



CCAFO MECHANICS ADDENDUM to the OFFICIAL'S MANUAL

Purpose: this document is to be used to complement the Official's Manual. It is not all encompassing but should be used to clarify several "gray" areas of officiating. The key to several of the mechanics is to **ADJUST** to the situation at hand, use common sense and be sure the entire crew makes their presence known to both teams on the field at all times. Our objective is to use consistent mechanics throughout the entire board for all positions. This makes it easier for the crew, coaches and players to receive consistent performances on a weekly basis. Because of their critical nature, some of the procedures listed in this document may be repeated more than once.

Recommended Crew Communication Signals: (page 24 of 2008-2009 Officials Manual) The fist for 11 players should be held out in front of the body at chest level so your fellow officials can see the signal. It is very helpful for the referee to hold the signal out as long as possible (until the QB starts his cadence) in order for the wing officials to ensure 7 or more players are on the line for offense. Some type of signal for 10 offensive players, (verbal and non-verbal) should be used in order to assist the wings with possible illegal formation, ineligible receiver downfield etc.. It is recommended that the referee put his open hand over his heart or keep his fist out but open and close his hand and make a verbal comment to the wings to "check it or take a look". For 12 or more "players", a delay should be given to see if anyone is leaving the field (unless the snap is imminent, then no delay) followed by a dead ball whistle and flag thrown if no "player" is leaving the field prior to the snap. *The type of signals that will be used and the importance of recognizing that the offense has 10 players should be covered in the pre-game conference.*

Signals that we have adopted in the past include: juggling the ball followed by an incomplete pass signal, extra point or field goal kick wide with both arms sweeping towards where the ball was wide, or tapping the ground that the ball was trapped and not caught. We do NOT give the 2 hands completed catch (like the NFL) in the event our fellow officials have given the incomplete signal.

Backward pass signal (page 24) should **not** be used by wing officials and they should only sound the whistle for a forward incomplete pass that has hit the ground or let the play continue if the pass is backward is on the ground.

Signals in General: One arm signals for plays such as an incomplete pass, touchdowns, stop the clock etc... are not part of our mechanics and should not be used. They give the appearance of not being clear, concise and are technically an inadvertent signal which is treated the same as an inadvertent whistle. If a finger whistle is being used, blow hard into the whistle loud once and use both arms to make the signal. ALL signals including the ones given by the Referee to the press box should be slow, deliberate and with purpose.

Arrival to the Game Site: It is recommended to arrive at the game site one hour 15 minutes or sooner for a Friday night game and one hour 30 minutes or sooner for Saturday/Sunday games. The key to a good game is preparation and a good pregame will help set the tone for the following event. *It is highly recommended the referee send an e-mail to the crew no later than 5 days before the contest specifying the game site (i.e lockers available/not available), arrival time, special game conditions and his cell phone number in the event of late arrival. It is in the crew's best interest to have the referee's cell phone number with them in case of an emergency.* Please remember, once you enter a game site and until you leave you are representing the CCAFO and your conduct should reflect that. All schools prohibit smoking anywhere on school property so please follow school policies. Also, please be sure your uniform and equipment are up to date and wearing shorts is **not** allowed for varsity assignments.

Pre-game Conference: The conference is facilitated by the referee but everyone should participate in this extremely important discussion. This is a great time to bring up any questions you may have or any unusual plays that have occurred during the season or prior years. Serious situations can be avoided or not repeated by bringing them up and discussing how they are going to be handled for that game (see page 5 of this document for a recommended conference outline). New officials with 1 – 5 years experience are encouraged to attend pre-game meetings to help them become familiar with this process. Anyone who is not on the crew should be reminded that they are guest and let the crew focus on the job at hand.

NOTE: this also applies to the half time break, any feedback or critique by a qualified observer to the crew should be handled after the game and not when there is another half of football to be played.

On Field Arrival: rule 1.1.7 states “the game officials shall assume authority for the contest, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts, 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present”. The end of this statement (or soon thereafter) indicates that we should be on the field no later than 20 minutes prior to the start of the game.

