

THE OFFICIAL MECHANICS AND PHILOSOPHIES
OF THE NEW MEXICO OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

MECHANICS FOOTBALL OFFICIATING ILLUSTRATED

4 AND 5 PERSON
HIGH SCHOOL CREWS

NMOA

REFeree

PUBLISHED BY REFEREE AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS OFFICIALS

***NMOA Football Officiating Mechanics Illustrated:
4 and 5 Person High School Crews***

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Published in coordination with Referee Enterprises, Inc., and the National Association of Sports Officials.

Printed in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

The integrity of interscholastic football games is entrusted to its officials. For the most part interscholastic football officials officiate as an avocation and are representatives of what is good in amateur athletics. The New Mexico Officials Association (NMOA), the New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA), its member schools and game participants appreciate the efforts of high school football officials.

The manual assumes a basic knowledge of officiating fundamentals, and it is meant to inform officials of the preferred methods and expectations of officiating high school football. It provides a consistent system that offers the very best field coverage for high school football officials. Uniformity of performance and rules interpretations by all officials is an absolute necessity. This manual provides uniformity.

A thorough understanding of the materials and statements of the NMOA must supplement knowledge of the procedures outlined in this manual. Intelligence, imagination, perspective and good judgment must be combined with study and interpretation of both the rulebook and mechanics manual.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NMAA FOOTBALL RULE AND POLICY REMINDERS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Mercy Rule (NMAA Handbook)

7.15.1.I) — 6 Player: When a team is ahead at halftime by 35 or more points or becomes 35 or more points ahead in the second half, the clock will not stop during out of bounds, incomplete passes or first downs. The clock only stops for timeouts or scores. If the point differential becomes less than 35 points, regular timing resumes. A game is ended at halftime or during the second half if a team is 50 or more points behind.
8-Player and 11-Player: When a team is ahead by 35 or more points, the clock will not stop during out of bounds, incomplete passes or first downs. The clock only stops for timeouts or scores. If the point differential becomes less than 35 points, regular timing resumes. A game is ended at halftime or during the second half if a team is 50 or more points behind.

Bands Playing During Football Games

— School Administrators and coaches that have active bands should work with and instruct the band directors to be careful when the band is playing that they do not play so loudly that the opposing teams cannot hear their signals. While bands certainly improve the atmosphere of the game they should not be disruptive to the opposing team.

Please note that although the above policy still applies, there has been a slight change to enforcement of these guidelines that began with the 2021 fall season. In previous years, a member of the team on offense could make a request to the officiating crew that the opposing team's band stop playing because of difficulty relaying/hearing

signals. This is no longer the case as direct requests from players/coaches can no longer be made. Discretion now lies strictly with the officiating crew to determine if the band is playing too loudly. If the crew does feel that a band is hindering the ability for the offense to hear signals, NFHS Rule 9-9 (Unfair Acts) may be enforced. The referee has the discretion to initially issue a warning or penalty. The penalty may range from a delay of game (5 yards) to an unsportsmanlike foul (15 yards). This policy in no way is intended to take away from a band playing and representing your schools during games, but, it is intended to improve sportsmanship where applicable.

Player Celebrations — The NMAA office receives calls every year regarding player celebrations after a score. In particular, the questions revolve around players “chest bumping” after they score a touchdown. It is the opinion of the office that if two players spontaneously bump chests after a touchdown is scored and then head to the sidelines (or line up for the PAT), no penalty should be assessed so long as the celebration is not choreographed, excessive or done in a taunting fashion toward opponents. A spontaneous chest bump is no more celebratory than a “high five” between players and does not fall under “excessive celebration.” However, if the celebration is excessive, prolonged or an attempt to focus attention upon themselves, the player will be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct.

PATs After Touchdown(s) at the End of a Game — If a team scores a touchdown that puts it up 50 or more points in the second half, the PAT shall not be attempted.

Tie-Breaker Procedure at the End of the Game — The tie-breaking procedures in the National Federation rulebook are used in all games at all levels (varsity, sub-varsity and middle school) between New Mexico schools, as well as out-of-state guests, with the results determining the winner.

3-Minute Warm-Up Clock Clarification

— The 3-minute warm-up starts immediately when halftime ends. Teams must be on the field at 0:00. The opportunity for the 3-minute warm-up begins then. Coaches may meet with officials at the beginning of the 3-minute warm-up.

Pre-Game Time Management — School home site administration is asked to assist in managing time prior to kickoff. Introductions, singing or playing of the national anthem and any other ceremonies need to take place prior to kickoff. If a game is scheduled to start at 7:00 p.m., all pre-game festivities should already be completed by kickoff.

LIGHTNING POLICY

Awareness

Lightning is one of the most consistent causes of weather-related death or injury in the United States averaging 100 lightning deaths and 1000 injuries annually. Nearly all lightning-related injuries occur between the months of May and September and nearly four fifths occur between 10:00AM and 7:00PM, which coincides with the hours of most athletic events. Generally speaking, it is felt that any time a cloud-to-ground strike of lightning can be seen, or thunder heard, risk is already present. It is time to seek shelter.

AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND PLAY

Bylaw 7.10.1

Once the contest begins the assigned contest officials are responsible for making decisions to suspend or interrupt a contest due to unsafe weather conditions. While the final burden lies with contest officials, it is highly recommended that host site administration and contest officials work together when making any determinations to suspend play and use any and all available information in doing so. On-site medical professionals/athletic trainers should also be consulted and included in the decision-making process. When in doubt, err on the side of safety.

*Note: NMAA representatives directing NMAA State Championship events will have final authority on making decisions to postpone or suspend contests due to unsafe weather conditions.

CRITERIA FOR SUSPENDING PLAY

Bylaws 7.9.6 and 7.10.6

If the local management does not have commercial weather warning equipment or an efficient method of making an accurate, timely decision on location, listening for thunder and using the “flash-to-bang” count is the best way to mitigate the danger. As lightning approaches, the time in seconds from seeing the stroke to hearing the thunder decreases. For each 5-second count, the lightning is 1 mile away. At a count of 15 seconds (3 miles) there is imminent danger. When thunder is heard within 50 seconds of a visible lightning strike (10 miles), or a cloud-to-ground bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Take shelter immediately.

RETURNING TO PLAY

Bylaws 7.9.6 and 7.10.6

Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count, the clock should be reset and another 30 minute count should begin.

ADVANCE PLANNING AND MONITORING

Local managers should have a documented plan in place as well as designated people who are responsible for monitoring the weather and relaying information to contest officials. During the contest local managers should be aware of any potential thunderstorms that may form during competition. Monitoring the weather with electronic lightning detection systems (weather apps - i.e. Weather Bug's Spark function) is recommended.

*Note: It is essential that local managers, competing schools and contest officials establish dialogue in advance of contests or events to ensure that all involved understand what the plan will be for determining whether or when to suspend play.

OTHER SAFETY GUIDELINES

Bylaws 7.9.6 and 7.10.6

- Seek appropriate shelter. The safest shelter is a fully enclosed, substantial building with plumbing, electricity and telephone. The next safest is a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows closed. If play is suspended the fields and stands should be cleared. Local managers should develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe areas.
- Avoid being the highest point in an open field, in contact with, or proximity to the highest point. Do not take shelter under or near trees, flagpoles or light poles.
- Assume the lightning safe position (crouched on the ground, weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered, and ears covered) for individuals who feel their hair stand on end, skin tingle, or hear crackling noises. Do not lie flat on the ground.
- Avoid using land-line telephones except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning when using a land-line telephone.
- People who have been struck by lightning to do not carry an electrical

charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. Activate local EMS and call 911. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac arrest or respiratory arrest need emergency help quickly. Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT (REMINDER)

Athletic Directors, coaches and officials in our state have all been provided with information about concussion either at clinics during the summer, NFHS rulebooks and other publications and/or online courses regarding concussions. The area of concussion management has become a point of emphasis for the NFHS and, with the passage of SB1 by the New Mexico Legislature, has become a "hot button" issue statewide.

