clock until the congestion is over. **R** then may start the clock again before the ready for play signal. The game clock should not be stopped if the 25-second clock is started in error.

## GAME PROCEDURES FOR OFFICIALS

**Back Judge:** When time expires in the second period, start the field clock on **R**'s signal when field is cleared of players and officials. Always be aware of the condition of the clock and the time remaining in any period. In the event the clock is running when it should be stopped, make and repeat the appropriate signal until the clock has been corrected (only **R** shall start the clock on the ready for play). If an appreciable error is noted, or if inefficiency is habitual, **B** shall call timeout and so advise the **R**. Officials will review these procedures with the timer before the game.

**Back Judge/Umpire:** Keep **R** informed of the time remaining in each period. Either official or **R** will sound the whistle if time expires before the snap or advise **R** at the end of the down if time expired while the ball was in play.

**Referee:** Indicate the end of the period by holding a ball overhead with one hand and arm extended. Correct timing errors on the game clock or by any officials. Exact information as to the timing error must be available from either the clock operator or game officials. Correct timing errors only in the period in which they occur.

## ARTICLE 2. CLOCK OPERATION

**Clock Operator:** Function as an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the game clock is not started or stopped promptly.

Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clock. Notify the governing authority or assigning agency immediately following the game if there is any breakdown in cooperation between game officials and the clock operator during the game, or if any malfunction of the game clock occurs. Timers are encouraged to report crews that are not cooperative or whose signals are not clear and accurate.

When the second period expires, start the game clock (or your stopwatch) on **R**'s signal when field is cleared of players and officials. Keep officials informed as to running time. Make sure the crew arrives on the field to start the second half on time (at least 4 minutes before kickoff).

**Back Judge:** Time each timeout interval. When one minute has expired (or when both teams indicate readiness to resume before that time), notify **R**. Time the one-minute interval between quarters. If a media timeout is being used, TASO or UIL policy may assign a different official to this duty.

### ARTICLE 3. PLAY (25/40-SECOND) CLOCK

**General:** All timing involving the play clock is under the direct supervision of the **B**. When play clocks are available, they are the official delay of game time piece. The assigned play clock operator will work under the supervision of the **R**.

**Pre-Game:** The play clock operator should report to the **R/S** 60 minutes prior to the game. If the play clock operator does not visit the dressing room, it is advisable to attempt to discuss timing procedures with the individual. Instruct the operator to set the displays prior to plays and to start the clocks on the **R**'s ready for play signal or an official's dead ball signal (see chart at end of this Article). Leave the display at :00 seconds if there is a delay of game penalty and reset the display immediately to 40 seconds when the ball is put in play if there is no delay foul. Reset the displays to 25 seconds any time the **R** interrupts the play clock. If there is a malfunction, both clocks will be turned off until the problem is corrected. Both coaches will be notified if the field play clock is no longer official. The play clock will then be restarted at plays with **B** manually timing the count with a watch or other timing device. With less than 40 seconds (or 25 seconds if the play clock is starting on the Referee's signal) remaining in any period and the game clock running, the play clock shall not run. **Note:** If the play clock is erroneously started, it shall be stopped immediately.

### Duties Before Each Play

**Back Judge:** Observe the start of the play clock with the **R**'s ready signal or an official's dead ball signal. Check time consumed in snapping and free kicking the ball and call play clock infractions. Stadium clock located at each end of the field operated under the supervision of **B** will officially time the play clock. In obvious field goal and scrimmage kick situations or when there is no field play clock, the **R** may assume responsibility for the count. If visual clocks become inoperative, raise one arm straight overhead during the last 10 seconds [SO8]. Drop that arm and extend it out to the side, fist closed, during the last 5-seconds.

## PLAY (25/40-SECOND) CLOCK CHART

**Basic Premise:** The play clock will ALWAYS start at 40 seconds unless there is an administrative stoppage.

**Refer to the following table for situations when the play clock will be set to 25.**

SITUATION	PLAY CLOCK	REFEREE SIGNAL
Administration of a penalty	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
At the start of a period	25 seconds	Chop
Measurement	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Offense (Team A) helmet off	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Offense (Team A) injury	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Defense (Team B) awarded a first down	25 seconds	Chop
After any kick down	25 seconds	Chop
After any score	25 seconds	Chop
Start of team's possession in an extra period	25 seconds	Chop
Inadvertant whistle	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Timeout by either team	25 seconds	Chop
Timeout by official	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Touchback	25 seconds	Chop
Try down	25 seconds	Chop
Period extension	25 seconds	Chop

If the **R** wants the play clock reset, regardless of whether it is running, signal the play clock operator to restart the play clock. For 40 seconds, the Referee will signal with both palms open in an over-the-head pumping motion. For 25 seconds, the Referee will signal with one open palm in an over-the-head pumping motion. There is usually no need to stop the game clock to reset the play clock unless the play clock operator does not reset upon the **R**'s signal [SO7]. The play clock should be reset to 25 seconds when, through no fault of the players, the ball is not ready for play and the play clock has run down below 25 seconds.

## **SECTION 8. USE OF BEAN BAG AND HAT**

### **ARTICLE 1. USE OF BEAN BAG**

The bean bag will be dropped on the approximate yard line, herein after referred to as “spot.”

#### **DO NOT THROW THE BEAN BAG!**

Drop the bean bag to mark the appropriate spot:

- When a scrimmage kick ends inbounds. (This marks the Post Scrimmage Kick enforcement spot. Normally, only one official will mark this spot with a bean bag).
- When the covering official sees a live ball fumble anywhere on the field. SEE THE BALL FUMBLED, NOT MERELY LOOSE!
- When a hand-off or backward pass occurs beyond the neutral zone or when there is no neutral zone.
- When a Team A player illegally touches a free or scrimmage kick.
- When a Team B player intercepts a forward pass, fumble, or backward pass between their 5-yard line and the goal line.
- When a Team B player catches a free or scrimmage kick between their 5-yard line and the goal line.
- When necessary to mark forward progress when the runner/passers is driven back.
- When the potential Team A passer is tackled behind the line of scrimmage.
- When a fair catch signaler muffs the kick but can complete the catch before it touches the ground.
- When there is an inadvertent whistle, the covering official marks the spot of the ball at the time of the whistle.

### **ARTICLE 2. HAT MECHANICS**

Use your hat to mark appropriate spots as follows:

- When an eligible Team A receiver voluntarily goes out of bounds.
- When an eligible Team A pass receiver fails to return inbounds immediately after being blocked out of bounds.
- When a Team A player voluntarily goes out of bounds or fails to return inbounds immediately after being blocked out of bounds during a free kick play or scrimmage kick play.

### **OPPOSITE SIDE OFFICIAL**

Be alert for a hat on the ground. Cover the yard line while the calling official reports action to **R** and **U**.

## SECTION 9. GAME BALL MECHANICS

### ARTICLE 1. UIL GAME BALL AND BALL ASSISTANT POLICIES

**Ball Assistants:** With the addition of the 40/25 clock to UIL games, it will be extremely important to get the ball on the ground and ready for play as soon as possible. It is highly recommended that game balls for both teams be on both sidelines. This means that both teams will either count on the opposing team's Ball Assistants to administer their game balls, or that each team will place Ball Assistants on both sidelines. Additionally, it is recommended for each team to provide a 'ball retriever' to support the Ball Assistants. In the ideal situation there would be two Ball Assistants (one for each team) and one ball retriever on each sideline.

It is recommended that Ball Assistants be at least seventh grade students or above (Freshman or JV players would be optimal). Ball Retrievers (those who will 'chase' balls that are downfield or that end up on the opposite sideline) could be younger students working in conjunction with the Ball Assistants.

### ARTICLE 2. APPROVAL OF GAME BALLS

**Referee:** Prior to game, test, certify, and mark game ball(s) from home team; test, certify, and mark game ball(s) from visiting team, if they elect to use their own game balls (**Note:** It is mandatory that at least one game ball be offered for play). It is recommended that each team offer at least two balls for play. Marks should be unique for each team. Distinct marks are essential for efficient ball handling during the game.

**Line Judge:** Assist **R** in testing game balls; adjust air pressure in balls if incorrect. If balls are received prior to arrival on the field for pregame duties, take over from **R**. Otherwise, ensure ball assistants have game balls and are ready prior to coin toss.

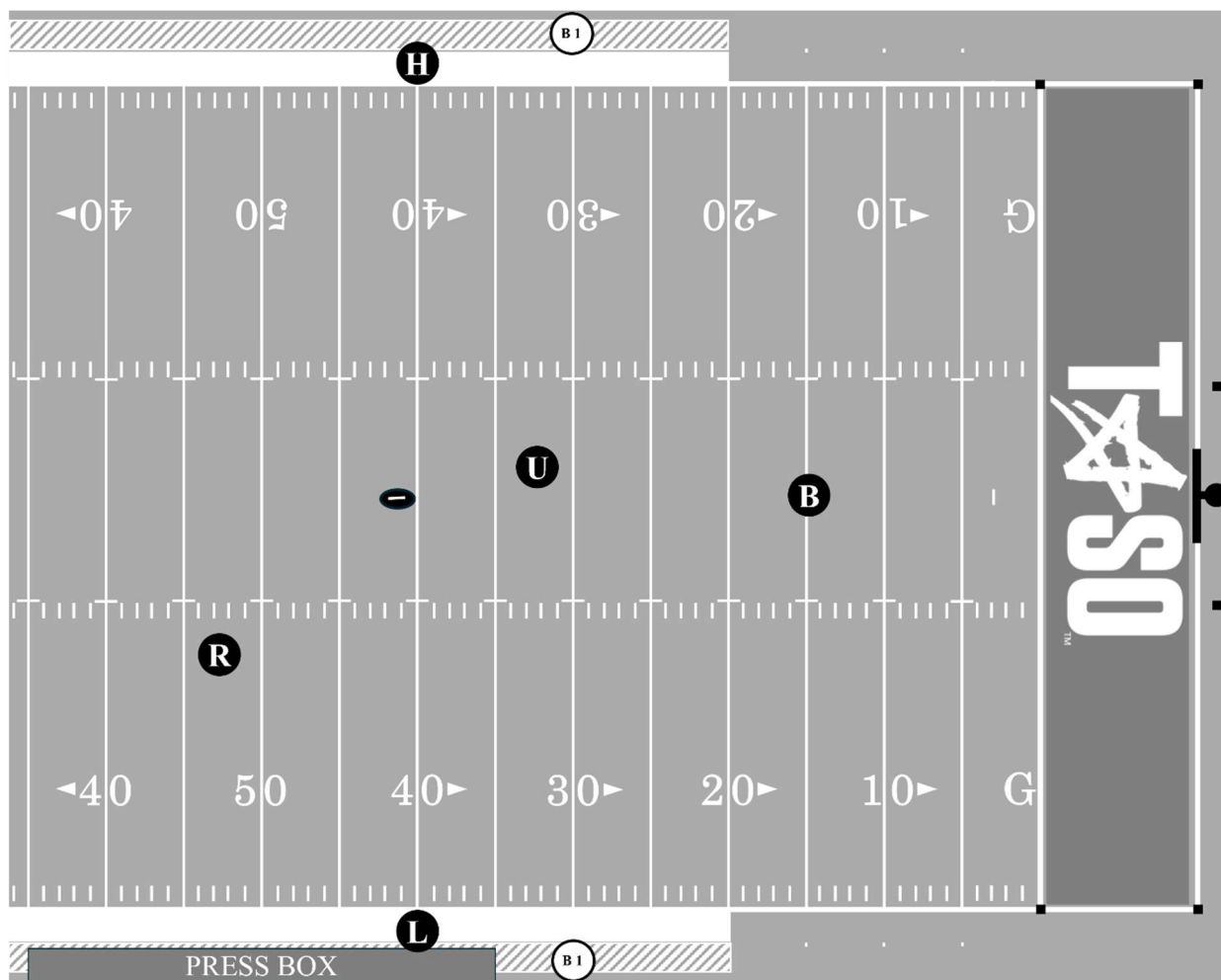
### ARTICLE 3. BALL ASSISTANTS (BA)

For scrimmage plays, BAs are to be positioned approximately 10 yards beyond neutral zone at the snap and should move to stay downfield of wing officials as much as possible during play. Always remain outside field of play and be at least six feet off sideline unless relaying replacement ball or retrieving ball that has been replaced. (**Note:** Game officials are solely responsible for transferring replacement ball to **U** for placement at the succeeding spot; ball persons are to remain off field unless directed to retrieve a ball that has been replaced). Following any change of possession, the 'new offense' ball should come from the sideline of team now in possession, regardless at which sideline the dead ball may be, and the replaced ball should be taken to the opponent's sideline. For field goal attempts, BAs are to be positioned at the Team B 10-yard line. For Tries, BAs may be positioned behind the end line. Do not place replacement ball by the goal post. Immediately following play, relay replacement ball to nearest official, then retrieve the ball being replaced. For free kicks, BAs are to be positioned at the Team B 40-yard line. Immediately following play, the ball assistant on the side of the team now in possession will relay the 'new offense' ball to nearest official, then retrieve ball being replaced.

For most downs, BAs will look for **H**, **L**, or **B** to relay replacement ball into game. Following an incomplete pass, BAs to side where ball falls incomplete will look for wing official to that side to

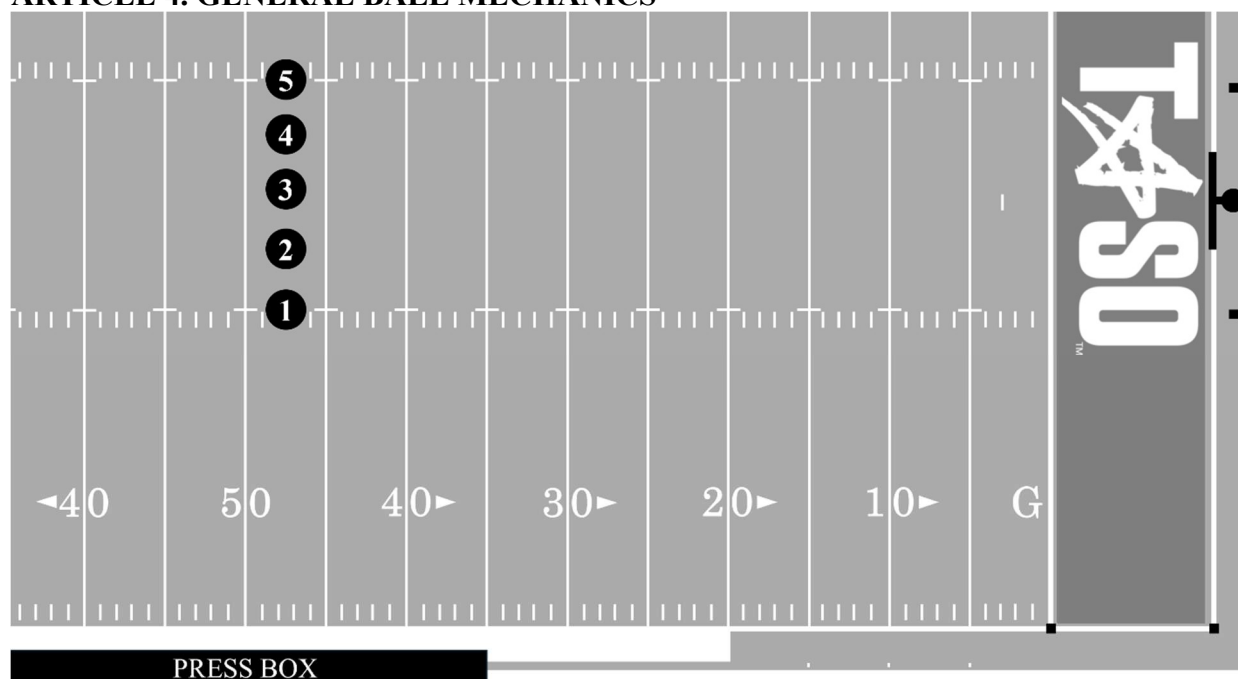


relay ball into game. Remain alert and have correct game ball(s) ready immediately when requested by any official and hustle when retrieving ball that has been replaced. Toss or hand ball only to officials and only when requested. Officials and Ball Assistants must have eye contact before tossing/handing the ball, keeping all tosses short and underhand. Comply with any request by a coach or player to replace the ball; by rule, only the **R** and **U** may determine when a ball is to be replaced. Do not address opposing team personnel in any way. Notify the nearest official of any interference or unsportsmanlike behavior toward them by anyone. Be on the appropriate sideline and ready with game balls at least three minutes before the start of each half.



If the visiting team elects to provide Ball Assistants, instruct them as above. Additionally, at least one Ball Assistant provided by each team is to be stationed on each sideline, and each shall be responsible for game balls from their respective team (only). (Assuming three game balls per team) Ball Assistant on the sideline of their team will be responsible for two game balls (for their team only). Ball Assistants on opponent's sideline will be responsible for one game ball (for their team only). Officials and Ball Assistants must coordinate to ensure game balls on each sideline remain 'balanced.' All Ball Assistants shall cooperate with and assist each other, regardless of team affiliation.

## ARTICLE 4. GENERAL BALL MECHANICS



### Ball Positions:

When communicating with crewmates, relaying ball position by number, 1 through 5, is easily understandable and consistent across all levels of games. Ball position numbers correspond to hash marks, uprights, and the center of the field. The following describes the five positions, which are illustrated above.

- 1) Hash closest to the press box.
- 2) Upright closest to the press box.
- 3) Center of the field.
- 4) Upright farthest from the press box.
- 5) Hash farthest from the press box.

**Relaying the ball:** Relaying or transferring of ball should be done quickly and efficiently, with as few exchanges as possible.

**Spotting the ball:** Spotting ball for succeeding down should be done with one placement. Official that spots the ball should do so as quickly as practical, yet assuring ball is placed correctly when first spotted. However, any official that has positive knowledge that the ball is not spotted correctly should take necessary measures, including stopping clock, to get ball located correctly.

**Tossing the ball:** All tosses shall be underhand with a spiraling motion and on a generally flat trajectory to chest level of the person receiving ball. Do not toss ball over players. A crew proficient in ball handling will not allow the ball to fall to ground while handling and transferring it.

**Start of second half or extra period:** The Back Judge will obtain a ball from the team on the press box sideline if they are kicking off. The Umpire will obtain a ball from the team opposite



the press box if they are kicking and deliver to **B** prior to the kickoff. In Extra Periods, **H** or **L** will deliver game ball to **U** to spot.

## **ARTICLE 5. WET WEATHER PROCEDURES**

**Additional game balls:** Teams should provide additional game balls for use in games when wet conditions are expected. **R** must test, approve, and mark all such additional balls prior to the game.

**Procedures:** Generally, the same as for dry conditions, except the wing officials will secure replacement balls from Ball Assistants as needed and relay to **U** to ensure dry ball (to the extent possible) is spotted for play for the succeeding down.

**Towels:** **U** should carry a towel to wipe the ball dry. After spotting, **U** may cover the ball with the towel to keep it dry. If conditions warrant, **U** may hold ball covered with towel until offense approaches to snap and then spot ball and move to pre-snap position. Other officials may carry towels if conditions warrant.

**Ball Assistants:** Ball Assistants should have towels to wipe balls dry and to keep balls covered.

**Note:** By rule, no ball drying substances may be used.

## **ARTICLE 6. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS**

**H** and **L** cover forward progress of runner. **R** and **B** hustle to sideline area or team area when the ball is dead. **U** moves to a clear area between 9-yard marks and inbounds line, and toward **H** or **L**. When there is no threat of foul, **H** or **L** secures replacement ball from Ball Assistant and relays to **U**. If the ball is dead in or behind the neutral zone, **R** may secure replacement ball and relay to **U**. When conditions permit, the **R** should assist the **U** by moving to the succeeding spot and spotting the ball. Fluid coordination and communication between the **R** and **U** will ensure the most efficient spotting of the ball.

### **When the ball is dead and between the 9-yard marks.**

**Umpire:** When there is no further threat of foul, move to retrieve the ball and place at the succeeding spot.

**Referee:** When there is no further threat of foul, and conditions permit, move to retrieve the ball and deliver to **U** for placement (or personally place) at the succeeding spot.

### **When the ball is dead and nearer sideline than 9-yard marks or out of bounds.**

**Referee:** When the ball is dead and in or behind neutral zone and there is no further threat of foul, if conditions permit, secure replacement ball from Ball Assistant and relay to **U**.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** If you have forward progress and conditions permit, secure ball being replaced, or a 'spare' ball from a Ball Assistant and place at foot marking forward progress. This is to be done only if there is no threat of foul by any player and if it does not distract any official from performing essential duties. Assist as necessary in getting replaced ball to the appropriate Ball Assistant.

**Umpire:** Move to an open area between the inbounds line and the 9-yard marks and toward the **H** or **L** when there is no further threat of foul. Permit replacement ball to be relayed to you then spot replacement ball.

**When a forward pass is incomplete.**

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** If pass falls to your side of the field, when there is no further threat of a foul, secure replacement ball from Ball Assistant and relay to **U**.

**Umpire:** Go to side to which pass falls; move to an open area between inbounds line and 9-yard marks and toward **H** or **L**. When there is no further threat of foul permit replacement ball to be relayed to you then spot replacement ball.

**Following punt or field goal play.**

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** If you have forward progress and conditions permit, secure ball being replaced or a 'spare' ball from a ball person and place at foot marking forward progress. This is to be done only if there is no threat of foul by any player and if it does not distract any official from performing essential duties. Assist as necessary in getting replaced ball to the appropriate Ball Assistant.

**Referee:** Assist as necessary in getting replaced ball to the appropriate Ball Assistant.

**Umpire:** Move to an open area between the inbounds line and the 9-yard marks to sideline of team now in possession. When there is no further threat of foul permit replacement ball to be relayed to you then spot 'new offense' ball.

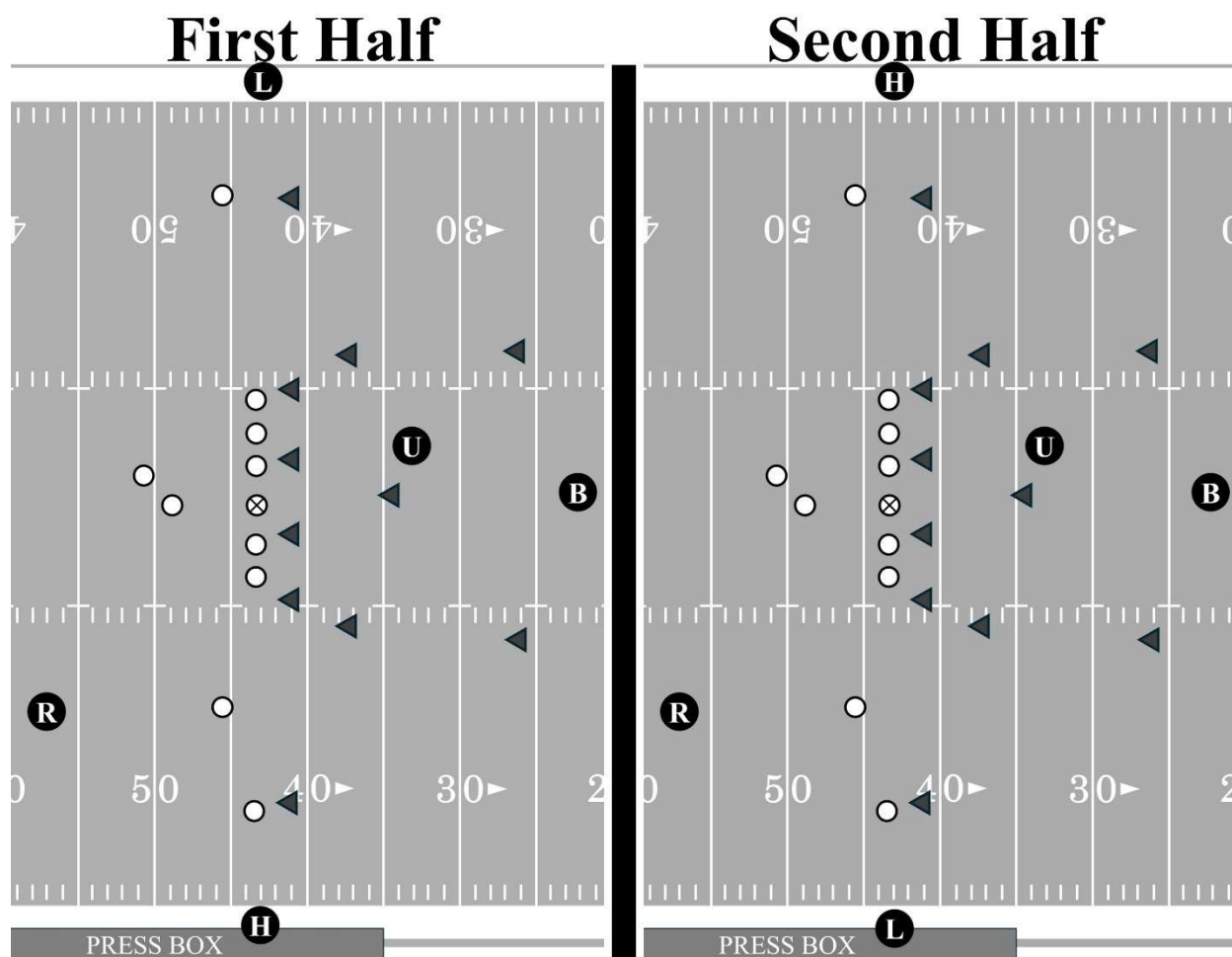
**Referee/Umpire:** If the ball is unfit for play obtain a replacement from any sideline official.

**All:** Be alert that only approved game balls are used during the game.

## SECTION 10. BASIC POSITIONS

For the first half, the Line Judge will be positioned on the sideline opposite the press box and will be responsible for the operation of the chains. Beginning with the second half kickoff, and continuing through the end of the game, the Head Line Judge will be positioned on the sideline opposite the press box and will be responsible for operation of the chains.

All descriptions and graphics in this manual (other than the toss) represent positioning for the second half of a game. Duties referring to the Head Line Judge will be covered by the official positioned opposite the press box. Duties referring to the Line Judge will be covered by the official positioned on the press box side.



While many duties for the H and the L on the line of scrimmage will be the same during a game, the following situations involve very different responsibilities. It is important that officials are aware of their specific duties and are prepared to administer those duties, based on which sideline they are on.

**Pregame Duties on the Field:** Both the H and L will organize and give instructions to sideline assistants on **BOTH** sidelines. They should address the chain crew and ball assistants together. The H will now have responsibility to have the team occupying the press box side on the sideline

before the opening toss. The **L** will now have responsibility to have that team to the sideline prior to the start of the second half.

**Toss:** The **H** position will be on the press box side and after captains are escorted to the center of the field take a position at the 9- yard marks and not allow team members to go beyond that position. **L** will remain on the sideline throughout the toss.

**Free Kick:** The official working the **H** position will **ALWAYS** be positioned on Team B's restraining line. The **R**, **U**, and **B** will **ALWAYS** take the same positions in the first and second halves.

**Scrimmage Kicks (Punts):** The **H** position must remember to hold the line of scrimmage until ruling the kicked ball has crossed the neutral zone. The **L** position will move down field when it is apparent that it is a kick.

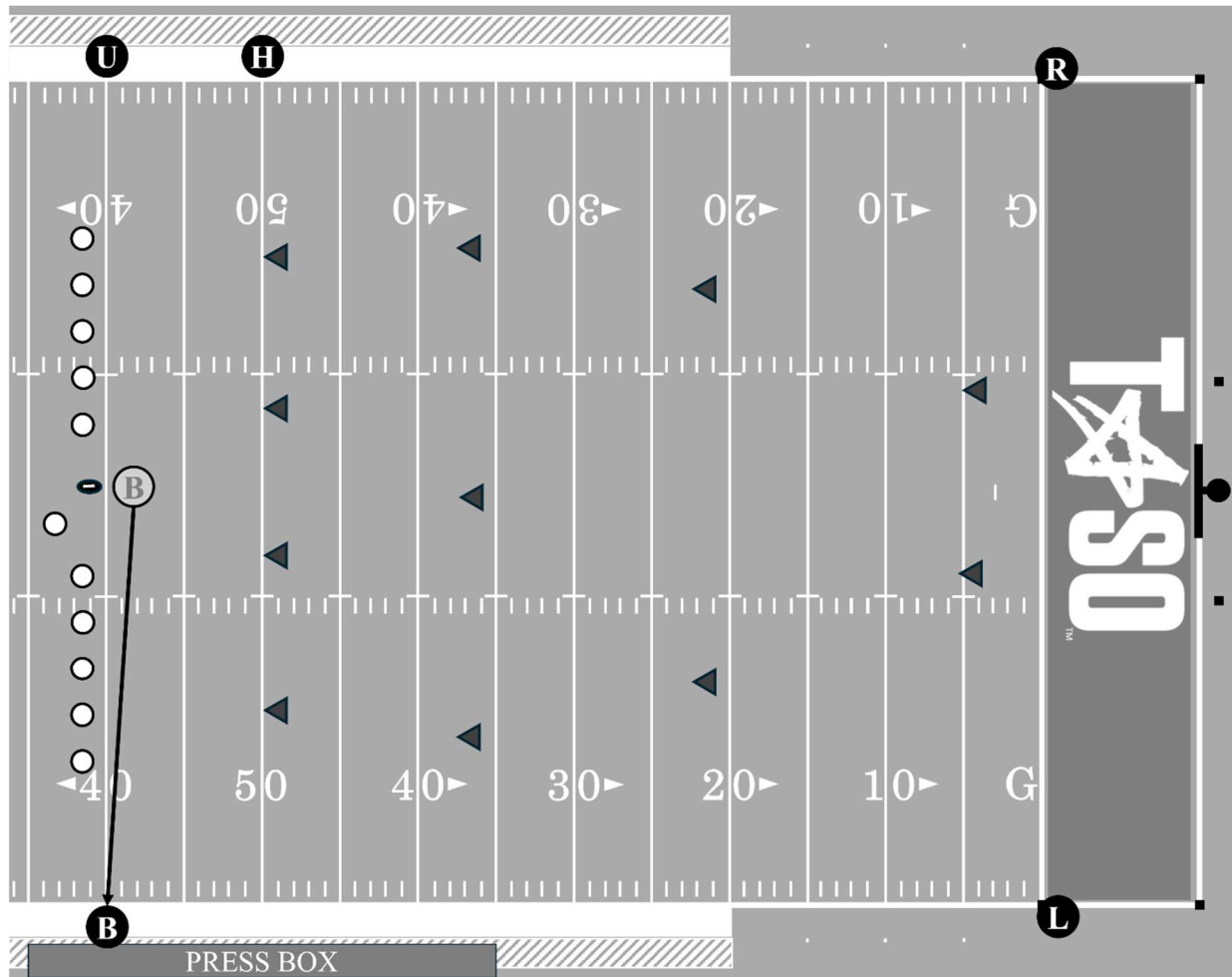
**Try/Field Goal:** The **L** position must anticipate a field goal attempt and be quick to ensure they are under their goal post and ready for a kick. They should also be prepared for the Swinging Gate formation and quickly adjust as needed. The **H** position has responsibility for the snap as well as ruling if the kick has crossed the neutral zone.