*NOTE: some venues require special vigilance concerning the entering of teams. It is **HIGHLY** recommended that 2 officials (backjudge and linejudge) stay at those entrances once the on field inspection is completed. The referee can stay with the linesman as he gives his chain crew instructions. If both teams are ready to enter the same entrance, the visiting should be allowed to enter first with both officials ensuring both teams maintain sportsmanship.*

Primary Responsibilities:

Referee: crew chief for the activities of the game (lightening procedures, coordination of ejection forms, over 50 point differential procedures etc..) line up on the passing arm of the QB, 10-12 yards deep, able to view backs and opposite tackle, read opposite tackle for play situations, ball behind line of scrimmage (LOS) from sideline to sideline, communicate to both head coaches for highly unusual circumstances, count A players with Umpire. Primarily responsible for penalty administration and communicating penalties by giving good signals to the press box.

Umpire : 5-7 yards behind defensive line, keep snapper in view, read guards and center for play situation, vary positions so you are not used as a pick, know status of ball on the field (i.e. on the hash mark, on the post etc...), 5 lineman numbered 50-79, count A players with referee.

Linesman/Line Judge: begin each scrimmage play positioned 9 yards from the widest receiver or on the sidelines straddling the LOS. Note: there may be formations such as 2 tight ends, nobody wide and ball is snapped from the opposite hash mark that requires you to be on the field at the snap but no closer than the top of the numbers with no need to be at the hash marks. The wider position ensures the officials won't get caught inside if the play goes wide and will help them maintain a wide angle of focus, allowing for better observations of players. **However, do not stay "anchored" on the sidelines, get a feel for how the game is progressing and ADJUST accordingly.** On normal plays (2nd and 10 and there is a 2 yard run up the middle) there is no need to come in past the numbers keeping all players in view. On plays that are close to a first down, goal line going in or coming out or if the game conditions **it is imperative that you see the ball and come in hard to the spot.** Punch back if the last man on your side is in the backfield, number of offensive players on the LOS, motion going away and stay with him if changes. Line Judge checks down marker every play and count B players with the backjudge. Linesman instruct chain crew at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the game and it is recommend you have a fellow official with you during this conference.

Backjudge: 15 – 20 yards deep, deeper than the deepest defensive player, no wider than near uprights, don't get burnt deep, keep a 20 yard "cushion between you and the wings on running and passing plays, time 25 second count and per state wide policy put your hand straight up in the air at **5** seconds (**game situations and common sense should dictate how your handle this**). Also, key on the tight end or end on the strong side (where most eligible receivers are located – if strength is even, favor the linesman side of the field) and count B players with line judge.

ALL : responsible for game clock and status (ready for play or snap) after every play, signal next down and correct if wrong, safety of players including bleeding, injuries or issues with equipment during the game, information back to the coaches via the wings for penalties, and correct penalty enforcement. If you are the calling official on a penalty, it is your responsibility to ensure that the penalty is administered properly. If anyone thinks that there is something not being done correctly, they are to bring it up at that time and not later. Good crew communication is essential to having a game that no one remembers who we were after the game. **PLEASE** be sure you see the ball in possession and the play is dead before blowing the whistle. A late whistle is allot better than an early one or inadvertent whistle, no ball = no whistle, don't guess

If there is a potential ejection, the crew should huddle together to discuss if this is the appropriate course of action to take giving the calling official a chance to cool down and reflect. Preventive officiating by talking to the players and letting the coach know that a player is getting out of hand beforehand, is always helpful but if needed and warranted, an ejection may occur. If this happens or the score differential is over 50 points, the referee is responsible to contact the Commissioner and the head of the Better Officiating Committee right after the game. At **NO** time should anyone else on the crew or board, contact anyone about these situations until the entire crew has met and filled out the appropriate paper work that the referee will send to the correct parties. Our press policy is "no comment" which can not be misquoted.

Key points to Official's Manual for coin toss, kickoffs, running plays, field goals etc..

1. Coin Toss (page 14 NFHS Official's Manual 2008 – 2009) linejudge is with the team opposite the chain crew with the referee and the referee will escort the captains (max of 4) to the middle of the field at 5 minutes before game time. **The linejudge remains on the sideline to keep team members who are not involved in the toss off the field.** The umpire, linesman and backjudge (see page 16.III.A.5) are on the visitors sideline with the umpire escorting his captains (max of 4) to the center of the field. **The linesman and backjudge remain on the sideline to keep team members who are not involved in the toss off the field.** *By rule, page 43 (rule 3-2-2) "all team personnel on the playing field, other than the team captains involved with the coin toss ceremony, shall be restricted to their respective team box areas or well away from the vicinity of the toss."*

