



4 Person Crew Coverage

Reference:

Football Officiating Mechanics Illustrated, NMOA 2022

Steve Wagner

sewagne@gmail.com

505-400-6384



Move with a Purpose

Move with a purpose means to know when to move and when to settle. Read the play, hold your position allowing the play to develop and let it flow past. Then trail with speed while there is open space between players. As the block, tackle or catch is about to be made – slow down, stabilize and even stop if possible to allow your eyes to settle and be able to see and process the play to the best of your ability.



Free Kick Coverage Zones

All officials cover their perspective zones

R: Responsible for determining whether momentum exception applies inside the 5 yard line and if a kick is ruled a touchback

U: Responsible for the pylon on their side

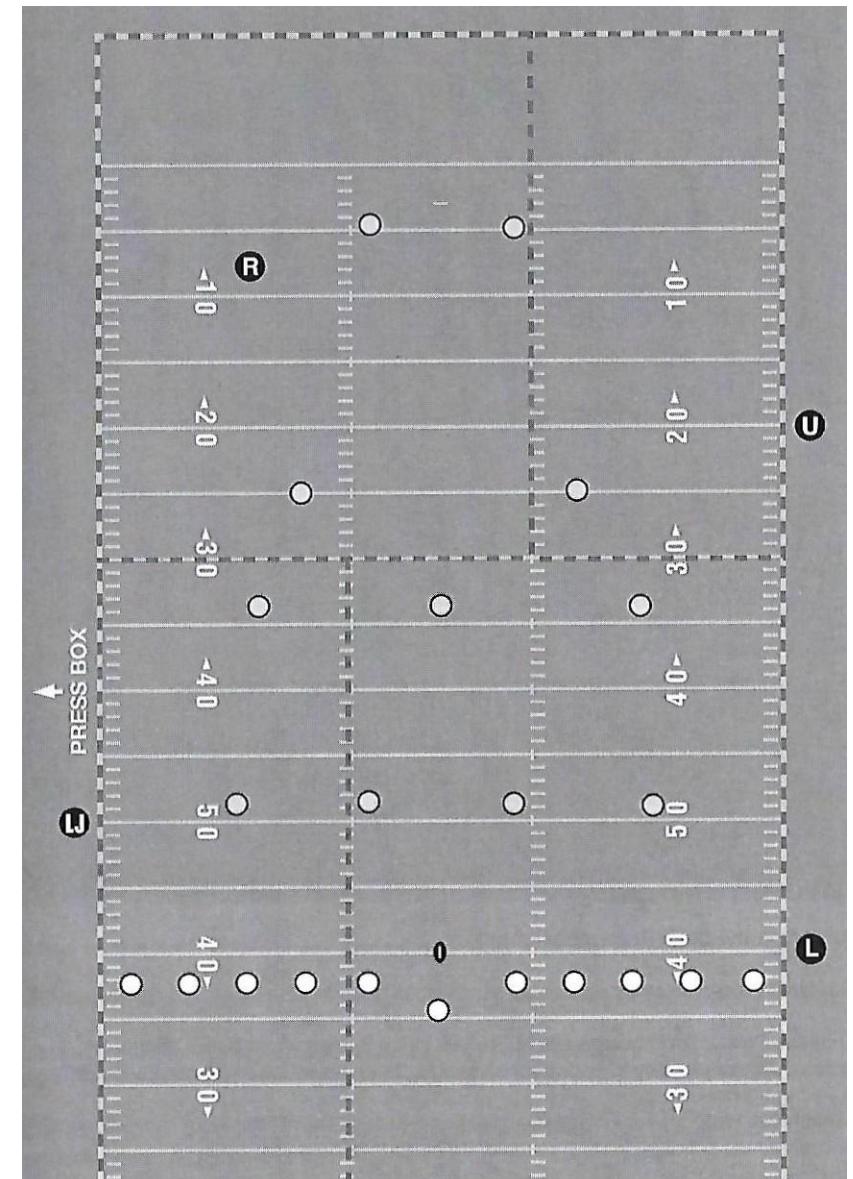
Covering official:

Signals clock start when R touches the ball

Signals stop when the play is over

Drops a bean bag if R causes the ball to go out of bounds

Flags when K causes the ball to go out of bounds





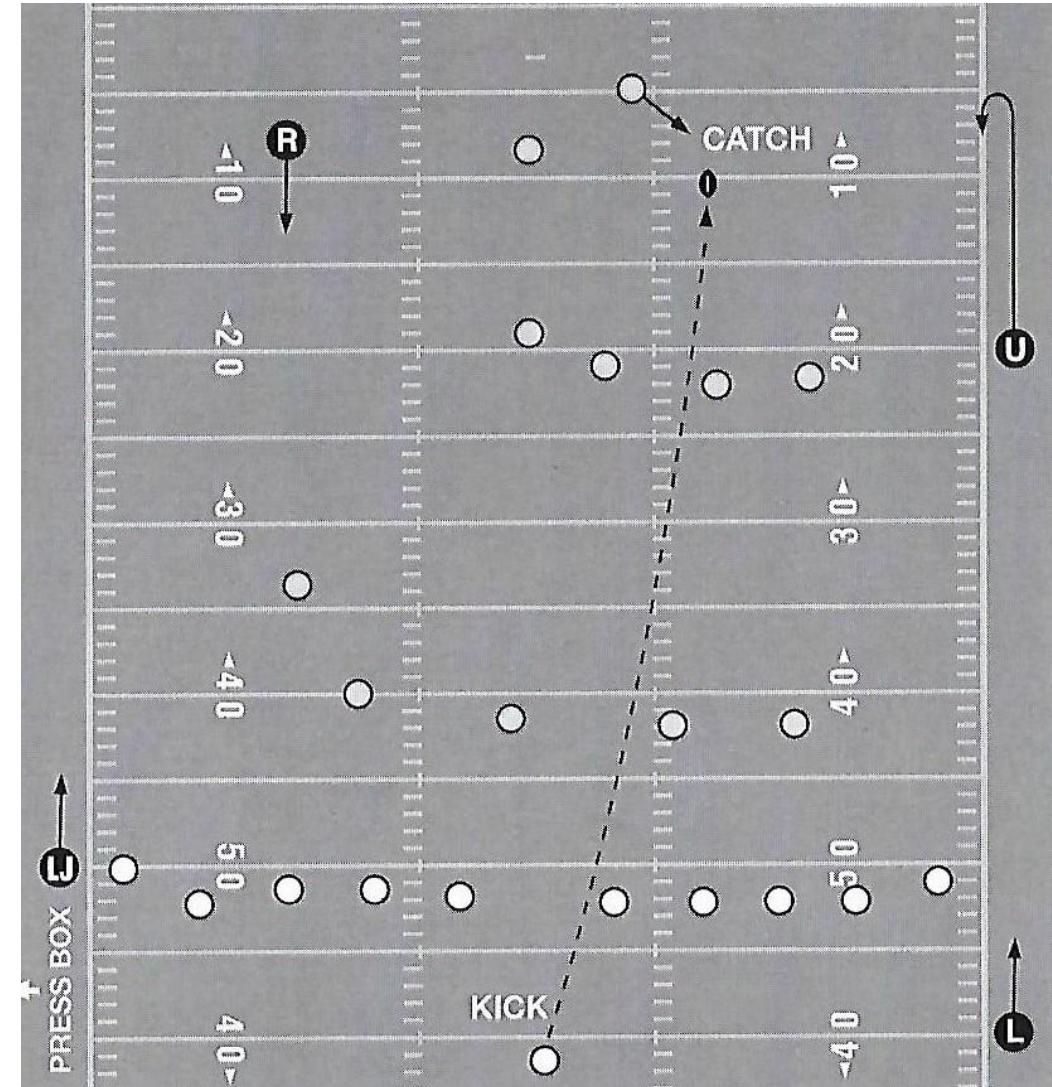
Free Kick - Part 1

Receiver catches kick

R: Action in front of the receiver on his side of the field; slowly move up field

U: Retreat to observe catch; signal starting clock when caught; moves to stay ahead of the receiver and observes action of the runner during the return

L & LJ: Watch for free kick line infractions; after kick move down field observing action in front of receiver on their side





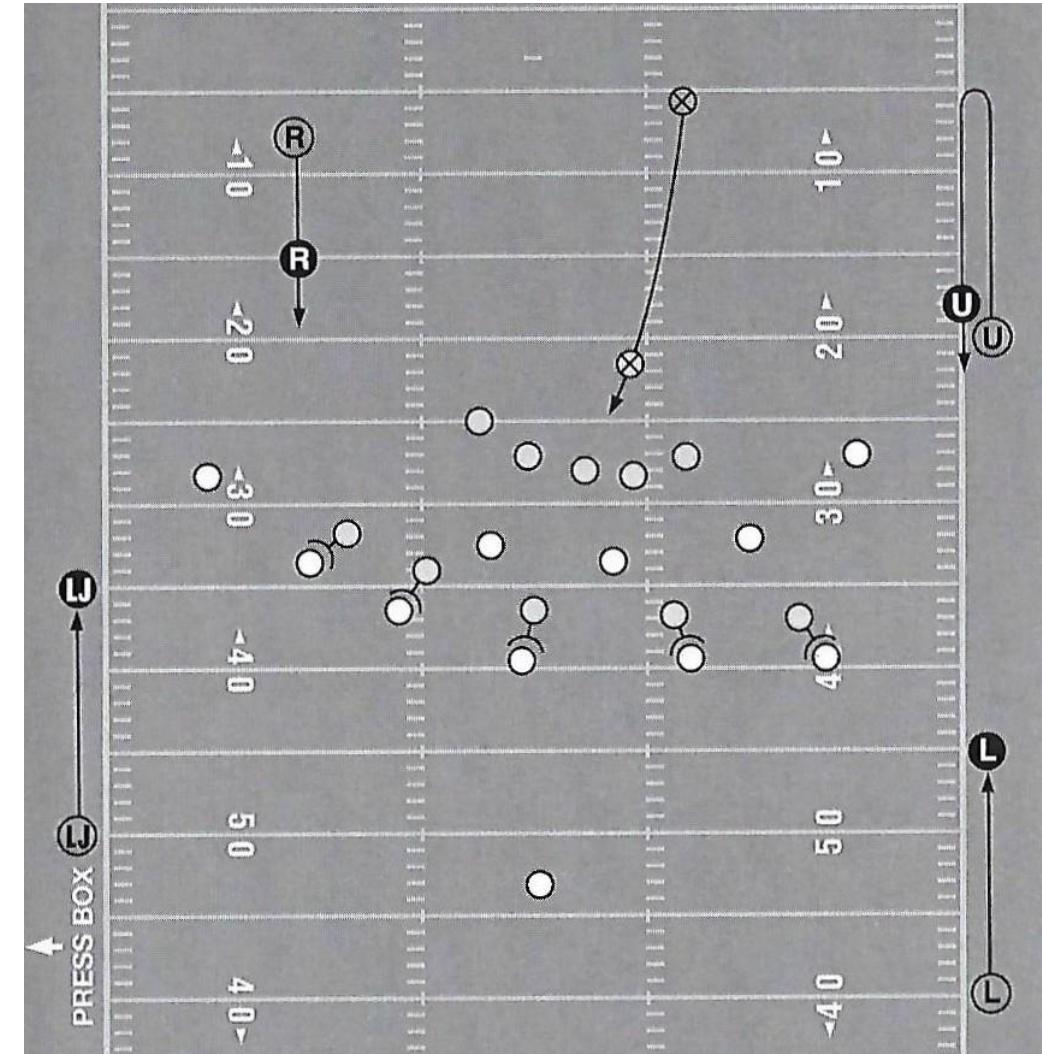
Free Kick - Part 2

Receiver advances

R: Action in front of the receiver on his side of the field; slowly move up field