**Measurements:** While **H** will position the chain crew for the measurement and grab the clip as the chain moves onto the field, **L** will mark the spot for the clip with a foot.

**Fouls & Enforcement:** Very important for the **L** position to hold the enforcement spot while the **H** moves to the succeeding spot. After enforcement is complete, both officials will confirm that the enforcement is correct before moving to their normal position for the next down.

## SECTION 11. FREE KICKS

### BASIC FREE KICK POSITIONS

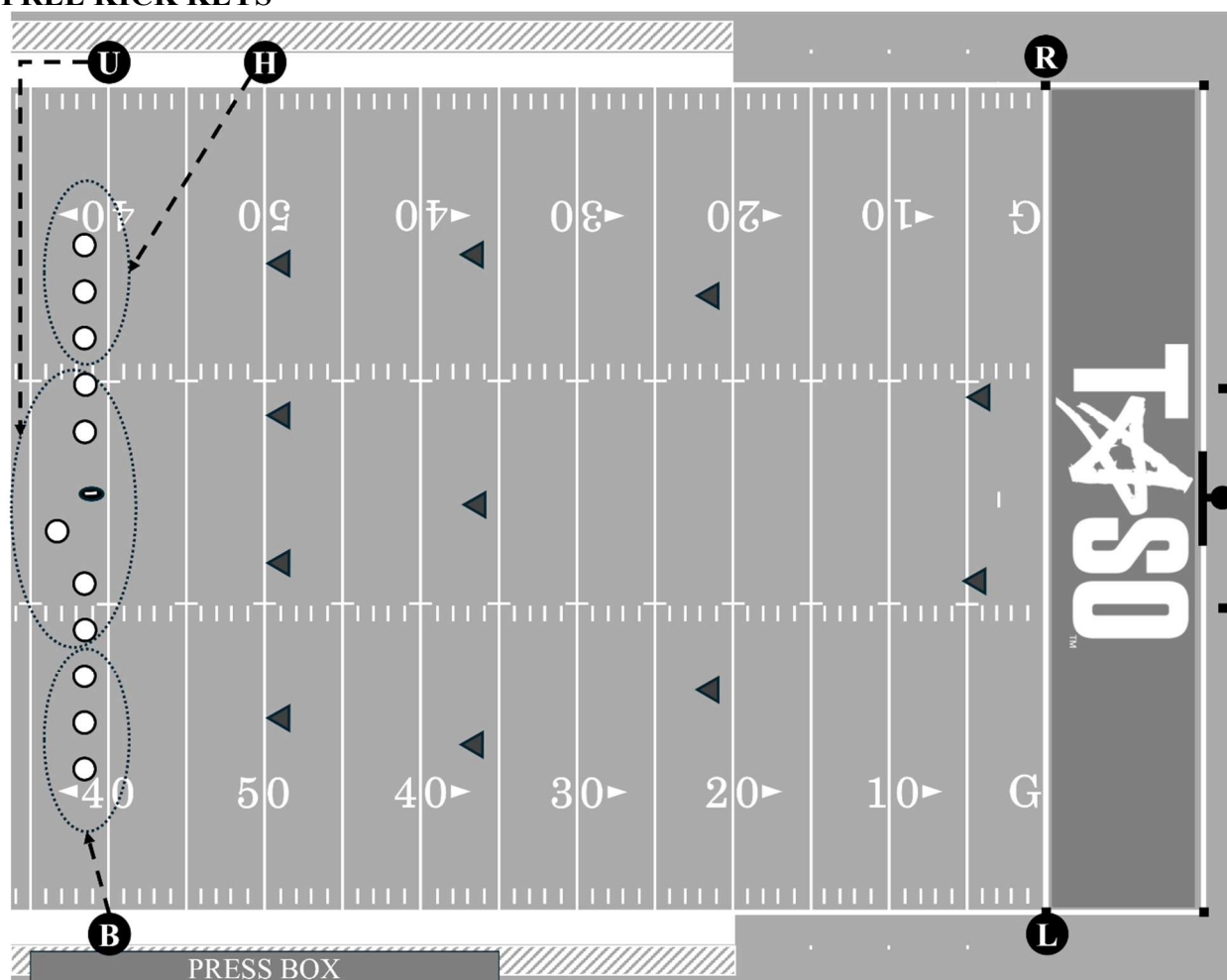


### ARTICLE 1. DEEP FREE KICK POSITIONS

**All:** Take position as shown on kickoff diagrams and complete your duties. Note adjustments below when onside kick is indicated. Be alert for short or “pooch” kicks, legal and illegal touching, touchbacks, kicks beyond the end line and near the sidelines and wind the clock when appropriate. Think onside kick first; then anticipate every kick could be returned for TD. Know and stay with your keys during the entire down.

Be alert for fair catch signals and interference with the opportunity to catch a kick on every kick. Mark the out of bounds spot with foul marker when the kick, in flight or rolling, goes out of bounds between the goal lines. Determine if inbounds Team B player touched the ball inbounds and signal timeout. If kicked to your area, cover any muff or advance by any Team B player who catches or recovers. Give the “start the clock signal” [S2] when the ball is legally touched in the field of play in your zone. Observe any player who is out of bounds before or during the kick. This includes Team A players who enter after the ball is made ready for play. If a touchback occurs move into the field to stop any late or illegal action, but do not ignore players behind you.

## FREE KICK KEYS



**Back Judge:** Take position in center of field, count Team A players and deliver instructions to the kicker. Check to see if **U** and **H** are ready for kickoff. If so, signal **R** and give the ball to the kicker once **R** signals back and move to the press box sideline position. Take position on A's restraining line, press box side and at the back of the restricted area. Check the sideline to ensure all non-players are out of the restricted area. Make sure Team A players have complied with the 9-yard mark requirements and all players but the kicker are within five yards of their restraining line. When all players and officials are ready, indicate by raising and keeping one arm aloft until **R** drops arm and sounds ready for play. Be alert for Team A offside. Following the kick, maintain a cushion of space and cover the sideline with **L**, keying on the three Team A players on your side. Be prepared to cover the goal line on a long return.

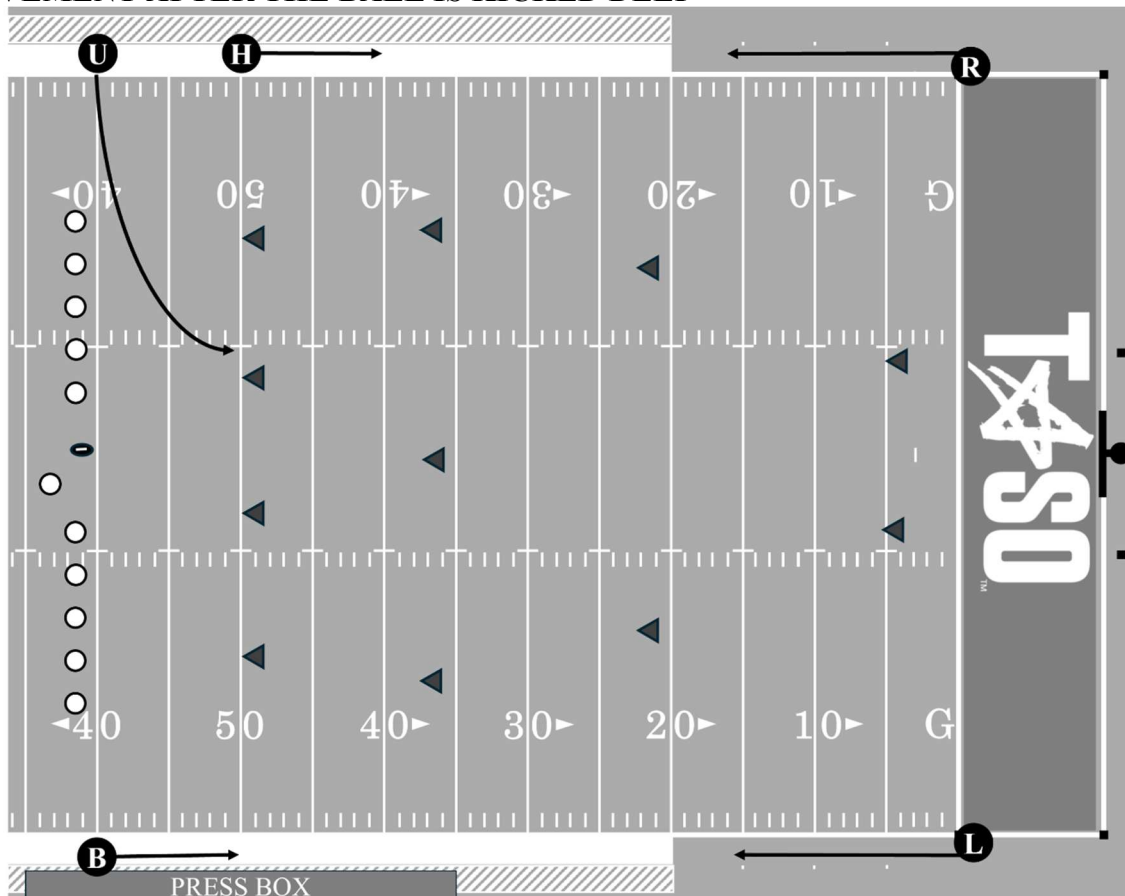
**Umpire:** Take position on Team A's restraining line, opposite press box, at the back of the restricted area. Check sidelines and ensure all non-players are out of the restricted area. Make sure Team A players have complied with the 9-yard mark requirements and all but the kicker are within five yards of their restraining line. Be alert for Team A offside. Following the kick move toward the inbounds line and key on the kicker and the five Team A players in the middle of the formation.

**Head Line Judge:** Clear your sideline opposite the press box and then take position at Team B's restraining line at the back of the restricted area. Count Team B players. Watch for infractions involving restraining lines. Following the kick, maintain a cushion of space and cover the sideline with **R**, keying on the three Team A players on your side of the formation. Be prepared to cover the goal line on a long run.

**Referee:** Obtain all crew members' ready signals. After **B** reaches and clears the sideline, turns to face the field and gives the ready signal, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal.

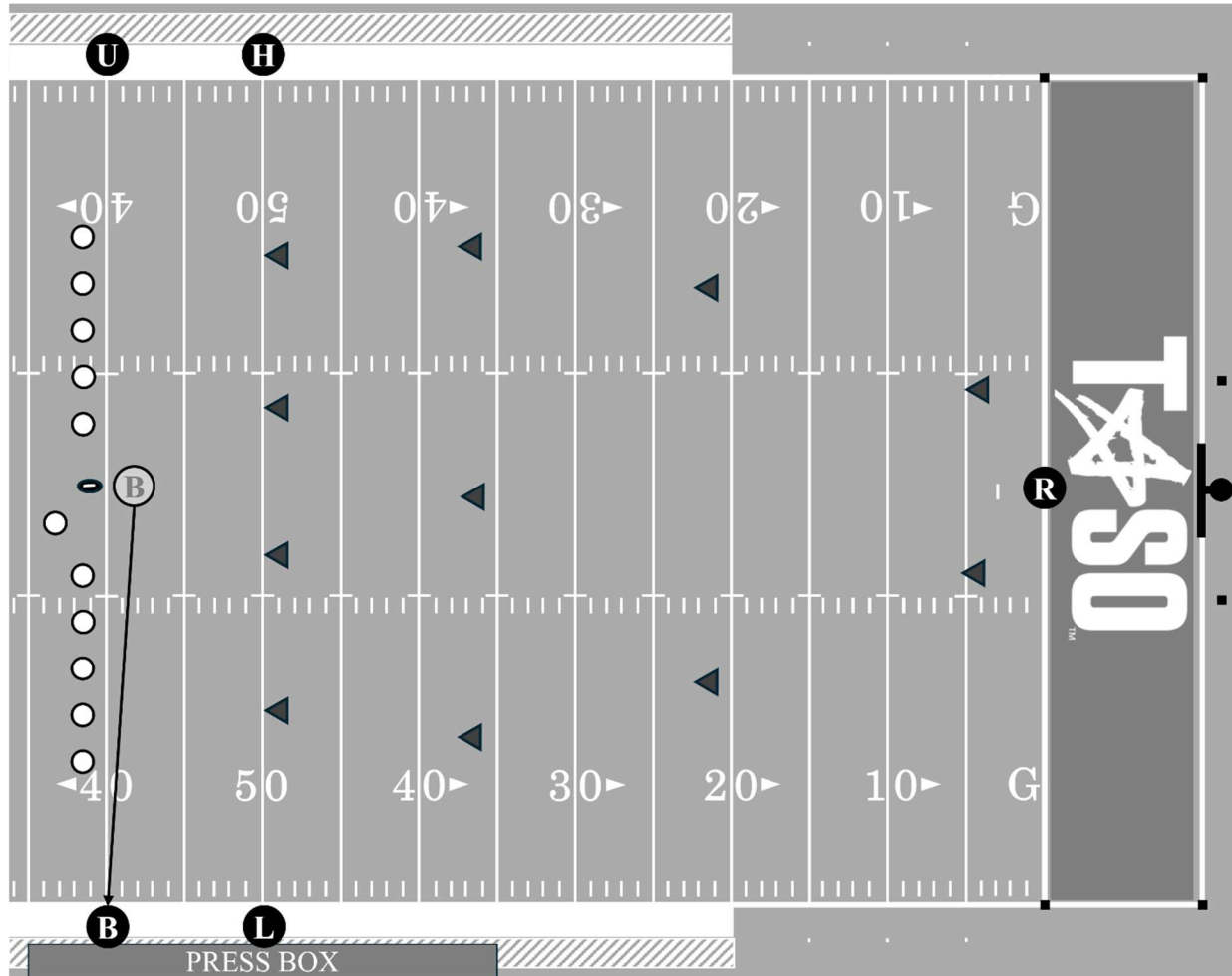
**Referee/Line Judge:** Take position on your sideline at the goal line. Count Team B players. Ensure at least four players are on your side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. Be alert for illegal wedge formations. Responsible for the goal line and pylon in your zone. Remain at the pylon until the ball is possessed by the receiving team. Give the wind the clock signal when the ball is legally touched in the field of play. Following the kick, you have the ball carrier if the ball is caught in your zone. Work with **B** or **H** to bracket the ball carrier and be prepared to mark the dead ball spot. If the ball is not caught in your zone, your key is the lead blocker. Watch for holding, clips and blocks below the waist. Check sidelines, restraining lines, etc. When you do not have the ball, move up field to observe action ahead of the runner. If a touchback occurs, move into the field of play to stop any late or illegal actions but do not ignore players behind you.

#### MOVEMENT AFTER THE BALL IS KICKED DEEP





## ARTICLE 2. SHORT FREE KICK BASIC POSITIONS



**ALL:** The **Referee** will determine when to move into short free kick formations and officials will take positions as shown on short free kick diagrams and perform all pre-kick duties. Think onside kick first then anticipate every kick could be returned for TD. Be alert for touching, both legal and illegal; action at the sidelines and regular coverage if ball is kicked deep. Give the “start the clock signal” [S2] when ball is legally touched. Observe any player who is out of bounds before or during the kick. This includes Team A players who enter after the ball is made ready for play.

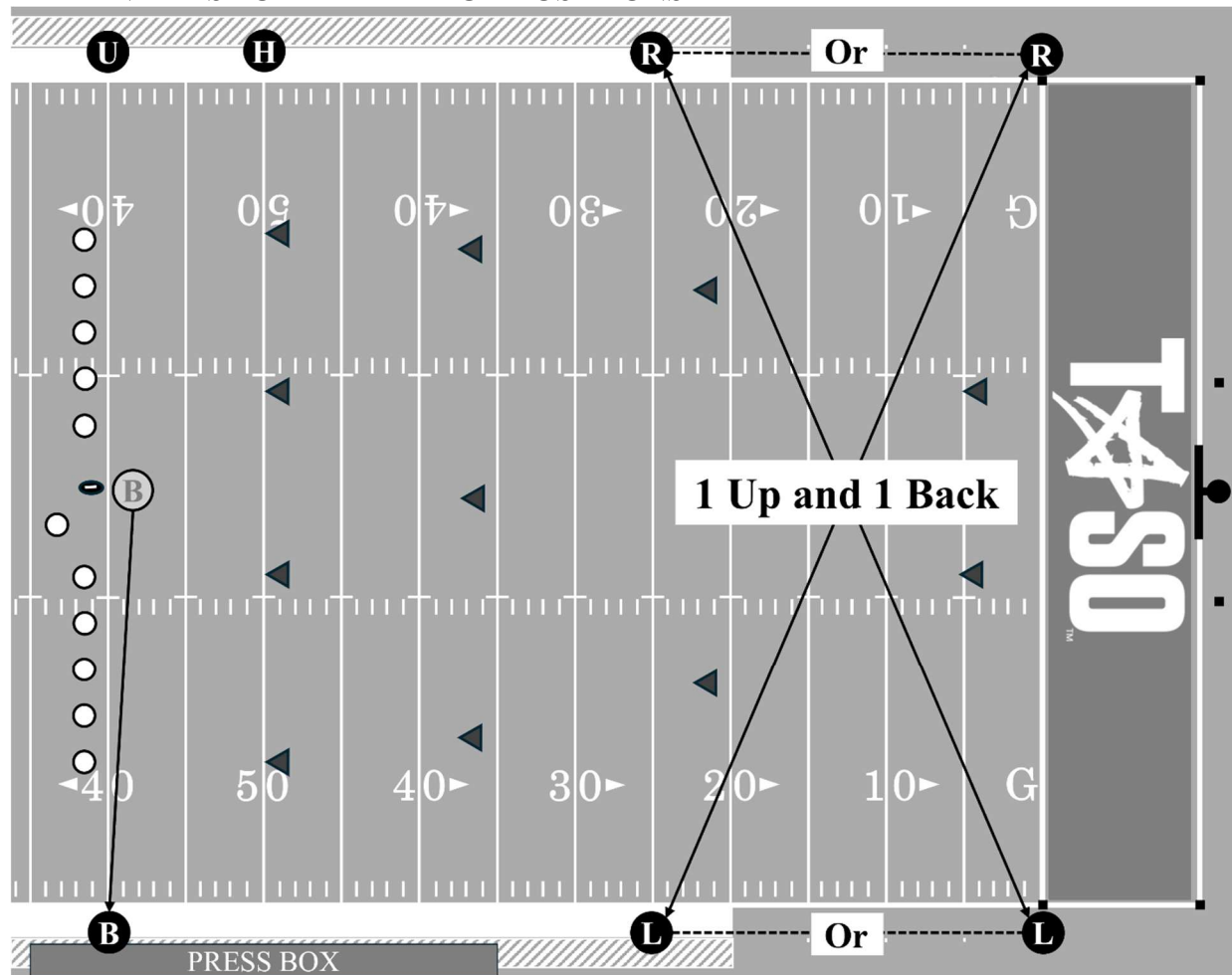
**Umpire/Back Judge:** Take positions on the kickoff diagrams, bean bag in hand. Officiate Team A’s restraining line as a plane being alert for kicking team members beyond their restraining line prior to the ball being kicked. Observe action by the kicking team on your side, such as blocking and/or touching the ball prior to becoming eligible by rule. On short kicks, **U** will remain on the sideline after the ball is kicked and will be alert for illegal action on the kicker.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Take positions on the kickoff diagrams, bean bag in hand. Officiate Team B’s restraining line as a plane being alert for receiving team members beyond their restraining line prior to the ball being kicked. Observe touching of the ball by either team, noting when and where the ball was touched.



**Referee:** Take a position slightly behind and to the side of the deepest receiver and be aware that you are still responsible for goal line, pylons, end zone, end line, and play clock.

### ALTERNATE SHORT FREE KICK POSITIONS



Crews may use a third option to better cover short free kick opportunities. Either the **R** or **L** may move up to the 25-yard line, on their sideline, while the other official remains on the goal line pylon. **B**, **U**, and **H** remain in their normal positions with normal duties. If the kick is long, the up official (**R** or **L**) will retreat to Team B's goal line and assume normal responsibility ahead of the runner.

### ARTICLE 3. FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY

**All:** Assume the same relative positions and duties as on kickoff and be aware Team A may put the ball in play by place kick, drop kick, or punt.

### ARTICLE 4. AFTER TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

**All:** Review any enforcement actions affecting the kickoff.

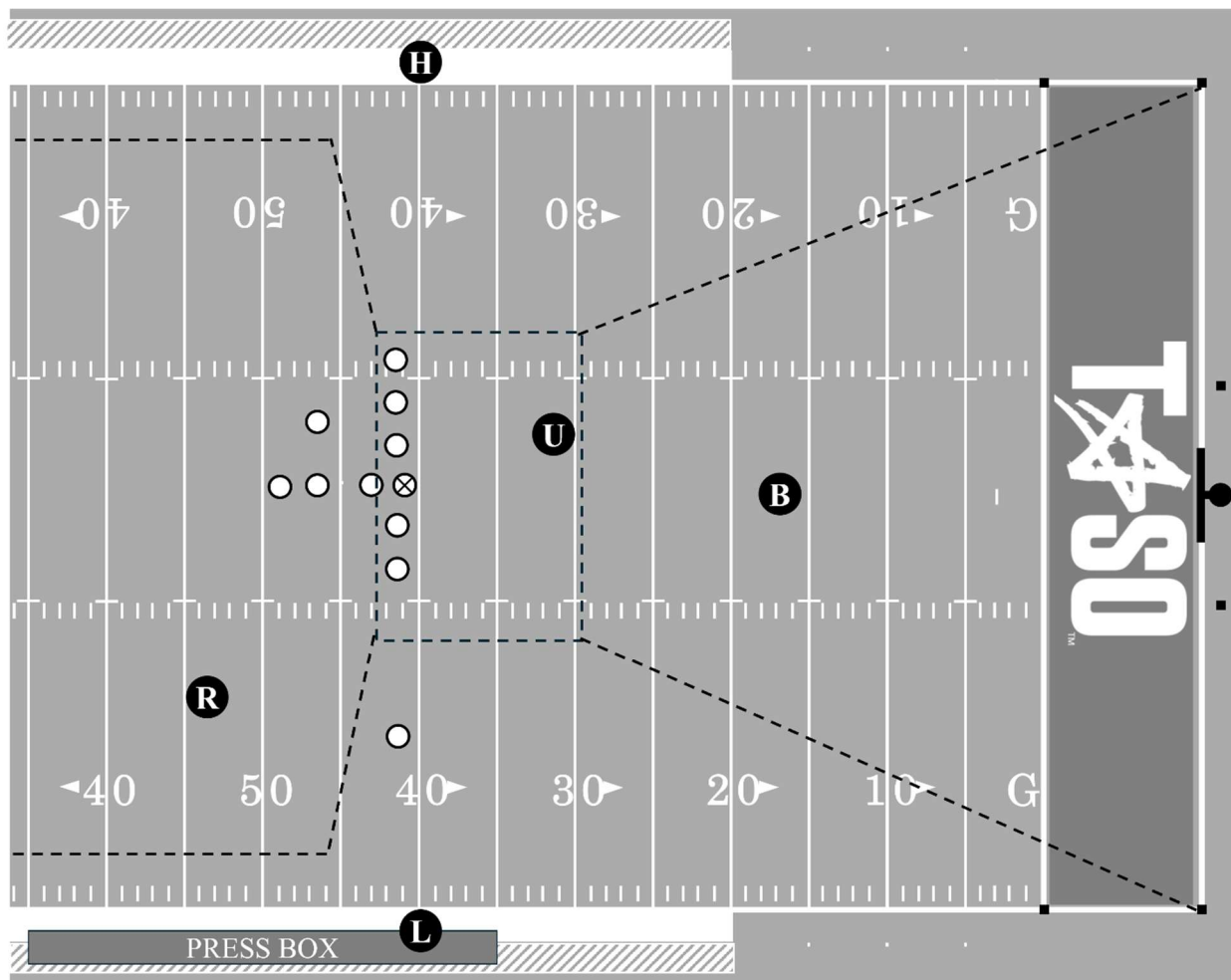
**Back Judge:** Obtain a football from the BA and proceed up press box sideline to Team A's free kick restraining line. 40 seconds after the previous play, sound your whistle and take the football

onto the field and give it to the kicker. Return to Team A's sideline on the press box side and signal **R** when ready.

**Umpire/Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Proceed directly to your sideline and then to your free kick position. Use this opportunity to advise coaches, players and team personnel to return to the team box and clear the sideline. Clear your sideline after **B** sounds the 20-second warning whistle.

**Referee:** Go to pre-kick position and review official score. Look for **B**'s ready signal and then make the ball ready for play.

## SECTION 12. PLAYS FROM SCRIMMAGE



**All:** Basic positions may vary, depending upon play situations, formations, the field, and weather conditions. Always box in the play. Avoid positions that may cause scrambling to avoid interference with players.

### ARTICLE 1. DETERMINING AND PRIORITY OF KEYS

**All:** In determining keys, the following definitions are needed for clarification purposes.

**Strength of the formation** is determined by the number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the offensive formation. It has nothing to do with the number of linemen on each side of the snapper but rather the number of eligible receivers outside the tackles. The position of receivers is determined by their location, whether set or in motion, when the ball is snapped. If there is no strong side and the formation is balanced, strength is declared to the **L** side. **Tight End:** The end man on the line of scrimmage lined up no more than four yards from the nearest offensive lineman. **Back in the backfield:** A player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.

**Twins:** Two receivers outside the tackle on both sides of the formation. **Trips:** Three or more receivers outside an offensive tackle on the same side of the formation. **Quads:** Four receivers outside the tackle on the same side of the formation. The priority of keys to determine initial

assignments, from the sideline in, for each group of officials is as follows: 1st: **L** and **H**. 2nd: **B**. The general rule is do not key the same player as the group of officials ahead of you, priority-wise. For example, **B** should not key the same player as **L** or **H**.

## ARTICLE 2. BASIC POSITIONS AND DUTIES BEFORE THE SNAP

**Referee:** Assume a position deep and wide where you may comfortably see the ball, backs and the tackle on your side, except for flanks or a man in motion toward you. Work on the throwing arm side of the quarterback, 12-14 yards wide from the original position of the ball and 12-14 yards deep. Be aware of the wingback's alignment and signal the wing official on your side if appropriate. Check the offensive formation. Count Team A and give the appropriate signal to the **U**. Check the setbacks and quarterback for illegal motion, the ball at the snap; and assist the **U** if there is movement of restricted linemen.

**Umpire:** Vary positioning according to the formations of both teams, avoiding positions that will interfere with linebackers. Adjust distance behind the defensive line according to the width of Team A's formation and (except on goal line or Try situations) be at least 5, but no more than 10 yards deep. Whenever possible, coordinate your position with the **R** for best coverage of the interior line play. Usually this means the **U** will be on the opposite side of the formation from the **R**. Be aware of wingback's alignment on the side opposite referee. Signal wing official if appropriate. Read the offensive alignment and know the five ineligible, making sure there are at least five linemen numbered 50-79. Ensure you have a clear view of the snap. Count Team A and give the appropriate signal to the **R**. Rule on illegal movement by restricted linemen prior to the snap. Be certain that the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert opponents.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Read the offensive formation and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be aware of wingbacks aligned near the tackle on your side. Watch for illegal formations, including encroachment prior to the snap, and false starts by Team A players. Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take final position straddling the neutral zone, out of bounds and off the sideline. Cover man in motion on your side of the snapper. When the motion man is beyond the center of the formation (either going away from or towards you) it will then be the other official's responsibility. (This does not relieve the opposite official from making an obvious call). Signal the widest man off the line of scrimmage to your side. Assist **R** in marking forward progress behind the neutral zone, particularly when the goal line is involved.

**Back Judge:** Take an initial position 20- 25 yards deep favoring the strong side of the formation. Be in position to cover from the inside (looking out) and for the end line. Responsibility for man in motion may be determined by their location at the snap if in motion at the snap. Observe the start of the play clock and violations of the play clock and count Team B players. Be aware of Team A substitutions and signal when appropriate, holding your signal until acknowledged by the **R**.

## SECTION 13. RUNNING PLAYS

### ARTICLE 1. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A RUNNING PLAY

**All:** Be alert for fouls by blockers leading the runner and for fouls after the ball is declared dead. The use of the Dead Ball signal [S7] to indicate dead ball fouls should be used only by **R** when fouls are involved.

**Referee:** Help with the tackle on your side immediately following the snap. Watch action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone. Watch action on the ball and the quarterback on hand-offs and backward passes. Take the runner behind the line of scrimmage until the ball is dead and coordinate sideline coverage with the **L** and **H**. Watch action on the QB during an option play until there is no threat of a foul, then trail the runner into the side zone, covering behind the play. When the QB turns up the field, across the neutral zone with the ball, assume responsibility for the player in position to receive a backward pass until there is no longer a threat of a foul. When spotting the ball after it becomes dead, check with the **L** and **H** to get accurate forward progress. Coordinate with the **U** in spotting the ball for the next play.