NOTE : *To reduce the chance of ill will and starting the game in a negative manner, preventive officiating must be exercised well before the toss (player introductions, teams running onto the field etc..). **If needed**, the referee and umpire should be in the middle of the field and the other officials on their sidelines to watch for any type of unsportsmanlike behavior (i.e. finger pointing, excessive and prolonged celebration, attempts to intimidate etc...). Nobody wants to start a game with a penalty but if this occurs, an unsportsmanlike penalty needs to be called.*

2. Kickoff (page 50): referee is positioned on the goal line linesman side and has rulings on momentum and endzone plays. Umpire is positioned on the R's 20 yard line opposite the linesman and should try to stay with the returner until he turns this over to the line judge. Linesman on R's 30 yard line same side as the chains and also has the runner. All 3 of these officials count R players and do not let the kick get off with more or less than 11 players. Line judge is on R's restraining line and lined up on the side lines unless they feel it necessary to line up the receiving team behind their restraining line where they should come onto the field at their nearest hash mark. Back Judge secures the ball, instructs the kicker when they can kick, jogs off to K's restraining line on the linesman side of the field. The back judge and line judge will count K players and not let the kick go off with less or more than 11 players.

Onside kicks : (not covered in the manual) the backjudge and linejudge remain were they were for regular free kicks, the linesman comes up to R's restraining line and the umpire goes past the line judge to K's restraining line. All will have bean bags in hand, if the ball is kicked towards your direction make sure you have a bag down BEFORE the 10 yards restraining line (if that is the case) to mark first touching of the kicking team. If the ball is opposite you, make sure all blocks are legal (above and in front of the waist) and help with which team touched the ball first. If you are lined up in this formation and they kick the ball deep, the linesman and linejudge must retreat deep to help out the referee.

3. Running plays (page 61): the wings should be responsible for forward progress on the field and a 20 yard buffer should be maintained between them and the back judge to allow the back judge to ability to get to the goal line if a play breaks. The wings and back judge need to verbally communicate who has the spot and a general rule of thumb is if the covering official is squaring off the spot first, then they have the spot. If this is a wing official, then the opposite wing should come in, square off and mirror that spot and the BJ should stay back and observe dead ball action. If the BJ has the spot on a long run, the wings should get to the spot and observe the dead ball action **always keeping their heads up and not looking at the ground (the spot will not move)**. Wing officials should never be too close to the play where they interfere with the flow and become unable to officiate due to not seeing the action. They should not step over, around or through players to get to the spot but meet their first resistance observing all action around them. There is no need for wings to run into the center of the field after every play and by maintaining their distance, can observe more dead ball action than if they were too close.

4. Goal line play (page 74): umpires must check with wing officials prior to making any type of signal for touchdown. If a wing has a spot, it is imperative they blow the whistle, run hard towards that spot with their head up not making any type of hand signal or verbal communication. This should be done in the event the opposite wing is slow to rule an obvious touchdown and the first official is running pointing at the ground saying no touchdown, we have a situation. If the wing observes the ball in player possession break the play of the goal line then they should blow their whistle and signal touchdown. A touchdown signal should not be mirrored unless the official observes the action just mentioned.

NOTE: section III.B.C page 75 for wings “that on a snap between 10 - 5 yard line going in, release slowly downfield and stay ahead of the runner **to the goal line** and on a snap inside the 5 yard line, release **to the goal line** and officiate back to the ball”. Get wide of the pylon to be in position to make the call.

5. Administering Penalties (page 75) : if you called the penalty, you are responsible for correct administration and that the proper information to both teams is communicated. **After the play is dead, be sure to blow on the whistle longer and louder until you have the referee’s attention.** A foul should not be called if it does not affect the play (hold away from the point of attack) unless it is a type of foul that is a personal foul (face mask), could cause injury (block below the waist) or ill will (unsportsmanlike conduct, need the player’s number). Everyone is responsible for the correct administration of a penalty and if a situation does not “feel” right, mention this immediately to the crew and don’t wait until it’s too late.

6. Time out procedure (page 79): head coaches should be notified after every time out and how many time outs the other team has left and how many they have remaining. All officials should write down the game time left on the clock, the period, and who called the time out (head coach or player’s number). Officials should quickly discuss any unusual situations that may be occurring, get a drink of water if needed, but then quickly return to their responsible areas and not congregate in the center of the field. Wing officials are responsible for their sidelines. Parade rest position is recommended while observing teams and performing time out duties. The referee is responsible to inform the *head coach* when his team is out of time outs.