U: Moves to trail the runner and observes action by and in front of the runner

L & LJ: Stops 15 yards from their responsible free kick line. Observes action in front of receiver on their side **until the end of the down**





Free Kick - Part 3

Receiver advance continues advance and is downed

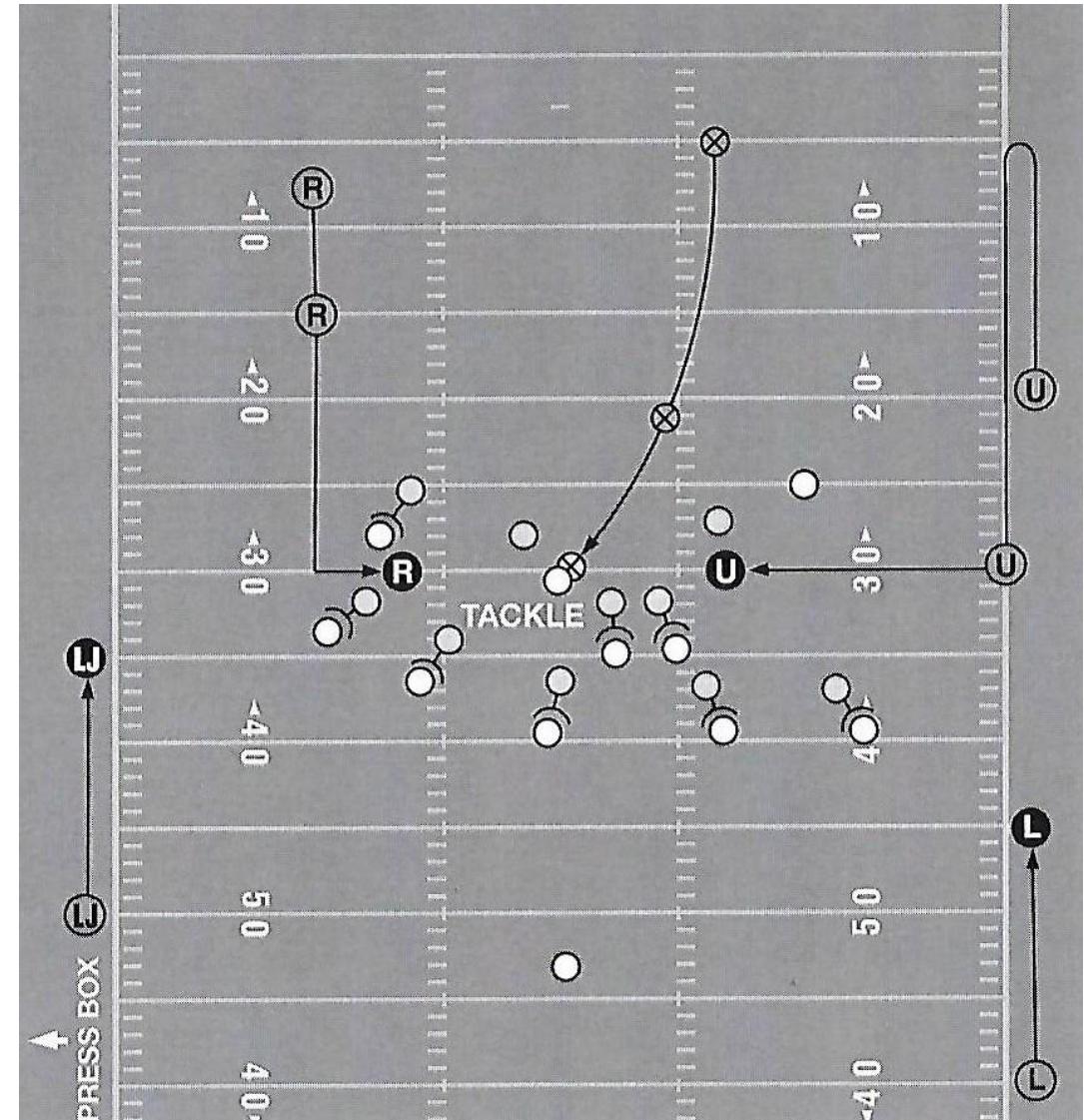
All officials:

Cover runner and action around the runner in your zone

Covering official holds end of run spot until U can mirror spot

L: Observer players and sets chain crew for new series

LJ: Observes players and sends out R's ball when kick ends





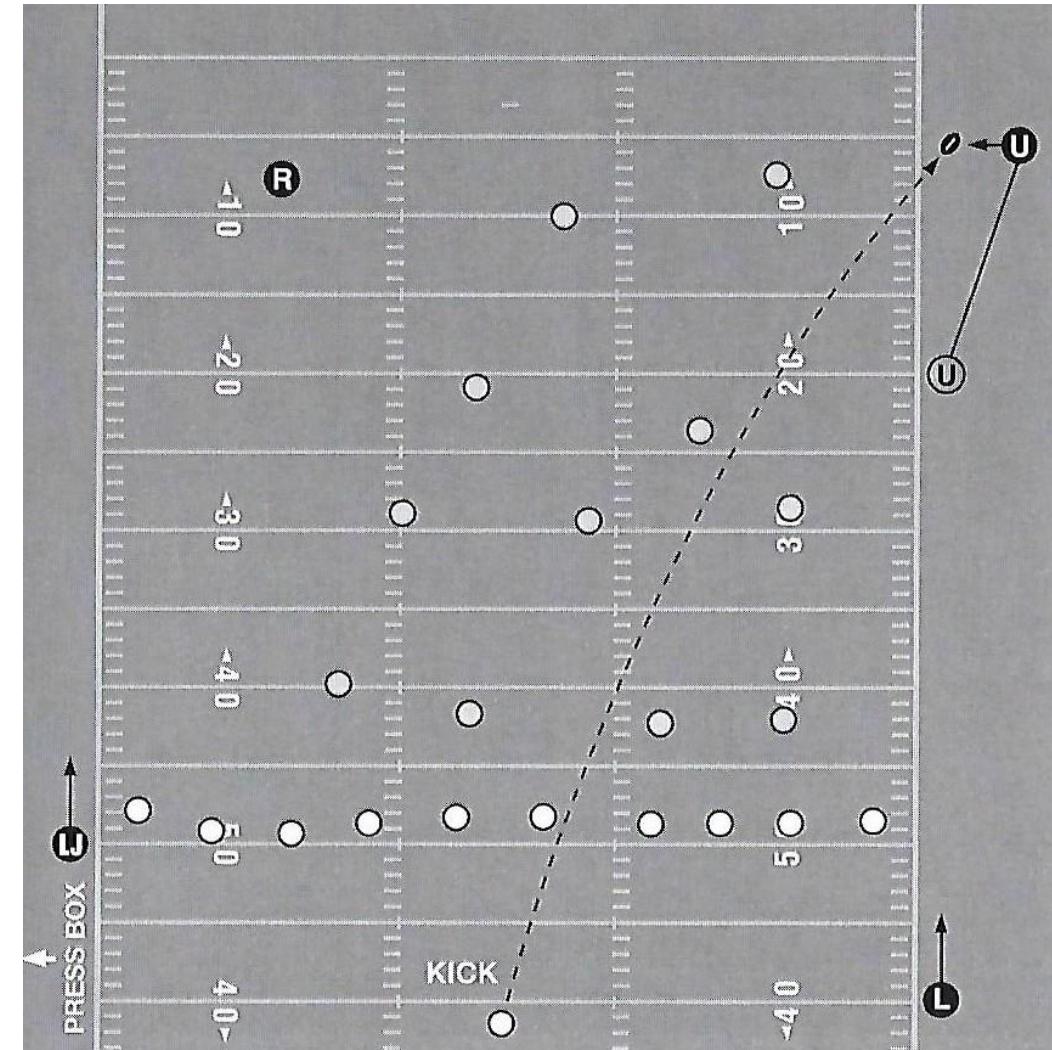
Free Kick Out of Bounds - Part 1

Kick becomes dead out of bounds

R: Action in front of the receiver on his side of the field;

U: Retreats to observe ball. Signals stop clock when ball goes out. Flags (if K causes the ball to go out) or marks the out of bounds spot

L & LJ: watch for free kick line infractions; after kick move down field observing action in front of receiver on their side