**Umpire:** Read the point of attack and the action on or by the interior linemen. Key the snapper and two guards. Observe continuing action on the backside of the runner. On a sweep, open to the point of attack gaining depth as needed while watching the backside. Observe action in the side zone, especially between inbounds lines and 9-yard marks. After the ball becomes dead (and there is not a threat of dead ball action) hustle to the ball and assist in placing the ball in accord with the forward progress designated by the sideline official. Remember that inbounds lines are not walls; move into side zone as needed.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Observe illegal shifts and motion by flanker. Act toward the ball with wingbacks that are aligned just outside the tackle on your side. Watch for offside by the defense and encroachment or false start by the offense. Observe initial action on or by interior lineman nearest you and action on or by the offensive player who is your designated responsibility. Observe blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage or in the neutral zone. Mark forward progress on straight hand-offs and runs to your side. Observe action on the player(s) in a position to receive a backward pass when the ball is behind the neutral zone. Take the player in a position to receive a backward pass (trailing back), loose ball and the trailing back as they become the ball carrier on play action toward your side. Take the ball carrier in your side zone as far as the end zone. When the play ends out of bounds, go directly into the area and observe. Stay with players until all are back on the field of play. Make certain you “square off” your spots. Mark forward progress and the out of bounds spot on your side when within your area of responsibility. When the flow of play is away from your position, move cautiously toward the flow and clean up action behind the **R** and **U**, giving special attention to late action on the QB after a backward pass is thrown. Always keep players boxed in.

**Back Judge:** Observe action on or by your eligible receiver responsibility as determined by offensive formation. Move laterally and backward to observe actions of players ahead of the runner as the ball moves to the **H** or **L** side of the field. Be ready to take over on cutback and breakaway runs. Cover the goal line or end line as spot of the snap and subsequent action dictates. Go to the football when it becomes dead in your immediate area. When play is not in

your area, move to a position to best observe the continuing action after the ball becomes dead. When a running play develops toward a sideline, drift toward that sideline. Keep the runner bracketed between you and **H** or **L**. Assist in stopping the clock and be aware of the status of the clock when the play is dead. Observe player action downfield between the **U** and you. On plunges into the line up the middle, do not move too fast, let the play come to you. Pick up any ball carrier that breaks loose and goes downfield. On plays where the runner goes out of bounds, especially in team areas, move into the dead ball area and assist **H**, **L** and **R** with maintaining order. The presence of another official stops most dead ball fouls in the team areas. Some out of bounds runs may necessitate coming rapidly into the team area while observing all the action. Go where the play takes. Watch player(s) activity around the ball carrier, especially in wide-open plays where players are pursuing and coming to the primary area. On long runs, be prepared to rule on goal line plays.





responsible for shorter routes as well as routes in their side zone. **H** and **L** must be aware of routes that take the **B** deep and must be prepared to adjust their zones accordingly. While in Zone coverage, officials should pay particular attention to Team B players who hold Team A receivers as they are running past them or are making cuts during their route.

Once the pass is in the air, switch to Ball coverage. Observe the action of the defenders and the receiver in the area where the ball is thrown. While the official in that zone will be primarily responsible for ruling on interference by either team, an official in another zone may have the only look at a foul and may need to throw their flag.

The concept of “**Man, Zone, and Ball**” is essential to effective officiating at any level. Skilled TASO officials will know how to begin with the appropriate key in “Man” coverage before shifting to “Zone” coverage in a timely, synchronized manner.

In determining keys, the following definitions are needed for clarification purposes.

**STRENGTH OF THE FORMATION:** Determined by the number of eligible receivers outside the offensive tackles on each side of the formation. If there is no strong side, a balanced formation, strength is declared to the **L** side.

**SNAPSHOT AT THE SNAP:** The position of the receivers is determined by their location, whether set or in motion, when the ball is snapped. This is particularly significant if there is a receiver in motion.

**BACK IN THE BACKFIELD:** A player is in the backfield between the tackles at the snap. If the receiver is lined up outside the tackles, consider they are a receiver.

**TWINS:** Two receivers outside the offensive tackle on each side of the ball.

**TRIPS:** Three or more receivers outside the offensive tackle on the same side of the ball.

**QUADS:** Four receivers outside the tackle on the same side of the ball.

**PRESS COVERAGE:** When a defender lines up in a position that is close enough to touch the receiver when leaving the line of scrimmage.

Receivers are numbered from each sideline. The widest receiver on the **L** or the **H** side is #1. The second receiver is #2 and so on. If the two widest receivers are stacked, the one closest to the Line of Scrimmage is #1 and the receiver behind him is #2. **B**'s normal assignment is the #2 receiver on the strong side. **H** and **L** will have the #1 receiver to their side. When there is only one receiver on each side, **B** will key #1 on the **L** side and **L** will observe backs coming out of the backfield. When there are twins, **H** and **L** will have the #1 receiver to their side. **B**'s primary key is the #2 receiver on the **L** side. **B**'s secondary key is the receiver (#1 or #2) entering middle zone from the **H** side. **B** must observe primary key, then shift attention to secondary key as soon as possible.

When there are trips on one side, **H** and **L** will have the #1 receiver on their side. **B** is responsible for the #3 receiver. The #2 receiver is assigned based on how close they are to #1 or #3. If closer to #1, they belong to **H** or **L**. If closer to #3, the receiver belongs to **B**. When in question, the **L** will key #1 and #2. The sideline official opposite the trips will be responsible for #1 on their side and #2 if there is one. In trips formation, the officials must be prepared to go to zone quickly. The **R** will take the tackle on the trips side. When there are quads, the **B** and the sideline official to that side will work zone, with the sideline official covering the shallowest

routes and **B** covering the remaining vertical routes. The official on the other sideline has the lone receiver to that side.

If there is a motion back, strength may change by the motion back's location at the snap. Officials will take a 'snapshot' of the formation at the snap and key the appropriate receivers as indicated herein. Again, only count receivers who are outside the tackles at the snap. Sideline officials must be aware of all wide players to their side blocking back toward the ball (possible illegal block below waist, clip, etc.). The most highly skilled TASO officials will know not only which receiver is their key, but which officials are assigned to every receiver. The ability to identify keys instantaneously is developed through practice and experience.

## **ARTICLE 2: ASSIGNMENT AND BASIC KEYS**

**Referee:** Watch QB with responsibility for the tackle on opposite side while helping with the tackle on the near side.

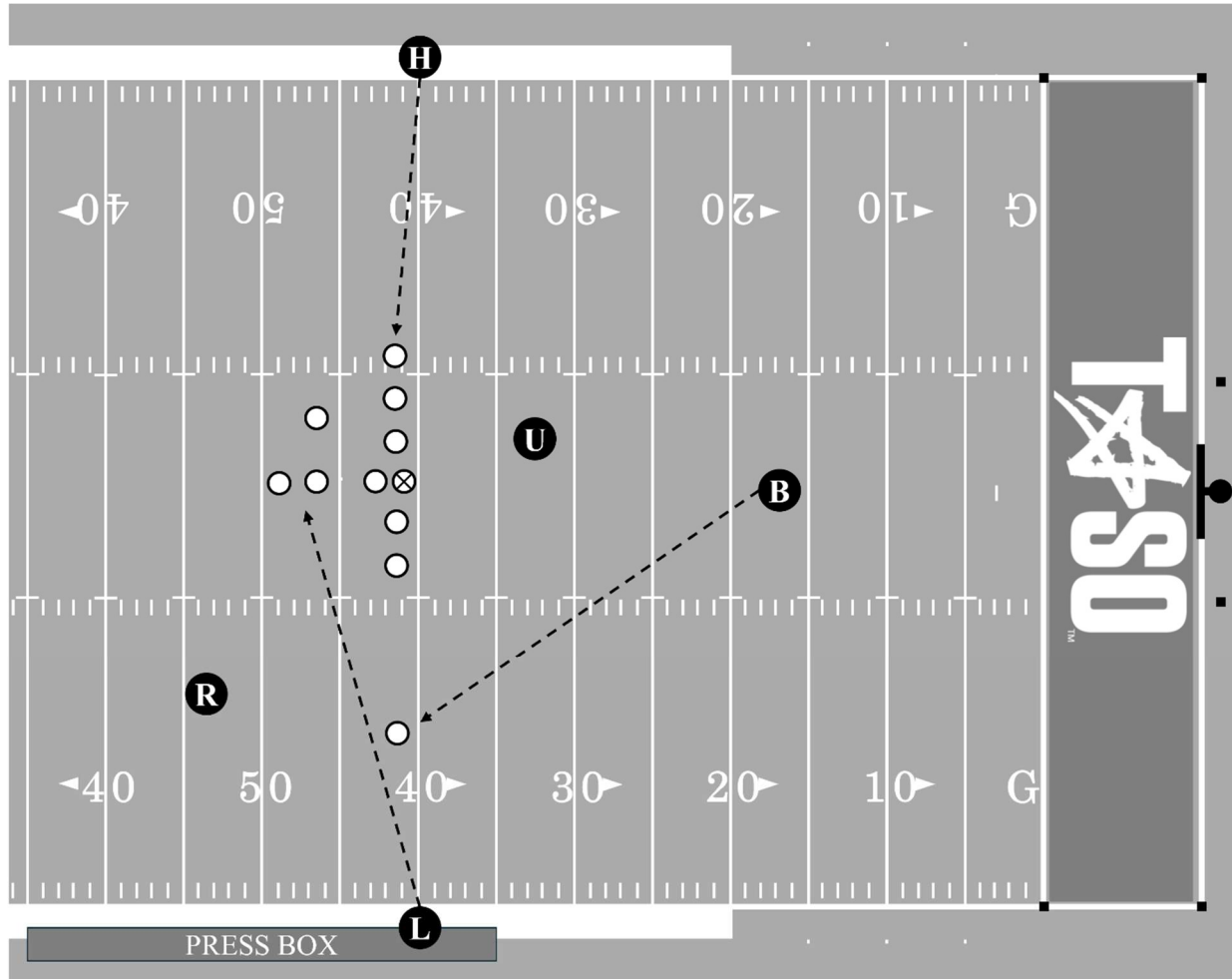
**Umpire:** Watch interior linemen. Keys are the snapper and two guards but help with tackles if obvious fouls are observed.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Watch the widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. If there is a third receiver outside the tackle box at the snap, the second eligible receiver to your side of the formation will be based on their position relative to the other receivers on that side. If you are on the weak side of the formation, you will have the second eligible receiver from your sideline. Your concern is not to double cover **B**'s assignment.

**Back Judge:** Based on the strength of the formation, and if there is a third receiver outside the tackle box at the snap. Normal assignment would be the second eligible receiver on the strong side of the field. If there is a third receiver to either side your key will switch to the third, with responsibility for #2 based on their position relative to the other receivers on that side. In a balanced formation, the strong side is determined to be the **L** side. Initial pre-snap position should favor the strong side of the field. This will assist **H** and **L** in determining their keys.

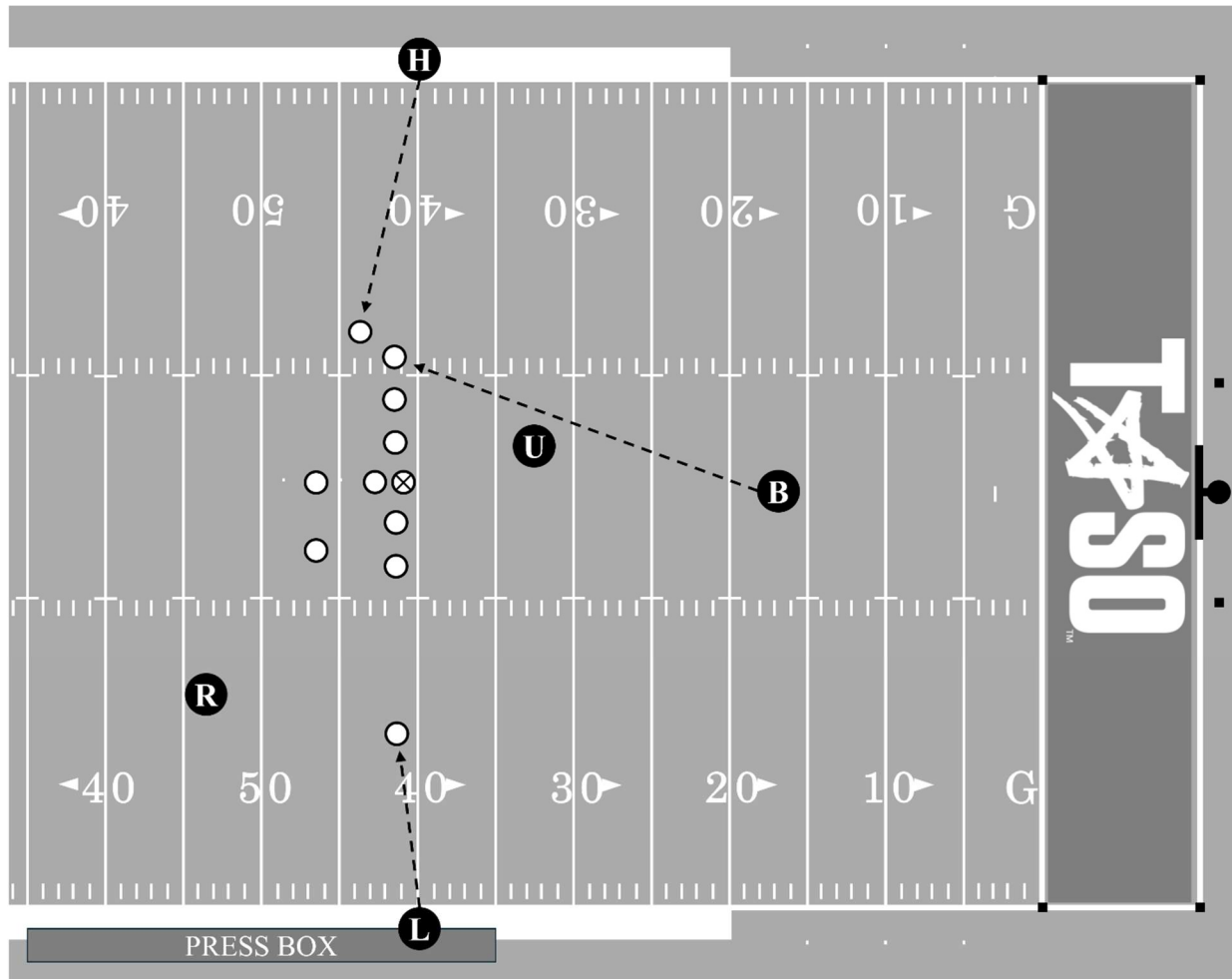
**All:** After the snap do not release too quickly in assuming zone responsibility.

## ONE RECEIVER TO EACH SIDE (BALANCED FORMATION)



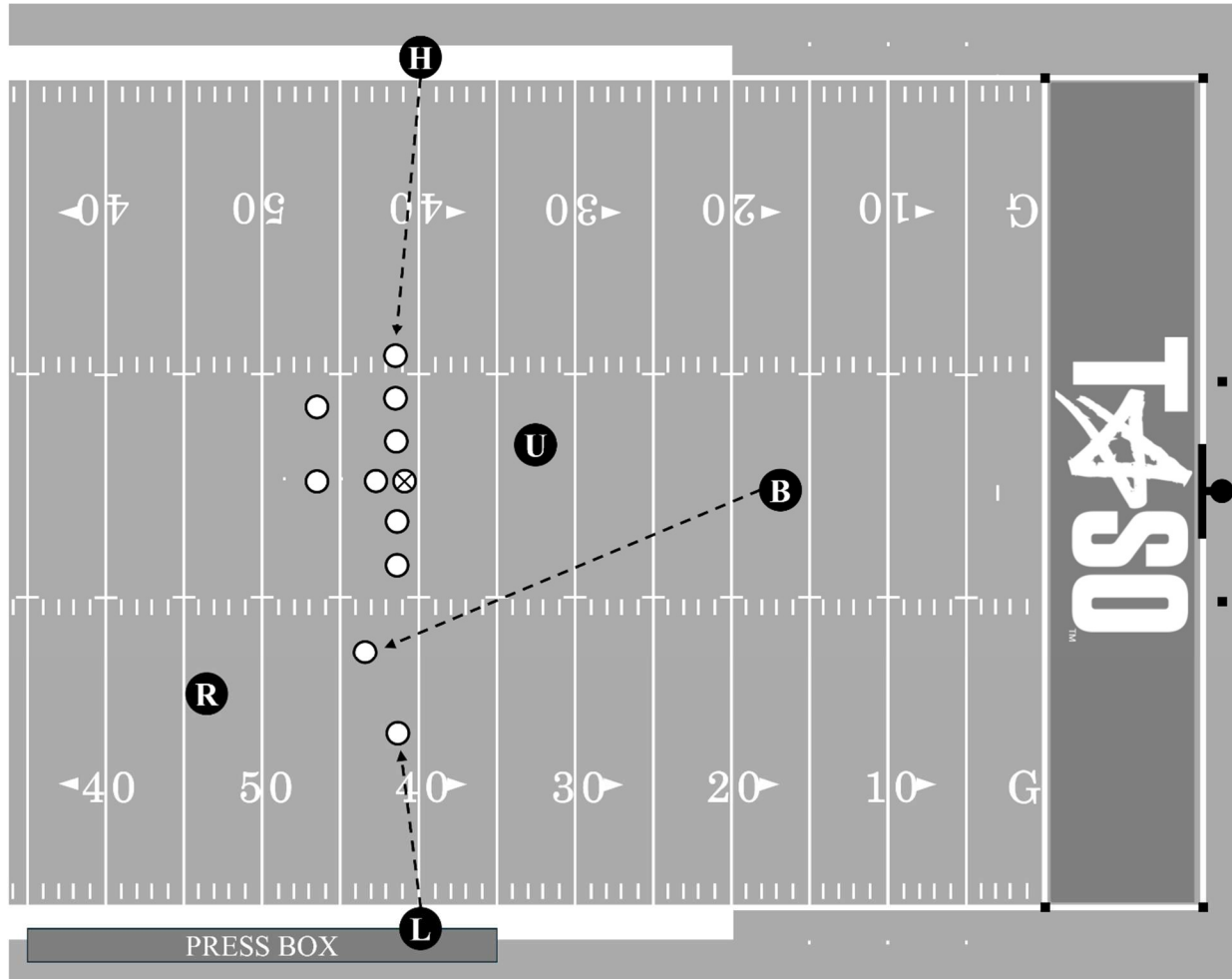
Balanced formation, strength is declared to **L** side. **B** has the end on the **L** side. **L** has no receiver but is responsible for backs leaving the backfield. **H** is responsible for initial action on or by the end on the **H** side.

## STRENGTH TO THE HEAD LINE JUDGE SIDE



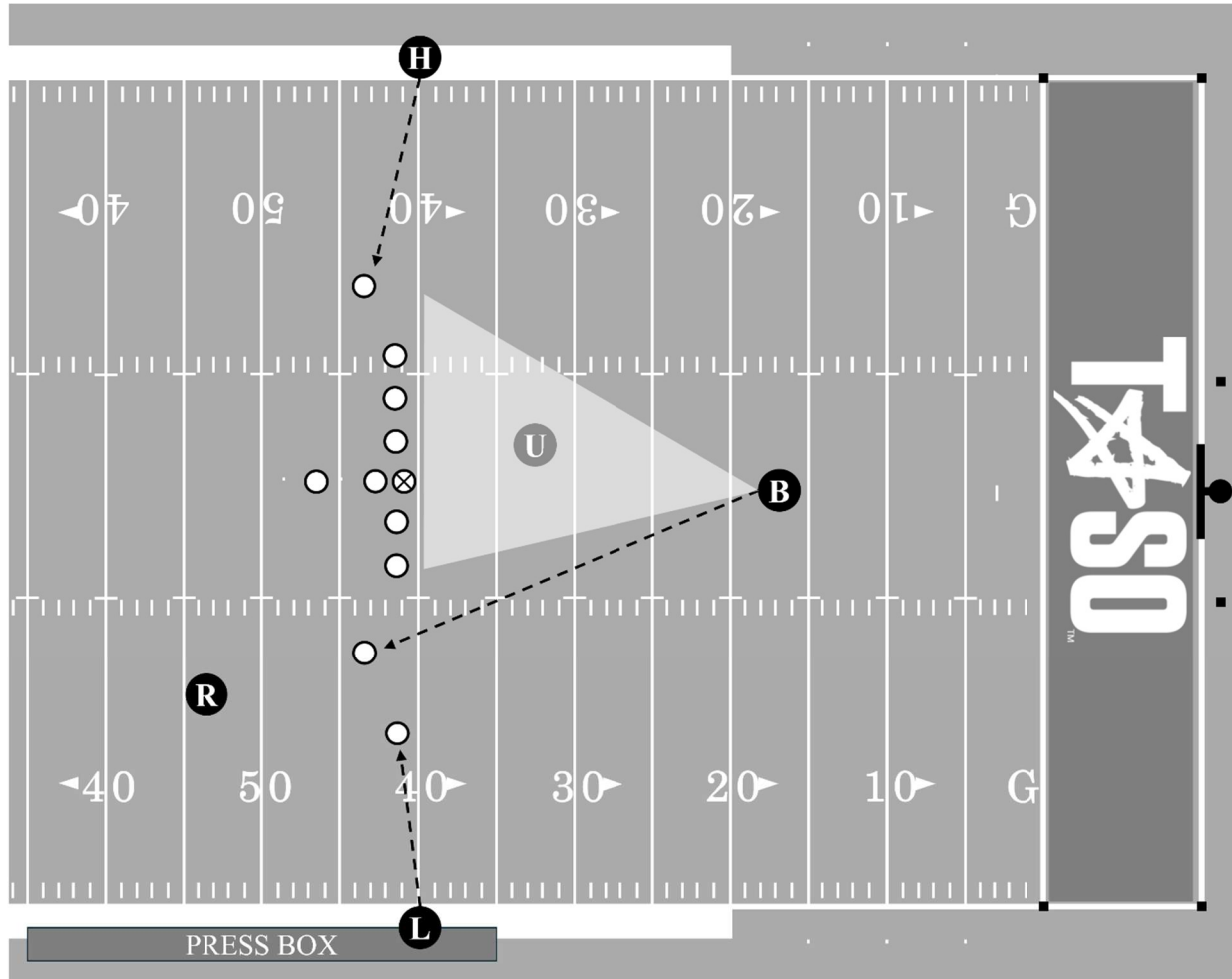
When the formation is as above, strength is declared to the **H** side. **H** has the #1 receiver on that side while **B** has the #2 receiver. **L** is responsible for initial action on or by the end on that side.

## STRENGTH TO LINE THE JUDGE SIDE



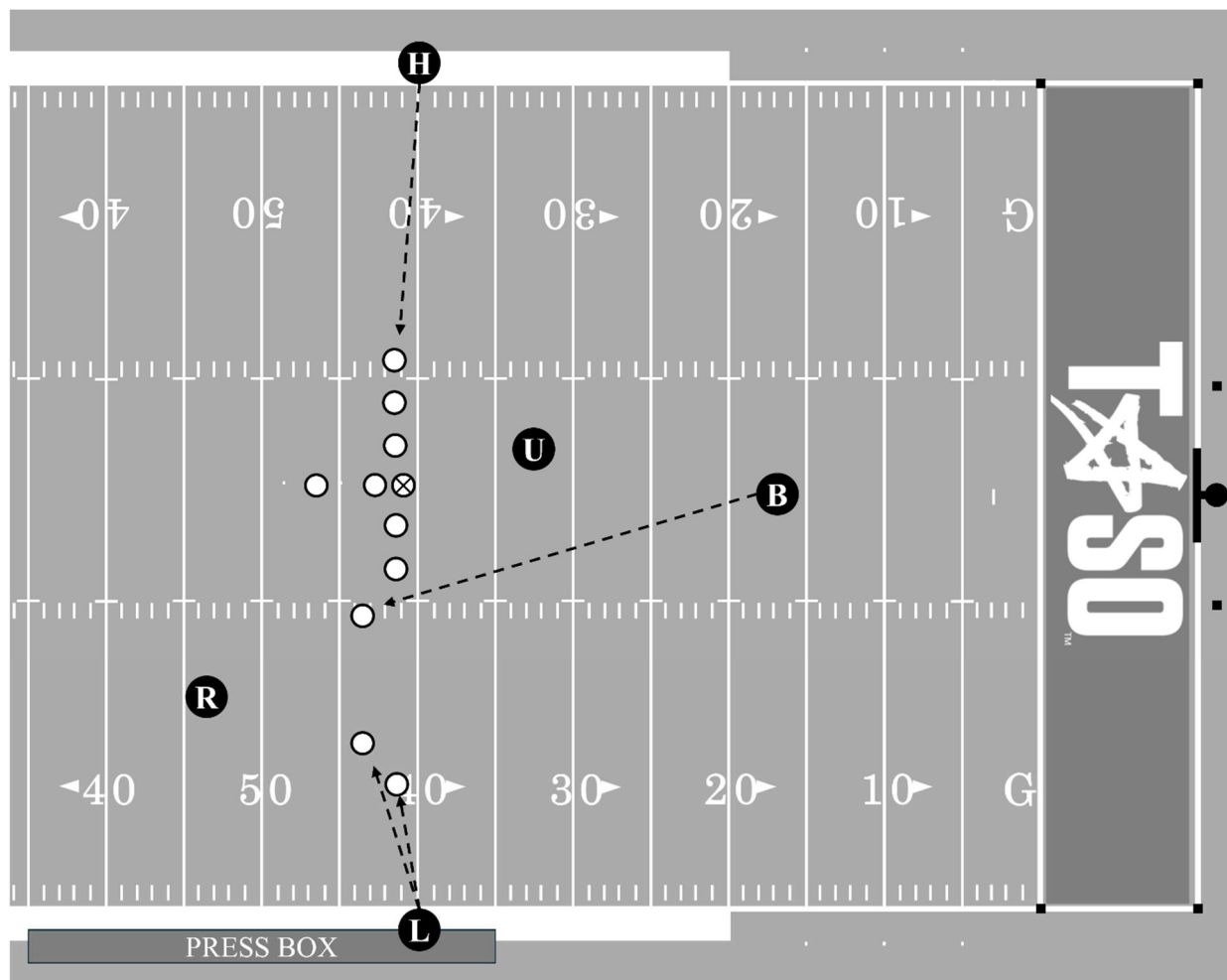
When the formation is as above, strength is declared to the **L** side. **L** has the #1 receiver to that side while **B** has the #2 receiver. **H** is responsible for initial action on or by the receiver on that side.

## TWINS (TWO RECEIVERS TO EACH SIDE)



When the formation is as above, the formation is “balanced”, and the strength is declared to the **L** side. **H** and **L** will have the #1 receiver to their side. **B**’s primary key is the #2 receiver on the **L** side with the secondary key as the receiver (#1 or #2) entering middle zone from the **H** side. **B** must observe primary key, then shift attention to secondary key as soon as possible.

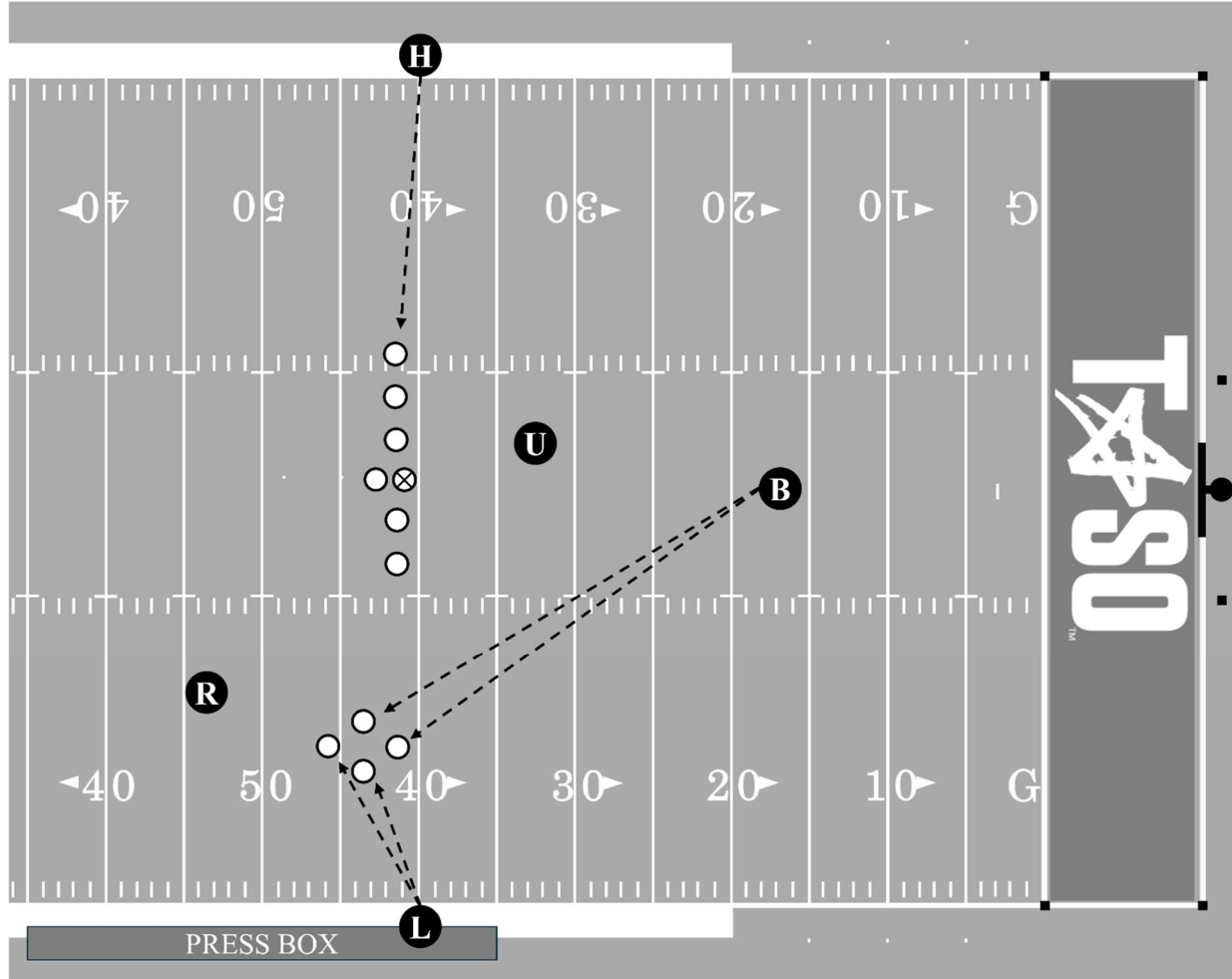
## TRIPS (THREE RECEIVERS ON ONE SIDE)



When there are trips on one side, **H** and **L** will have the #1 receiver on their side. **B** is responsible for the #3 receiver. The #2 receiver is assigned based on how close they are to #1 or #3. If closer to #1, they belong to **H** or **L**. If closer to #3, the receiver belongs to **B**. When in question, the **L** will key #1 and #2. The sideline official opposite the trips will be responsible for #1 on their side and #2 if there is one. In trips formation, the officials must be prepared to go to zone quickly. The **R** will take the tackle on the trips side. In trips formation, the officials must be prepared to go to zone quickly.