The following are mechanics for officiating a concussion in any and all sports, in concert with the NFHS Concussion Management Guidelines and additional information provided by the National Association of Sports Officials:

- When a student-athlete displays possible signs and symptoms of a concussion as listed in the NFHS rulebook, stop the game and visit with the athlete in question. You may want to get one of your partners involved with you in this process. Signs and symptoms include: headache, fogginess, difficulty concentrating, easily confused, slowed thought process, difficulty with memory, nausea, lack of energy, dizziness/poor balance, blurred vision, appears dazed or stunned, appears confused about assignment, forgets plays, unsure of game/score/ponent, moves clumsily, answers questions slowly or loses consciousness.

- Check the student-athlete's behavior against the list of signs and symptoms. If signs or symptoms are present, remove the student-athlete from the contest.
- Avoid any discussion of cause (how the athlete was injured) with anyone, including coaches, players and fans. The cause is immaterial.
- Do not tell the coaches that you are removing the player because he/she has a concussion. You may tell the coach simply, "I need you to take a look at Player X." If the coach does ask why, you can state that the player exhibited one of the signs and symptoms (i.e., dizziness, disorientation, headache, nausea, etc.). Do not mention that you think the player has a concussion because then you are crossing the line into a diagnosis!
- Make note of the jersey number of the athlete, the time at which he/she was removed from the game and the time of re-entry into the game (if applicable).
- Do not ask anyone to sign anything. The new NFHS guidelines and state law do not require signatures from coaches or appropriate health care professionals.
- During the removal of an athlete from a contest, continue to supervise both teams, both benches and keep the athletes separated.
- Do not render first aid to athletes and do not attempt to move them under any circumstance (if they are on the ground).
- Remember that an athlete does not have to be unconscious to have sustained a concussion.
- Most importantly, remember that the decision for a player to return to play falls on the appropriate health care

professional and the head coach. The liability for returning an athlete to play is on the school personnel. Do not offer opinions about an athlete's ability to reenter the game and do not ask questions about the medical personnel. What happens on the sidelines after you remove a player who is displaying signs and symptoms of a concussion is out of your control. Just keep note of who you removed and when and if the player returned so that you have the necessary documentation should questions arise. Leave return to play decisions to the appropriate individuals on the sideline.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Balanced formation — An offensive formation in which the same number of eligible receivers are outside the tackles on both sides of the snapper.

Blitz — A defensive strategy in which several players commit to rushing the passer. See “Showing blitz.”

Box — Apparatus (also known as the down marker) used by the chain crew to show ball position and the current down.

Chain crew (or chain gang) — Non-officials in charge of the line-to-gain equipment and box.

Cleaning up after the play — Mechanic in which the official not responsible for the ballcarrier observes action behind and around the ballcarrier.

Dead-ball officiating — Activity during the time immediately after the ball becomes dead.

Digger — Official who burrows into a pile and determines which team has recovered a fumble.

Downfield — Refers to the direction the offensive team is moving with the ball. On a scrimmage down, it is the area beyond the neutral zone. Opposite of “Upfield.”

Eye contact — Gaining the visual attention of another official before making a ruling. By doing so, officials can avoid conflicting calls.

Flat — The area behind the offensive linemen where backs go to receive short passes. A pass to a back in the flat is thrown shortly after the snap, thus making it different from a screen pass.

Give up — Turning attention from a specific player (usually the runner) because the player has entered another official’s coverage area.

Hashmarks (or hashes) — Also known as the inbounds marks, the lines on the field from which the ball is snapped if it becomes dead in a side zone or out of bounds.

Inside-out look — Pivot that turns an official’s back toward the middle of the field, allowing them an angle to action in a side zone or on the sideline.

Key — An action or reaction by a player that gives the official a tip as to what type of play the offense will run; a player an official observes for all or part of a down.

Line-to-gain equipment — Ten-yard length of chain connected at each end to poles used to indicate the line team A has to reach in order to achieve a first down. Commonly referred to as “the chains.” The box is also considered to be part of the line-to-gain equipment. See “Box,” “Chain gang” and “Stakes.”

Look through — Use of depth-of-field vision to observe a player lined up inside the nearest player.

Mirror a spot — Mechanic, usually used by wing officials, in which one official marks the spot of forward progress and another indicates the same spot from across the field.

Nine-yard marks (or numbers) — The yardline identification numbers painted on the field. The distance from the sideline to the top of the numbers is nine yards.

Officiate back to the ball — Mechanic in which a wing official who has moved toward team B’s goalline moves back toward the play in order to determine the spot of forward progress.

Point of attack — On a running play, the area in advance of the runner through which he runs; on a passing play, anywhere in the vicinity of the passer

or any player attempting to reach the passer.

Preventive officiating — Refers to actions by officials who prevent problems from occurring by talking to players and coaches. Preventive officiating is often related to dead-ball officiating.

Short side (of the field) — The side of the field from the hashmark to the nearer sideline when the ball is snapped from the hashmark; opposite of the “Wide side.”

Showing blitz — The defense places eight or more players within four yards of the snap, making no secret of the fact it intends to place pressure on the quarterback or kicker. See “Blitz.”

Shuffle step — Movement used mainly by wing officials on pass plays. The torso remains perpendicular to the line of scrimmage and the feet are alternately scraped along the ground (not a crossover step) in order to move downfield.

Side zone — The area of the field between the sidelines and the hashmarks.

Square off — Ninety-degree turn made by an official when marking the spot of forward progress.

Stacked — One player lined up directly behind a teammate (e.g. a linebacker positioned immediately behind a defensive tackle).

Stakes (or sticks) — See “Line to gain equipment” and “Chain crew.”

Strong side — The side of the offensive line on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackles; opposite of “Weak side.”

Trips — Three eligible receivers on one side of an offensive formation.

Upfield — The direction the defense or receiving team is moving. Opposite of “Downfield.”

V — Triangular alignment used by officials to relay the ball from a side zone to the hashmark.

Weak side — The side of the offensive line on which there are fewer eligible receivers outside of the tackles; opposite of the “Strong side.”

Wide side (of the field) — The area from the opposite hashmark through the middle of the field and side zone to the sideline when the ball is snapped from the opposite hashmark. Opposite of the “Short side.”

Wideout — An eligible receiver who lines up outside the last player on the offensive line, on the line of scrimmage.

Wing official — The linesman or line judge.

NMAA/NMOA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS' UNIFORM STANDARDS

Your uniform should be clean and well kept. The entire crew shall be dressed alike.

Shirt: Black and white vertically striped, long or short-sleeved knit shirt shall be worn. 2-1/4-inch striped shirts are mandatory with the American flag above the pocket. The flag must go above the pocket with white piping (if a patch) or sublimated directly onto the shirt. All officials in a given game are to wear the same type shirt (i.e., short or long sleeves).

Pants: Football officials must wear black pants. Pants may be worn with either long-sleeved shirts or short-sleeved shirts (or jackets) and black socks must be part of the uniform. Football officials may wear black shorts at any level, with the approval of the local association. Each local association is given the authority to choose whether they will utilize black shorts or if they will not allow the use of shorts at all.

Belt: A black leather belt 1-1/4 to 2 inches wide with a plain buckle shall be worn (either with pants or shorts).