Free Kick Out of Bounds - Part 2

Team R chooses to take the ball at the 35

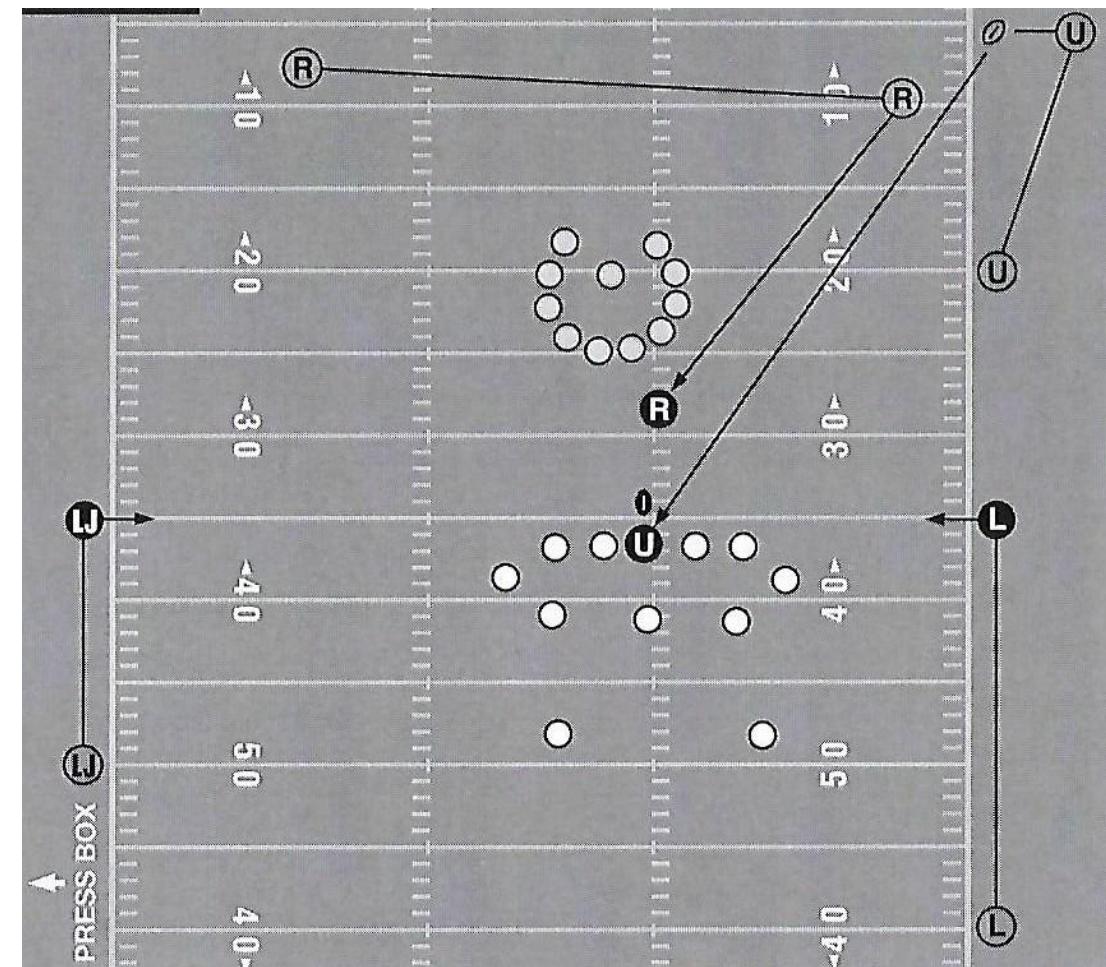
R: Action in his area; communicates with U; gets choice from team R; signals team K's foul and points to the 35

U: *Retreats to observe ball*; signals stop clock when ball goes out; flags (if K causes the ball to goes out) or marks the out of bounds spot. Spots team R's ball on 35 at the hash marks

L & LJ: moves down field observing action in their area; sets up on the 35

L: Set chains

LJ: Send in new ball





Free Kick Out of Bounds - Part 3

Team R caused the ball to go out of bounds

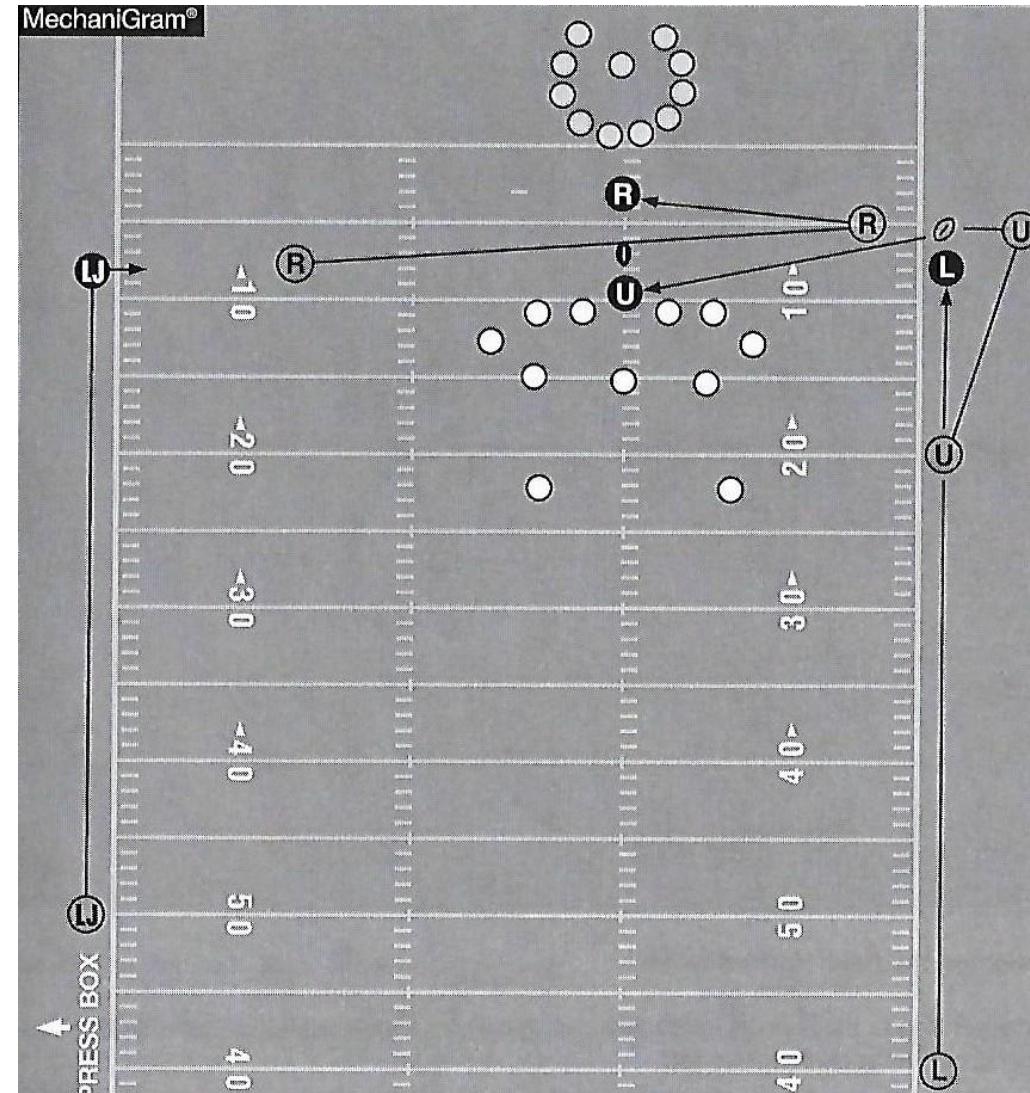
R: Action in his area; communicates with U; signals new series will begin at the out of bounds spot

U: **Retreats to observe ball;** signals stop clock when ball goes out; holds the out of bounds spot for the L; spots team R's ball on the hashmark at the out of bounds spot

L & LJ: Move down field observing action in their area; sets up on the out of bounds spot

L: Set chains

LJ: Sends in R's ball





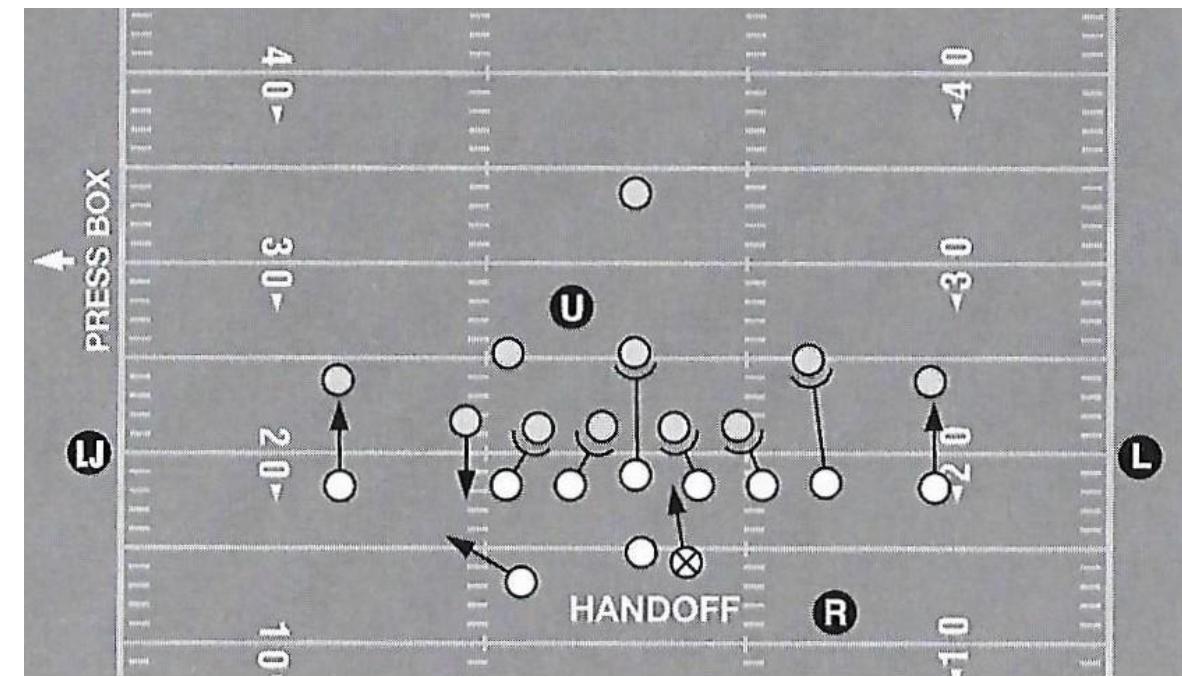
Running Play Up the Middle – Part 1

Handoff to a back

R: Reads left tackle blocking – run; observes handoff and action around the QB after the handoff

U: Reads blocking of the right G and C – run; Determines and observes action at the runner and around the runner