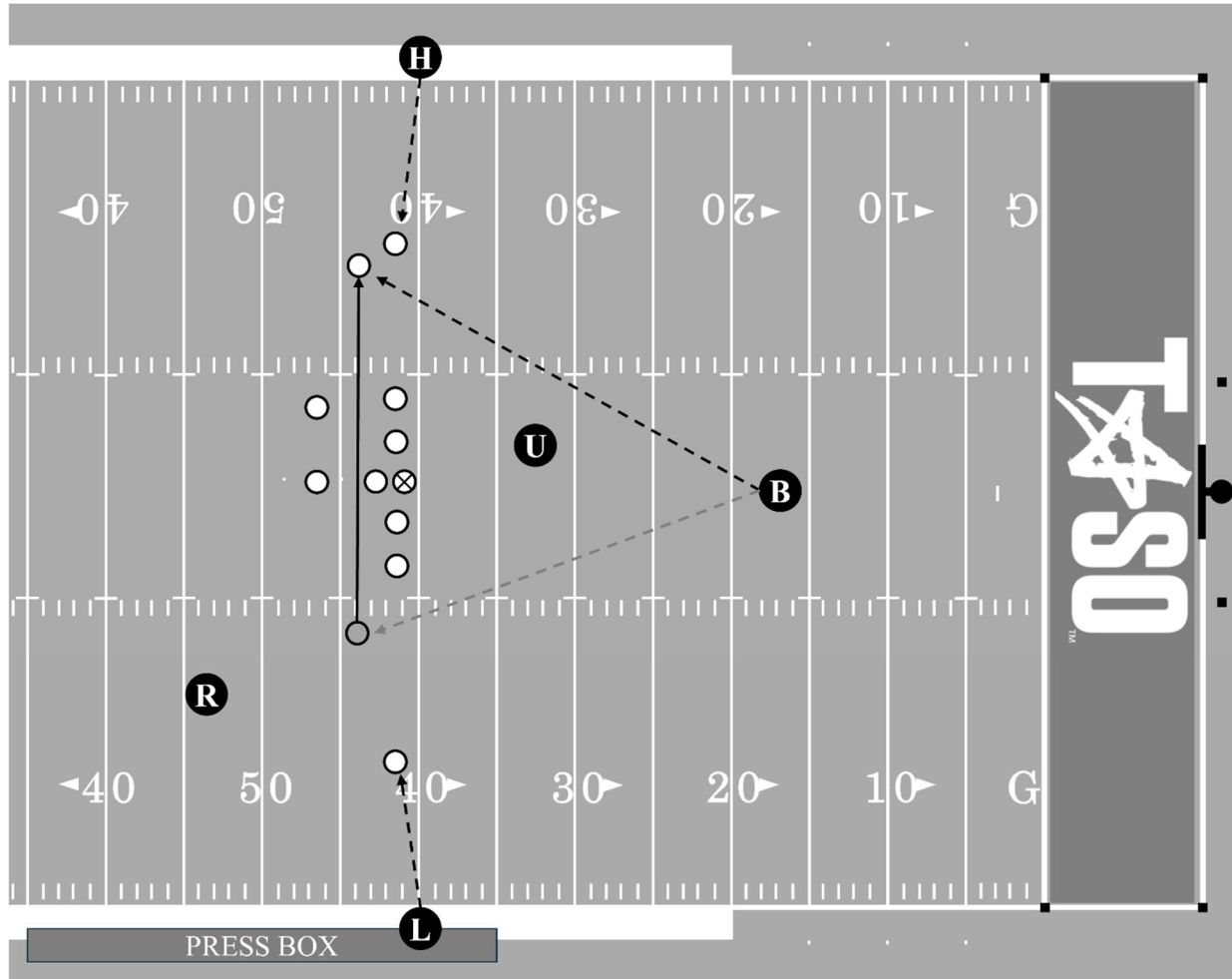


## FOUR RECEIVER SETS



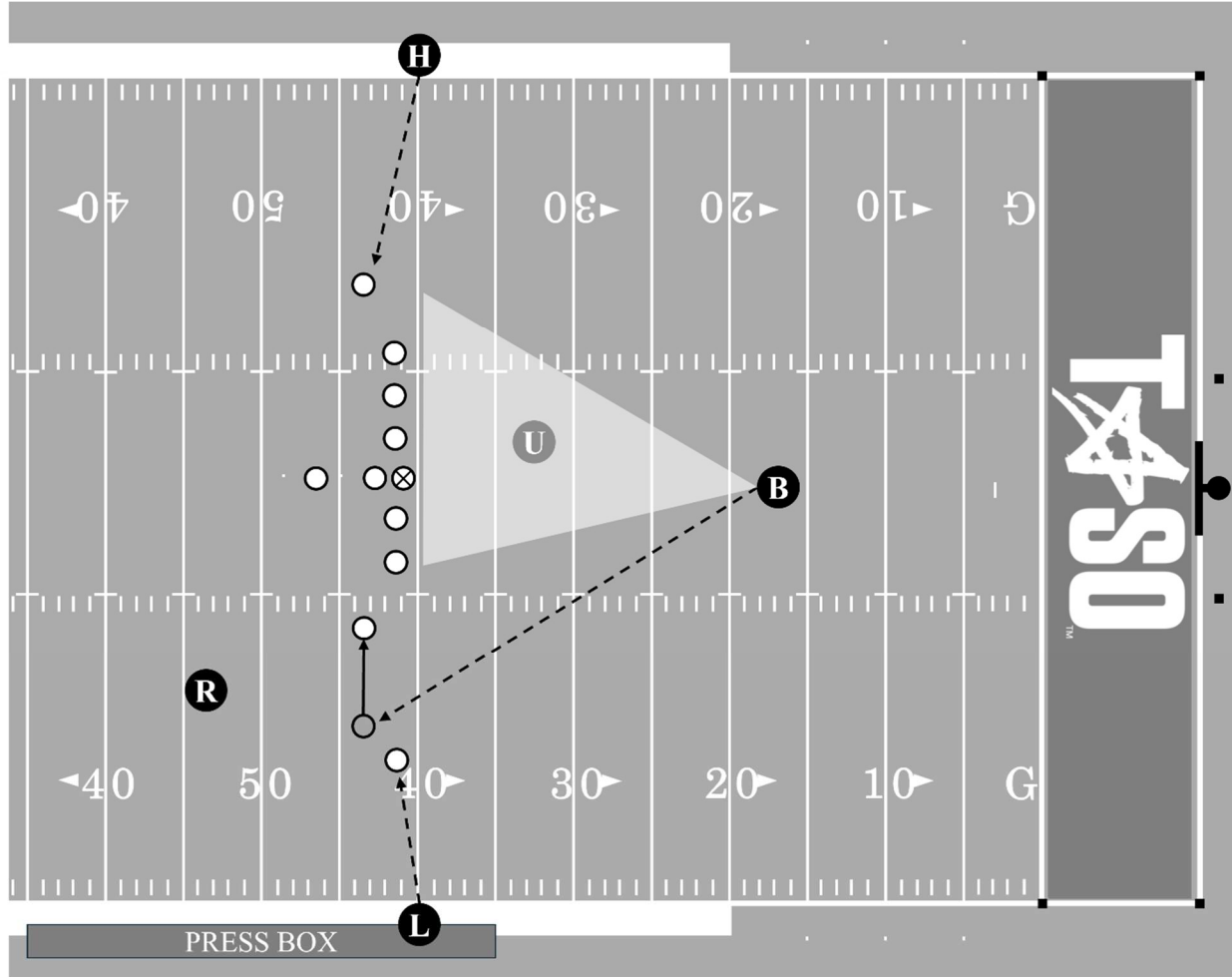
When there are quads, the official to that sideline has the two outside and/or back receivers. **B** has the two inside/frontmost receivers. It is important to go to zone very quickly. Both **B** and the sideline official must know what all four receivers do during the play. Receivers who run deep routes become the responsibility of **B**. Receivers who go across the middle become the responsibility of the sideline official (**L** in the example). The sideline official will cover the shallowest routes while **B** covers the remaining vertical routes. The official on the opposite sideline (**H** in the example) has the lone receiver to that side.

## MOTION WHICH CHANGES STRENGTH



When a back is in motion, as illustrated above, strength and keys may or may not change. Officials will determine their keys based on the position of the eligible receivers when the ball is snapped. In the example above, the formation began as *TWINS* (with strength declared to **L** side.) When the receiver in motion is between the tackles the strength changes to the **H** side. **B**'s key becomes the #2 receiver on the **H** side. If the receiver in motion continues to the **H** side and is outside the tackle when the ball is snapped, the formation becomes *TRIPS* to the **H** side. The officials must know their keys well enough to adjust instantaneously.

## MOTION WHICH DOES NOT CHANGE STRENGTH



In the example above, the formation began as *TWINS* (with strength declared to the **L** side). If the ball is snapped before the receiver in motion is between the tackles, the formation remains unchanged.

### ARTICLE 3. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A FORWARD PASS PLAY

**Referee:** Original position will be on the throwing arm side of the QB, (12-14 yards deep and 12-14 yards wide from the original position of the ball). Observe the tackle on your side immediately following the snap. The opposite side tackle then becomes your primary once QB has dropped back into a passing position. Observe action behind the line. When you read pass, back out from your original position at a 45-degree angle. Observe drop back blockers in your vision and QB or passer who is your responsibility until there is no threat of a foul. When the passer retreats, remain wide and deep to keep the play in front of you. Ensure that the passer is not roughed, thrown roughly to the ground or forcibly contacted to the head or neck area. Verbally alert defender(s) when passer has released the ball. Rule on the legality of forward pass thrown (when the passer releases the ball) by moving to that spot of the pass beyond or behind the neutral zone, or out of bounds on run/pass option. Coordinate with the **H** or **L** on quick passes (forward or backward) that are thrown right at the wing officials. Check with downfield

officials on the results of the play. Rule on intentional grounding, marking the spot of the pass with your bean bag and consulting other crew members on the position of eligible receivers.

**Umpire:** Observe ineligible interior linemen and legality of numbers, being mindful of ineligibles down field. When you read forward pass move toward the line of scrimmage. Be aware of draws and drag patterns. Know whether a forward pass crosses the neutral zone. Pivot on low trajectory and short passes and move toward area where pass is headed. Assist with the ruling on trapped passes. Must know the lateral position of the ball on the field if the pass is incomplete. Continue to observe your area of responsibility if there is a threat of action. Then, cover continuing action around the runner in the side zone. Assist the **R**, **H**, and **L** in determining legality of forward pass, if possible. Primarily responsible for legal pass when the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 5-yard line. Use legal touching signal [S11] when appropriate. Assist **R** in determining the legality of forward passer.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Assist **U** in checking the legality of numbers of interior offensive linemen. Check the legality of positions for players with eligible numbers. In addition to watching keys, help rule on whether a pass is caught or touched at/behind or beyond the neutral zone and whether linemen are illegally downfield, particularly if the play is away from you and they are behind the **U**. After initial charge of linemen, move into position to check blocking and contact of eligible receivers and linebackers. Determine whether a quick pass thrown toward you is forward or backward and signal, by extending one arm horizontally in the direction of the passing team's goal line, if the pass is ruled backward [SO2]. Drift downfield cautiously for the first 5-7 yards, approximately halfway between flat zone and deepest receiver. If the line to gain is less than 7 yards down field, the ideal position is to set up on the line to gain. While pass is in flight, move to the most advantageous position to judge the play. Observe action on players other than the pass receiver if the pass is thrown out of your area. If the receiver is driven backward after the catch, the opposite sideline official should assist in marking the forward progress spot. Always be prepared to come back to rule on play near the neutral zone in addition to sideline action. Observing the wide initial position is helpful in covering any pass. Hold the line of scrimmage on flair passes to your side. Be aware of wide outs who stay at or near the line of scrimmage after the snap, a "jailbreak" screen could be coming. When your key is no longer threatened, go to zone coverage. If potential passer decides to run, you must cover him beyond the neutral zone. The sideline from endline to endline is your responsibility.

After an incompletion, obtain a ball from the Ball Assistant and form a relay to return the ball to official nearest the previous spot. If an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns to the ground out of bounds, after giving the incomplete signal, the covering official may, with both arms, give a sweeping motion toward out of bounds.

**Back Judge:** Assume basic responsibilities prior to the snap as on running plays. Cover plays from behind deepest receivers. Initial focus on your key(s) as they leave the Line of Scrimmage. Once receivers are no longer threatened at the Line of Scrimmage, transition quickly into zone coverage. Bracket pass receivers between yourself and either **H** or **L**, depending on location. Once the player in motion has cleared the tackle, responsibilities for the player in motion will be determined by the location of the player at the snap. If a player goes in motion between the tackles and never leaves the tackle box, officiate the play as if there is no motion. Take end line

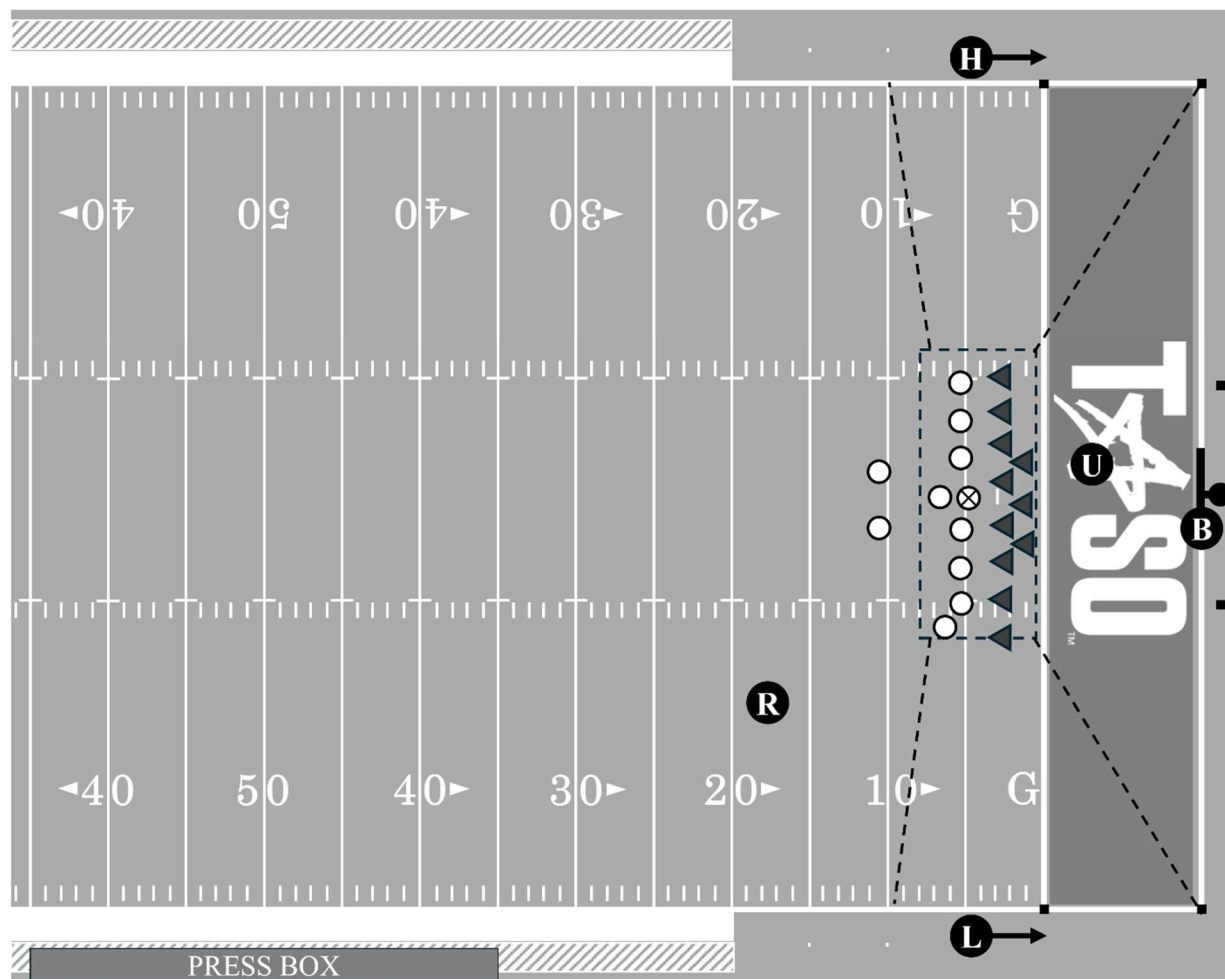
responsibility. Rule on pass receptions in your area. Always maintain the inside out look. Go to the football when it is thrown in your area and clean up from sideline to sideline when the ball becomes dead near or outside the sideline. Do not set up too shallow. This interferes with pass patterns, and you can always move in much better than you can back pedal or sidestep. Be aware of a “pick” on forward pass plays, particularly when the ball is inside the 20-yard line. Watch player activity removed from the ball carrier, especially on wide-open plays. On long pass receptions; rule on goal line plays.

**All:** Be alert to eligible receivers out of bounds and for an illegal pass (especially after completion). Observe touching or catching by an ineligible player. Watch for holding or illegal checking of eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown. Observe action when opposing players contest for the pass. When ruling on a pass reception involving the sideline, only the signal governing the action should be used. The incomplete signal [S10] shall be used if pass is ruled incomplete or the timeout signal [S3] if ruled complete. **Note 1:** If an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns to the ground out of bounds, after giving the incomplete signal the covering official may, with both arms, give a sweeping motion toward out of bounds. **Note 2:** If an airborne player receives a pass inbounds and first returns to the ground inbounds not in control of the ball, and touches out of bounds, after giving the incomplete signal the covering official may, with both arms, give a “bobbling” signal (both hands extended out from the body, palms up, alternating pumping arms up and down). Watch for fouls by blockers leading the runner and for fouls after the ball is declared dead. Continue to observe your area of responsibility while there is a threat of action.

After an incomplete pass form a relay to return the ball to the official nearest the previous spot. Be sure the results of pass plays are properly communicated to **R**. Make sure all action has cleared before getting a new ball. When contact occurs on a pass that is un-catchable and the covering official does not drop a penalty marker, the covering official will give the un-catchable pass signal after giving the incomplete pass signal [S17] & [S10]. When the ball is airborne the covering official should focus on the spot where the pass is headed, and other officials prepared to help when needed. When there is a change of team possession, immediately switch to reverse mechanics to ensure proper coverage of the play and the goal line. On short yardage situations on third and fourth down inside Team B’s 20-yard line, be alert for keys running pick plays.

## SECTION 15. GOAL LINE PLAYS

### BASIC POSITIONS AND COVERAGE



Except when a field goal attempt is indicated on a try, the crew will assume positions as on any other short yardage down. See Section 17 for Field Goal Attempts.

#### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**Referee:** Execute position and coverage the same as for other scrimmage downs with forward progress usually determined by the sideline official. Do not back up other officials' TD signals.

**Umpire:** Know ineligible. Do not be as deep as for other scrimmage plays. When the runner has made a quick thrust into the line, move quickly to the dead ball pile and ensure the ball is not moved forward after it is declared dead. When the ball is snapped on or inside the 5-yard line, assume primary responsibility for ruling on passer beyond the neutral zone. Be aware of the goal line and do not block the sideline officials' view. Never signal score but assist the H and L, verbally or visually, if necessary.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Initial position must be wide, out of bounds, off the sideline. When the ball is snapped between B's 10 and 5-yard lines, **H** and **L** release slowly downfield at the snap and staying ahead of the runner all the way to the goal line. When the ball is snapped at or inside B's 5-yard line (going in) move to the goal line at the snap. The one exception is when the line to gain is between you and the goal line. In that instance, go to the line to gain and be prepared to move quickly to the goal line. Move toward the goal line and rule on the score or an accurate forward progress spot when you see the ball. If the ball's forward progress is short of the goal line, move in on the ball mark and hold the dead-ball spot until ball is spotted for the next play **Communicate and think Goal Line. You must be on the goal line to rule on a score.** Be alert for a forward pass.

Use "**Reverse Goal Line**" mechanics to provide goal line coverage when Team A snaps the ball on or behind its 3-yard line. At the snap, move immediately to the goal line. When snapped between A's 3 and 10-yard line, **L** will hold the line of scrimmage, and **H** will read the play and react to the goal line, if necessary. Be alert for fumbles and players who provide impetus for the ball being in the end zone.

**Back Judge:** When the ball is snapped outside B's 25-yard line, take position as in normal scrimmage plays. Ordinarily need not be as deep as for other scrimmage plays. When the ball is snapped between B's 20 and 10-yard lines, take your initial position on the goal line. If snap is from on or inside the 10-yard line, initial position is on the end line. Assume complete responsibility for end line coverage. In short yardage situations, i.e., running plays, be alert for illegal activities in the fringe areas. If in doubt on a close play, defer to the official facing the receiver.

**All:** Aid in pileups where runner or ball is not visible. Let the nearest official dig out the ball and indicate touchdown if appropriate. Stop the clock when appropriate. Be alert for ball fumbled through the end zone or out of bounds. Indicate score by touchdown signal [S5] only when in position to see and positive that the requirements are met. Communication between officials in this situation is most important. Do not let a fellow official make a mistake.





position on the end line and remind the kicker of the end line prior to the snap. Adjust to the situation. Count Team A players and give the appropriate signal to **U**. If Team A rushes substitutes onto the field, ensure the defense has an opportunity to match. **U** should cover the ball or stand near the snapper, preventing the snap, until motioned off by the **R**. Be alert for delay by the kicking team to confuse the opponent. When it is obvious a kick will take place and there is not a player 10 or more yards behind the neutral zone, there is a player aligned within the frame of the snapper, or aligned in the clear path from the snapper to the kicker, the **R** will place an open hand on chest [SO18], indicating to the **U** that Team A is not in a legal scrimmage kick formation.

**Umpire:** Adjust positioning 8-10 yards deep. Know the ineligible. Count Team A players and give appropriate signal to the **R**. Be alert for **R** giving the substitution signal. When seeing the signal, cover the ball or stand near the snapper, preventing the snap, until motioned off by the **R**. Move quickly to your position. Be aware of disconcerting signals as well as quick and abrupt movement by the defense.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Take basic positions and officiate as on scrimmage plays. Count the team on your sideline. Read offensive formation and know your offensive player responsibilities.

**Back Judge:** Take a position slightly behind and at the side of the deepest receiver. (*Note:* If you observe two receivers, do not split the receivers.) Read the offensive formation and know your offensive player responsibilities. Count Team B players. Be responsible for the play clock.

### ARTICLE 3. DUTIES AFTER THE SNAP

**Referee:** Watch blocking and illegal action by players behind the line. Observe action by and against the kicker. Observe players and clean-up action while proceeding slowly down field if the kick remains inbounds. If the flight of the kick is toward a sideline, move quickly to a position in line with the flight, use arm signals to direct covering official to the out of bounds spot when appropriate. When correctly aligned, drop your arm to indicate that the official hold that spot until ball is spotted for next down. Focus should remain with the kicker throughout the down. If the kick is caught or recovered down field, be prepared to take over the runner if the covering official is out of the play. Give the tipped signal [S11] if the ball is tipped, and alert players vocally that the kick has been made.

**Umpire:** Look down the line at initial charge, checking blocks of Team A and action by Team B players. Observe Team B players lined up near the snapper. Be particularly conscious of illegal acts against the snapper. Remind Team B players to avoid illegal action against the snapper. Be alert for holding and pull and shoot action by B players. After action in the line has cleared, move toward the return area to observe the middle area of the field for illegal action by players of either team. Don't hesitate to call a foul that occurs away from your position if you are certain a foul occurred and if it is your responsibility to be cleanup.

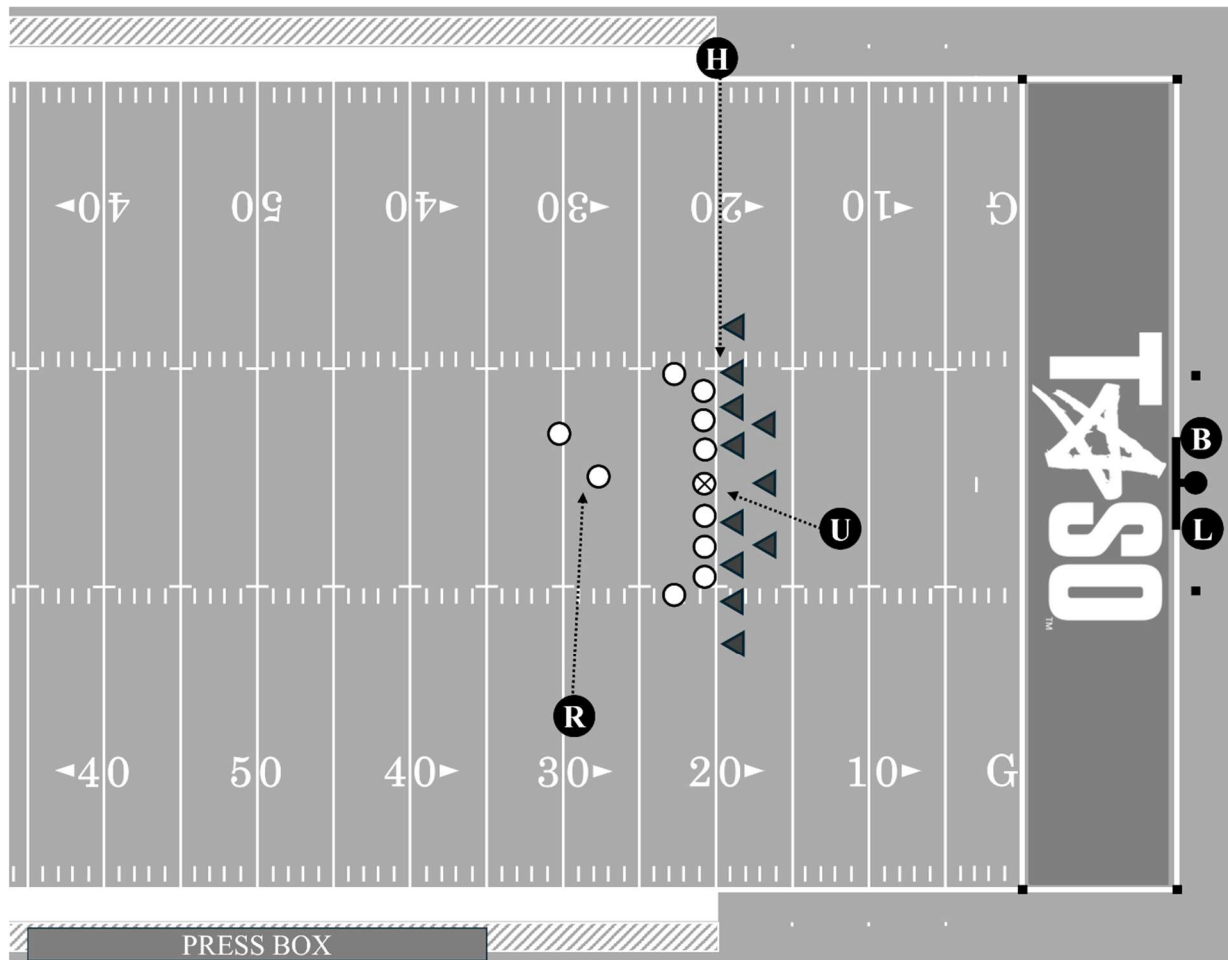
**Head Line Judge:** Assist **R** with errant snaps and blocked kicks, recovery and possible advancement. When the kick has clearly crossed and will not threaten the neutral zone, release and move downfield.

**Line Judge:** Stay on the line until it is apparent there will be a kick, then immediately move downfield in an easy run, covering that side between the neutral zone and the deep receiver(s). Assist **B** with out of bounds spot if the kick is short and on your side. Mark and hold the out of bounds spot of a rolling kick on your side. Be alert to, and accept, **R**'s signal in spotting out of bounds kick in flight.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** After initial line charge, observe offensive backs for holding, and defensive holding in the line area. During the kick, observe action on and by the gunners (Team A players charging the receiver) and receivers positioned close to the line of scrimmage. If the kick is short to your side, observe first touching, legal or illegal, kick catch interference and valid or invalid signals for a fair catch. Maintain position to cover in front of the runner after catch or recovery of the kick. Continue coverage until the runner cuts toward the opposite side or, if on your side, is picked up by you. You have responsibility for the entire sideline, endline to endline, on your side. When the ball is not in your area, take a position to observe action in your area ahead of the runner. When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe action in your area ahead of the runner. Mark and hold out of bounds spot of rolling kick on your side. Be alert to cover and accept **R**'s signal in spotting out of bounds kick in flight.