Socks: Solid black socks are worn with the black pants and short black socks will be worn with shorts.

Shoes: Black football shoes with black laces are required. Shoes should be shined before each game.

Cap: Black baseball-style cap with white piping is required. The Referee shall wear a solid, white baseball-style cap. Caps must be fitted.

Jacket: For inclement weather games, officials may also wear a black and white vertically striped jacket.

Accessories: All officials must have the proper equipment, including a whistle, penalty marker, blue or white bean bag (all officials on the crew must have the same color), game card, pencil and rubber bands/down marker. The penalty marker shall be a light gold flag (15 x 15 inches) with a middle pouch weighted with sand or beans, etc. The linesman shall furnish a clipping device for use in measuring first downs. The line judge / back judge shall have a countdown timer. The Ref Smart model is recommended.

USE OF THE BEANBAG

The beanbag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, which may later be needed as a reference point.

Under no circumstances should the beanbag be used as a substitute for hustle. One common example of lazy officials using the beanbag instead of proper mechanics involves a play in which the runner is downed near or past a sideline. Some wing officials approach the players, throw their beanbag toward the spot and retrieve the ball from the runner. In that instance, the beanbag should be dropped (not thrown) only after the official has squared off to the spot and only if players need to be escorted back to the field from beyond the sideline.

It is not necessary to drop a beanbag at the spot a player intercepts a pass. Unlike the spot of a fumble, that spot has no bearing on penalty enforcement. The beanbag should be dropped on the correct spot and not thrown; however that won't always be practical. If the spot is in a side zone, then only the correct yardline is needed because any penalty enforcement would bring the ball back to the nearest hashmark. Situations in which the beanbag should be used:

Fumbles

The spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs and that spot is needed to determine where the run ended. Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the neutral zone, but many officials bag all fumbles out of habit.

First Touching

During both free and scrimmage kicks, there are times when it is improper for team K to touch a ball that has been kicked. That is known as "first touching" and it applies only when team K touches the ball when it is not entitled to possession.

On free kicks, if team K touches the ball before the ball crosses team R's free-kick line and before it is touched

there by any team R player, the spot must be marked with the beanbag. For a scrimmage kick, the spot must be marked if team K touches the ball in the field of play beyond the line before team R touches it.

The spot must be marked because team R may have the right to take the ball at that spot.

End of a Scrimmage Kick

If a scrimmage kick ends between the goallines, the covering official must mark the spot with a beanbag. That is in case post-scrimmage kick enforcement (PSK) is needed on a foul.

The back judge (crew of five) should use two different-colored beanbags: one for marking the end of a kick and the other for marking first touching.

Momentum Exception

The momentum exception allows a defender or kick receiver to make a play without fear of giving up a safety.

When a defensive player intercepts an opponent's forward pass; intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass; or a team R player catches or recovers a scrimmage kick or free kick between their five yardline and the goalline, and their original momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in their team's possession or it goes out of bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered or the kick was caught or recovered.

The beanbagged spot might also be used to enforce a penalty that occurs after possession was obtained.

Out of Bounds

The beanbag can also be used to mark the out of bounds spot on punts. On free kicks, if the ball is kicked out of bounds untouched, it is a foul and the spot can be marked with the flag.

The hat (rather than the beanbag) is used when certain players go out of bounds during a play. If a player is pushed or blocked off the field, they may legally return and participate as long as he immediately reenters; that spot does not need to be marked. However, if a player of team A or team K goes out of bounds before a change of possession, the spot should be marked. It is not a foul unless he returns and the return spot should then be marked with a flag. The hat will demonstrate the covering official was on top of the play.

Inadvertent Whistles

When an official inadvertently blows their whistle, causing the ball to become dead, the covering official must drop their beanbag at the spot of the ball when the whistle was blown. The down may be replayed or the team in possession at the time the whistle was blown may choose to accept the result of the play.

FLAGS AND PENALTIES

Fouls must be reported to the press box and both coaches. Additionally, all fouls must be communicated to all members of the officiating crew as each official has a role in penalty enforcement. Your signals and sequence speak a language. Using signals to report is just like talking to the press box and spectators, only you are using signals instead of words.

Notification

Once the flag is thrown, the official who threw it must ensure both the referee and linesman are aware as soon as possible after the play ends. The linesman will ensure the chains and box are not moved and the referee will prepare for the steps that follow. Recommendation: Use three short blasts on the whistle after the ball is dead to bring the flag to the referee's attention.

The referee's first step in quality communication is to get an accurate report from the official who threw the flag. The referee must then move clear of the players, face the press box, stand stationary and indicate the foul and the offending team using the appropriate signal.

When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they

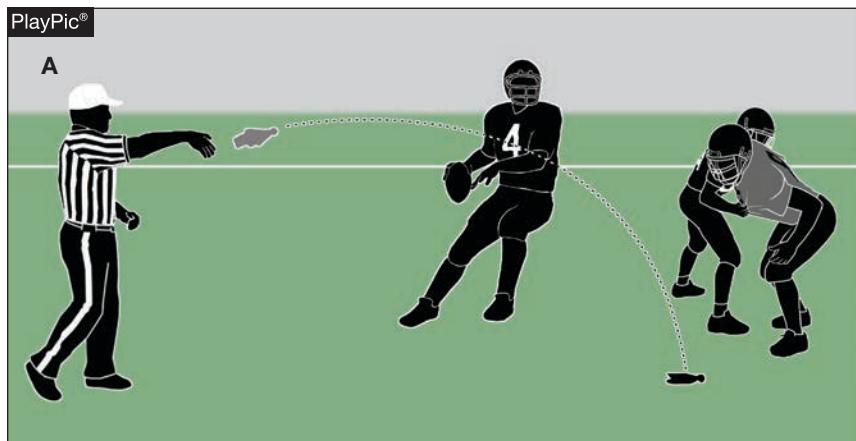
should jog slowly toward the middle of the field to report the foul to the referee. Remember to practice good dead-ball officiating during the jog; if a player has crossed the neutral zone and contacted an opponent, the contacted opponent may try to retaliate.

Avoid signaling the foul rather than reporting the foul to the referee because another official may have a different foul. Instead of signaling from their position, the calling officials should get together to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the referee.

Getting the Explanation

Some referees simply want to hear the foul and offender, such as, "No. 49 offense, illegal motion." Others prefer to be told what the reporting official saw, "No. 49 cut upfield too soon." It may make sense to use both techniques dependent upon the experience level of the crewmate.

On certain fouls, it is critical that the referee be told the status of the ball when the foul occurred or whether a player involved was an eligible receiver. Of course the guilty team must also be identified. The trend at many levels is to get away from referring to teams by jersey



color. The pregame conference should include a discussion of how to report fouls.

Giving the Explanation

The choices should be presented on all penalties unless it is a double foul or the penalty is automatically declined. The foul should be explained to the captains along with the options. State the options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously. The umpire must listen to the referee's explanation to ensure the options are properly offered.

The wing official on the sideline of the penalized team should tell the coach the number of the guilty player and explain the foul in non-technical terms, e.g., "The man in motion cut downfield too soon." Don't guess or make up a number if you don't know the number of the fouling player. If a non-existent number is reported, crew credibility is immediately destroyed.

Once the referee determines whether the penalty has been accepted or declined, they must inform other members of the crew. If the penalty is accepted, the umpire must understand

where to walk from – the enforcement spot, how far to walk and which direction to walk.

Finally, the referee should again move clear of the players, face the press box, stand stationary and indicate the foul and the offending team using the appropriate signals.