L & LJ: Read blocking of split end and reads run; observe initial line charge





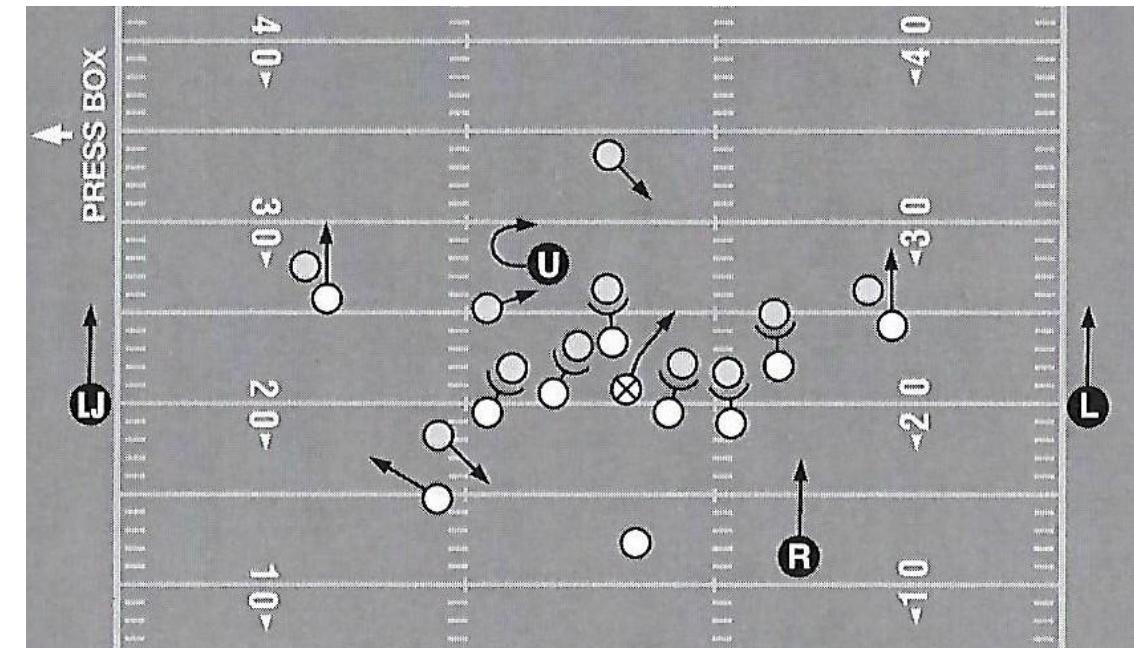
Running Play Up the Middle – Part 2

Runner advances

R: Moves slowly down field and observes action behind the runner

U: Steps back to avoid interfering; Pivots observing action around the runner

L & LJ: Move slowly down field observing action in front of the runner





Running Play Up the Middle – Part 3

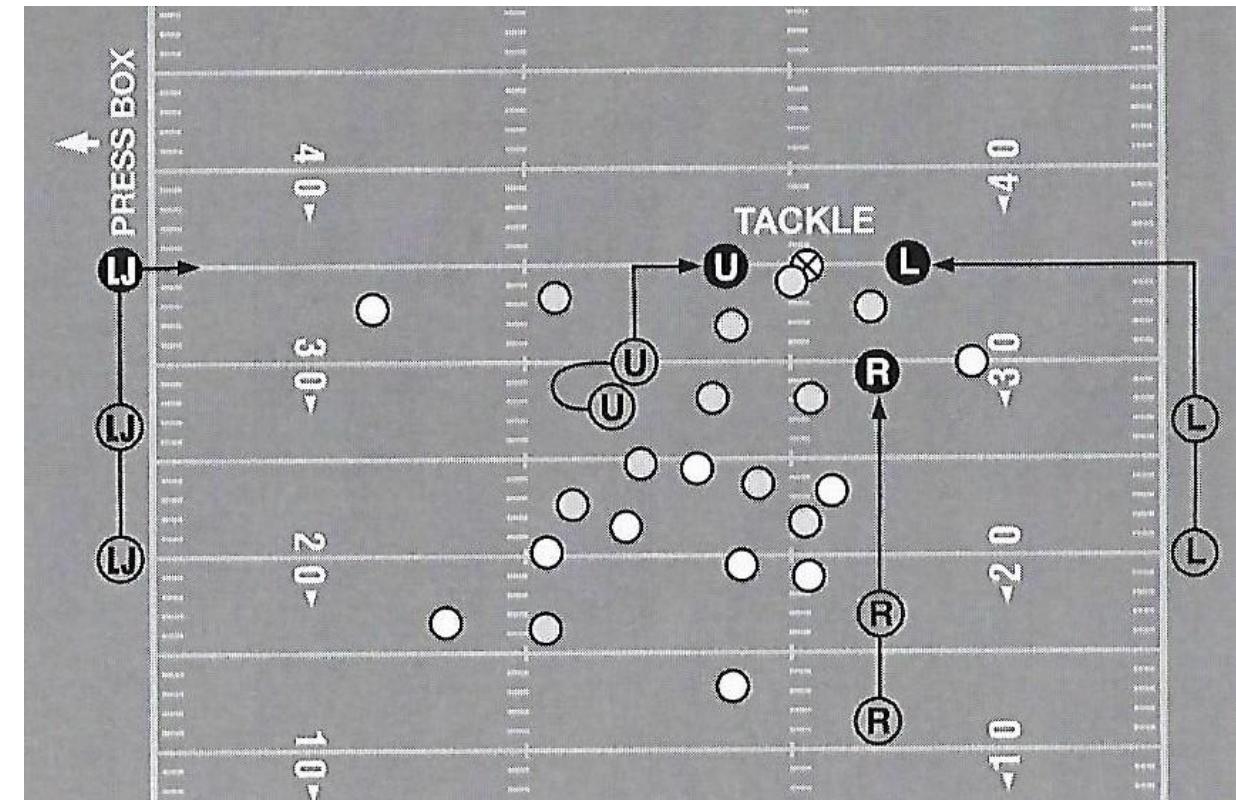
Runner continues to advance and is downed

R – Moves slowly down field and observes players in his area; If first down and no penalty markers – stop clock, signal L to move chains and first down

U – Moves quickly down field observing action in front of runner; **spots ball from covering official**; observes players

L – Moves quickly down field and observes action around runner; blow whistle when runner is downed (signals stop clock on first downs); after directed by R move and set chains

LJ – Observes action in front of runner in his area; Square off and mirror; Observe players





Sweep – Part 1

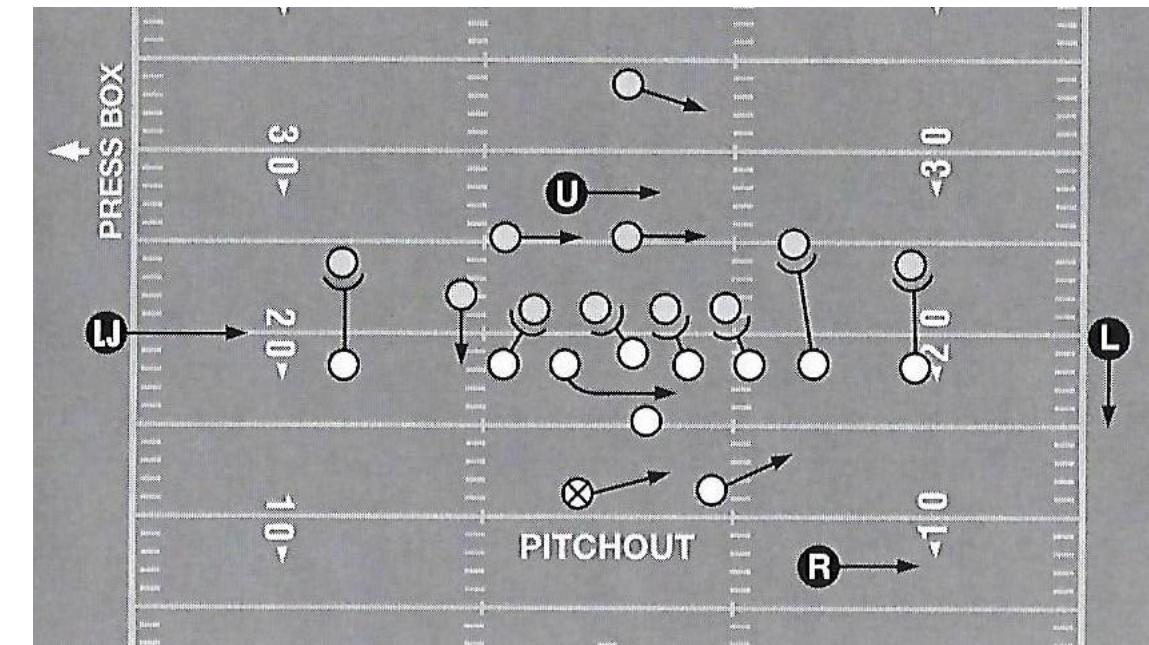
Pitch out to back

R – Reads left tackle blocking – run; moves with the flow of the play; observes runner and area around runner

U – Reads action of the pulling left G – sweep; moves with the flow and observes blocking and action in front of runner

L & LJ – Reads blocking of split end – run;
L – moves toward the offensive back field; observes blocking and action in front of runner

LJ – Moves slowly toward play; observes blocking of action of players not involved in play (clean up)

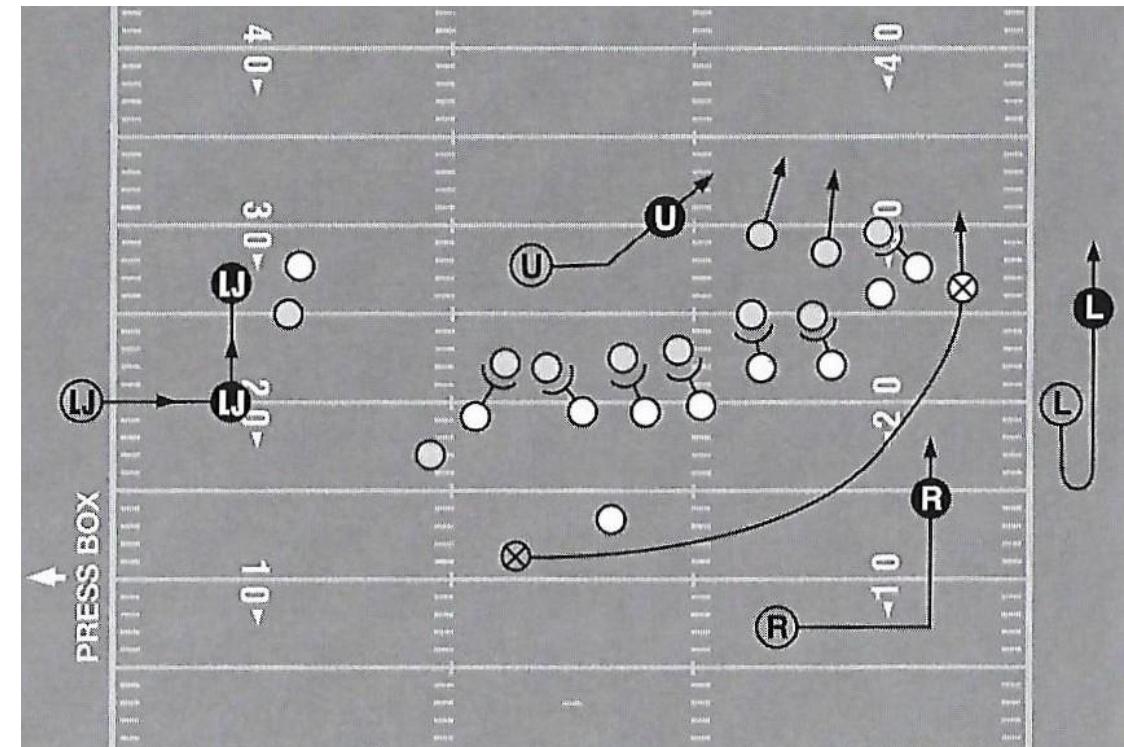




Sweep – Part 2

Runner advances

- R:** Gives up runner to L, trails/cleanup
- U:** Pivots and moves with the flow and observes blocking and action in front of runner
- L:** Covers the runner moving up the side line trailing while observing the blocking and action in front of the runner
- LJ:** Moves slowly down the field and cleans up after the play