**Back Judge:** Move into position to rule on validity of catch or signals, ruling on Kick Catch Interference. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field the kick. Be in position to rule on the legality of hand-offs. Responsible for marking the end of the kick with your bean bag from sideline to sideline. Cover the ball carrier until another official assumes responsibility in their zone. Rule on plays on the ball in the end zone. Be alert for a batting violation. If kick is short to either sideline, the sideline official will assume responsibility for the ball. Observe action in front of the ball. On all other kicks cover the receiver, taking a position ahead of the receiver if possible. If the receiver fails to catch the ball, rule on action by or on the receiver who signaled for a fair catch. Observe first touching, interference, and fair catch situations. Cover kicks on ground or in air. If in doubt as to spot of out of bounds kick in the air, raise hand and **R** will assist. If there are any questions regarding the covering official, communicate verbally. **B** is primarily responsible for ruling on fair catch signals in their area. **L** and **H** observe other actions surrounding the ball. If the player signaling fair catch does not touch the ball, **L** and **H** must observe legality of their actions until the ball becomes dead. Be ready to rule on a kick in the end zone.

## SECTION 17. TRY AND FIELD GOAL PLAYS



### ARTICLE 1. BASIC POSITIONS AND COVERAGE

**Referee:** On a Try or field goal, take a position even with, and 10 yards wide of the potential kicker on the **L** side, facing the holder. When it is obvious a kick will take place and a potential holder and potential kicker are not seven or more yards behind the neutral zone, there is a player aligned within the frame of the snapper, or aligned in the clear path from the snapper to the holder, the **R** will place an open hand on the chest [SO18], indicating to the **U** that Team A is not in a legal scrimmage kick formation. From this position observe the motion of the backs within line of vision and cover as usual if a run or pass develops. Responsible for sideline coverage if run develops to **L** vacated side. Signal score after being positive that requirements are met. Responsible for action on the kicker and/or holder.

**Umpire:** Adjust depth based on field position and line-up approximately five yards deep, observing line play and defensive action on the snapper. Observe defensive linemen over snapper (that is not on the end of the line) and be aware of any illegal action against them. Be alert to any illegal action by Team B players that are not stationary within one yard of their line scrimmage and in a 3- or 4-point stance. Be aware of the pull and shoot. Assist in goal line coverage if run develops to **L**'s vacated side.

**Head Line Judge:** Take regular position on the sideline observing the legality of the snap and the entire neutral zone. Responsible for the sideline from end line to end line. Cover plays on short field goal and Try attempts. Be alert for fake field goal attempts, being in position as usual. Stay at the line of scrimmage until the ball has crossed the neutral zone. Move into the backfield on blocked kicks and bad snaps to assist **R**. Quickly move to the goal line if a run develops and the goal line is threatened. Close once the ball is kicked, travels beyond the neutral zone and is dead by rule, talking to players on both teams to make sure there is no extra-curricular activity after the play.

**Line Judge/Back Judge:** Take positions inside the limit line to look up the upright on your side of the field. Rule on success or failure of field goal attempts. Official nearest ball rules on the play. Both officials will signal when a kick is successful. When the ball is wide to **L** upright, only **L** will signal the unsuccessful kick. When it is **B**'s responsibility to rule on the upright on their side and the crossbar and the kick is unsuccessful, only **B** will signal the unsuccessful kick. Break out into positions to cover play in the end zone or short field goal and Try attempts. Communicate verbally with each other. (**Note:** When the field goal or try attempt narrowly passes outside an upright, the official nearer the ball may give a sweeping motion with both arms away from the upright.) Be alert for fake field goal attempts and be ready to cover passes, runs and even the goal line. Watch for illegal touching or batting of the ball. Be alert for the ball striking an upright or crossbar. If the ball strikes the crossbar, **B** is responsible for the ruling.

**Line Judge:** If the run develops to your vacated side, quickly move along the end line to the back pylon to rule on the sideline. Next move is toward the goal line to assist. If run situations develop to the **L** side, **L** has primary sideline responsibility with **R**'s assistance. If the attempt is short and the ball remains alive, officiate as a scrimmage kick.

**Back Judge:** If run develops, move to the goal line to assist in ruling. If an attempt is short and the ball remains alive, officiate as a scrimmage kick. Sound whistle when the ball becomes dead on attempted field goals and kick tries. Responsible for the play clock.

**All:** Officiate all try downs as a normal scrimmage down and do not sound whistle until ball is dead. Be alert for runbacks. Assist each other in getting the ball spotted for next down.

## ARTICLE 2. SWINGING GATE FORMATION

**All:** If the kicking team's initial formation is the "Swinging Gate" with no kicker and holder, take your normal scrimmage down position until the team shifts into a legal scrimmage kick formation. If the kicking team originally lines up in scrimmage kick formation and then shifts to another formation, move directly toward your normal scrimmage play position.

When Team A lines up in a Swinging Gate formation but there is a kicker and holder, crew members should take original positions as for a normal kicking down. The **U** should adjust to a position in front of the snapper. If the team shifts to a normal kicking formation, the **U** will adjust to normal kick positions.

## SECTION 18. FUMBLES

### ARTICLE 1. SIGNALS

**Covering Official:** Point in the proper direction no matter who recovers. If a change of possession occurs stop the clock.

**Referee:** Signal the next down if the fumbling team recovers or direction if the opponent of the fumbling team recovers.

**All:** Make sure the clock stops if an opponent recovers.

### ARTICLE 2. MARKING SPOT WITH A BEAN BAG

**All:** Mark the spot of the fumble by dropping a bean bag on the corresponding yard line. Make sure players or other game participants do not move the bag.

### ARTICLE 3. DIGGING OUT FUMBLES

**All:** Should it become necessary to “dig it out,” the nearest official should dig for the ball, the next official to the area should signal to stop the clock and look at the clock to ensure it is stopped. The stop the clock signal [S3] should be relayed by the remainder of the crew. When possession has been determined, the digging official should verbally relay possession information to the nearest standing official, normally the **R**, who will then signal the proper direction. If possible, the signaling official will point to the recovering player to assist the press box. Only **R**, if not the signaling official, should relay the direction signal. See Section 8 for bean bag mechanics on fumbles.

### ARTICLE 4. FUMBLES OUT OF BOUNDS

**Covering Official:** Mark the out of bounds spot by dropping the bean bag and continue to officiate the out of bounds action. Be prepared to rule if the action is in fact a forward fumble or an illegal forward pass. Confer with fellow sideline official if any doubt exists.

**All:** Know what action caused the fumble to go out of bounds (ball touches ground, player, equipment or other participant that is out of bounds).

**Referee/Umpire:** Spot the ball by rule following the out of bounds action.

## SECTION 19. TIMEOUTS

### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**Referee:** Indicate a full length charged timeout by facing the press box, give timeout signal then extend one arm in pointing fashion, horizontally, in the direction of the requesting team. Indicate a third charged timeout by following this signal with three tugs on an imaginary steam whistle. If **R** has a field microphone, announce the team calling the timeout has taken their third and final timeout of the half in lieu of the steam whistle pull signal. Confirm the number of timeouts remaining for each team and the playing time remaining in the period with **U** and relay to other officials.

**Umpire:** Take charge of the ball and confirm number of timeouts left for each team. Confirm ready for play whistle with **R**. Do not allow Team A to snap the ball if Team B is not ready (delay of game) after being notified.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Notify a coach from the team on your sideline of the number of timeouts remaining in the half, that they may not call another time-out during the current dead-ball period (if they called the current timeout) and of the remaining time in the period. Take a position halfway between your team and its team area and inform the coach of a ready-for-play signal.

**Back Judge:** Make sure the game clock is stopped. Time the timeout period. Coordinate Radio and TV breaks. Indicate that the timeout is over, and the teams should return to the field. This can be a hand signal, verbal signal or sounding of the whistle.

**All:** Record time left on clock and number of requesting player when charged team timeout is requested. When relaying the number of timeouts, relay the number the teams have remaining. Make sure the crew has the correct information on the number of timeouts remaining. Inform coaches on your sideline. Do not huddle unless necessary.

### ARTICLE 2. REFEREE TIMEOUTS

**Referee:** Signal timeout, then indicate **R**'s timeout by tapping chest with both hands. Stay at the ball. Only **R** may stop the clock for a coach's conference. **R** will then go to the requesting coach's sideline accompanied by another official. If the reason for requesting a coach conference is not correct, the team will be charged with a timeout. After the timeout has been charged to the coach, the procedure for a team timeout will be carried out. This includes a full-time allotment. Signal timeout when Team A is awarded first down. Declare ball ready for play as soon as need for the timeout has been met.

**All:** Signal timeout and carry out the usual duties. When either team is in possession of the ball in advance of the line to gain, the covering official indicates timeout. If the game is disrupted for any reason, record down, team in possession, position of the ball and time remaining in the game.

### ARTICLE 3. INJURY TIMEOUTS

**All:** Same as free timeout. Permit as much time as is necessary. **The safety of injured players is**



**most important.** Use the “stop the clock” signal [S3] followed with tapping hands-on chest. Do not allow players to assist teammates but direct that they wait for trained staff.

**Referee:** Permit water attendants to tend to their teams on the field during extended injury timeouts. If appropriate, send players to sidelines. Make notes with **U** for an incident report if the injury qualifies for a report.

#### **ARTICLE 4. VARSITY GAME TWO-MINUTE TIMEOUT**

**Referee:** During the second and fourth periods, the clock shall be stopped for an official’s timeout at 2:00 when the ball is dead. When the ball is live, the covering official will stop the clock when the ball is declared dead and the clock is at 2:00 or under. **R** will then face the press box and announce, “two-minute timeout.”

**All:** The crew will meet in the center of the field and discuss the following items.

- Number of timeouts remaining for each team
- “Under two” timing rules
- 10 second runoff is applicable
  - Foul that causes the clock to stop immediately
  - Player injury
  - Player helmet off (not if the result of a foul)
- Clock status option of RFP or snap for the offended team if tied or behind
- Be alert for a coach calling timeout
- QB needs 3 seconds on clock to spike the ball if clock starts on RFP

At the conclusion of the meeting, sideline officials will deliver the information to the Head Coach on their sideline and then encourage teams to take the field.

#### **ARTICLE 5. SUB-VARSITY GAME TWO-MINUTE TIMEOUT**

No timeout, but two-minute timing rules apply when the snap is at 2:00 or less.

## SECTION 20. MEASUREMENTS

### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**All:** Let **R** know that the dead ball spot is close to the line to gain. Let **R** determine the need for timeout for a measurement. Echo signal if **R** calls timeout.

**Referee:** When spotting the ball after each scrimmage down be sure there is no need for a measurement before announcing the down. If close, announce the down and be alert for either captain's request for measurement or, if unsure, call for a measurement without the captain's request. When the ball becomes dead in a side zone or out of bounds and a measurement should be at the dead ball spot, have the covering official place the ball at the proper spot. If short of a first down, use the forward point established on the chain when spotting the ball at the inbounds line. If an alternate game ball is available following the measurement, leave the ball in the side zone until an alternate ball is placed at a corresponding inbounds spot. See that the **U** is ready. Facing the press box, observe the relative position of the ball and point to be gained, then announce your ruling. Remain over the ball and announce down and distance. Get ready signals from captains while **H** is resetting the chain. When **H** is ready, declare the ball ready for play. If not a first down, and in a side zone, retain firm grasp and personally set the ball at the hash marks using the chain. Be alert to measurements at the end of the 1st and 3rd periods and properly spot the ball after changing ends of the field.

**Umpire:** Make sure the ball is not moved until **B** arrives and assumes responsibility for the ball. Place chains on the press box side of the ball, take forward stake, making sure the chain is free of kinks. Wait until **H** or **L** calls "ready" then carefully tighten the chain only once. Don't pull or jerk it. Hold the stake perpendicular to the ground at the press box side of the ball until **R** announces the ruling, then return the stake to the chain crew.

**Head Line Judge:** Go to sideline and make sure the chain clip is properly located. Instruct the box operator to take a position at the front stake, maintaining the previous down. On your signal, move chains to the spot indicated by **L** or **H**. Call ready when the chain is set. Take chains to the sideline and reset chains depending on the result of the play.

**Line Judge:** Go to appropriate spot on the yard line nearest the rear stake. Use foot to indicate the spot **H** should place the clip. After the clip is set, use foot to hold chain in place after **H** sets chains. Report results to coach on your side so coach can call appropriate play.

**Field Judge/Side Judge:** Take sideline positions that facilitate spotting the box and auxiliary box, keeping the sideline clear. Be prepared to move to the spot of the measurement to help keep the area clear. Observe dead ball action around the area of measurement. Get a new ball if the measurement is outside the hash mark. Take a position at the sideline and move the box Operator to the spot on the sideline where the ball will next be snapped.

**Back Judge:** Ensure the ball is not moved after being spotted for measurement. If holding the ball is necessary, assume a position parallel to the ball's axis and in advance of the line to gain, allowing room for chains, etc.

## SECTION 21. CALLING FOULS AND ENFORCEMENT

### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**All:** Official calling foul will drop at the proper spot or throw foul marker, mentally marking the yard line. If the ball is live withhold whistle until the ball becomes dead, then continue to sound whistle until you are certain other officials are aware a foul has been called. The official should then verbally communicate the information to the **R**. For pre-snap fouls, visual signals are acceptable. Know the status of the ball if it is in play. Make a mental note as to whether the clock should be started on the ready or on the snap. Do not place a hand on or point toward the offending player. The Official who calls a disqualifying foul notifies the head coach. The nearest official will notify, by number or position, a coach of non-disqualifying fouls by their team. On encroachment fouls or false start fouls, if more than one marker is down, the calling officials should consult with each other before reporting the foul(s). If **U** is involved, report the foul to the **R**.

When giving a sideline warning, throw your flag. Notify the head coach then go to the **R** and report the violation. Each official should record their foul and the **R** will signal. After calling a foul, get **R**'s attention as soon as the ball is dead, sound your whistle and give a description of the foul. It is your duty to make sure another official is covering the spot of foul if foul is spot foul, then go to **R** and report the foul fully as follows: Foul called. Always use who, what, where, when, who fouled? offense or defense, return or kicking team. What was the foul? Where did foul occur, behind or beyond the neutral zone? When did foul occur? Live or dead ball. Offending team, A/B, offense/defense or kicking team/ receiving team. Offending player's number or position. Spot of foul, previous spot, end of run or end of kick. Status of ball (live (run/pass), loose, dead) and when foul occurred.

When a foul is called by another official, assist in getting the ball to the dead ball spot. Cover and hold dead ball spot and mark end of run. Leave the ball on the ground until needed. If the foul is a spot foul, cover and hold spot of foul. If all spots are covered, including the penalty marker, observe players and assist where needed.

When covering the spot of the foul, hold the spot as long as necessary. Ascertain foul and offending team. When **U** starts to enforce the penalty, pick up marker of the official who called the foul. If enforcement spot is different from spot of foul, see that it is covered by an official. If enforcement is from spot of foul, **L** shall hold spot during enforcement. **U** will release him. All crew members are responsible for knowing that proper yardage has been stepped off. Correct any mistakes immediately. If a coach wants a conference to discuss a call, alert **R**, who will call the time-out. Make sure at least one other official accompanies **R** to the sideline.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Be alert for **R**'s preliminary signal and be ready to explain options to the coach on your sideline. When fouls are committed that require enforcement at the next free kick, **R** will give the preliminary signal and point to the next free kick spot. If you are the calling official, be responsible for seeing that **R** and **U** assess penalty properly in all respects.

**Referee:** When fouls are committed that require enforcement at the spot of the next free kick, **R** will give the preliminary signal and point to the next free kick spot. **B** will repeat the signal

following enforcement from the succeeding spot. When fouls are reported, the **R** will immediately give a preliminary signal or signals to press box side before explaining options to captains. Notify both captains if loss of down is part of the penalty. Give dead ball [S7] signal before giving the signal for a dead ball foul. For pre-snap fouls, preliminary and dead ball signals are not required and should not be given. If a choice is obvious, announce it and proceed with enforcement or decline the penalty. If the captain objects, explain alternatives and conform to their choice. If the choice is not obvious, explain foul or fouls and the options, state options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously. Notify captain of offending team of foul called and number and position of offending player (if possible). If penalty is accepted, signal foul and extend one arm in pointing fashion, horizontally in the direction of the offending team. If penalty is declined, signal foul, extend one arm in pointing fashion, horizontally in direction of offending team and then give the penalty declined signal [S10]. If penalties offset, signal one foul, extend one arm, in pointing fashion, horizontally in direction of offending team, repeat this procedure for foul by other team, then give penalty declined signal [S10]. While facing the press box, indicate the number of the next down. be alert for wing officials relaying choice from head coach. After **U**'s enforcement, make sure of proper enforcement actions. If not correct, do not let the next play go.

**Umpire:** Take a position near **R** as options are explained to a captain. If the penalty is to be enforced, follow **R**'s instructions in marking off the penalty. Carry ball and place in position when enforcing the penalty. On a well-marked field, use the yard lines and don't step off yardage. Verify correct placement with **H** and **L**.

**Head Line Judge:** After decision, reset box and chains as appropriate. Verify down and distance. Verify correct placement with **U**. If enforcement is correct, direct assistants to move the down indicator and direct moving of chains, if appropriate. Make sure the offended team's coach knows their options. Relay that decision, as appropriate, to **R**.

**Line Judge:** When **U** starts to mark off penalty, remain at the enforcement spot until the penalty enforcement is complete. Verify correct placement with **U**. Make sure the offended team's coach knows their options. Relay their decision, as appropriate, to **R**.

**Back Judge:** Observe dead ball action around players on the field. Make sure the play clock has stopped.

## SECTION 22. CLOSE OF A PERIOD

### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**All:** Near the end of a period, be aware of the time remaining before the start of each down. Do not run the 25-second count with less than 25 seconds remaining in any period and the game clock running. Record ball position at the close of the period. If a measurement is required, move the ball with the stakes.

**Referee:** When time expires, sound whistle only if ball is dead. At the end of the period, indicate by holding a ball over the head with one hand [S14]. **R** is primarily responsible for determining the end of any period. Enlist the aid of the **U** and **B** when the only field clock is to your back. At close of first and third periods, see that the ball is not disturbed until the exact position for transfer has been determined. Turn the ball over to the **B** at close of second period.

**Umpire/Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Keep **R** informed of remaining playing time, indicated by an inconspicuous signal whether there is ample or scant time for next snap. Advise **R** at the end of the down if time expired while the ball was in play. **U** will transfer the ball to the new position at the end of each period.

### ARTICLE 2. TIMING AND FOULS

**All:** Make sure no timing errors exist. Record any fouls to be enforced at the beginning of the next period. If a penalty is accepted for live-ball foul(s) that occur during the down in which time expires in the first and third periods, enforce all penalties and set the box, chain and clip as needed. The crew will then record the ball position and rotate the chains as they are relocated to the opposite end of the field.

**Referee/Umpire:** Record score and make sure scoreboard is correct. Enforce fouls as appropriate.

## SECTION 23. ONE-MINUTE INTERMISSIONS

### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**All:** Note position of the ball, down and distance, mark that information and move to new location. If the period ends and a measurement is required, make sure to spot the ball appropriately. Observe players as they move to the other end of the field. After the prescribed duties are completed, take your position for the next play. Do not resume play until one minute has elapsed.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Move downfield assuming responsibility for respective teams. Record yard line, down and distance and check with **R** both before and after the position of the ball changes.

### ARTICLE 2. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

**All:** Verify the correct position of the ball both before and after its movement. Verify enforcement of any penalty occurring during the dead ball period. Do not resume play until one minute has elapsed.

**Referee/Umpire/Head Line Judge:** Record and announce yard line on which the forward point of the ball rests, and the down, distance, location and direction from nearer goal line (inbound/outbound). Verify correct placement of ball, line to gain, and down box. Obtain signal from **B** for marking ball ready for play.

**Head Line Judge:** Determine the yard line which intersects the chain nearest to the back stake. Record the down, distance and yard line upon which the ball rests. Grasp the chain at the back edge of the marked yard line, reverse the chain and the assistants holding the stakes, and move to the corresponding line on the opposite end of the field. Hold the point on the chain at the intersection of that line with the sideline while the assistants tighten the chain; then have assistants move the chain approximately six feet off the sideline. After **U** spots the ball, verify that it has been placed correctly (especially following a measurement). Make sure the down and the distance are correct.

**Line Judge:** Move to the correct yard line at the opposite end of the field to ensure proper placement of the ball. Verify correct placement of auxiliary markers.

**Umpire:** After ball and chain information has been recorded by the crew, move and place the ball at the proper spot at the opposite end of the field.

**Back Judge:** Time the interval between periods and after a safety, try or successful field goal. Coordinate TV or radio timeouts. When 20 seconds remain in the intermission, sound whistle with three short but sharp blasts. Move to your position and inform **R** and **U** when the intermission expires.

**Referee:** Upon **B**'s signal that the intermission has expired, ensure both teams are ready then immediately declare the ball ready to play.

## SECTION 24. INTERMISSION BETWEEN HALVES

### ARTICLE 1. END OF SECOND PERIOD

**All:** After the period has been cleared, move quickly off the field.

**Referee:** Move smartly off the field with the other officials. From the end zone give the start the clock signal [S2] when field is clear of officials, coaches, managers, and players.

**Back Judge:** From the end zone, begin timing the intermission when **R** starts the clock. Keep other officials informed as to the running time. Make sure the crew arrives on the field to start second half on time.

### ARTICLE 2. PRIOR TO SECOND HALF KICK-OFF

**All:** Review options from first toss. Note any fouls that require enforcement on the kickoff. Review extra period procedures. Check with other officials regarding second half choices, which should be obtained before teams depart the field for halftime. Re-enter the field with no fewer than four minutes on the clock. Arrive at your kickoff position no later than one minute prior to kickoff.

**Line Judge/Back Judge:** Five minutes prior to the end of the halftime intermission, go to the same team that you had for the opening coin toss and escort them to the field.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Ensure chain crew and auxiliary assistants as well as Ball Assistants are ready and send them to the receiving team's 20-yard line. Remind them to stay behind the restraining line during the kickoff.

**Back Judge:** Obtain the correct ball for kickoff.

## SECTION 25. EXTRA PERIODS

### ARTICLE 1. END OF REGULATION PLAY

**All:** Direct and escort, if necessary, teams to their respective team areas. Meet at the center of the field and review extra period rules and procedures. Approximately three minutes following the end of regulation play, **R** will review the procedures for the extra period with the head coach of the team opposite the press box, with **H** as a witness. **U** will review the procedures for the extra period with the head coach of the team on the press box sideline, with **L** as a witness. **R** and **U** will escort the head coaches to the center of the field for the toss.

**Referee:** Announce or otherwise notify the press box that, “Regulation play has ended with a tie score. There will be a brief intermission followed by an extra period of play.”

### ARTICLE 2. COIN TOSS

**All:** Approximately four minutes following the end of regulation play, conduct coin toss. Assume the same duties as for coin toss prior to start of game (see Section 5).

**Referee:** Remind head coaches that the winner of the toss may not defer their choice. Conduct toss, obtain choices from head coaches and position them with their backs to their respective goal lines. Place hand on shoulder of coach (nearest press box) of team winning toss. Stand adjacent to the team (to press box side) that will be on offense first and give the first down signal [S8]. Simultaneously, announce choices if equipped with field microphone.

### ARTICLE 3. ADDITIONAL EXTRA PERIOD

**Referee:** When an additional extra period is required, move along with the **U** to the center of the field and call for the coach from both teams. Obtain option from coach of team that had second choice in previous extra period, then the option from opposing coach. **Note:** Beginning with the second extra period, remind coaches that teams scoring a touchdown must attempt a two-point try. Beginning with the third extra period, remind coaches that a team’s possession series will be one play for a two-point try from the three-yard line (unless relocated due to a penalty). Indicate choices to press box as noted above.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Remind head coach for the team on your sideline that, beginning with the third extra period, each team will be allowed one timeout until the game ends.



## SECTION 26. POST-GAME DUTIES

### ARTICLE 1. PROCEDURES

**All:** Note total elapsed time from initial kickoff to final whistle, including all intermissions. Join other officials and quickly leave the field together. Neither seek nor avoid coaches. Complete any required game reports and send them immediately. It shall be permissible for the home school game administrator to contact the **R** regarding rules interpretations. Judgment calls will not be discussed. All comments must be cleared through the appropriate authority. Meet with Chapter or TASO observer for a postgame critique. Remember that critiques are provided to improve officiating. Do not take these comments personally but make certain that you give the observer your undivided attention. Discuss any situation that needs improvement.

**Referee:** Obtain data to complete foul report. Obtain necessary input from crew for any incident reports.

### ARTICLE 2. INCIDENT REPORTING

The University Interscholastic League has directed that certain incidents be reported. **ANY EVENT THAT DISRUPTS THE NORMAL FLOW OF THE GAME**, officiated by TASO officials, requires a report.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Abuse from coaches, players, or fans
- Fighting by players, coaches, or fans
- Serious injuries
- Unsafe playing conditions
- A half time lasting longer than 28 minutes at a Varsity game
- Coach ejection – **ALL** levels of play
- Player ejection – **ALL** levels of play
- **ALL** targeting fouls
- **ALL** 15-yard penalties involving the sideline
- **ALL** 15-yard penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct in sub-varsity play, especially middle schools or junior high
- For a Varsity game when no Game Administrator is identified

The Game Administrator is to be informed of the problem the night of the game, when available. Written reports from each official directly involved in the incident **MUST** be submitted within twenty-four hours and may be filed electronically using the TASO or UIL websites link. In addition, the official **WILL NOTIFY** his/her chapter leadership of the report **WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR (24) HOURS**. Reporting of other incidents should be done in accordance with chapter policies and such policies that TASO may adopt. A crew's failure to comply with any part of the incident report policy will result in crew being reprimanded by chapter leadership in a timely manner.

### ARTICLE 3. FIGHT REPORTING PROCEDURES

The official who calls the foul will inform the player, squad member or coach and the head coach of the disqualification. Within 24 hours of the contest **R** and all officials who called the foul or

witnessed the action must complete the UIL or Private School Incident Report available at [www.taso.org](http://www.taso.org). Players who are disqualified from a game must remain in the team area for the remainder of the game. Coaches who are ejected from a game may not be in the Playing Enclosure during the remainder of the game.

#### **ARTICLE 4. GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP REPORTING**

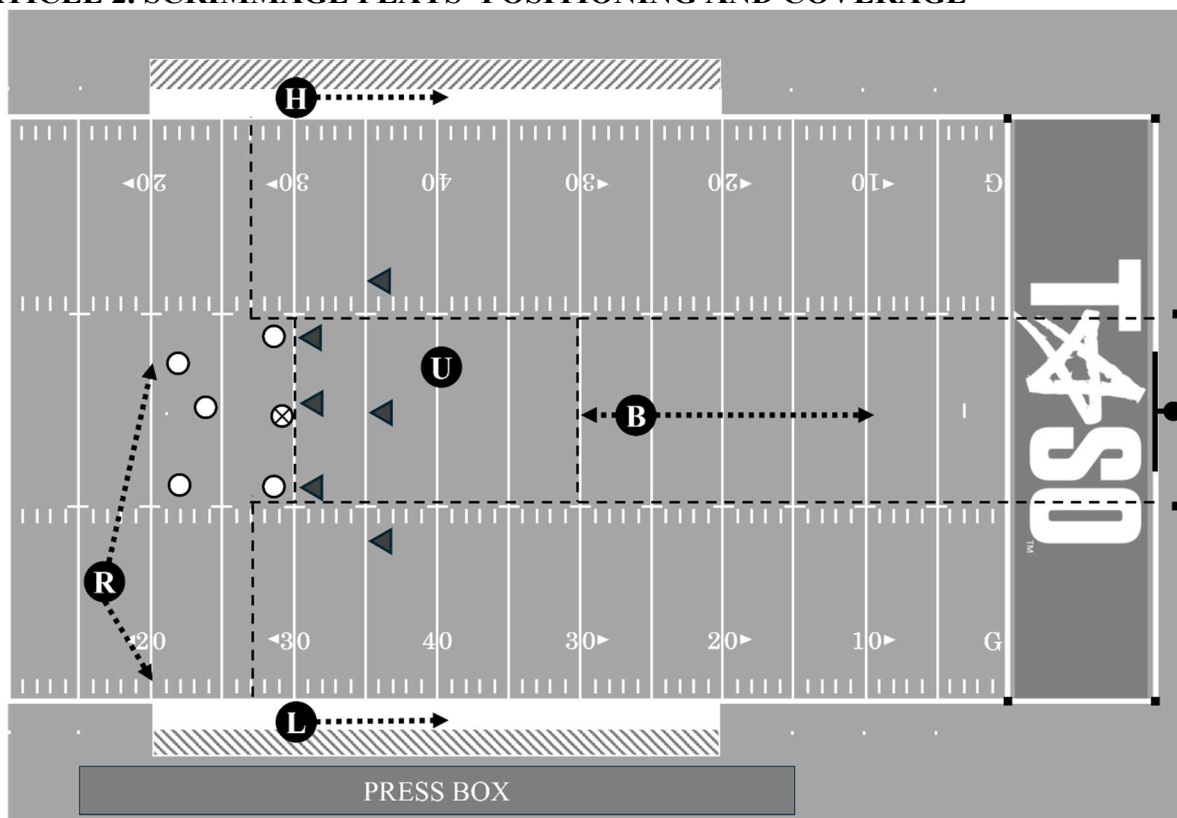
In an effort to combat poor sportsmanship, the UIL has asked for officials to report Good Sportsmanship they observe at their member schools. The reports can be for players, coaches, students, fans or administrators, anyone that added to a pleasant experience. The UIL then recognizes schools that have been reported for Good Sportsmanship. Written reports from each official directly involved in the experience should be submitted within 24 hours and may be filed electronically using the TASO or UIL website links. Let's do our part to promote Good Sportsmanship.

## SECTION 27. SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL

### ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

The exciting ‘wide-open’ style of play commonly found in Six Player football, combined with such rule differences as all players being eligible to touch a forward pass necessitates alternate officiating mechanics for those contests. Since all players on the six-player team are eligible to go out for and catch a pass, there is no need for the Umpire to watch for ineligible players downfield. However, there is still the need to observe and rule on illegal blocks and holding at or near the line of scrimmage. The high percentage of forward passes and long runs require deep coverage as well. For those reasons, some school systems and officiating chapters have elected to utilize a crew of 5 officials for these games. The following alternate mechanics for certain aspects of the game are recommended for Six Player football.