Use of the Microphone

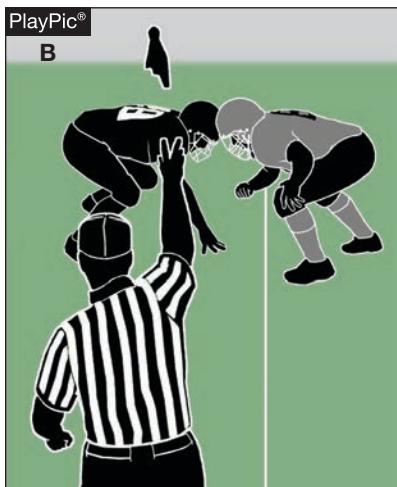
If the referee has a microphone to announce fouls, brief explanations are best: "Foul (pause), offense/defense, player # (pause), penalty/decline (pause), down. Example: "Holding (pause), offense #67 (pause), 10-yard penalty (pause), repeat third down." The number of the fouling player should be announced whenever possible.

Use of the Flag

Correct penalty enforcement can be facilitated if the flag is thrown properly. There are two ways to throw the flag: into the air or carefully to a spot. The latter is used when a spot foul occurs (PlayPic A, previous page). If it is possible the spot of the foul will be the enforcement spot, you must get your flag as close to that spot as possible. If you're off target, you should relocate the flag as soon as possible after the play by picking it up and moving it definitively. The longer you delay making this correction, the more it will appear you are manipulating the situation.

For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the flag should be tossed into the air directly in front of the official (PlayPic B).

A few techniques to avoid: slam-dunking the flag to the ground; looking angry when you toss it; holding the flag and waving it, instead of throwing it; or throwing it at the fouling player. On late hits, the latter looks confrontational, and worse yet, might hit the player in the face.



PENALTY SIGNALING SEQUENCES

The order of the penalty signals used by the referee is just as important as the clarity of the signals. Again using the language parallel, think of signal sequence as words in a sentence. The singular words, “Sequence important the is of signals,” makes little sense when thought of as individual words, but “The sequence of the signals is important,” uses the same words and is easy to understand.

The key to quality signaling is remembering that it is a sequence of fluid movements. Take your time. Signals executed with separate and distinct motions ensure clarity; jumbled quickly together and the messages are lost. Also, remember to wait for the linesman to indicate the chains are in position and the rest of the crew is ready before giving the ready-for-play.

It is also important to face the proper direction when giving the signal. All signals are given facing the press box.

The ready-for-play signal can be the downward stroke of your arm for the start-the-clock signal when the clock starts on the ready.

The false start and encroachment signals are always preceded by the signal for a dead-ball foul.

By following these principles and using the correct, accepted signals you will effectively communicate your decisions to all involved.

Live-ball Fouls

Signaling the penalty for a live-ball foul is a four-step process: foul signal, a point toward the team that fouled, an indication of the next down and either the ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal.

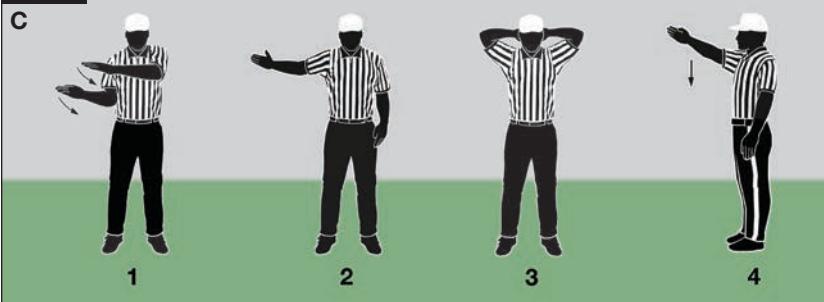
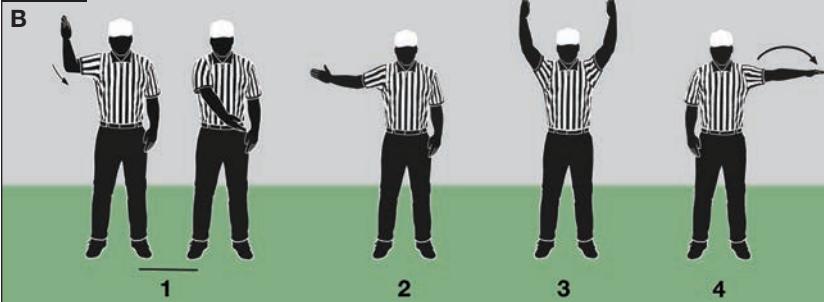
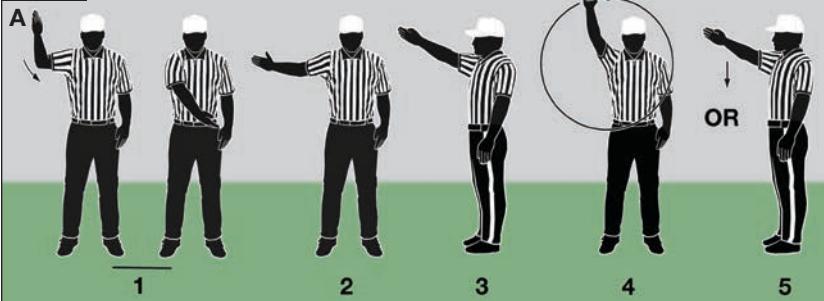
In PlayPic A, team B has been called for roughing the passer. The referee signals the foul (1), indicates which team

has fouled (2) and signals that team A has been awarded a new series (3). The referee waits to be sure the chains have been moved and the other officials are in position. If the pass was complete in spite of the roughing and the runner was downed inbounds, the referee blows their whistle and simultaneously gives the start-the-clock signal (4). If the pass was incomplete or the play ended out of bounds, the referee gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing their whistle (5).

In PlayPic B, team B has been called for roughing the passer, but team A scored a touchdown. The scoring team may choose to have the penalty enforced on the try. If so, the sequence in PlayPic A is used with the ready signal. If the scoring team chooses to have the penalty enforced on the next kickoff, the referee signals the foul (1) and indicates which team has fouled (2). The referee signals the touchdown, then points to the spot of the next kickoff to indicate the enforcement (4).

In PlayPic C, team A has been called for intentional grounding. The referee first indicates the foul (1), followed by the fouling team (2). Because the penalty includes a loss of down, the referee gives that signal (3). Because the pass was incomplete, the referee gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing their whistle (5).

Cases that involve an ejection add a step to the process. The referee must indicate the decision to the press box. PlayPic D (page 18) illustrates the sequence for a live-ball foul for illegal helmet contact that results in an ejection. The referee first indicates the nature of the foul (1) and the fouling team (2). The ejection is then indicated (3). If the penalty results in a first down,