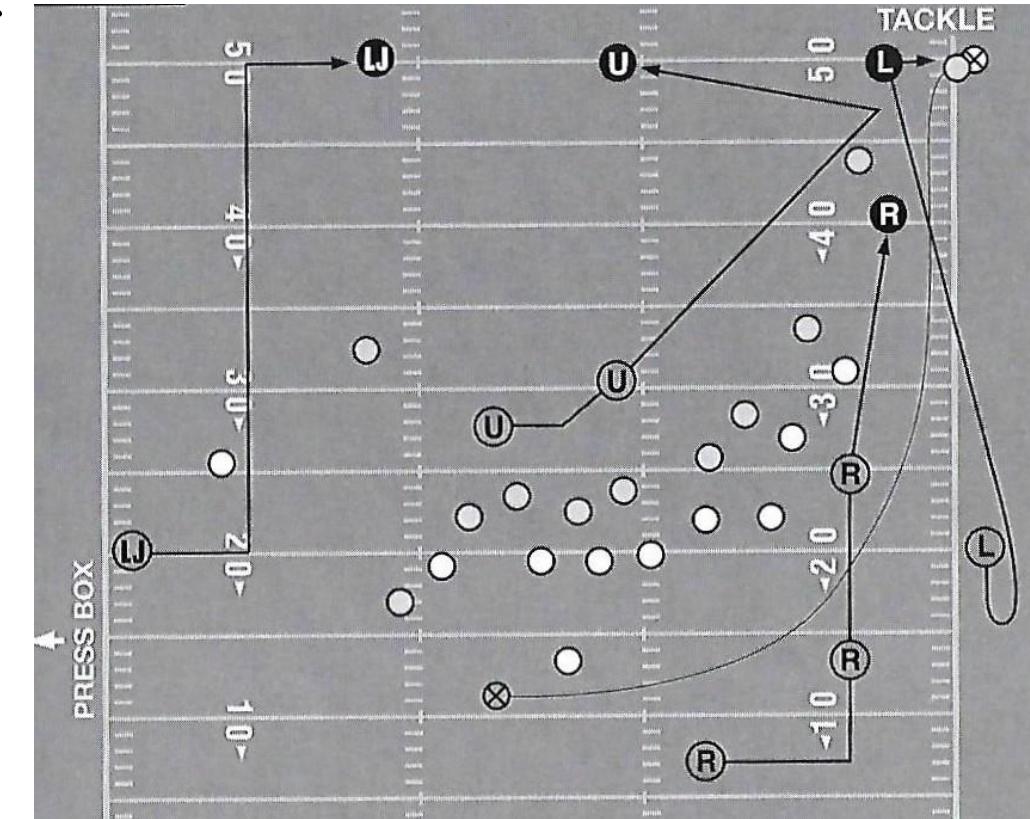
Sweep – Part 3

Runner continues to advance and is downed out of bounds

R: Continues to follow the flow and clean up; If first down and no penalty markers – stop clock, signal L to move chains and first down

U: Moves down field observing action in front of runner; hustles to the dead ball spot to prevent post-play action; hustle to set ball

L: Continues down field and observes action around runner; blow whistle when runner is downed (signals stop clock on first downs); uses inside-outside look to observe players; square off to mark spot; after directed by R move and set chains



LJ: Moves down field/clean up; Square off and mirror; observes players



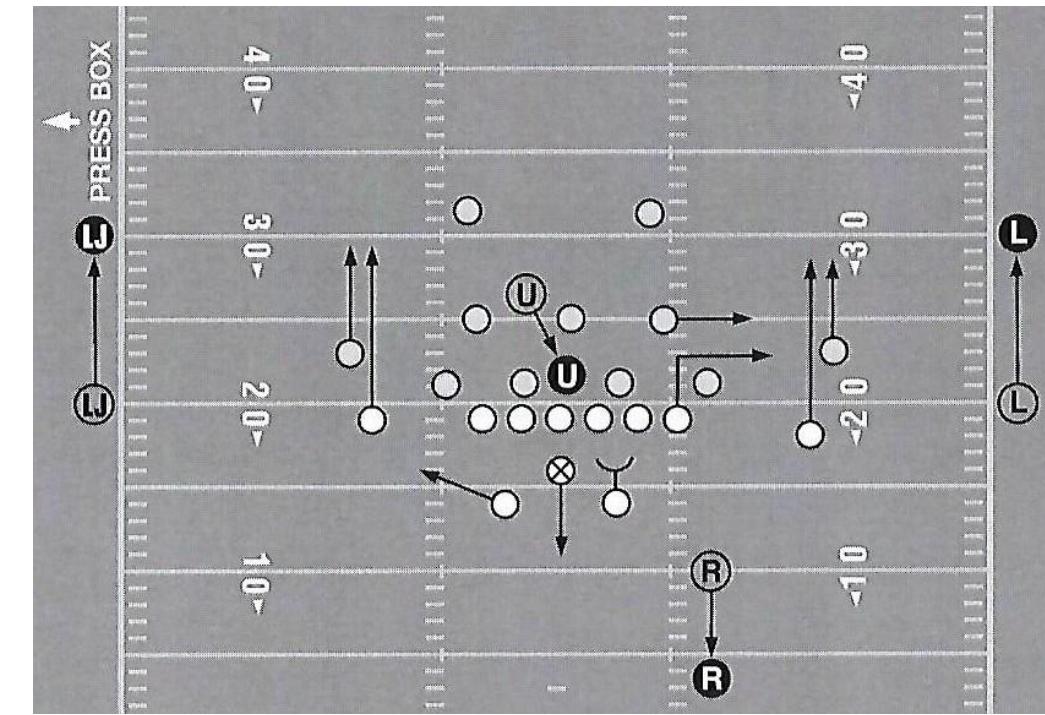
Deep Pass – Part 1

Quarterback drops back

R: Keys opposite T reads pass; moves maintaining distance with QB; observes blocking by backs; **watches for roughing and targeting on the QB**

U: Observes pre-snap adjustments and legality of snap; read C, Gs – pass; move to LOS observe blocking and ineligibles down field

L & LJ: Identifies eligible receivers on their side of the field; signal for receivers in the back field; read TE – pass; **shuffle step move with a purpose** down field and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders





Deep Pass – Part 2

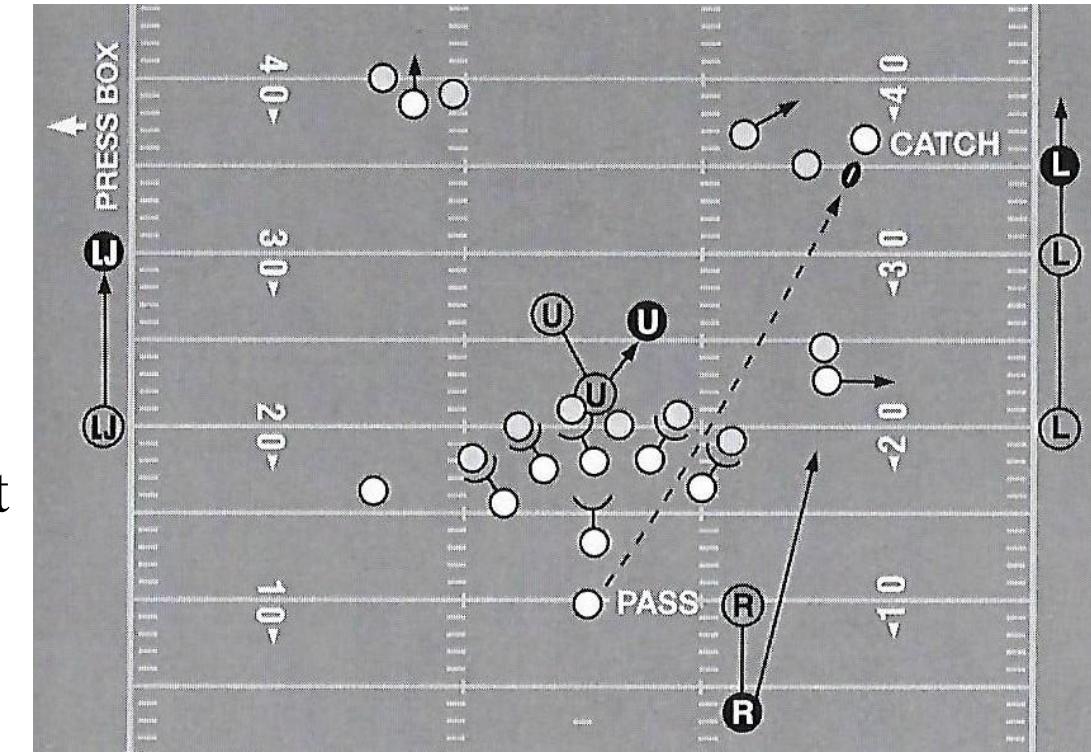
Runner advances and is downed

R: Moves slowly down field following the flow and observes players in his area/cleanup; Hustles to sideline to observe action; If first down and no penalty markers – echo stop clock, and signal L to move chains for first down

U: Moves down field observing action in front of runner; blows whistle when receiver is down; square off on forward progress spot; signal stop clock on first downs; move chains on R's request

L: Moves down field observing action in front of runner; hustles to the dead ball spot to prevent post-play action; observe players in area