### ARTICLE 2. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS- POSITIONING AND COVERAGE



**All:** Basic positions may vary, depending upon play situations, team formations or field and weather conditions. Always box in the play. Avoid positions that may cause scrambling to avoid interference with players.

**Referee:** Initial position 12 to 14 yards deep and 12 to 14 yards wide, on the throwing arm side of the quarterback where you may comfortably see the ball and backs or a player in motion toward you. Responsible for action and runners behind neutral zone, sideline to sideline. Move laterally to cover the runner, sideline to sideline. Primary responsibility for legal exchange. Sole responsibility for illegal forward pass beyond the neutral zone.

**Umpire:** Pre-snap position 7 to 12 yards beyond neutral zone; behind the defensive lineman and not impeding the defensive backs, approximately centered on the offensive formation. Other duties are the same. At snap read play. If running play, cover the action of blockers in front of the runner. If pass play develops, retreat to cover the middle downfield area, approximately halfway between the line of scrimmage and the goal line; cover action in middle zone; shift attention to intended receiver within your area when pass is released.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Initial position astride neutral zone, outside sideline. Same pre-snap positioning and duties. At snap, drift down field 10-12 yards, reading the play. If running play develops, take forward progress as usual. If pass play develops cover action in your zone. Shift attention to the intended receiver when pass is released. **L** has secondary responsibility for legal 'exchange.' Responsible for runs on your sideline all the way to the goal line. Responsible for foot inbounds on a sideline catch or catch on the end line.

**Back Judge:** Initial position approximately 20 to 25 yards beyond the neutral zone and deeper than the deepest defensive back. On the snap read the play. If running play, move to cover the downfield action in front of the runner, looking for illegal blocks, holding, facemask, etc. If the play is a pass, retreat to remain deeper than the deepest receiver and/or defensive back. Read direction of pass and shift attention to the intended receiver. Cover the middle of the field from approximately 20 yards beyond the neutral zone to the end line. Responsible for ruling on catch at the sideline and foot in bounds on the end line.

### ARTICLE 3. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS- ALTERNATE POSITIONING AND COVERAGE

An alternate mechanic may be utilized which moves the **U** to a position behind the offense opposite the **R**. This can be done when there is a lot of activity by the teams in the area normally occupied by the **U**. When using this alignment, the responsibilities do not significantly change, with minor exceptions. **Notes:** 1) When a crew begins a game using this alternate mechanic they will not switch to the standard mechanic during that game. 2) When this alternate mechanic is used for scrimmage plays, it may also include an attempted field goal or try, at the discretion of the officiating crew. The crew should consider moving the **U** onto the defensive side of the ball when there is an attempted field goal from outside of the 15-yard line, since **B** will be the lone official underneath the goal post and is focused on the flight of the ball during the kick.

**Referee:** Assumes a position 12 to 14 yards deep and 12 to 14 yards wide, on the throwing arm side of the quarterback. The **R** retains responsibility for observing the snap, the exchange, if there is one, and for actions on or by the runner/passer while in the backfield. Also responsible for any play that occurs from the line of scrimmage to the Team A end zone. The **U** may assist with plays back to the end zone while in this alignment.

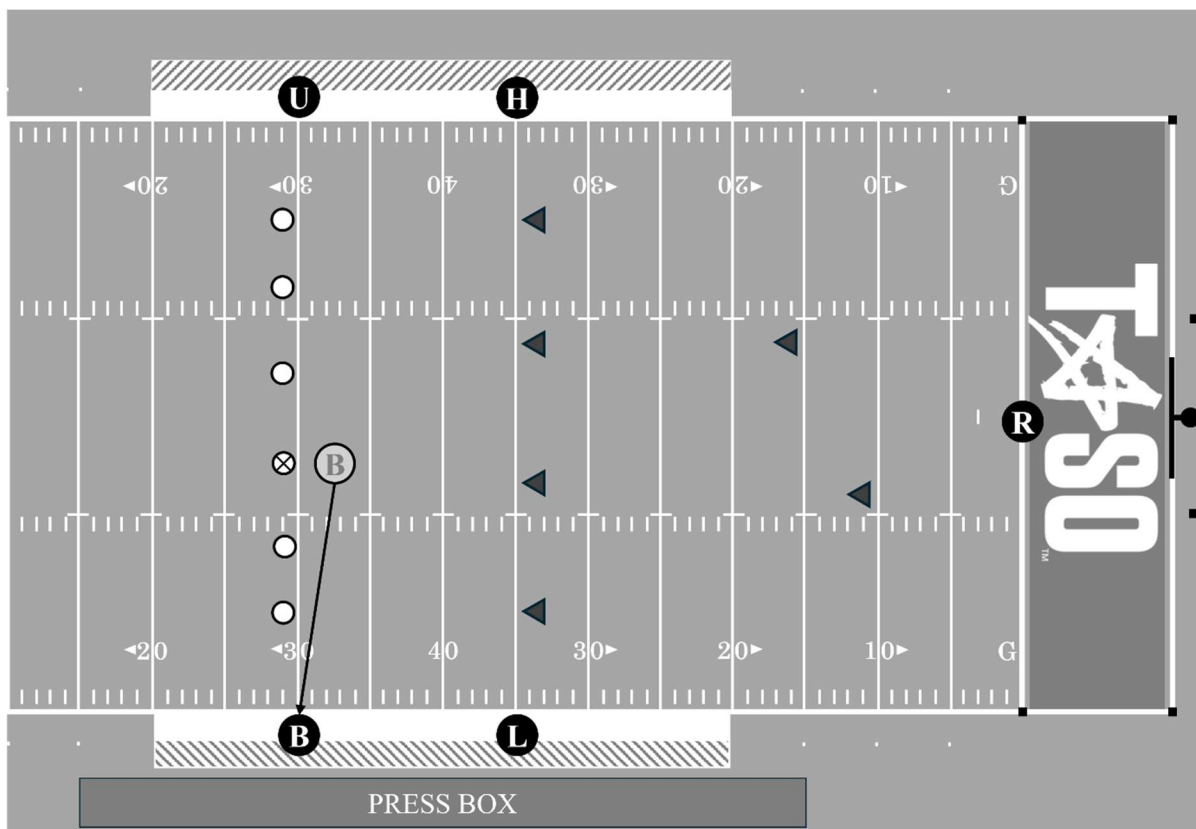
**Umpire:** The Umpire assumes a position roughly in the same plane as the **R** and to the opposite side of the field from the **R**. Responsible for observing the snap and any action on the snapper that may occur within one second after the snap when there is no hands-to-hand snap made. Responsible for action at the line of scrimmage to include holding, chop blocks, illegal blocks, facemask fouls, disconcerting signals, false start, and any other action at the line of scrimmage that is disallowed by rule. Assist the **R** on coverage of any play that occurs from the line of scrimmage to the Team A end zone.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge/Back Judge:** Responsibilities are unchanged from the primary mechanics for a Crew of 5. Note that **L** retains the secondary responsibility for the legal exchange in the backfield.

#### **ARTICLE 4. FREE KICKS**

Because it is so prevalent for 6-Player football teams to utilize the short or “pooch” kick for most or all free kicks, it is recommended that the officials plan on using the short field mechanics for all free kicks. However, if one or both teams demonstrate that they can and will use a deep kick, the **R** should switch the crew to a deep kick formation.

## SHORT KICK MECHANICS:



**Back Judge:** Hand the ball to the kicker and remind him not to kick the ball until the ready whistle has sounded. Then move to the kicking team's restraining line on the press box side of the field. Rule on kicking team off-side and be ready to assist the U on a run back in the middle of the field all the way to the goal line. Rule on illegal action against the kicker.

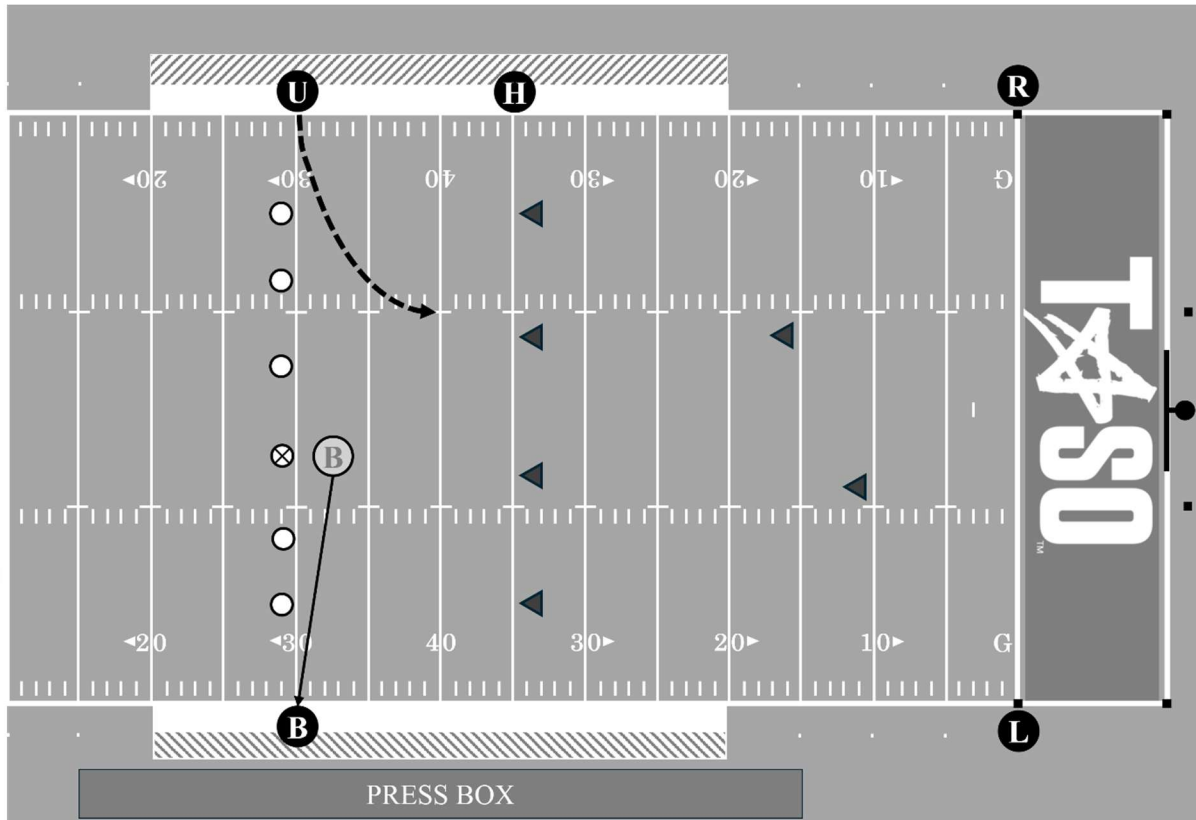
**Referee:** Take position on the goal line in the middle of the field. Assure all other officials are in position and ready. Mark the ball ready for play and be ready to move quickly to either sideline to rule on free kick out of bounds between the goal lines or behind the goal line. You have sole responsibility for a deep kick at any point on the goal line, including both pylons.

**Umpire:** Take position on the kicking team's restraining line opposite the press box side of the field. Rule on kicking team offside and action against the kicker before regaining balance. Move into the field of play after the kick and be ready to cover a run back down the middle of the field all the way to the goal line.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Assume position on the opposite sides of the receiving team's restraining line; H opposite the press box, L on the press box side. Rule on receiving team off-sides and kicking team players illegally blocking before they are eligible to touch the ball. Cover short kick toward your sideline. Rule on on-side kick traveling the required 15 yards or touching by the kicking team before being touched by a member of the receiving team or kicking team blocking before they are legally allowed to touch the loose football. Cover pooch kicks toward

your sideline. Responsible for the ball carrier on your side of the field or action around the ball carrier on the opposite side of the field. Cover the ball carrier down your sideline until turned over to **U** or **B** on their respective sides.

### DEEP KICK MECHANICS:



**Note:** The Alternate Free Kick Mechanic described for the 11-player game may be used, however, the **R** or **L** should not move beyond the 20-yard line if this option is used.

**Back Judge:** Hand the ball to the kicker and remind him not to kick the ball until the ready whistle has sounded. Assume position on the kicking team's restraining line on the press box side. Rule on kicking team off-side, kicking team players illegally blocking before they are eligible to touch the ball and illegal action against the kicker. Cover short kick toward your sideline. Do not vacate your position until the ball has crossed the receiving team's restraining line, or it has been touched or acted upon by players on either team before reaching the receiving team's restraining line. Assist **H** in ruling that an onside kick travels the required 15 yards or is touched by the kicking team before being touched by a member of the receiving team. Be prepared to move quickly down field to cover pooch kicks toward your sideline and assist on ruling for pooch kick to opposite side of the field. Responsible for the ball carrier on your side of the field or action around the ball carrier on the opposite side of the field. Cover the ball carrier down your sideline all the way to the goal line.

**Referee:** Take position on the goal line at the pylon opposite the press box. Assure all other officials are in position and ready. Mark the ball ready for play and be prepared to move quickly up field to rule on a free kick out of bounds between the goal lines or hold position on the pylon

to rule on free kick out of bounds behind the goal line. Responsible for the ball carrier if kicked to your side of the field or action in front of the ball carrier if kicked to the opposite side of the field.

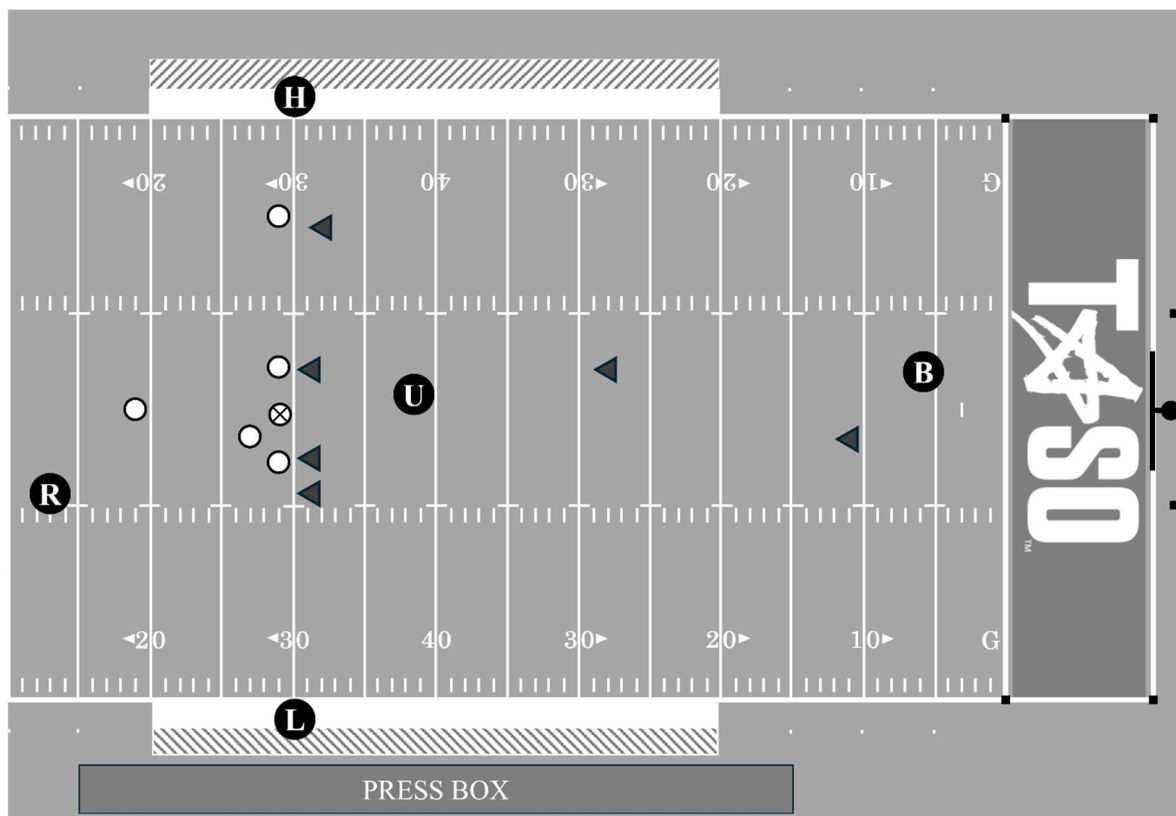
**Line Judge:** Assume position on the goal line at the pylon on the press box side. If agreed upon during the pre-game meeting, you may move 5-10 yards up field for your starting position but be ready to immediately return to the goal line to rule on free kick out of bounds between the goal lines or behind the goal line. Responsible for the ball carrier if kicked to your side of the field or action in front of the ball carrier if kicked to the opposite side of the field.

**Umpire:** Then move to the kicking team's restraining line opposite the press box side of the field. Rule on kicking team offside and action against the kicker before regaining balance. Move into the field of play after the kick and be ready to cover a run back in the middle of the field all the way to the goal line.

**Head Line Judge:** Assume position on the receiving team's restraining line opposite the press box. Rule on receiving team off-sides and kicking team players illegally blocking before they are eligible to touch the ball. Cover short kick toward your sideline. Do not vacate your position until the ball has crossed the receiving team's restraining line, or it has been touched or acted upon by players on either team before reaching the receiving team's restraining line. Rule on onside kick traveling the required 15 yards or touching by the kicking team before being touched by a member of the receiving team. Cover pooch kicks toward your sideline and assist on ruling for pooch kick to opposite side of the field. Responsible for the ball carrier on your side of the field or action around the ball carrier on the opposite side of the field. Cover the ball carrier down your sideline all the way to the goal line.



## ARTICLE 5. SCRIMMAGE KICKS (PUNT PLAYS)



**Note:** Any time the team in possession of the ball is in a formation that qualifies as a scrimmage kick formation, the deep snapper is afforded protection for one second after the snap.

**Referee:** Assume position deeper than the kicker and slightly favor the **L** side of the field. Be ready to rule on running into/roughing the kicker. Watch for touching of the ball by incoming blockers and be aware of who touches the ball and then as subsequent contact with the kicker. Vocalize that the ball is away after the kick to warn off the rushers (preventive officiating). Watch for illegal blocks as the players move downfield in punt coverage. Be ready to cover the ball carrier to the goal line if the kick is run back.

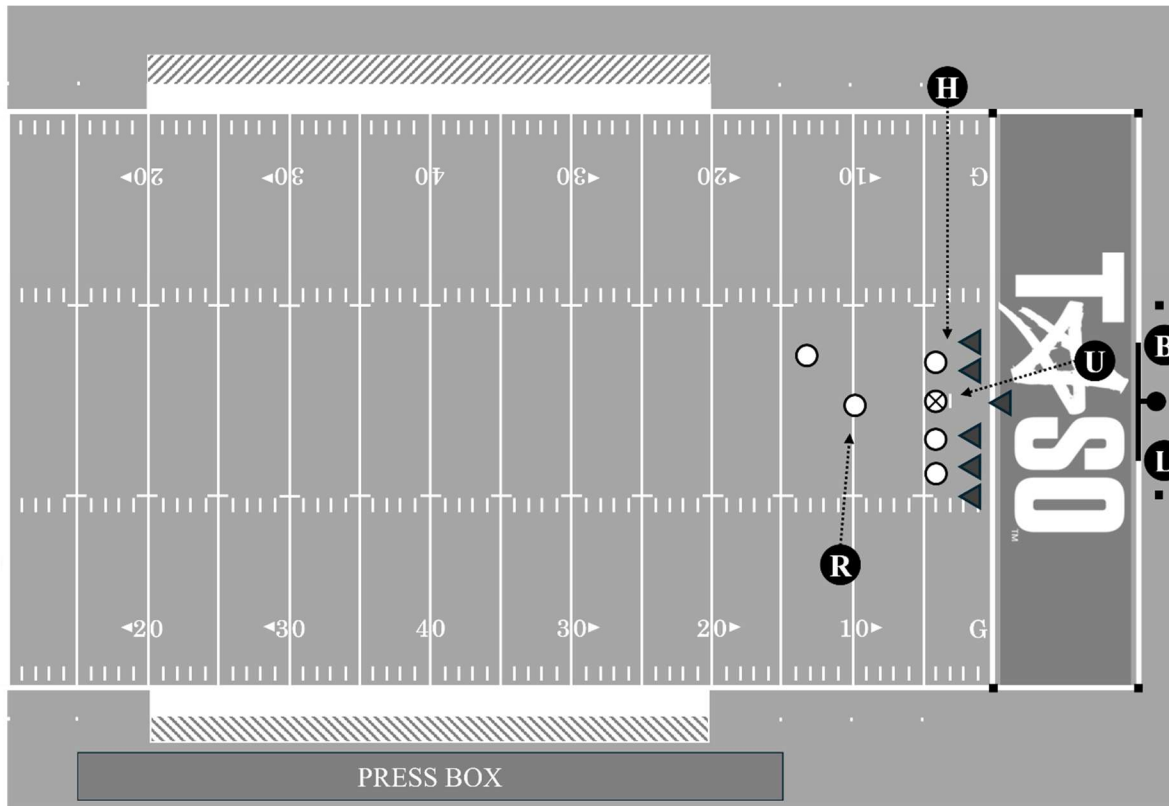
**Umpire:** Assume position 7 to 12 yards beyond the line of scrimmage and in a position to see action on the snapper. Observe for one second delay on hitting the snapper after the ball is snapped. Watch for holding, chop block, etc.

**Back Judge:** Assume position outside and behind the deep receivers. Position yourself on either side so that you may have the best view of the catch. Adjust to play area and assume responsibility for coverage into either sideline. If necessary to retreat, move backward at a 45-degree angle. Watch for fair catch signal and be ready to rule on legality of signal. Responsible for the ball carrier after the catch until turned over to the sideline official, **U** or **R** on the return. Watch for muff or touching by receiving team. Rule on touchback if the kick crosses the goal line untouched by Team B.

**Line Judge:** Responsible for action down the line of scrimmage prior to the snap, offside, false start, illegal snap, minimum of three offensive players on the line of scrimmage at the snap, etc. Remain in position on the line of scrimmage on the press box side until it is apparent that a kick will be made, then begin moving down field. Assist the **B** on fair catch (including signals given by another member of the receiving team other than the deep receiver), muff, fumble or first touching. Be ready to assist the **R** on muffs, fumbles, or blocked kick ruling Responsible for the ball carrier on your sideline all the way to the goal line. Responsible for blocks behind the ball carrier on the opposite side of the field.

**Head Line Judge:** Responsible for action down the line of scrimmage prior to the snap, offside, false start, illegal snap, minimum of three offensive players on the line of scrimmage at the snap, etc. Remain in position on the line of scrimmage until the kick has traveled beyond the neutral zone. Be ready to assist the **R** on muff, fumble or blocked kick rulings. After the kick has crossed the neutral zone, move downfield to cover the kick on your side of the field. Responsible for the ball carrier on your sideline all the way to the goal line. Responsible for blocks behind the ball carrier on the opposite side of the field.

## ARTICLE 6. TRY AND FIELD GOAL PLAYS



On a field goal attempt a blocked or unsuccessful kick remains a live ball and may be acted upon legally by players of both teams in accordance with the rules.

On the try the ball becomes dead whenever it is obvious that the kick is unsuccessful. However, to avoid confusion over live ball versus dead ball fouls that may be committed during the try, officials should not blow the whistle until the ball crosses the cross bar, becomes dead after the kick, or possession is gained by a Team B player.

Mechanics for Six-Player football are otherwise identical to those for 11-Players for a crew of five officials for a field goal or try.

## ARTICLE 7. SPOTTING THE BALL

**Referee/Umpire:** After dead-ball action has ceased, if you are nearest to the dead-ball spot or you can secure a ball more expediently, move to dead-ball spot and secure ball (or replacement ball from flank official) and spot on sideline official's forward progress spot.

**All:** Take the necessary action to keep consistent pace of spotting the ball and getting the ball ready for play.

## SECTION 28. SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL RULES

### UIL Exceptions for Six- Player Football:

General: Texas Six-Player Football Rules are the same as NCAA Football Rules with UIL Exceptions, except for the following variations. (Note: NCAA Rule References to the 2025 Rules Book are indicated in parenthesis.).

### SIX-PLAYER RULES VARIATIONS TO NCAA RULES

#### 1. (1-1 & 2)

Each team has six players. Number of players changed to NO MORE THAN SIX players each in UIL Six Man Games. In UIL Six Man Games, a team needs at least six players to start the game and can play with five or four, but less than four available players should result in suspension of the contest. Unless necessary to use the eleven-man field, the six-man field is 80 yards by 40 yards, with the 40-yard line being the center of the field. The two inbound lines (hash marks) are 40 feet from the sidelines. There will also be marks that are measured 13 feet from the sidelines. Goal posts are 25 feet apart and the crossbar is 9 feet above the ground.

#### 2. (1-1-3)

When one team is 45 or more points ahead at the end of the first half or if a team achieves a 45-point lead during the second half, the game ends immediately. The UIL Exception to the NCAA tiebreaker system will be used when a game is tied after four periods. NCAA football-playing rules apply, with these exceptions:

- First overtime period – each team has an opportunity to be on offense from opponent’s 25-yard line unless a change of possession results in a score. Team scoring a touchdown can attempt a 1 or 2 point try.
- Second overtime period – each team has an opportunity to be on offense from opponent’s 25-yard line unless a change of possession results in a score. Team scoring a touchdown can only score on a **2-point try (place or drop kick)**.
- Third and subsequent periods – each team has an opportunity to be on offense for a 1-point try (run or pass) from the **7-yard line**.

#### 3. (3-2-1)

The length of quarters is 10 minutes with a two-minutes intermission after the first and third. The intermission between halves is 15 minutes. For State Championship games only, halftime may be extended to a maximum of 20 minutes with coaches’ concurrence.

#### 4. (3-5-3)

Team A may not break the huddle with more than 6 players nor keep more than 6 players in the huddle or in a formation for more than three seconds. Officials shall stop the action whether the ball has been snapped. **PENALTY—Dead ball foul. 5 yards from the previous spot [S22].** Team B is allowed to briefly retain more than 6 players on the field to anticipate the offensive formation, but it may not have more than 6 players on the field when the ball is snapped. The infraction is a live-ball foul. **PENALTY—Live-ball foul. 5 yards from the previous spot [S22].**

**5. (4-1-3-d)**

During a try after touchdown the ball becomes dead when Team B gains possession or it is obvious that a kick is unsuccessful.

**6. (4-1-3-j)**

The 4<sup>th</sup> down fumble rule will not apply when the receiver of the snap involuntarily gives up possession and another Team A player gains possession in the backfield (legal exchange). After the legal exchange has been completed or a legal forward pass has been caught any subsequent fumble on a 4<sup>th</sup> down play will cause the ball to become dead when recovered by any Team A player other than the player who fumbled. On a field goal attempt a fumble recovered by a Team B player who is inbounds and not grounded is a live ball. (This also applies to Rules 7-2-2-a exception 2 for placement of the ball following a fumble, and 8-3-2-d-5 for opportunity to score).

**7. (5-1-2-a)**

Offense must advance 15 yards instead of 10 yards in four downs.

**8. (6-1-1/6-1-7)**

Unless relocated by penalty, the kicking team's restraining line on a kickoff is the 30-yard line on a six-man field and the 20-yard line for a free kick after safety. The receiving team's free kick restraining line is 15 yards from the point of kickoff. There is no requirement to have a minimum number of players on either side of the kicker. If the result of a Free Kick is a touchback for Team B, and the placement of the ball is not relocated by penalty, the ball will next be put into play from Team B's 20-yard line.

**9. (6-2-1)**

A free kick out of bounds between the goal lines, untouched inbounds by a player of Team B, is a foul (A.R. 3-IV). **PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot; or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B; or the receiving team may put the ball in play 20 yards beyond Team A's restraining line at the inbounds spot [S19].**

**10. (6-5-1-a)**

If a Team B player makes a fair catch of a Free Kick behind Team B's 20-yard line, Team B will next snap the ball at its own 20-yard line.

**11. (7-1-4)**

Unless the ball is kicked or forward passed, it may not be advanced beyond the neutral zone until *AFTER AN EXCHANGE* has been made between the receiver of the snap and another player. (**Exception:** Any player of Team A may advance a loose football after it has been touched by a Team B player. Forced touching of a ball by Team B is disregarded.). **PENALTY—5 yards plus loss of down (illegal procedure) from previous spot [S19 & S9].** An exchange is completed when possession of the football is gained by a receiver of the snap, given up **voluntarily or involuntarily** by the receiver of the snap, and possession is regained by another Team A player.

**12. (7-1-4)**

If the snap is muffed and a Team A player catches or recovers the ball beyond the neutral zone, it may not be advanced. **ENFORCEMENT—Loss of down from previous spot**

**[S9]. PENALTY—Loss of down and 5 yards from the previous spot for illegal procedure is assessed if the Team A player advances or attempts to advance the ball [S19 & S9].** If a Team A player catches or recovers the muffed snap behind the neutral zone, it may be legally advanced only after a legal exchange.

**13. (7-1-4-a-4)**

No more than 3 Team A players shall be in the backfield at the snap.

**14. (7-1-6)**

The ball may be handed in any direction to any player during a scrimmage down behind the neutral zone. A lineman may receive a forward hand-off at any time and is not required to be 2 yards behind the neutral zone and does not have to face their goal prior to receiving the hand-off.

**Exception:** The ball may not be handed forward to the snapper through the snapper's legs.

**PENALTY—5 yards from previous spot and loss of down [S19 & S9].**

**15. (7-3)**

The ball is dead when the passer catches their own forward pass (untouched by Team B), and it is ruled as an incomplete forward pass.

**16. (7-3-3-c)**

All players are eligible to catch a forward pass, except that a pass is ruled incomplete when caught by the passer (see preceding rule). If a forward pass is thrown to the snapper, it must travel at least one yard in flight.

**17. (7-3-2-h)**

It is not a foul if the passer is or has been outside the tackle box and throws the ball so that it crosses or lands beyond the neutral zone or neutral zone extended. (The last sentence of the exception is changed to read.). This applies only to the receiver of the snap and the player who receives the legal exchange in the backfield.