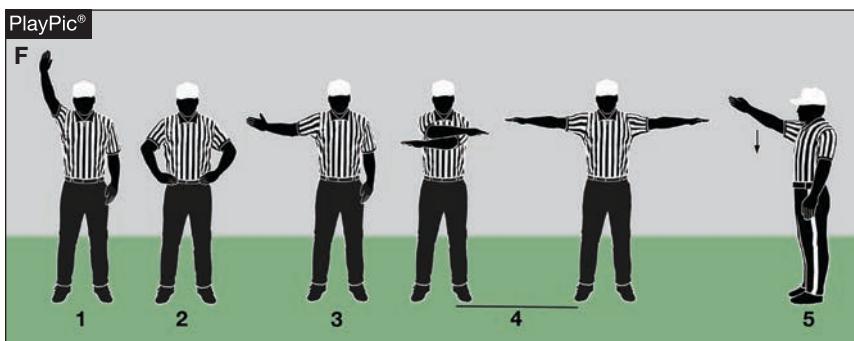
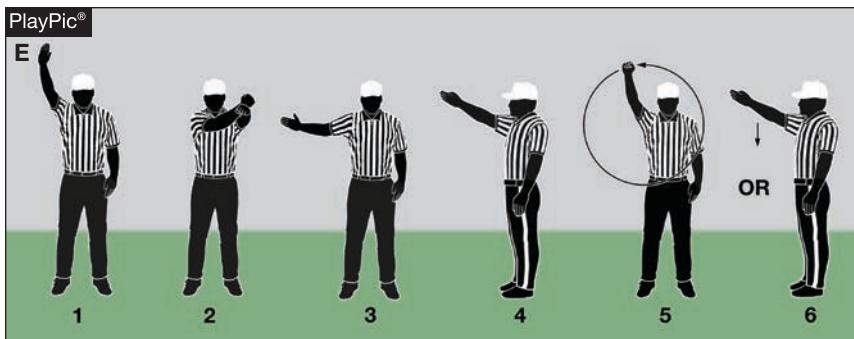
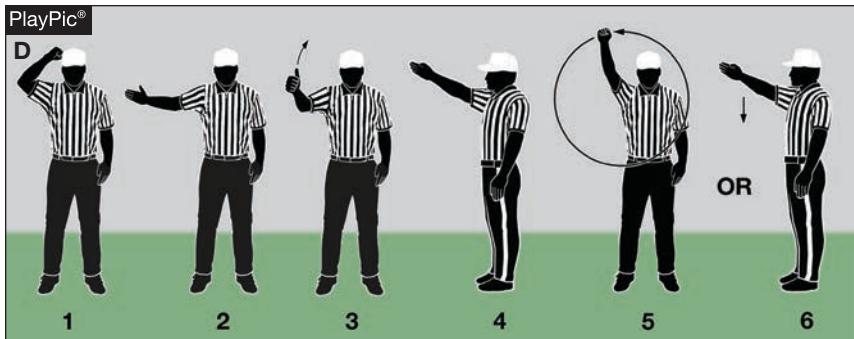


the referee signals that team A has been awarded a new series (4); if not, the referee signals the next down. In this example, the penalty has given team A sufficient yardage for a first down. If the previous play ended inbounds, the referee blows their whistle and simultaneously gives the start-the-clock signal (5). If the previous play was an incomplete forward pass or if the play ended out of bounds, the referee gives

the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing their whistle (6).

Dead-ball Fouls

When a dead-ball foul has been called, the dead-ball signal must precede the signal for the nature of the foul. That means signaling the penalty is a four- or five-step process: the dead-ball signal, followed by the foul signal, followed by a point toward the team that fouled,



followed by an indication of the next down, followed by either the ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal.

In PlayPic E, team B has been flagged for a personal foul that occurred during a dead-ball period. The referee begins with the dead-ball signal (1) followed by the signal for personal foul (2). They then indicates the team that fouled (3) and signals the next down. If the penalty results in a first down, the referee signals that team A has been awarded a new

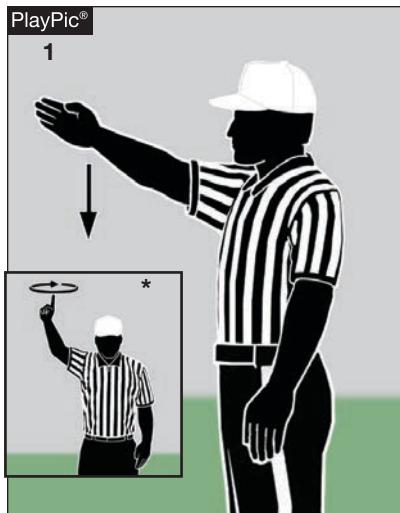
series (4); if not, the referee signals the next down. In the example, the penalty has given team A sufficient yardage for a first down. If the previous play ended inbounds, the referee blows their whistle and simultaneously gives the start-the-clock signal (5). If the previous play was an incomplete forward pass or if the play ended out of bounds, the referee gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing their whistle (6).

Penalties for dead-ball fouls are rarely

declined because the yardage is “free.” However, on those rare occasions when a dead-ball foul is declined, the referee must indicate the declination after indicating which team fouled.

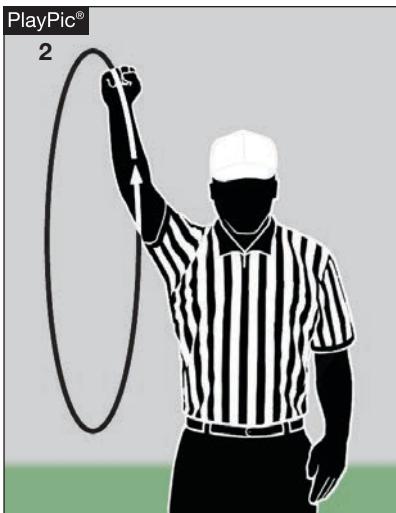
In PlayPic F, team K is ready to attempt a try but team R has been called for encroachment. Team K declines the penalty because its kicker is more comfortable kicking from the present distance. The referee gives the signals for dead-ball foul (1) and encroachment (2). He indicates which team has fouled (3), followed by the declination (4). The referee then gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing their whistle (5).