LJ: Moves down field/clean up; Square off and mirror; Observes players





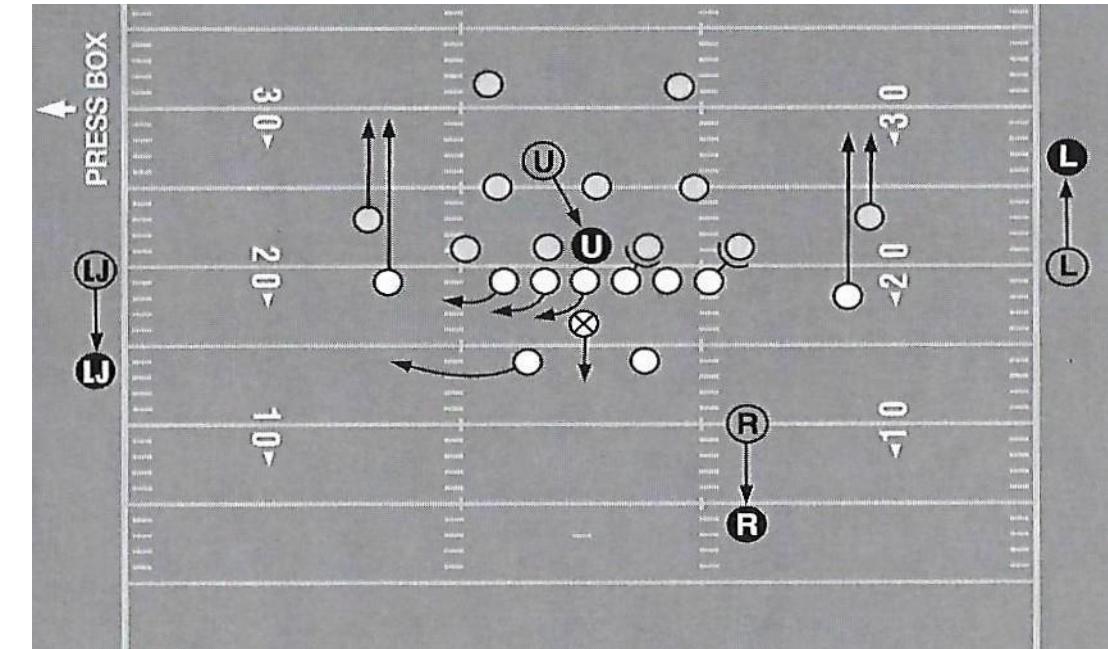
Screen or Pass to Flat – Part 1

Quarterback drops back

R: Keys opposite T reads screen or draw when tackle pulls; moves maintaining distance with QB; observes blocking by backs; **watches for roughing on screen**

U: Observes pre-snap adjustments and legality of snap; read C, Gs – screen or draw when lineman pull; move to LOS observe blocking and **ineligibles down field**

L: Identifies eligible receivers on his side; signal for receivers in the back field; reads TE – pass; moves slowly down field and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders



LJ: Identifies eligible receivers on his side; observe initial blocks; reads T – screen or draw if tackle pulls; Moves initially to the back field to cover R out of the backfield



Screen or Pass to Flat – Part 2

Back catches pass and begins to advance

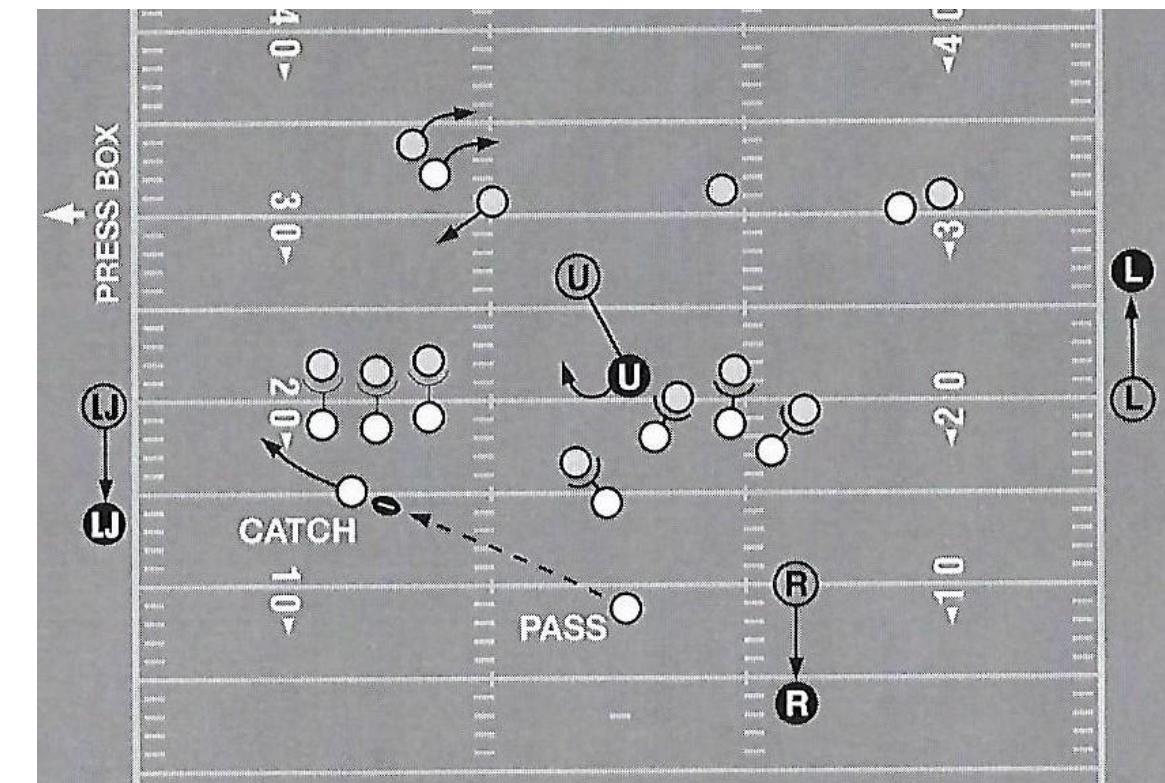
R: Observes the passer; looks to LJ for backward pass signal;

U: Pivots to follow flight of the ball; observes blockers in front of the ball

L: Moves slowly down field and observes action of players in his area

LJ: Rules on backward or forward pass; observes action in front of the runner

Note: Often the wing on the opposite side (pass going away from) will have a better read on the backward pass – here, the L is already moving down field.





Screen or Pass to Flat – Part 3

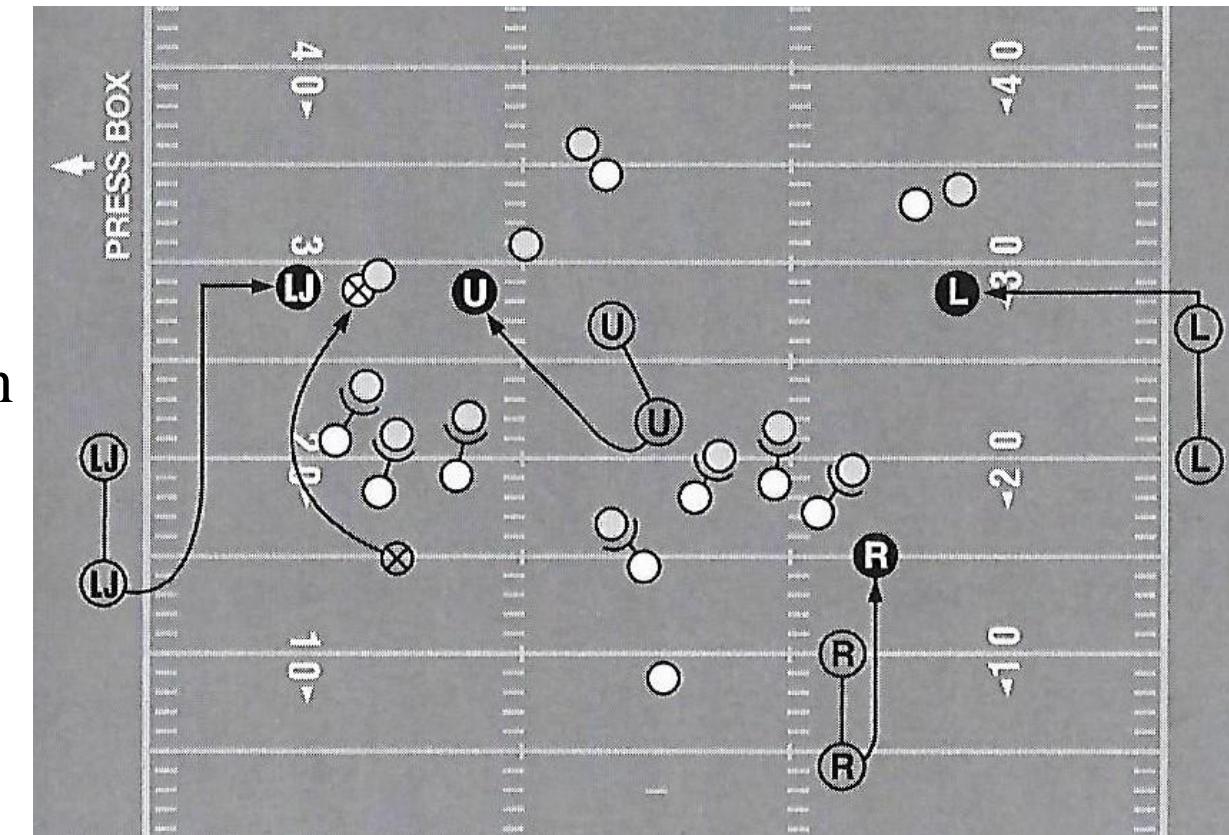
Runner continues advance and is downed

R: Moves slowly down the field and **observes players and action in his area**

U: Moves slowly down the field and observes players in front of the ball; hustles to the hashmark to set the ball after the runner is down

L: Moves slowly down field and observes action of players in his area; squares off to mirror forward progress spot

LJ: Moves down field with the runner; observes action in front of and around the runner; whistle when runner is downed. squares off to mark forward progress spot; stops clock if there is a first has been achieved.