7. Field goal kicks (page 72): can be challenging due to the amount of officials on the field, the distance an official has to get to and the positioning of the officials. As the same with extra points, the official who is facing the holder, will stay on the LOS so you should not be looking at the referee’s back. With the line judge or head linesman under the post with the back judge, the sideline he normally covers is left unattended. In the event that the field goal breaks down or the kick is blocked and the defense runs for an apparent touchdown, the referee has goal line responsibilities along with the sideline that the wing would normally cover.

8. Points of emphasis : *player safety* along with *sideline management* is always our main concerns. Fouls that could cause serious injury such as chop blocks, blocking below the waist (anywhere on the field unless in the free blocking zone while the ball is still in the zone at the snap) helmet to helmet contact and personal fouls must be called on every occurrence regardless if they occurred at the point of attack or the score. All officials need to be diligent in this effort. Being in position to make these calls, being a good dead ball official by keeping your head up observing all players, and maintaining your focus during the down regardless of the score will increase our chances of making the right call at the right time. To prevent unnecessary injuries and to maintain our focus on the game, players and coaches must be off the field during the play.

PREGAME CONFERENCE – Outline

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|---|-----------------------|
| 1. PRE-GAME DUTIES - REFEREE | |
| VERIFY TIME | UNUSUAL PLAYS |
| CHECK EQUIP. | TIME FOR HALF TIME |
| CHECK BALLS | GET CAPTAINS |
| 2. COIN TOSS PROCEDURES - REFEREE | |
| POSITIONING OF OFFICIAL | |
| TEAM OPTIONS | |
| 3. FREE KICKS - UMPIRE | |
| POSITIONING | KICK OUT OF BOUNDS |
| TEAM INSTRUCTIONS | BLOCK BELOW WAIST |
| RESTRAINING LINES | KICK CATCH- INTERFER |
| COUNT PLAYERS | FAIR CATCH RULES |
| MOMENTUM RULE | FORWARD HANDOFFS |
| BALL IN END ZONE | ON-SIDE KICKS |
| FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY | |
| 4. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS - RUN - LINESMAN | |
| POSITIONING | COVERAGE ON RUN |
| CREW COMMUNICATION | GOAL LINE COVERAGE |
| COUNT PLAYERS | COVERAGE OF FUMBLE |
| SUBSTITUTIONS | FIRST DOWNS |
| FALSE START AND | ACTION OUT OF BOUNDS |
| ENCROACHMENT | RELAYING THE BALL |
| MAN IN MOTION | FORWARD PROGRESS |
| 5. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS - PASS - LINE JUDGE | |
| COVERAGE OF PASSER | COVERAGE OF RECEIVER |
| PASSER/PASS BEHIND/ BEYOND THE LINE | COMPLETE / INCOMPLETE |
| FORWARD/BACKWARD | PASS INTERFERENCE |
| PASS PLAY | OFFENSE / DEFENSE |
| INTENTIONAL GROUND | FIRST TOUCHING |
| INELIGIBLES DOWNFIELD | INTERCEPTIONS |
| KEYS AND ZONES | MOMENTUM RULE |
| 6. PUNTS - BACK JUDGE | |
| POSITIONING | COVERAGE - RUNBACK |
| COVERAGE OF KICKER | FAKES |
| KICK CATCH INTERFER | BALL OVER KICKERS |
| FAIR CATCH | HEAD |
| UNTOUCHED - END ZONE | BLOCKED KICK |
| OUT OF BOUNDS | BALL BEHIND LINE |
| ILLEGAL TOUCHING | WHO CAN ADVANCE? |
| 7. FIELD GOAL AND TRY - BACK JUDGE | |
| POSITIONING | FAKES |
| WHO HAS WHISTLE | BALL BEYOND / BEHIND |
| COVERAGE OF KICKER | BLOCKES |
| HOLDER | F.G. PUNT RULES APPLY |
| 8. END OF QUARTER - REFEREE | |
| CREW RESPONSIBILITIES | |
| 9. TIMEOUTS - REFEREE | |
| TIMING | POSITIONING |
| MARKING CARDS | |
| 10. MEASUREMENTS - REFEREE | |
| POSITIONING | WAITING FOR LINESMAN |
| BALL OUTSIDE HASH | |
| 11. FOULS AND ENFORCEMENTS - REFEREE | |
| REPORTING FOULS | CREW COMMUNICATION |
| MEASUREMENT | LIVE / DEAD BALL |
| OF FOULS | |
| 12. OVERTIME PROCEDURES - REFEREE | |
| REVIEW IF NECESSARY | |