SIGNAL CHART

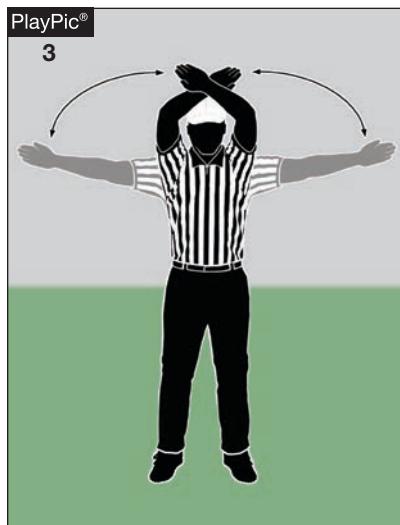


Ready for play

*Untimed down



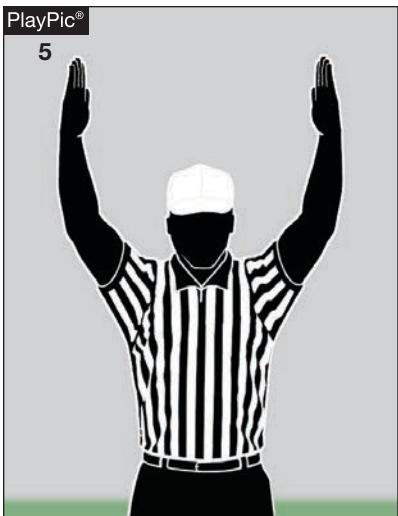
Start the clock



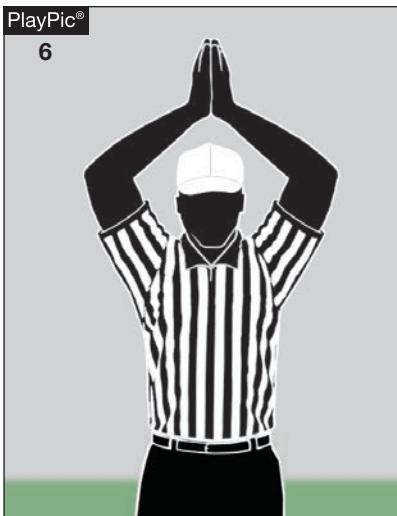
Stop the clock



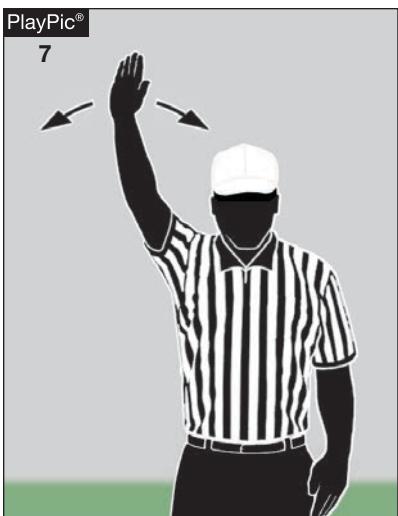
TV/radio timeout



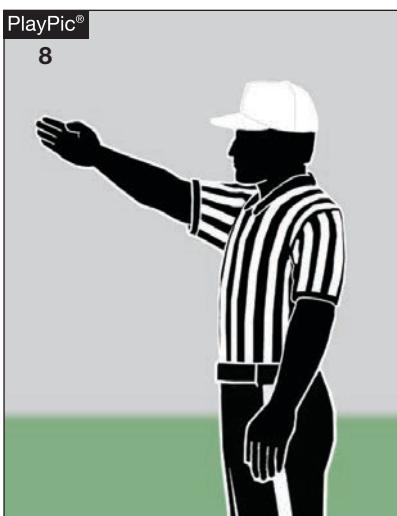
Touchdown/field goal/point(s) after
touchdown



Safety



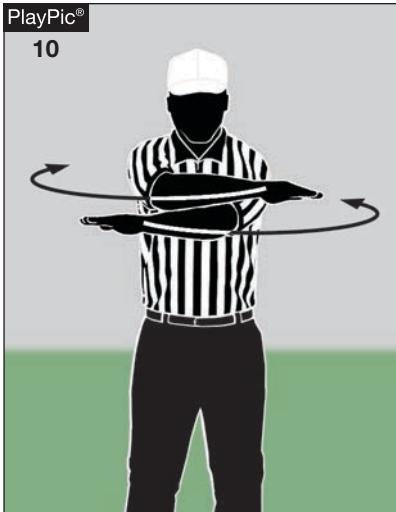
Dead-ball foul
Touchback (side to side)



First down



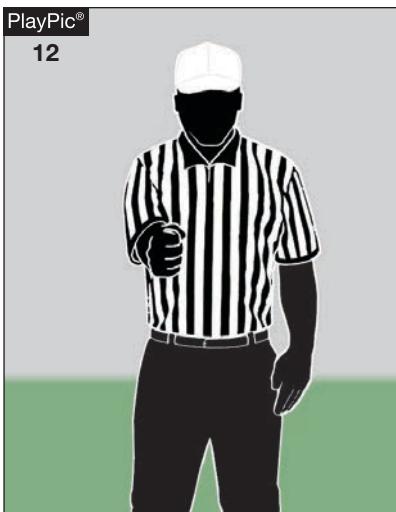
Loss of down



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



Legal touching



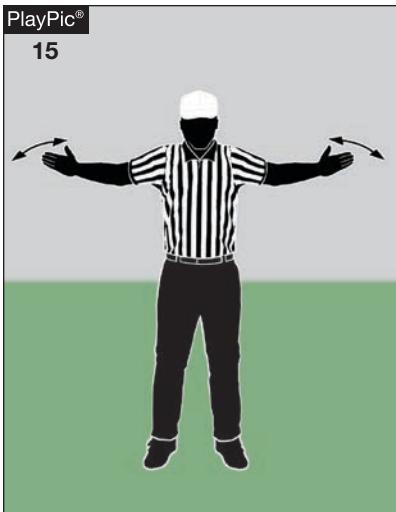
Inadvertent whistle



Disregard flag



End of period



Sideline warning



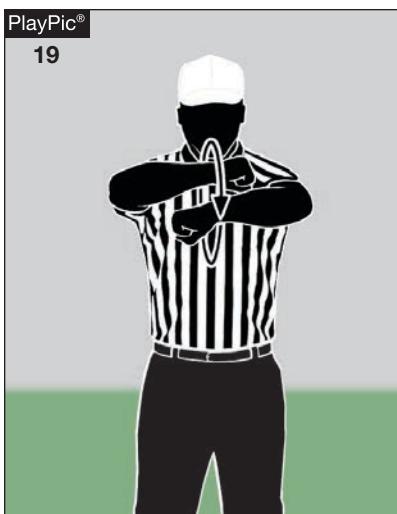
First touching
Illegal touching



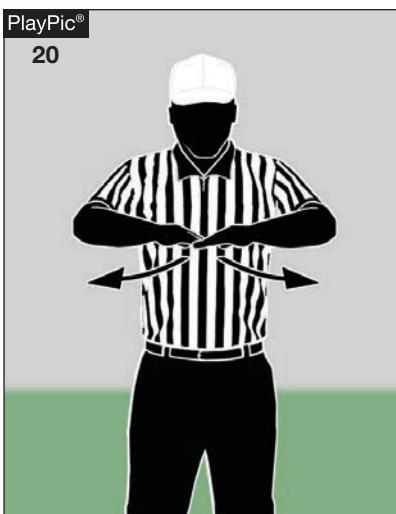
Reset play clock to 25 seconds.
(Use both hands to have play clock
reset to 40 seconds)



Encroachment



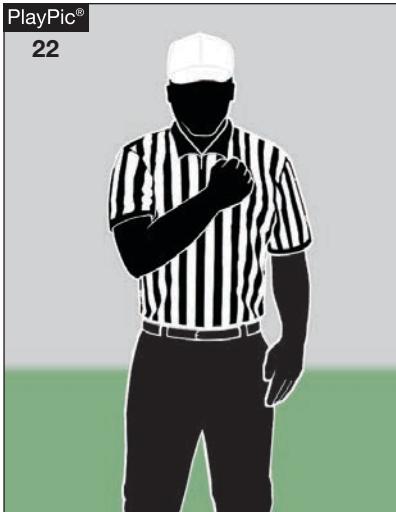
False start
Illegal formation
Free kick infraction



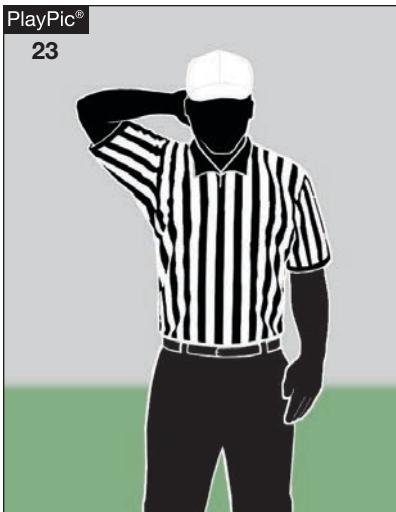
Illegal motion (1 hand)
Illegal shift (2 hands)