**18. (8-1-1)**

Field goals count 4 points; successful try, 2 points if successful through place or drop kick and 1 point if successful by pass or run. The defense may not score on a try. **Exception:** 1 Point awarded to the defense for Safety on the Try.

**19. (9-1-14)**

When a team is in an offensive or scrimmage kick formation, and no player is in position to take a hand-to-hand snap, a defensive player may not initiate contact with the snapper until one second has elapsed after the snap.

## **ARTICLE 9. SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL RULES APPROVED RULINGS**

### **SECTION 1. EXCHANGES**

- I.** First down and 15 from the A-35. A10 throws a backward pass to A28 who muffs the ball. A10 picks it up and runs to the B-35. **RULING:** Illegal advance by A. Penalize 5 yards plus loss of down.
- II.** First down and 15 from the A-25. A10 throws a backward pass. It strikes B72 and is loose on the ground. A10 picks up the ball and runs to the 40-yard line (midfield). **RULING:** A's ball first down and 15 on the 40. **Note:** By definition, when the ball strikes B72, it has been touched by Team B player.
- III.** A15 hands the ball to A40. While still behind the neutral zone, A40 hands the ball forward to A15 who advances beyond the neutral zone for a 10-yard gain. **RULING:** Legal advance by A15.
- IV.** A12 receives the snap and possesses the ball. A12 then hands the ball forward to A60, the snapper, by handing it back between A60's legs. A60 advances 5 yards. **RULING:** Illegal Advance by Team A. 5 yards and loss of down.
- V.** A15 receives the snap and hands off to A38. A38 fumbles the ball, and it is picked up by A45 (a) behind the neutral zone or (b) beyond the neutral zone. A45 advances for 10-yard gain. **RULING:** A legal exchange has been made. A45 may advance the football in (a) and (b) if it is not fourth down.
- VI.** A12 receives the snap and throws a backward pass to A45 who muffs it and is attempting to catch the ball (bobbling it) while crossing the neutral zone. A45 then catches the ball and advances for a 5-yard gain. **RULING:** Illegal advance by A. 5 yards and loss of down.
- VII.** A's ball first down and 15 at the A-20. A8 muffs the snap. It is picked up by A25 behind the neutral zone and advanced to the A-30. **RULING:** Illegal advance by A. Penalize 5 yards plus loss of down from the previous spot. No legal exchange has been made since A25 was the first to possess the ball after the snap and then advanced the ball beyond the neutral zone without an exchange.
- VIII.** A's ball second and 5 at the A-24. A13 receives the snap and fumbles the hand-off to A30. A30 recovers the fumble and hands the ball back to A13 who advances it to the A-32. **RULING:** A's ball first down and 15 at the A-32.
- IX.** A10 muffs the snap from A50. The ball rolls a few yards beyond the neutral zone where A6 (a) picks up the ball and advances or (b) falls on the ball for the recovery. **RULING:** (a) Illegal, 5 yards previous spot plus loss of down. Penalty marker is dropped, play continues. (b) Legal recovery, no foul, the ball is returned to the previous spot, loss of down. A legal exchange has not been made prior to the advancement of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.



**X.** A25 receives the snap and immediately throws a backward pass to A40 who muffs it. A40 scoops up the ball from the ground and advances beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Legal. A backward pass has been thrown, and a legal exchange has been completed.

**XI.** A first and 15 from the B-22. A10 receives the snap and hands the ball to A20. The ball is fumbled by A20 and A70 recovers at B's 19. **RULING:** Legal advance by A, unless it is 4th down.

**XII.** A's ball 4th and 1 at the B-30. A10 receives the snap and fumbles the hand-off to A22. A22 picks up the football and advances to the B-25. **RULING** Legal advance. Under rule variation 6, the 4<sup>th</sup> down fumble rule will not be applied until after a legal exchange has been completed. A player may not recover their own fumble and advance the ball because there will have been no legal exchange in the backfield.

**XIII.** Third down and 4 at the A-30. A10 receives the snap and possesses the ball. Rushing defender B55 is legally blocked by A61 and falls to the ground in front of A10. A10 reaches out with the ball and touches it to the shoulder pad of B55, then runs the ball and is tackled at the B-38. **RULING:** Illegal advance for no legal exchange in the backfield. Forced touching is disregarded by rule. Penalize 5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down. A's ball 4th and 9 at the A-25.

**XIV.** Team A lines up in scrimmage kick formation for either a field goal attempt or a 2-point Try. A19 muffs the snap and the kicker, A12, picks up the ball and (a) drop kicks it through the uprights and over the cross bar, (b) passes it forward to A56 in the end zone, (c) makes a backwards pass to A19, who runs it into the end zone, or (d) runs the ball into the end zone. **RULING:** (a) Legal. 4 points for the Field Goal or 2 points for the try. (b) Legal. 6-point touchdown for field goal attempt or 1 point for a try. (c) Legal. 6-point touchdown for field goal attempt of 1 point for a try. (d) Foul for advancement beyond the neutral zone without an exchange. **Enforcement:** Field goal attempt on 4th down, assess the 5-yard penalty from the previous spot and loss of down. Team B's ball at the succeeding spot. Try – no points, and since the penalty includes loss of down, the try is over. Team A will free kick from the A-30 unless relocated by subsequent penalty. **Note:** The 5-yard penalty for illegal advancement does not carry over to the kickoff.

## SECTION 2. PASS PLAYS

**I.** A15 attempts a forward pass which is batted in the air by B73. A15 catches the ball and advances 10 yards. **RULING:** Legal. Ball was touched by B.

**II.** First and 15 at the A-15. A9 hands the ball forward to A30. A30 runs to the left and passes the ball to A60 while still behind the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** Legal pass by A30.

**III.** A15 receives the snap and retreats 10 yards to the A-20. Due to a heavy pass rush, A15 immediately passes the ball to A50, the snapper, who is standing on the A-21. **RULING:** Legal pass since the ball traveled at least one yard when passed to the snapper.



**IV.** A8 attempts a pass at the line of scrimmage. B75 tips the ball, and it is caught by A55, the snapper, at the line of scrimmage. The ball has only traveled 1/2 yard in the air. **RULING:** The tipping by B makes A55's reception a legal catch and A55 may advance the ball.

**V.** A's ball 4th and 4 at the B-22. A10 throws a pass which strikes A73 and bounces into the air. A10 catches the ball and advances 5 yards where A10 fumbles the ball. **RULING:** Incomplete forward pass. B's ball first and 15 at the B-22 (Six-Player Rule variation No's 15 & 16).

### SECTION 3. OTHER PLAYS

**I.** Team A lines up at the line of scrimmage with three men on the scrimmage line next to each other in a three-point stance. A80, located on the right side of the snapper raises up and shifts out 7 yards. **RULING:** Since A80 is at the end of the line this is a legal shift.

**II.** Team A lines up with four players on the line of scrimmage next to each other in a three-point stance. A62, who is covered by A80, (a) raises up from a three-point stance before the snap, (b) receives a forward hand-off and advances 4 yards, or (c) catches a forward pass 10 yards beyond the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** (a) False start. (b) and (c) Legal.

**III.** Team A lines up with 4 players on the scrimmage line next to each other. A88, on the end of the line, leaves that position and goes in motion before the snap. At the snap, A88 is (a) moving toward Team B's goal line or (b) moving away from Team B's goal line and 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** (a) Illegal motion since A88 cannot be moving toward Team B's goal. (b) Illegal motion by A88. A88 must be set for one second after leaving the line. A lineman may not be in motion at the snap.

**IV.** Team A's kickoff from the A-30 rolls out of bounds untouched inbounds by Team B at the B-38. **RULING:** B may snap the ball (a) at their own 38 (penalty declined), (b) at the B-30 (20-yards in advance of the spot of the kick), (c) at the A-37 (5-yards in advance of the out-of-bounds spot), or (d) accept the penalty against A for illegal procedure and have Team A re-kick from the A-25.

**V.** B55 is standing 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped for a try or field goal attempt. B55 immediately runs forward and initiates more than incidental or slight contact with an offensive player before 1 second has elapsed. **RULING:** Personal Foul, 15 yards and automatic 1st down (2023 UIL Exception #54).

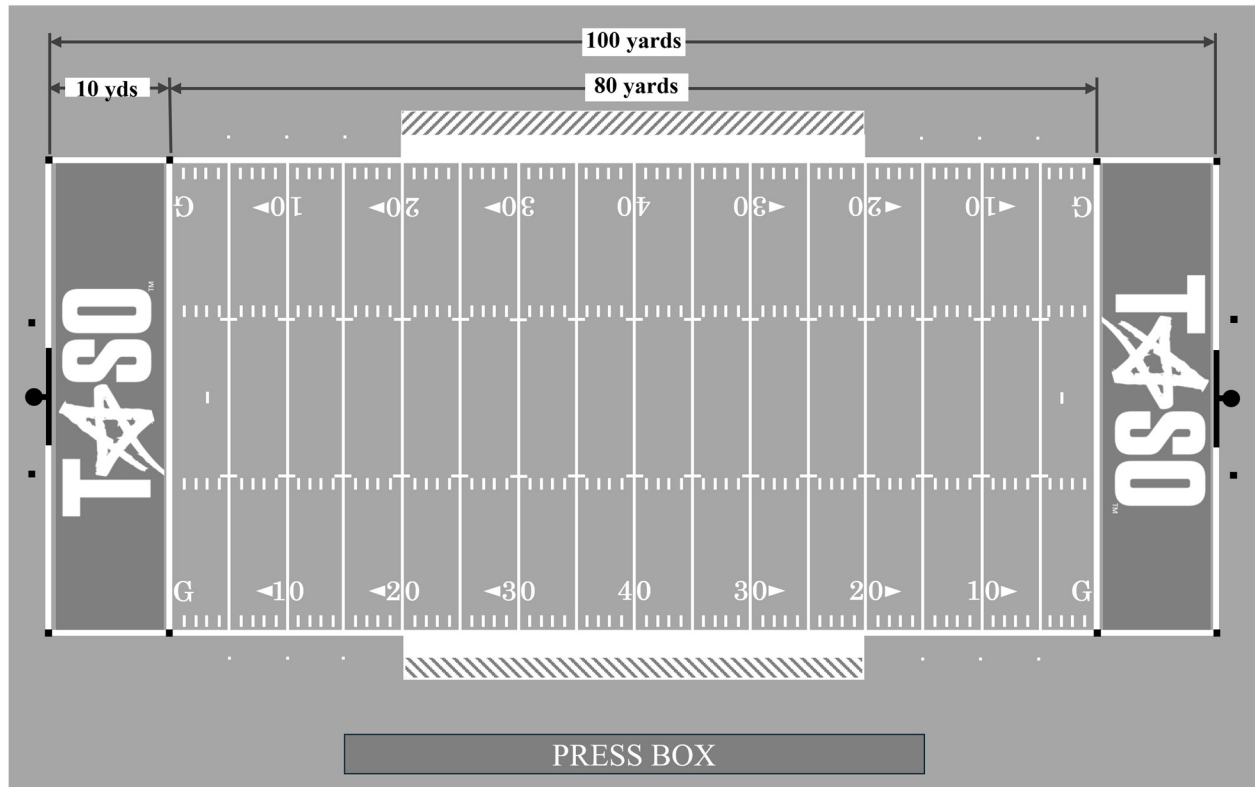
**VI.** Team B is leading 50-10 in the second half. B intercepts A's pass and returns it 16 yards for a touchdown. The game clock reads 0:00 when the down is over. B44 clips on the run back. **RULING:** If A declines the penalty the game ends and there will be no try.

**VII.** A's ball 4th down and 5 from the A-20. A14 punts the ball, which is blocked and goes straight up in the air. A45 catches the punt behind the neutral zone and advances to the 40-yard line. **RULING:** Legal advance by A, first down and 15 yards to go.

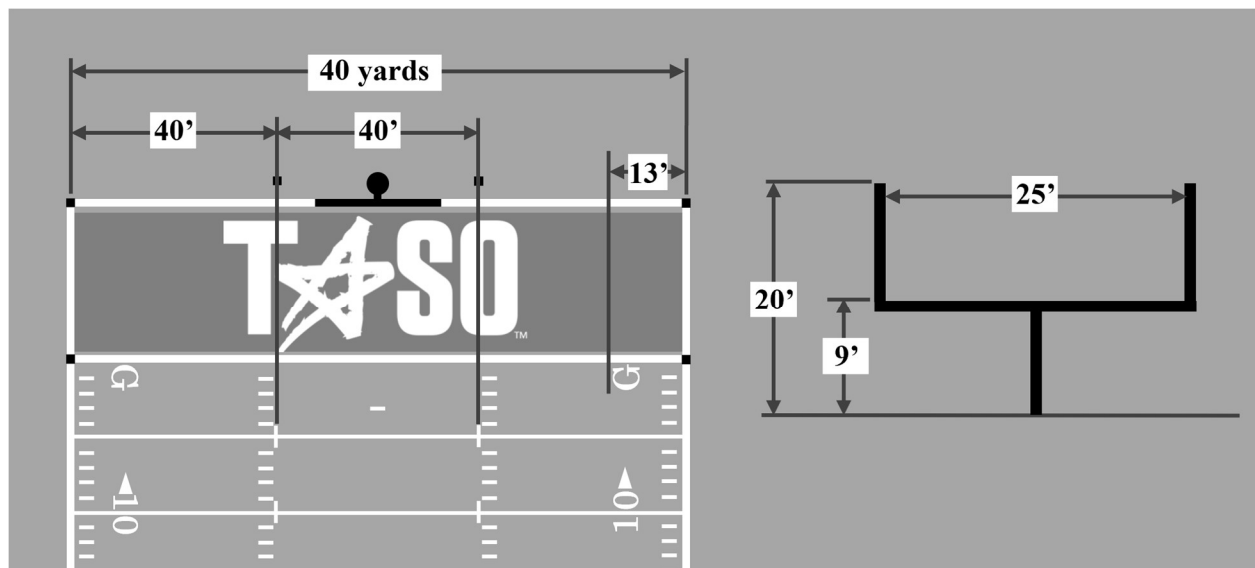
**VIII.** Team A attempts a try from any legal point and (a) Team B recovers a legal fumble, picks it up and advances the ball into Team A's end zone; (b) Team B intercepts a fumble or forward

pass and advances the ball into Team A's end zone; (c) Team B blocks the try and gains legal possession and advances the ball into Team A's end zone; or (d) Team B blocks the try and A12 picks up the ball and advances into Team B's end zone. **RULING:** No score in all cases. Ball is dead on the try when Team B gains possession or it is obvious that the kick is unsuccessful.

## SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL FIELD DIMENSIONS



## SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL FIELD AND GOALPOST DIMENSIONS



## SECTION 29. TASO OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES

### **Guidelines and Tips for Texas High School Football**

Officiating Philosophies, Points of Emphasis, Guidelines, and Tips are to be used in connection with the 2025 NCAA Football Rules, 2025 UIL Exceptions to NCAA Football Rules and TASO Football Officiating Mechanics. They are not intended to conflict with any rule, exception, or mechanic. An Officiating Philosophy is not part of the rules. Points of Emphasis are special actions we want to take before, during, and after the game. Guidelines are to help simplify some rules and game situations. Tips are sayings and advice that has been passed down and shared among officials.

Officiating Philosophies do not take the place of common sense and good judgment by officials. They are not intended to replace the continued study of the Rules Book and Mechanics Manual. They are an aid to officials to provide consistency in officiating certain types of plays and to, as much as possible, eliminate the differences from crew to crew, game to game, week to week, and chapter to chapter.

### **Abbreviations used:**

**CHB**-Chop Block  
**CLP**-Clipping  
**COP**-Change of Possession  
**DH**-Defensive Holding  
**DOG**-Delay of Game  
**DOF**-Defense Offside  
**DPI**-Defensive Pass Interference  
**DQ**-Disqualification  
**EZ**-End Zone  
**FOP**-Field of Play  
**FST**-False Start  
**GL**-Goal Line  
**IBB**-Illegal Block in the Back  
**IDP**-Illegally Downfield on Pass  
**IFP**-Illegal Forward Pass  
**ILF**-Illegal Formation  
**ILS**-Illegal Substitution  
**ILM**-Illegal Motion

**KO**-Kickoff  
**LTG**-Line to Gain  
**LOS**-Line of Scrimmage  
**NZ**-Neutral Zone  
**OFK**-Offside Free Kick  
**OH**-Offensive Holding  
**OB**-Out of Bounds  
**OPI**-Offensive Pass Interference  
**PF**-Personal Foul  
**POA**-Point of Attack  
**RPS**-Roughing the Passer  
**RTH**-Roughing the Holder  
**RTK**-Roughing the Kicker  
**TB**-Touchback  
**TD**-Touchdown  
**TO**-Timeout  
**UNR**-Unnecessary Roughness  
**UNS**-Unsportsmanlike Conduct

**Aiding the Runner:** A foul only if the runner is “picked up” by teammates or is “pulled” into end zone by a teammate. It is not a foul if “driven” into the end zone or forward by teammates. Most of the time, this happens near the goal line or short yardage situations, but illegal and legal actions apply anywhere on the field.

**Announcements:** Practice your microphone skills. The fans love this part of the game. Practice even when you do not have a microphone. Be sure to turn the microphone off after your announcement.

**Backward Pass:** When in question, the pass is forward, not backward. When the QB’s hand starts forward with the ball, rule the pass forward even if the passer is contacted and the ball goes backward.

**Bean Bags:** On fumbles, officials shall drop the bean bag only when they see the ball fumbled, not when they see the ball loose. During punts, drop the bean at the spot the kick ends or the spot of illegal touching. Be accurate. You are marking a potential enforcement spot. Do not drop your bean bag after an interception, except when inside Team B’s 5-yard line.

**Blocking:** If there is a potential OH, but the action occurs clearly away from the POA and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, OH should not be called. It is not blocking below the waist if the initial contact is above the waist and the blocker then slides down and makes contact below the waist. To be a foul for IBB, the initial contact of the block must be from behind and above the waist. When in question, the block is below the waist. First contact is the key, not the position of the blockers helmet. It is not a foul for IBB if the initial contact is from the side. If the blocker is in chase mode, ALL of the contact must be on the side. You should not call OH on a double team block unless there is a takedown, or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back. A block from behind below the waist is a CLP. Clipping is legal if within the Tackle Box and above the knee if the ball has not left the Tackle Box. If a defender has beaten the blocker be alert for OH. If the blocker is beaten, the blocker is going to cheat. Watch the feet.

**Ball Assistants:** Have good communication and a good pregame meeting. Keep them in the game. Keep them off the field. Tell them you will let them know when you want a new ball. Don’t let them make that decision.

**Catch:** If the process of the catch includes going to the ground, the receiver must maintain possession of the ball when contacting the ground to be awarded a catch. The ground can cause an incompleteness. This is the same in the FOP and EZ. These requirements are the same for interceptions and fumble recoveries. There is a difference in the ball moving within the receiver’s control and moving from a loss of control. If the receiver is contacted simultaneously with or immediately after controlling the ball with one foot down and loses possession, rule the pass incomplete. A play that would be ruled a catch/fumble in the field of play would be ruled a catch/TD in the end zone.

**Catchable Forward Pass:** For a pass to be ruled uncatchable, it must be BLATANTLY uncatchable. If there is any question the pass shall be ruled catchable. Give the uncatchable signal only if you would have thrown a flag for OPI or DPI if the pass had been catchable.

**Chain Crew:** Remind the chain crew they are part of the officiating crew and are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. No cheering or comments. Instruct them to move only on the **H**'s signal. If TASO Officials are on the chain, include them as much as you can.

**Chop Block:** High: If a blocker is engaged with the defender above the waist, a teammate may not block the engaged player below the waist. A high/high block is legal. Low: if a blocker is engaged with the defender below the waist, a teammate may not block the engaged player above the waist. A low/low block is legal. It is a foul for a CHB even if the high blocker has just disengaged with the defender when the low blocker contacts the defender. There must be contact by both the high and the low blocker to be a CHB foul.

**Clocks:** Game Clock: The Referee may make any clock adjustments necessary. If an official sees time remaining on the Game Clock when a timeout is called, put time back on the game clock even if reads 0:00 when the officials get the game stopped for the timeout. Play Clock: Once the play clock reads :00 the official will look for the ball. If the ball is still on the ground and not in the process of being snapped it is a foul for DOG. If the ball is being snapped, no foul for DOG. The Referee may reset the play clock to 25 if necessary. If the clock operators do not come to the dressing room prior to the game, report it to the Athletic Director. If they are TASO Officials, report it to the Chapter. If time is being kept on the field, turn the scoreboard clock off. Know the signals used if the play clocks are not working. Turn both off if one is not working. Be sure the crew has a watch for timing if necessary. If the game clock has less than 0:02 seconds remaining when the ball is snapped, this will be the last play of the game unless the period is extended by rule.

**Coach to Coach Communication System:** This is not covered by the rules, and the officials are not involved. If one team's communication goes down the officials may notify the other Coach, however, there is no rule NCAA or UIL/TAPPS rule of equity and no obligation for the other team to put theirs down. If there is a district rule or agreement, it is out of the jurisdiction of TASO officials.

**Coach to Player Communication System and Tablets:** Wearable technology is now permissible for players, but tablets and the technology to communicate with the players are not allowed on the sideline. There is no rule of equity on the use of this technology between teams, and it is out of the jurisdiction of TASO officials. If there is a district rule or agreement, it is out of the jurisdiction of TASO officials.

**Coin Toss:** Make this a memorable experience for the captains and their families. Ask the captain to call the toss before you toss the coin. Repeat the choice back to the captain. Let the coin hit the ground. Give good signals to the Press Box.

**Consistency:** Coaches want consistency in what is and is not a foul so that they know what to coach. Do not call a foul in the 4th quarter that you passed on earlier in the game. Do not pass on a call in the 4th quarter that you called earlier in the game. Do not call a foul near the goal line that you passed on near midfield. Do not pass on a call near the goal line that you called near midfield. Be consistent in marking the ball ready for play throughout the game.

**End of Game:** If an offensive team goes into a victory formation, officials should use common sense officiating and make every attempt to not call fouls that have no bearing on the outcome of the game. Personal fouls and player safety fouls should always be called regardless of time and score. If the Referee stops play for any reason, the game is suspended and not over. The official's jurisdiction ends when the game is over.

**Equipment:** Both teams must certify in writing before the game that all their players are equipped according to rule and have been instructed in the proper use of their equipment. If equipment becomes illegal through play, the team will not be charged a timeout. However, the player must leave the game until the illegal equipment is corrected.

**Face Mask:** Touching the Face Mask or a grab and release is not a foul. There must be a pull or twist and turn to be a foul. The grab, pull, twist, and turn of any helmet opening is a foul. Face Mask restrictions apply to the offense and defense.

**False Start:** A flinch is a flinch and is a FST. This applies to both linemen and backs. If an ineligible offensive player is going from a 2-point stance to a 3-point stance when the ball is snapped, this is a FST. If an eligible offensive player is going from a 2-point stance to a 3-point stance when the ball is snapped, this is ILM. QB head bobs or jerks are an FST. QB hard counts are not fouls. Ineligible offensive lineman who has their hand on or near the ground can turn and look at the QB to hear the signals if they are slow and do not lift their hand. Pointing at the defender as part of the offensive signals is not an FST. If the snapper flinches, head bobs or moves the ball, this is an FST, especially if this is only done on 4th downs or short yardage situations. Be alert for the defense calling the offensive snap count that causes an FST. A defender making a non-football move that causes the offense to FST is a foul for DOG.

**Field:** If both teams are on the field, two officials must be on the field to keep the teams separated. Jurisdiction begins 60 minutes prior to kickoff but use good judgment if there is potential for problems. The **R** will request a change to anything in, on or around the field that is believed to be unsafe.

**Flags:** There is no such thing as a "late flag." Sometimes it is necessary to wait until all the action has stopped to make a ruling. Go slow. See the play, read the play, then make the call. There is no such thing as "that's not your call." All officials are responsible for their primary area and responsible for ruling on action, legal or illegal, anywhere on the field. Do not throw flags at players. Throw your flag up in the air unless it is a spot foul.

**Fighting:** If player actions are deemed to be "fighting," the player must be disqualified. When in question, such actions will be deemed pushing and not fighting. If players come off the bench onto the field, they are deemed to be fighting by rule. In the pregame, be sure the coach understands this is an automatic disqualification by rule.

**Formations-Defense:** If the snapper adjusts or moves the ball forward after the defense has established position on the LOS, the defense should not be penalized for DOF as they have been put into this position by actions of the offense. A defender is considered on the LOS if any part of their body is inside the rearmost part of a down lineman's body.



**Formations-Offense:** Officials will work to keep offensive lineman legal and call ILF only when obvious or when warnings to the player or coach are ignored. Do not wait until the 4th quarter to start enforcing this rule. A wide receiver or slot back is covering up a tight end if there is no stagger. When in question, it is not a foul. Do not be technical in determining if a wide receiver or slot back is on or off the LOS. When in question, it is not a foul.

**Free Kicks:** The kicking team's restraining line for regular deep or pooch kicks will be a SOFT plane, and the officials will not be technical on calling OFK. The kicking team's restraining line for an onside kick will be a HARD plane, and the officials will call OFK if the kickers (other than the kicker) break the plane of their restraining line before the ball is kicked. The receiving team's restraining line is a plane, and a kickoff has gone 10 yards when the ball has broken the plane and remains beyond the plane of the receiving team's restraining line (The wind could blow it back). If the kickoff results in a TB or Fair Catch, do not call a foul for an illegal wedge formation or OH.

**Fumbles:** When in question, the runner fumbled the ball and was not down. When in question, the ball is passed and not fumbled during an attempted forward pass. The ground cannot cause a fumble. If the ball carrier with possession of the ball contacts the ground with something other than a hand or foot and the ball comes out simultaneously with the contact, the ball becomes dead. You cannot fumble a dead ball.

**Fouls:** See the play, read the play, make the call. Go slow in calling fouls. If you think it's a foul, it is not. If you know it's a foul, it is. If you don't see the entire play don't throw a flag.

**Game Balls:** There is no such thing as a kicking ball. All balls submitted for approval prior to the game must be rotated in and out of the game as necessary. When the U places the ball on the ground, it has been deemed acceptable for play. Do not let a team request a new ball late in the play clock to keep from getting a DOG. Good crew ball mechanics is a very important part of the game. The crew must have an air pressure test gauge, an air pump, and a marker to test, inflate and mark the game balls in case the officials' dressing room does not have these items.

**Game Control:** Control of the game is not lost in one play. It happens one play at a time until control is lost. Preventive officiating will keep the game pace and eliminate potential fouls. "Let them play" does not mean let them foul. Fouls that create an unfair advantage or player safety should be called anytime during the game regardless of time and score.

**Goal Line:** When in question it is not a touchdown. When considering whether a receiver has taken the ball out of the end zone on a kick, interception, or recovery, it is the position of the ball rather than the position of the player, or their feet, that will determine if the entire ball is out of the end zone. The entire ball must be in the FOP, or it is a touchback or safety when coming out. The entire goal line is in the end zone. When in question, a foul occurred in the FOP and not in the end zone. Consider an interception or catching a kick inside the 1-yard line to be in the end zone.

**Hide Out & Trick Plays:** Formations and actions during the execution of a trick or unusual play must be completely legal. Any play that uses a substitution to deceive as part of the play is



illegal. If a play can only be run in front of a team's bench area it is probably illegal. Officials must be aware of all substitutions, especially ones that could create an ILS foul. A player may fake a spike and throw a pass. A player may not fake "taking a knee." This makes the ball dead.

**Holding-Defense:** It is not DH if the defender is restricting the offensive player in a personal attempt to get to the ball or the runner. A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts and takes away their feet is DH. Do not call DH if the action occurs clearly away from the POA and has no effect on the play. If a defender holds and restricts an offensive player and a teammate shoots the gap, this is DH. If the defender holds and restricts an offensive player and no one shoots the gap this is not DH unless this action prevents the offensive player from getting to their blocking assignment (next level).

**Holding-Offense:** To have OH there must be a clear and visible material restriction; a pull, a yank, or a jerk. Make the defense "show you something," like trying to get away. Categories of OH: Tackle, Pullover, Grab & Restrict, Hook & Restrict, Take Down, Jerk & Restrict.

**Horse Collar Tackle:** To have a Horse Collar Tackle, the runner does not have to be tackled. If the immediate action buckles the ball carrier's knees but the runner is strong enough to fight through the action it is still a foul.

**Illegal Forward Pass:** The second forward pass from behind the LOS is IFP. If beyond the LOS, the spot from where the ball was first touched or hits the ground must be in advance of the spot where the ball was released to be IFP. For the QB to be called for IFP, the QB's ENTIRE BODY and the BALL must be beyond the LOS when the ball is released.

**Ineligible Downfield:** For a restricted offensive player to be illegally downfield on a forward pass that crosses the neutral zone, the ENTIRE player's body must have been more than 3 yards past the LOS before pass is RELEASED to have a foul for IDP. If the QB is throwing the ball away do not call IDP.

**Intentional Grounding:** The QB can throw the ball anywhere if not under pressure (*Exception:* Cannot spike the ball to stop the clock unless it is immediately after the snap). The QB can throw the ball at the feet of an eligible receiver even if the receiver is not looking. If the QB is outside the pocket and throws the ball away to avoid a sack and there is a question as to if the ball went beyond the LOS, rule that it did.

**Kicking a Loose Ball:** When in question, if a loose ball was kicked, it will be ruled accidental and not a foul. Intentionally kicking a loose ball and illegally kicking the ball are not the same.

**Leaping:** Jumping straight up to block a Try or FG is not a foul. Leaping into the plane directly above the frame of the body of an opponent is the foul. It is a foul to leap over a blocker behind the NZ (punt shield) when attempting to block a kick.