Goal Line – Offense Going In

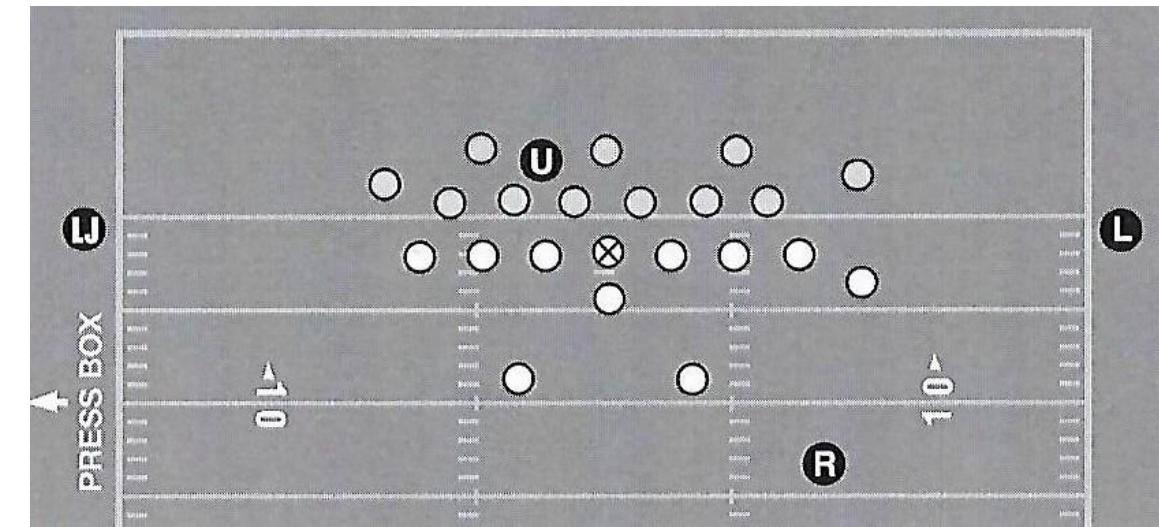
Hand off to back

R: Reads left tackle blocking – run; moves with the flow; observes the runner and action around the runner; looks for covering official TD signal and repeats TD signal facing the press box

U: Reads blocking of the right G and C – run; Determines and observes action at the point of attack around the runner; moves with the flow

L & LJ: Move immediately to the GL; read blocking of TE and reads run; observe initial blocking; If ball in runner possession breaks the GL plane signals TD; if short, officiate back to FW progress spot; **crash in if ball is near goal line;**

Note: only one wing needs to signal TD, do not mirror





Goal Line – Offense Coming Out

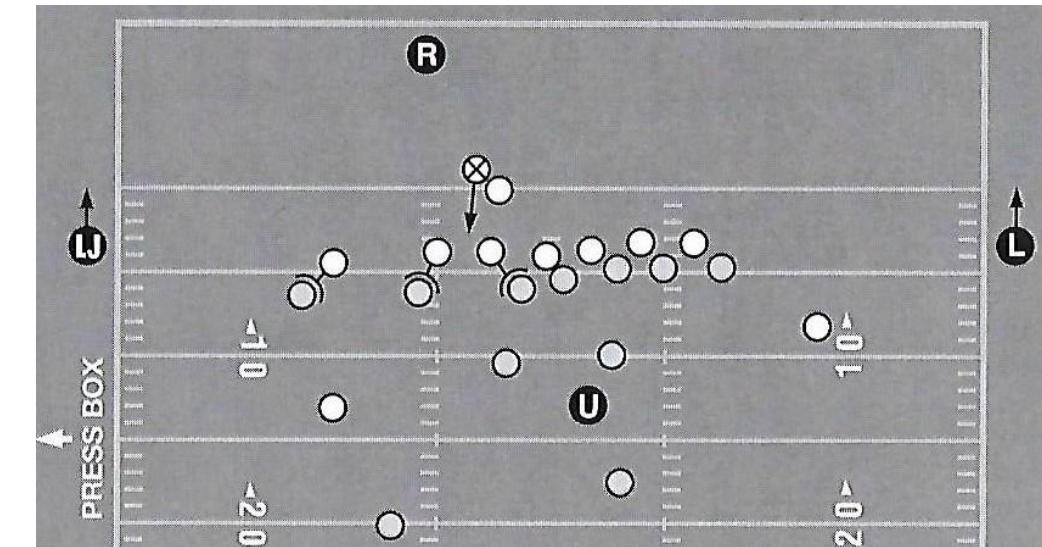
Hand off to running back

R: Reads left tackle blocking – run; moves with the flow; observes the runner and action around the runner; if the ball doesn't come out of the end zone - looks for covering official safety signal and repeats safety signal to the press box

U: Reads blocking of the right G and C – run; Determines and observes action at the point of attack around the runner; moves with flow

L & LJ: Moves immediately to the GL; observe initial blocking; If ball in runner possession is downed in the endzone, signal safety; otherwise moves back to FW progress spot; **crash in if ball is near goal line**

Note: no need to mirror a safety signal





Scrimmage Kick Out of Bounds – Part 1

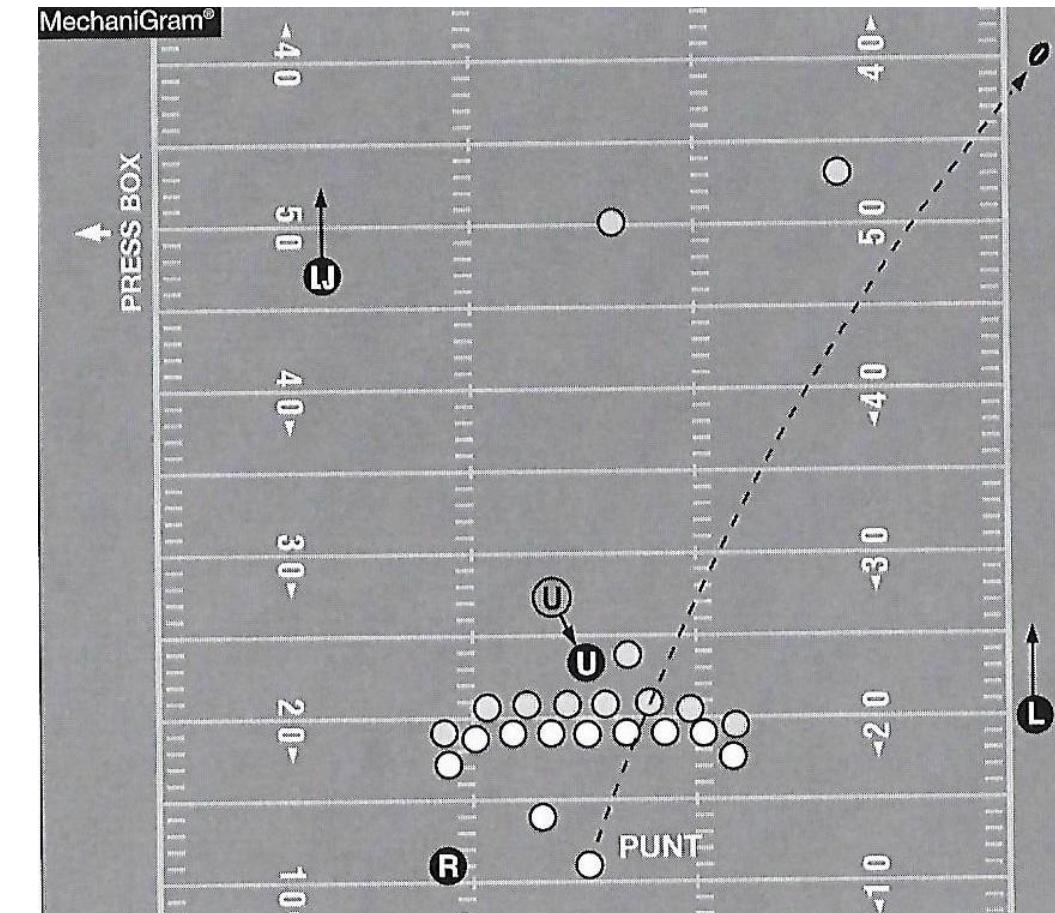
Punt to Linesman side

R: Observe snap and action around kicker

U: Initially holds position (initially about 10 yards deep) to allow action to clear while observing initial charge of the lineman and contact on the snapper

L: Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the NZ then moves down field

LJ: Observes receivers; moves down field when ball flies deeper than receivers





Scrimmage Kick Out of Bounds – Part 2

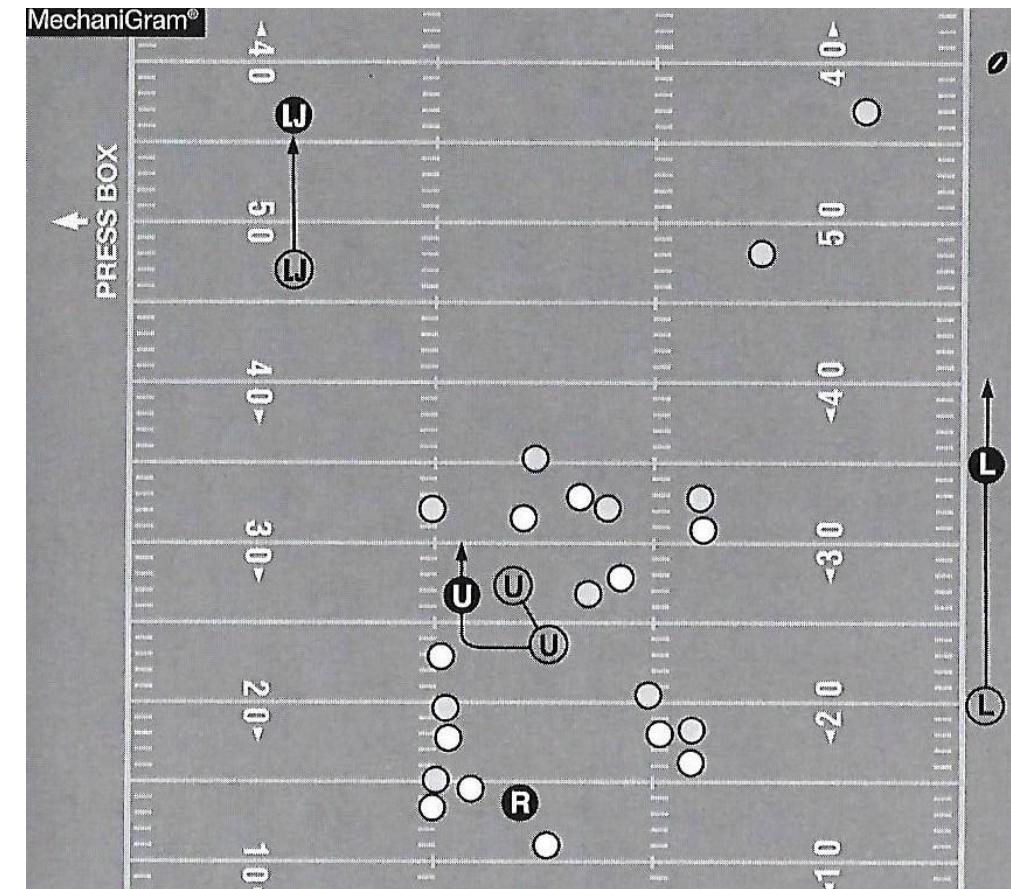
Ball becomes dead out of bounds

R: Observes flight of ball, adjusting if necessary

U: Pivots toward LJ side; moves down field with the flow and observes players in his area

L: Moves quickly down sideline, observing action of players moving down field; stops the clock when the ball goes out of bounds