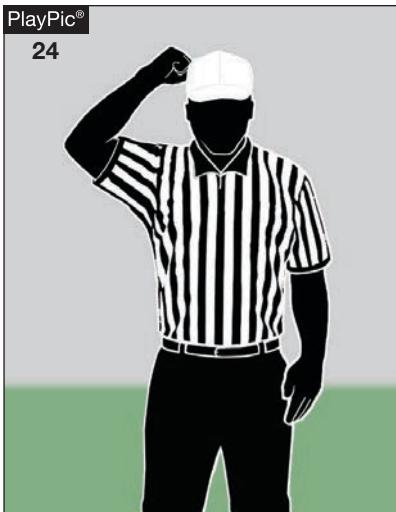
Delay of game



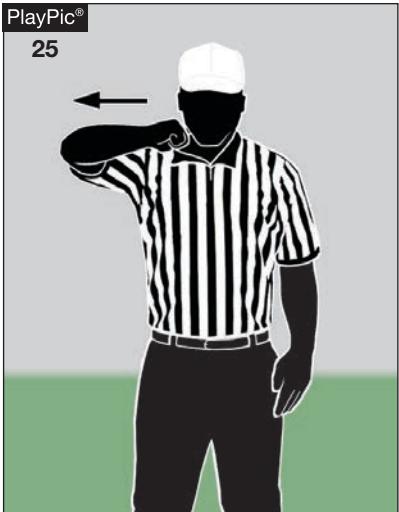
Substitution infraction



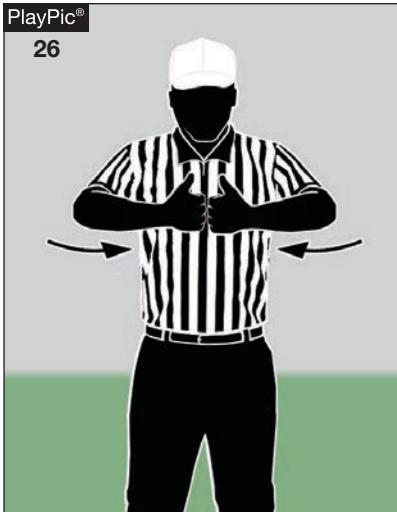
Disconcerting act



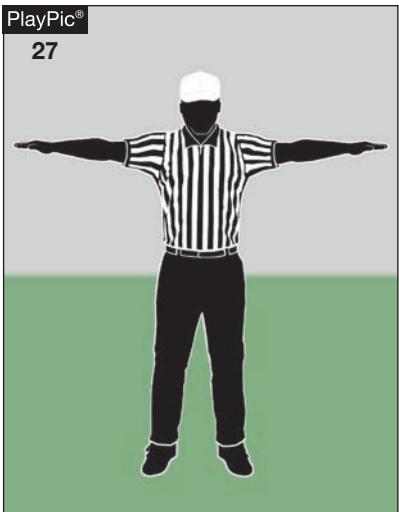
**Illegal helmet contact
Targeting**



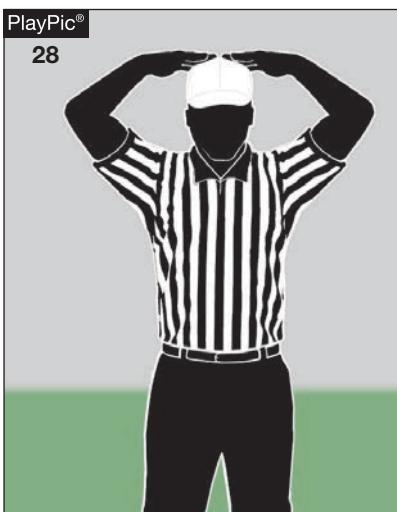
Illegal horse-collar



Blindside block



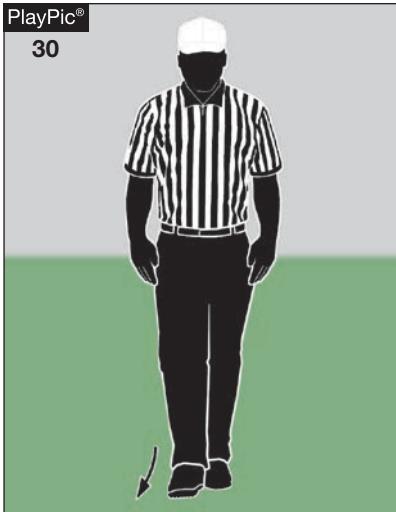
Unsportsmanlike conduct or
noncontact foul



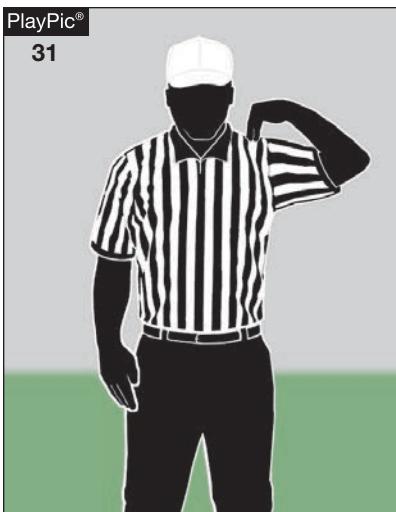
Illegal participation



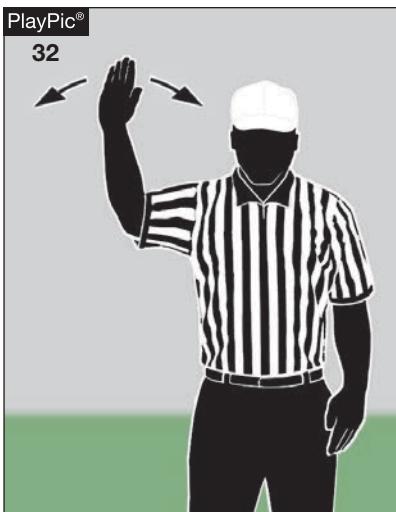
Sideline interference
Note: Face press box when giving signal.



**Running into or roughing
the kicker or holder**



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



Illegal/invalid fair catch

33



Pass interference
Kick-catching interference

34



Roughing the passer

35



Illegal pass

Illegal forward handing

Note: Face press box when giving signal

36



Intentional grounding



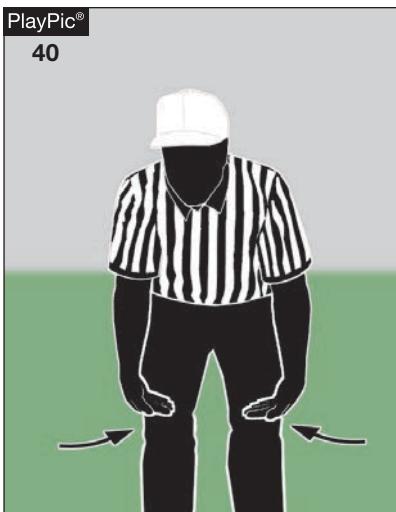
Ineligible downfield on pass



Personal foul



Clipping



Block below the waist

41



Chop block

42



Holding
Obstructing
Illegal use of hands or arms

43



Illegal block

44



Helping the runner
Interlocked blocking



Grasping of facemask, chin strap
or helmet opening

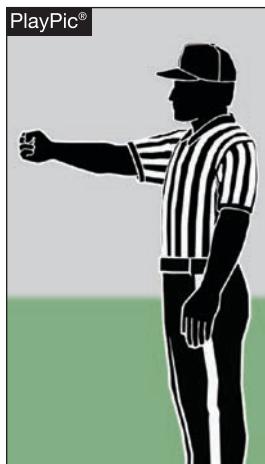


Tripping



Disqualification

CREW AND SUPPLEMENTARY SIGNAL CHART



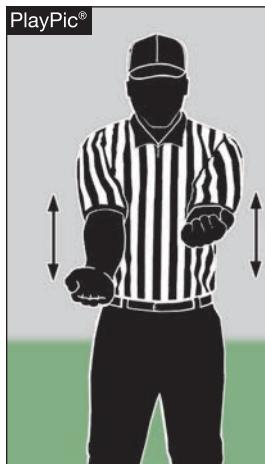
11 players



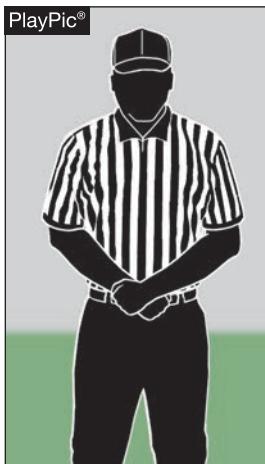
More than 11 players
on field*



Less than 11 players
on field*



Pass juggled*



Play ended out of bounds
Don't start clock



Unbalanced line

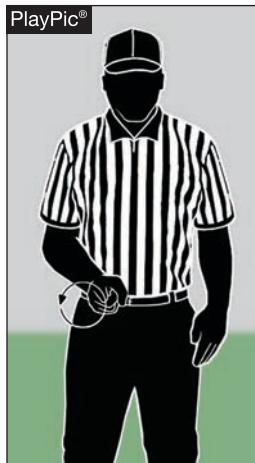
Asterisk (*) indicates unofficial signal