**Line of Scrimmage:** Defensive players who jump into the NZ and are moving back will be ruled to be DOF anytime there is a question as to did they get back on side before the snap. If the defense is crowding the NZ, any forward movement by the defense puts them into the neutral

zone. Two offensive players are protected if a defender moves into NZ in the gap between two offensive linemen. It is a foul for DOF if the defender's action causes one of the linemen to react. Three offensive players are protected if a defender moves into the NZ head up on an offensive lineman. It is a foul for DOF if the defender's action causes that lineman or an adjacent lineman on either side to react. Backs and Split Receivers are not protected. The defender must be in NZ when the offense moves for these examples to be DOF. If the offense moves and the defender is not in NZ, this is an FST. Contact by the defense prior to the snap is DOF. The defense cannot touch the ball after it has been made ready for play. Rule a defender as "unabated" when their charge takes him past the hip of the offensive tackle before the ball is snapped.

**Measurements:** Always allow a reasonable request for a measurement. Do not allow a measurement to keep from a DOG penalty. Do not allow a measurement after a touchback. The ball must touch the appropriate yard line to be a first down. Do not allow a measurement after a kickoff OB that was spotted 30 yards from the kickoff spot. The ball must touch the appropriate yard line to be a first down. Be sure the Press Box or TV cameras have a clear view of the measurement. Rotate the ball with the nose facing the goal line before measuring. Don't move the ball then measure. Hold the ball to keep it from moving prior to the measurement. Be sure the chain has tape in the middle. Never walk off a 5-yard penalty then measure.

**Momentum:** If a pass is intercepted near the goal line (inside the 1-yard line) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the FOP or the EZ, make it a TB. If intercepted inside the 5-yard line and the player's momentum carries that player into the EZ where the player goes down, give that player's team the ball at the spot of the interception. Use the same philosophy in ruling if the receiver of a free or scrimmage kick should be a TB or possession in the FOP.

**Out of Bounds:** If you think a ball carrier stepped OB, they did not. Throw your hat when an eligible receiver steps OB.

**Overtime:** You must know the overtime rules and if the district uses Positive Points.

**Pass Interference-Defense:** There must be contact to have DPI, and the legal forward pass must have crossed the NZ and be untouched and catchable by rule. There can be no DPI on a pass that does not cross the neutral zone. There can be DH but not DPI. There is no face guarding rule. Both offense and defense have equal rights to the ball. No DPI on an eligible receiver who went OB on their own. Most DPI fouls will fall into these categories: Not playing the ball, playing through the back of the receiver, grabbing the receiver's arm, arm bar to slow receiver down, cutoff the receiver's route, hook and turn. Must turn before the ball gets there. Hand on back or waist is not a foul without the turn. DPI is not coached.

**Pass Interference-Offense:** Blocking downfield on a pass that crosses NZ, push-off creating separation, pick plays, must be more than 1 yard beyond the NZ to be a foul. Do not call OPI or IDP if an attempted screen pass is overthrown and lands beyond the LOS. OPI is coached.

**Personal Fouls:** Spitting on an opponent is a DQ. When late hits occur away from the ball near the end of the play, make them dead ball PF, not live ball, when in question. Flagrant PF is a DQ.

Contact fouls are UNR. Non-contact fouls are UNS.

**Pocket:** Pocket is not an NCAA Rule Book term. The rule book uses the term Tackle Box. The pocket (tackle box) goes from tackle to tackle all the way back to the passers end line. The pocket (tackle box) goes away when the ball leaves the pocket and does not come back even if the ball comes back into the original pocket area.

**Pregame:** A good pregame conference is vital to the success of the crew. Use the time on the field during warm-ups to get some snaps and reps at your position.

**Professionalism:** From the time you arrive at the stadium until you leave, how you dress, act, talk, and treat other people is a reflection on you, your fellow officials, and your chapter.

**Pylon:** The goal line pylon is OB behind the goal line. If the ball in player possession touches the goal line pylon it is a TD. The player who touches the goal line or end line pylon is OB. A loose ball that touches any pylon is OB. The end line pylon is OB and not part of the end zone.

**Roughing/Running into Holder, Kicker, and Passer:** The holder can be roughed. Be careful in calling running into the holder. Remember, the holder can get up and run. If contact is very late it is RTH. When in question it is RTK. If the defender hits the kicker's plant leg it is RTK. If the defender hits the kicking leg it can be either RTK or RNK. When in question, it is RPS if the defender is attempting to punish. RPS can be the result of a legal hit that was late.

**Sideline:** Use common sense in working with the team on your sideline to stay back. Let them coach but don't let them interfere with you doing your job. Sideline control is a safety issue. Good communication with your sideline is an important part of the game. Be respectful and reply to questions. Do not reply to comments. Conduct sideline conferences with the Coach on the sideline. Not on the field.

**Signals:** The dead ball signal kills the play just like a whistle. Good signals by the officials make the game play better. Do not signal TD unless you are the covering official. Don't repeat another official's TD signal.

**Spots:** Always mark the forward progress spot with your downfield foot. Spot the ball with the same pace throughout the game unless there is an up-tempo offense or time is running out. Do not let a hurry up offense take you out of your game. Hustle to get the ball spotted, when necessary, but you must mechanically do your pre-snap responsibilities first even in a hurry up offense. The ball should be spotted where it was when it became dead. The wrist is part of the hand, and the ankle is part of the foot. Rule a player down when something other than a hand or foot touches the ground. The back of the hand does not make the runner down. **H** and **L** should practice cross field mechanics. Know when you see double action. Don't give the runner too much progress. If the penalty for a foul says it is from the previous spot, go back to where the ball was snapped, not just the yard line, and then enforce the penalty yardage for the foul.

**Targeting:** When in question, it is a foul for targeting. When there is no question there is a foul for targeting, it shall be deemed to be a flagrant targeting foul and the penalty will include

disqualification, regardless of the number of targeting fouls the player has previously committed during the game.

**Touchdown:** If the ball in player possession breaks the plane of the goal line it is a TD and the ball becomes dead. Go slow in ruling TD. Look at the other officials if you need help before you signal. Your TD signal kills the play and the ball becomes dead.

**Touching the Ball:** If a player who is passive and not blocking is blocked into the ball, that player is not deemed to have touched the ball. If a player who is active and blocking touches the ball it is touching. On a punt, when in question the ball was not touched by kickers or receivers.

**Trys & Field Goals:** The 4th down fumble rule applies on try. A kick that hits the cross bar or upright can score a goal, otherwise it becomes a dead ball. A pass, free kick, punt, or fumble that hits the goal post becomes dead. Check with the offense before spotting the ball for a 2 point try. They may want to put it on the right or left hash mark. If it is placed at a hash mark by request of the offense it can only be moved if the offense calls a timeout.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of plays. Do not allow prolonged actions or taunting actions made toward an opponent. Actions such as throat slash, gun references, sexual motions, spiking the ball, or actions that are aimed to draw attention are UNS fouls. Kicking or throwing an official's flag is a DQ.

**Video:** Watch and study as much video of yourself and others as possible. Watch games on TV with attention to your position. Practice your keys when watching TV or video.

**Weather:** Know the weather and lightning rules for stopping and restarting the game.

**Whistles:** Officials are instructed to blow the whistle only when they see the ball dead in player possession. It does not matter what type of whistle you use or if you have it in your mouth or not during the play. What matters is why and when you blow the whistle. There will be no inadvertent whistles if the officials go slow and blow the ball dead only when it becomes dead by rule.

**Xs & Os:** Learn some football coaching terms. This will help when communicating with coaches.

**Yard Lines:** The ball can be spotted on a yard line to begin a new series after a COP. Exception, if the COP occurs after a failure to make the LTG because of an incomplete forward pass or a run that was short of the LTG after a measurement, you do not move the ball. At all other times the ball will be spotted where it becomes dead.

**Zones:** Know your zones on the field. Free kick blocking zone, legal clipping zone, legal blocking below the waist zone, neutral zone, outside/inside the numbers, side zone and tackle box.

## SECTION 30. FOUL CODES

BAT.....	Illegal Bat	ITP.....	Illegal Touch of Pass
BBW .....	Block Below Waist	IWG.....	Illegal Wedge
BOB .....	Blocking Out of Bounds	KCI.....	Kick Catch Interference
BSB.....	Blind Side Block	KIK .....	Illegal Kick
CHB .....	Chop Block	KOB .....	Kick Out of Bounds
CLP .....	Clipping	LEA.....	Leaping
DH.....	Defensive Holding	LEV.....	Leverage
DOD.....	Delay of Game (Defense)	LPS.....	Leap Over Punt Shield
DOF.....	Defensive Offside	OFK.....	Offside on Free Kick
DOG.....	Delay of Game (Offense)	OH.....	Offensive Holding
DPI.....	Defensive Pass Interference	OPI.....	Offensive Pass Interference
DSC.....	Disconcert Signals (Team B)	PFH .....	Personal Foul Helmet Off
ENC.....	Encroachment Offense	RFH.....	Roughing Holder (15-yds)
EQV .....	Equipment Violation	RFK.....	Roughing Free Kicker
FBG.....	Fighting Before Game	RNH .....	Running Into Holder (5-yds)
FFH .....	Fighting First Half	RNK .....	Running Into Kicker
FHT .....	Fighting Half Time	ROB .....	Return From OOB
FMM .....	Face Mask (15-yards)	RPS .....	Roughing the Passer
FSH .....	Fighting Second Half	RRK .....	Roughing the Kicker
FST.....	False Start	SKE.....	Striking, Kick, Knee, Elbow
GAI .....	Game Admin Interference	TGT.....	Targeting
GAI/SLW....	GAI/Sideline Warning	TRP .....	Tripping
GAIM.....	GAI/Major (15-yds)	UNR/BTH...	Blow to Head
HUR.....	Hurdling	UNR/BUT...	Butting, Ram with Crown
IBB.....	Illegal Block in Back	UNR/HCT...	Horse Collar Tackle
IBK.....	Illegal Block Kickers	UNR/HDP...	Hit on Defenseless Player
IBS .....	Illegal Block After FC Signal	UNR/HTF...	Hands to Face
ICS .....	Illegal Contact with Snapper	UNR/LTO...	Late Hit Out of Bounds
IDP .....	Ineligible Downfield on Pass	UNR/LTP....	Late Hit/Piling On
IFD .....	Illegal Formation Defense	UNR/OTH...	Other
IFK.....	Illegal Free Kick Formation	UNS/ABL...	Abusive Language
IFP .....	Illegal Forward Pass	UNS/BCH...	Unsportsmanlike Act/Bench
IHR.....	Illegal Forward Pass	UNS/CTO...	UNS/Contact Official
IHR.....	Illegally Helping Runner	UNS/DEA...	Delayed Excessive Act
IIN .....	Interlocked Interference	UNS/HCH...	UNS/Head Coach
IKB.....	Illegally Kicking Ball	UNS/NFA...	Non- Football Act
ILF.....	Illegal Formation	UNS/OTH...	Other
ILM .....	Illegal Motion	UNS/PSH....	Pushing/Shoving Opponent
ILS.....	Illegal Substitution	UNS/RHT...	Removal of Helmet
ING .....	Intentional Grounding	UNS/SLI.....	UNS/Sideline Interference
INU .....	Illegal Numbering	UNS/STM...	Spiking/Throwing Ball
ISH .....	Illegal Shift	UNS/TAU...	Taunting or Baiting
ISP.....	Illegal Snap	UNS/UFA...	Unfair Acts
ITK.....	Illegal Touch of Kick		

## SECTION 31. PREGAME CONFERENCE

### IN OFFICIALS DRESSING ROOM

**Referee:** Be responsible for the pre-game conference. Others on the crew may facilitate the meeting, at the choice of the **R**.

**All:** Actively participate in pregame conference. Set watches to correct time (**S** has official time). Check uniforms and equipment; whistles, markers, game cards, etc. **R** and **U** will provide information from the coaches. Review UIL, TASO and Chapter bulletins from the previous week. Review kickoff time, toss time, unusual plays and player equipment. Review where and how line to gain indicator is to be worked, instructions to ball persons, location of testing and marking game balls. Review instructions for clock operators (Section 7), rules changes, and UIL exceptions. Discuss crew realignment if an official gets injured.

### TEAM (LOCKER ROOM or FIELD)

**Referee/Umpire:** Visit teams one hour and 15 minutes before kick-off, if possible, otherwise no later than 45 minutes before kick-off. Give head coaches official time. Obtain name(s) and number(s) of captain(s). Make certain teams are equipped according to rule. Obtain head coach certification that all players are equipped in compliance with NCAA rules and the UIL exceptions that apply. Review length of half, 5-minute warning, second half options on field and sideline administration. Record discussion information from a coaches pregame meeting form or card and disseminate it to other officials in the meeting. Keep in case you need it for completing an incident report. Inspect equipment and bandages of each team.

### ON THE FIELD

**All:** Enter field together and move smartly to accomplish duties. Inspect field markings, notify **R**, **U** and game management of any deficiencies or hazards. End on your bench.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Check line to gain equipment and instruct assistants. Instruct the auxiliary box operator if one will be used in the game. Instruct Ball Assistants, along with **B**, and identify the location of game balls.

**Referee/Umpire:** Spot check equipment. Arrange for your captains at the toss. Take positions to control your sideline during the Coin Toss.

**Back Judge:** Instruct clock operator(s), if not done prior to arrival on field, and check clock operation. Join **H** and **L** as they meet with and instruct Ball Assistants and identify the location of game balls.

### COIN TOSS

**All:** Take initial positions and be ready to execute Toss duties promptly and precisely. After Coin Toss, move quickly to the center of the field and record the results. **H** or **B** will deliver game ball to **U** then the crew will break to positions, preferably before the National Anthem.

**Referee/Umpire:** From your sideline, escort captains to the center of the field.



**Head Line Judge/Back Judge:** Remain with your teams, ensuring no more than four captains advance beyond the nine-yard marks. Secure game ball if your team kicks to begin the game.

**Line Judge:** Remain on the sideline.

## SECOND HALF OPTIONS

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Obtain the second half option from the appropriate coach.

**Head Line Judge/Back Judge:** Ensure your team is on the field with no less than three minutes on the game clock.

**All:** Arrive at Free Kick positions no later than one minute prior to kickoff.

## KICKOFF

**All:** Clear restricted areas then raise arm to indicate ready. **R** will make the ball ready for play. Covering official winds the clock. **L** and **R** will discuss end zone split, illegal touching, untouched kick out of bounds, blocking below waist, fair catch, kick catch interference, forward hand-offs, special adjustments for obvious onside kick and free kicks after safety.

**Back Judge:** Initial position is with kicker. Be aware of Team A's 9-yard mark restrictions. Instruct the kicker, count kicking team players be aware of Team A formation after ready for play. Take position at kicking team restraining line, press box side. Be prepared to rule on restraining line fouls, short kicks, touching, blocking, fair catch, signals and Team A players out of bounds. Responsible for action on and by the kicker. Work with a bean bag in hand.

**Umpire:** Position on Kicking team's restraining line, opposite press box side. Be aware of Team A's 9-yard mark restrictions, count kicking team players and be aware of Team A formation. Be prepared to rule on restraining line fouls, short kicks, touching, blocking, fair catch, signals and Team A players out of bounds. Work with a bean bag in hand.

**Line Judge:** Receiving team's restraining line opposite press box. Position off sideline, count Team B and Be prepared to rule on restraining line fouls, short kicks, touching, blocking, fair catch, signals and Team A players out of bounds. Work with a bean bag in hand.

**Referee:** Opposite press box side, outside sideline until area between you and **H** is clear and then move to sideline. Ensure the correct number of players on either side of kicker and be aware of illegal wedge formations.

**Head Line Judge:** Press box side, outside sideline until area between you and **B** is clear and then move to sideline. Ensure the correct number of players on either side of kicker and be aware of illegal wedge formations.

## RUNNING PLAYS

**All:** Clear the restricted areas. Work your zones of coverage. Watch for chop blocks.

**Referee:** Take an initial position on the throwing arm side of the QB, 12-14 yards deep and wide

to have a clear view of the ball and the tackle for which you are responsible. Cover the QB primarily and then the runner behind the neutral zone.

**Umpire:** Take an initial position 5- 10 yards deep on Team B side of the ball. Count Team A and linemen numbered 50- 79. Listen for defensive signals. Watch for a legal snap and linemen moving illegally. Cover inside out and clean up away from the ball on runs in side zone. Observe blocking action in the line area.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Clear the sidelines. Be wide and communicate through arm/hand signals. Observe action by end/linebackers on your side, legal snap, blocks below the waist, chop blocks and player in motion away from you. Call encroachment and False Starts. Observe action in front of a runner moving toward you and runners on your side beyond the neutral zone. When the run is away from you, clean up action on QB after a backward pass or hand-off. Enforce 9-yard mark restrictions.

**Back Judge:** Cover from behind defensive backs. Keep action bracketed, helping on illegal blocks and action in front of runner. Help cover downfield action out of bounds and substitutions.

## PASSING PLAYS

**All:** Take same basic positions and coverage as on running plays. Be alert for action by and against receivers assigned to your coverage. Be ready to rule on pass interference, out-of-bounds and catchable pass rules. Ask for help if appropriate on catch determination.

**Referee:** Observe and rule on action by, on and around passer, intentional grounding, pass from on or behind line, direction on drop-back, work passing arm side of QB. If the passer is sacked, mark the dead-ball spot with a bean bag. PROTECT THE PASSER.

**Umpire:** Know ineligible, action on or by close-in backs, linemen downfield, where pass is first touched. Help on button hook and low short passes.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Know ineligible on your side by position and number, blocking by or on eligible receivers, eligible receivers out of bounds, and quick pass direction. Help on first touching. Discuss coverage on sideline passes with **B**.

**Back Judge:** Don't get beat deep, the end line is yours. Keep action between you **H** and **L**. Rule on momentum on kicks and interceptions near the goal line.

## PUNTS

**All:** Be alert for change of possession. Review rule on advancing scrimmage kicks. Be alert for passes that resemble punts, blocking below the waist, fair catch signals by any Team B player and touching.

**Referee:** Take position slightly behind (no more than 5-yards) and to the kicking foot side of the kicker's initial position. Help to spot out of bound kick if needed. Rule on blocking and action behind line, action by, on or near the kicker.



**Umpire:** Be aware of Team B players positioned around the snapper and their actions after the snap. After the kick, turn with flow of players and work action in the center of the field.

**Head Line Judge:** Hold position on the line of scrimmage. Rule on whether kick crosses the neutral zone. If Team B fouls, know if PSK rules apply.

**Line Judge:** Observe action by and against gunners on your sideline.

**Back Judge:** Take a position most advantageous to ruling on action by and against deep receiver. Mark the end of the kick with a bean bag. Rule on momentum on a catch near goal line. Responsible for game and play clock.

### FIELD GOALS AND TRY

**All:** Be alert for blocked kicks. Stay off whistles until the ball is dead by rule. On short or partial block, know if ball crossed neutral zone. Be alert for fair catch, signals, touching, blocking, etc. Work a kick that does not score the same as a punt.

**Referee:** Take an Initial position on L side of the formation.

**Line Judge/Back Judge:** Have the call all the way. Review coverage, especially if run or pass develops.

**Umpire:** Position should favor L side of the formation. Observe line play and action against the snapper.

**Head Line Judge:** Cover line play in the neutral zone. Be responsible for knowing if the ball crosses the neutral zone.

### GOAL LINE PLAYS

**All:** Make sure the appropriate official covers the goal line. Coordinate coverage between **H**, **L**, and **B** when going in, and between **R**, **H**, and **L** when coming out. Cover the same as any scrimmage play except be ready to move in. Be alert for score, sound loud whistle when you rule a score. Move in to help if a pile-up occurs. See the ball before killing the play. Coordinate call with other officials as appropriate, especially on plays involving the sideline or the end line. Be alert for a busted play or a change of possession. Sell your call.

**Referee:** Make sure you have all the information concerning the play before signaling. Be alert for a change of possession and resulting breakaway run.

**Umpire:** Indicate to the sideline officials through a pre-arranged signal if sees the ball in player possession in the end zone but should not signal touchdown except in very extreme circumstances.

### TIMEOUTS

**All:** Make sure the clock stops. Check on the number of timeouts remaining for each team and confirm accuracy with other officials.

**Referee:** Signal timeout to press box and indicate whether it is team or an official's timeout.

**Umpire:** Cover and hold ball position.

**Head Line Judge/Line Judge:** Make sure the down box, chains and auxiliary markers stay put. Remain near the team on your sideline and ready to alert them when timeout is ending.

**Field Judge/Side Judge:** Stay with the team on your sideline.

**Back Judge:** Time the timeout and coordinate Radio/TV breaks

## MEASUREMENTS

**Head Line Judge:** Grip the chain at the clip on the yard line nearest the back stake and bring to measurement spot.

**Line Judge:** Mark the spot for **H** to place the clip on the field.

**Umpire:** Take forward stake, stretching the chain.

**Back Judge:** Clear area for the press box side view and hold ball.

**Referee:** Rule on the result of the measurement.

## CALLING AND REPORTING FOULS

**All:** Report fouls by team name, offense or defense, or A/B with number and position of the offender; status of the ball (run, pass, loose, or dead), spot of the foul, and the enforcement spot. Continue to officiate on live ball fouls. Stop the clock if foul occurs in a dead ball interval. Check with other officials as appropriate. Inform **R** and **U** of the outcome of the play. Cover penalty markers and bean bags as appropriate. Be alert for special enforcement circumstances. Know the enforcement options of your call.

**Referee:** Give preliminary signals so that wing officials can notify coaches. Present options as appropriate. Signal acceptance or declination, and the next down.

**Umpire:** Make sure **R** has all the information concerning the play. Check **R**'s options for accuracy and enforce as determined by decision.

**Head Line Judge:** Ensure chains and the down box have not moved. Move from enforcement spot to succeeding spot and check enforcement for accuracy with **U**.

**Line Judge:** Hold enforcement spot until enforcement is complete and check enforcement for accuracy with **U**.

**Back Judge:** Ensure all important spots are covered and observe dead ball action around players on the field.

## **END OF A PERIOD**

**All:** At the end of first half, record elapsed time and any fouls to carry over to next kickoff. Leave the field together at half-time and at the end of the game.

**Referee:** Signal end of period, record down, distance and yard line. At the end of the first half and from the end zone, signal clock operator to start the clock after the field is clear of coaches, players and assistants.

**Umpire:** Check and accompany **R**. Notify **R** if between downs.

**Head Line Judge:** Record yard line of the clip, move line to gain indicator. Check for proper placement of ball and line, box and line to gain equipment.

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

**All:** Be responsible for legality of the 9-yard marks. Offensive players must comply with 9-yard restrictions. Mark forward progress without fanfare, hold until sure **U** has spot. Keep a written record of toss, timeouts, major fouls, unsportsmanlike fouls and ejections. Assess players out of bounds on kicks and passes. Report on the status and position of the ball on fouls. On fumbles; report jersey color on possession. Discuss dig procedures for fumbles. Review signals and procedures to stop the clock. Discuss winding signals by **H** and **L**. Know down and distance of each play. Assure **R** makes the ball ready. Be sure one-second stop is observed. Discuss encroachment and sideline coverage. Correct numbering. Hustle, but don't hurry. See what you call and call what you see. Sell your calls. Keep coaches informed on penalty options.



Ready for play  
\*Untimed down



Start the clock



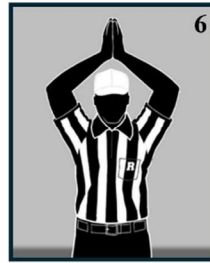
Stop the clock



Media timeout



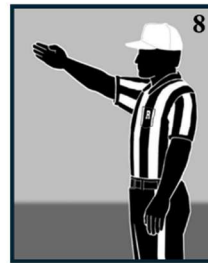
Touchdown  
Field Goal



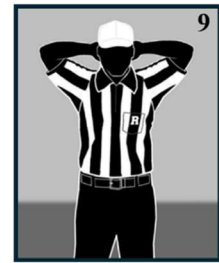
Safety



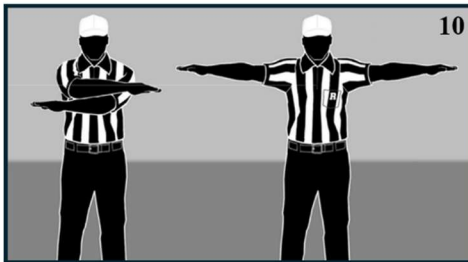
Dead ball foul/  
Touchback  
(move side-to-side)



First down



Loss of down



Incomplete pass/unsuccessful try or field  
goal/penalty declined/coin toss option deferred



Legal touching



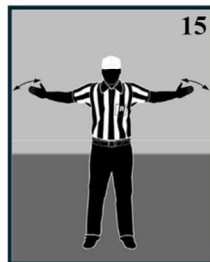
Inadvertent whistle



Disregard flag



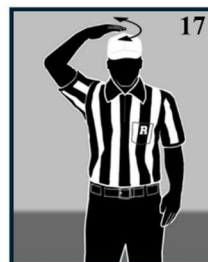
End of period



Sideline warning



Illegal touching



Uncatchable pass



Offside B/Offside  
A or B on kickoff



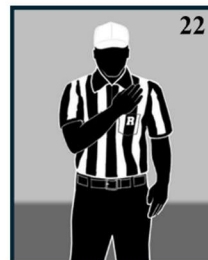
False start/  
Encroachment A  
Illegal formation



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



Delay of game



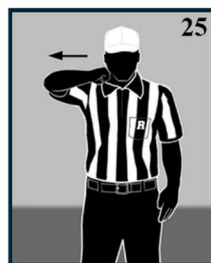
Substitution  
infraction



Equipment  
violation



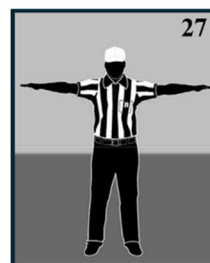
Targeting



Horse-collar



Hands to the face



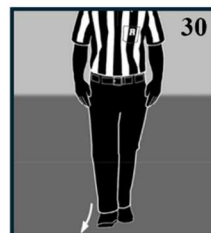
Unsportsmanlike  
conduct



Illegal blindside  
block



Sideline interference  
Note: Face press box  
when giving signal.



Running into or  
roughing the  
kicker or holder



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



Illegal fair catch



Pass interference  
Kick-catching  
interference



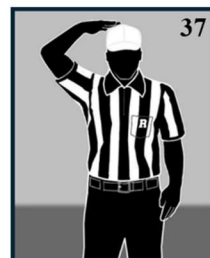
Roughing the  
passer



Illegal pass  
Illegal forward handing  
Note: Face press box  
when giving signal.



Intentional grounding



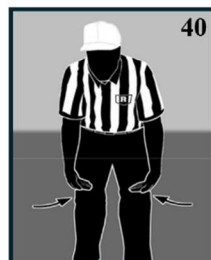
Ineligible receiver  
downfield



Personal foul



Clipping



Block below the waist  
Illegal block



Chop block



Holding/Obstructing  
Illegal use of the  
hands or arms



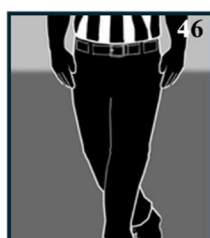
Illegal block  
in the back



Helping the runner  
Interlocked  
interference



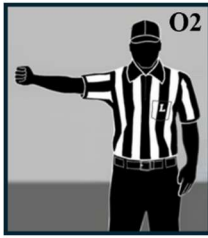
Grasping of  
face mask or  
helmet opening



Tripping



Disqualification  
Ejection



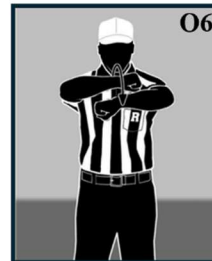
**O2**  
Eleven Players  
Backward pass  
(Punch back)



**O3**  
No catch, out of bounds  
Field goal no good, wide



**O5**  
Pass juggled



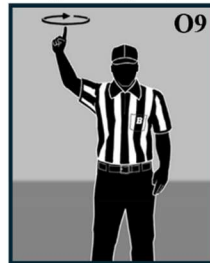
**O6**  
Fourth down  
fumble rules apply



**O7**  
Reset play clock to 25  
seconds (Use both  
hands for 40 seconds)



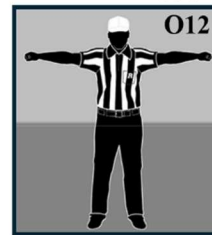
**O8**  
Dead ball  
10 seconds left on  
play clock



**O9**  
Recount players



**O11**  
Catch



**O12**  
Team A substitution  
requiring Umpire to  
cover the ball



**O18**  
Team A is not in  
scrimmage kick  
formation





# TASO's Commitment to Education and Training

## Empowering Members Through Continuous Development

The Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO) is dedicated to the advancement and professional development of its members. Its education and training initiatives are designed to ensure that officiating skills are honed, rules are understood and consistently applied, and each member maintains a high standard of competence. This commitment is achieved through a diverse array of programs that cater to the unique needs of its members.

### Training Materials

One of the core pillars of TASO's educational efforts is the creation and distribution of specialized training materials. These resources aim to equip members with a deep understanding of the rules and provide strategies to elevate their officiating skills. The aim is to foster a culture of continuous improvement where members feel equipped and confident in their roles.

### Annual Meetings

Every year, the TASO Annual Meeting brings members together from across the state for collective learning experiences. These meetings serve as a platform to review the latest rule changes, discuss proper mechanics and provide deeper insights into their implications.

### Regional Clinics

Recognizing that not all members can attend the Annual meeting, TASO Regional Rules Clinics serve as a valuable opportunity for members and are tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of the local officiating community. They emphasize practical training and real-world application, ensuring that members leave with actionable knowledge that can be directly applied in their roles.

### Local Chapter Training

Training at the local level is integral to ensure that members receive personalized instruction that aligns with their unique officiating environments. TASO provides chapters with a variety of educational resources, including training materials and guidelines, to conduct effective training sessions. Local chapters play a crucial role in reinforcing the principles and standards established at the state and regional levels.

### Annual Rules and Mechanics Exam

To maintain consistency and uphold the highest standards of officiating, TASO requires each member to pass an annual rules and mechanics exam before officiating a game. It ensures that every member is adequately prepared to handle the responsibilities of officiating and reinforces the importance of continuous learning.