LJ: Observes actions of players in front of the ball





Scrimmage Kick Out of Bounds – Part 3

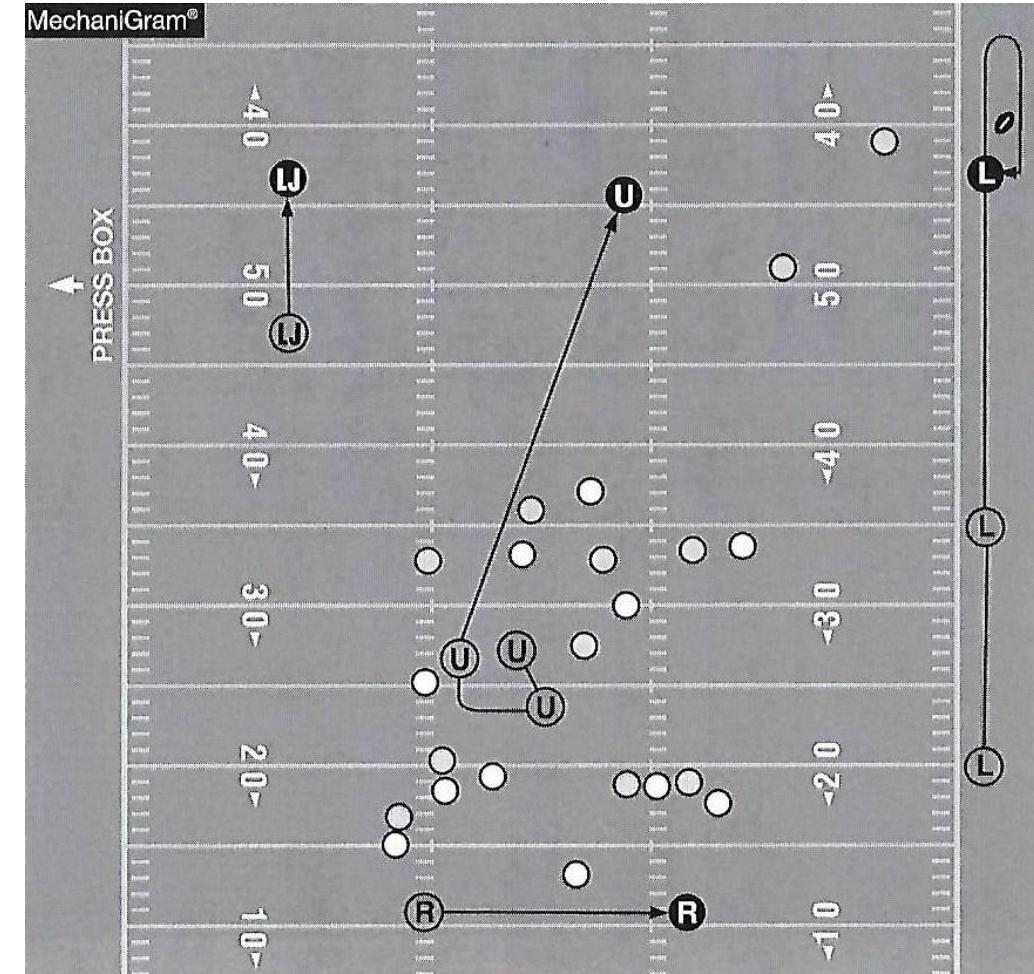
Ball spotted for next down

R: Moves parallel with the LOS to ensure eye contact with the L; Holds arm above head while L walks up the sideline chopping when L reaches the out of bounds spot; confirm there are no penalty markers and signal L to move chains

U: Continues to move down field with the flow and observes players in his area; hustles to spot R's ball at the hashmark

L: Moves 5-7 yards beyond where ball apparently went out of bounds; pivots slowly walking down the sideline toward R and stopping when R chops; moves chains when directed by R

LJ: Observes action of players in front of the ball; squares off and mirrors L's spot





Scrimmage to Line Judge Area – Part 1

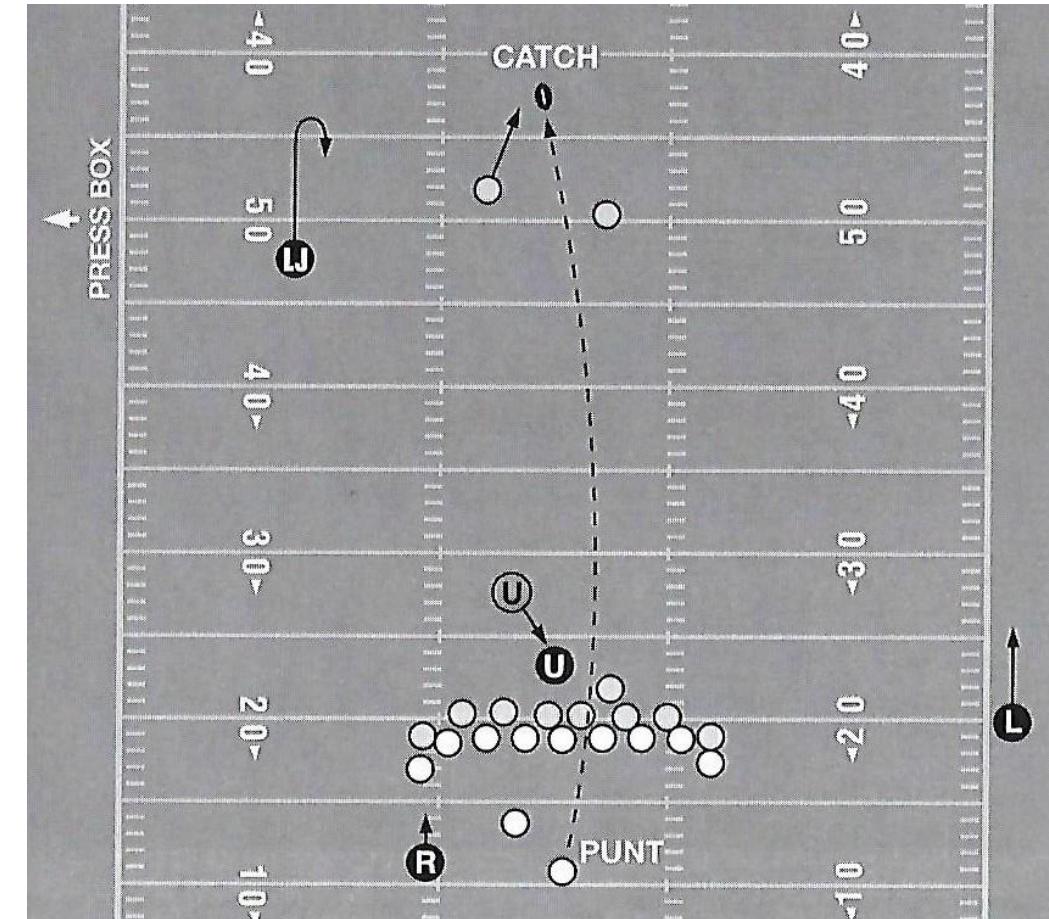
Receiver catches kick in Line Judge's area

R: Observe snap and action around kicker;
slowly moves down field with flow

U: Initially holds position to allow action to clear while observing initial charge of the lineman and contact on the snapper

L: Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the NZ then moves down field to cover players in his area

LJ: Retreats to observe catch; bean bag end of kick; moves slightly ahead of runner observing the runner and action ahead of the runner





Scrimmage to Line Judge Area – Part 2

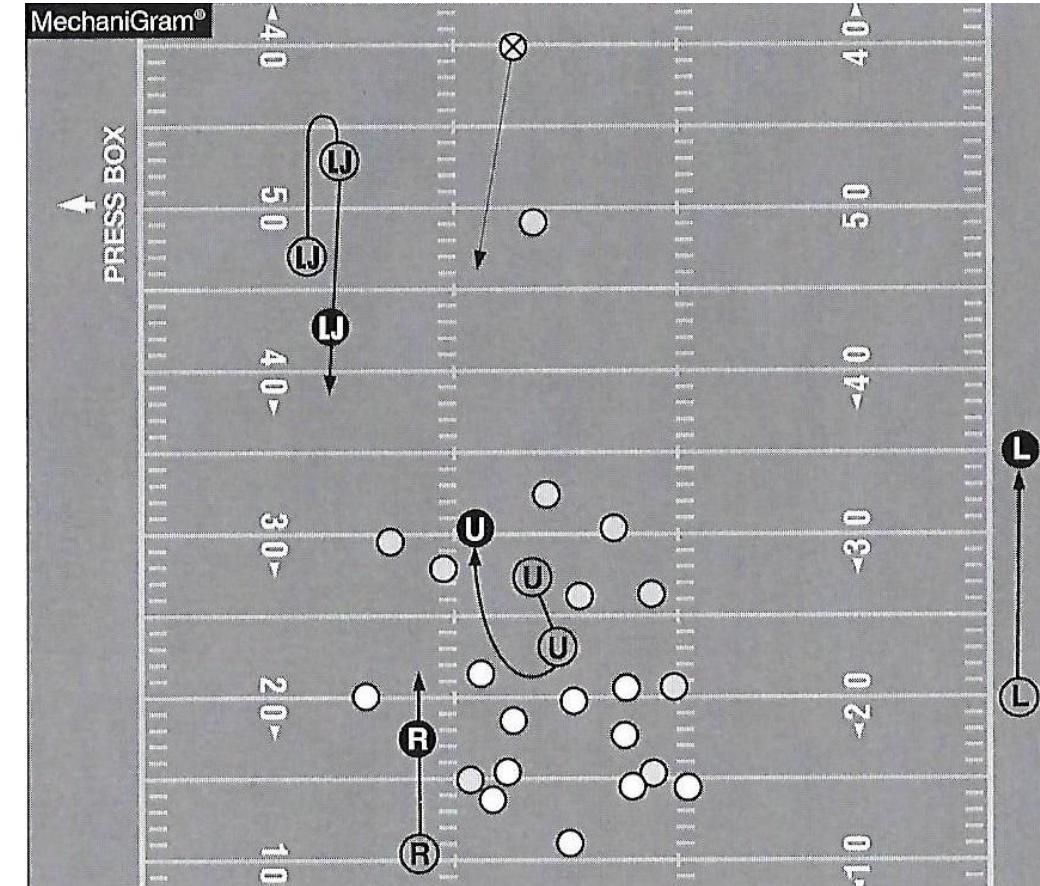
Runner advances

R: Moves slowly down field observes players and action in his area

U: Pivots toward LJ side; moves down field with the flow and observes players in his area

L: Moves down the sideline and observes actions of players in front of the ball

LJ: Moves to stay ahead of and observes the runner as runner moves up field; observes action in front of the runner





Scrimmage to Line Judge Area – Part 3

Runner continues to advance and is downed

R: Moves slowly down field observes players and action in his area; hustles to dead ball spot; ensures no penalty markers; signals to move chains

U: Continues to move down field with the flow and observes players in his area; hustles to spot R's ball between the hashmarks

L: Observes action and players in front of ball; squares off to mirror forward progress spot; moves chains when directed by R

LJ: Blows whistle and stops clock when runner is downed; squares off to mark forward progress spot; holds spot until released by U