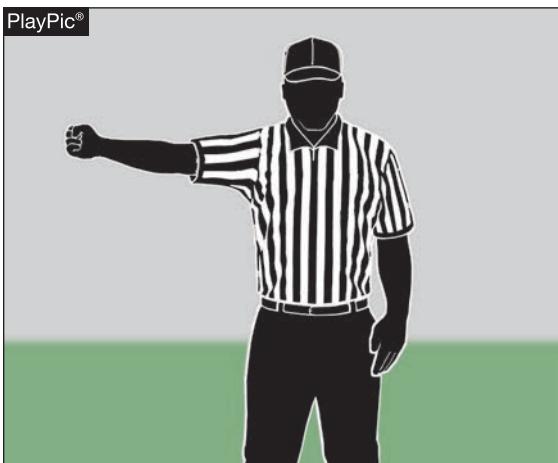
Double sticks



**Snapper protection
rules apply**



Start clock on ready



**Receiver off the line
Backward pass**



Dead ball

WHISTLE MECHANICS

Each official will carry a whistle as part of required game equipment. A whistle on a lanyard is preferred. The lanyard should be black. Some assigners or associations allow the use of finger whistles. Check to see if finger whistles are allowed before using one.

Whichever type of whistle is used, having a spare whistle in a pocket is recommended.

The referee, umpire, linesman and line judge should strongly consider having the whistle in their mouths prior to the snap in case a dead-ball foul occurs or a team's timeout request is granted. Once the snap occurs, it is strongly recommended that no official have a whistle in the mouth until the ball becomes dead.

Remember that, by rule, the whistle rarely causes the ball to become dead. Blowing the whistle only confirms that something has happened to cause the ball to become dead.

At the end of a play, the official who threw the flag should alert the crew by giving three short blasts of the whistle. That helps ensure the box is not moved or the chains moved until the penalty is sorted out.

Because of the 40-second play second play clock, the referee won't always blow the ready for play signal. The referee uses the whistle to indicate the ball is ready for play on certain dead-ball situations, when there is a timeout (charged or official), when there is a player injury and to prevent the ball from becoming live due to a dead-ball foul before the snap. Rarely will the referee use the whistle to confirm that the ball is dead after a play.

The umpire whistles to indicate a timeout, dead-ball foul that prevents the snap and player injury. It is strongly recommended the umpire refrain from using the whistle to confirm the ball is dead at the end of the play. The umpire may blow their whistle if he sees an

incomplete pass in their coverage area, however.

Wing officials use the whistle to indicate timeouts, dead-ball fouls that prevent the snap, injuries and when the ball becomes dead following plays in their coverage areas (including incomplete passes and the runner or a live ball going out of bounds).

The back judge uses the whistle to indicate timeouts, injuries, the end of a quarter, touchback, the ball is dead in their coverage area and touchdowns when he is the covering official.

When the 40-second interval is in force, officials' signals will serve as the trigger for the play clock operator to start the play clock. One arm raised completely above the shoulder with the hand open and the palm facing forward signals the 40-second interval should begin (see PlayPic). It is acceptable for the covering official, after giving that signal, to then indicate with their hand the next down.

When a pass is incomplete, team A has gained a first down or a runner goes out of bounds, the appropriate signals will cause the 40-second clock to start. In those instances, the raised hand is not necessary.



CHAIN CREW, CLOCK OPERATORS AND BALL HELPERS

Chain Crew

It is important for the linesman to have a thorough pregame meeting with the chain crew. Officials will often encounter a chain crew that “has been doing this for 30 years” and needs no instruction. In those cases, the linesman can remind the chain crew that not all crews do things the exact same way, thus creating the need for the meeting.

A four-person chain crew is preferable. If the crew consists of only three members, the person working the box can perform most of the duties involving the clip while the trail chain holder tends to the box. No one on the chain crew should double as a ball helper.

When a new series begins, the box is set on the spot where the linesman’s downfield heel intersects with the sideline. The chains are then set according to the position of the box. Once the spot has been established, the box should be moved at least six feet away from the sideline. The six-foot spacing allows the chain crew some cushion. If players approach, the chain crew must retreat and drop the equipment. That protects the players and the chain crew.

Remind the box holder that all spots are taken from the forward point of the ball. At the start of a new series, the linesman will go to the sideline and mark the spot with the heel of their downfield foot.

The box holder is not to change the down or move the box until the linesman echoes the referee’s announcement of the next down. Let the box holder know what signals will be used to indicate the down (inexperienced chain crews may not know that a fist indicates fourth down). Remind the box holder the box will be needed on tries.

Although most chain holders understand not to move the chains unless directed by the linesman, the reminder needs to be offered.

The chain holders should be shown the signal the linesman will use telling the crew to stay put and the signal that moves the crew. Many linesmen use the “stop” signal (arm outstretched, palm up and facing the chain crew) to indicate stay put and a beckoning motion of the hand or arm as the signal to move.

If the linesman tells the crew to move, not seeing that a penalty marker is down, the crew should be told not to hesitate to point out the flag to the linesman.

When a first down is declared, the trail pole goes immediately behind the box so the officials’ view of the box is not obstructed. The lead holder is responsible to ensure the chain is taut at all times. Instruct the chain crew that when the trail pole is set behind the box, the trail pole holder should step firmly on the chain; that ensures the chain will be taut and that the trail pole will not be displaced when the lead pole is pulled.

Once a first down is awarded to team A inside team B’s 10 yardline, the chains are no longer needed and should be moved well away from the sideline.

The linesman’s clip is a safety valve. If the chains are moved either in error or for safety reasons, the clip provides the exact chain location. The clip operator should be told to place the clip on the back edge of the line. Then the chains are moved off the sideline.

With a four-person chain crew, the use of a second clip is encouraged. If two clips are used, the clip operator should mark the new yardline with a second clip, leaving the original clip in place until after the first-down play ends.

The clip goes on the five yardline nearer the trail stake, the yardline is set on the clip and the clip is never removed until the stakes are in a new position.

Another tool the linesman can use is tape on the halfway point of the chain. The tape helps the linesman determine if team A will achieve a first down on a five-yard penalty, thus precluding the need for a measurement.

For instance, if the box is three links behind the tape and team B is flagged for a five-yard penalty, the linesman can check the tape and tell the referee, "They'll still be short." Conversely, if the box is slightly beyond the tape, the linesman can tell the referee, "It will be first down." If, during their pregame inspection of the chains, the linesman sees there is no tape on the chain, they should ask a trainer or team manager for a strip of tape about six inches long. The chain is folded in half and the tape wound around the links at the halfway mark.

To ensure that the proper penalty yardage is assessed, the linesman should go to the succeeding spot when penalties are to be enforced.

At the end of the first and third quarters, the chains need to be moved to the other end of the field. The linesman should record the down, distance, yardline on which the ball is resting and yardline on which the clip is located. The linesman then grabs the chain on either side of the clip, asks the stake holders to rotate so they are opposite of where they were when the quarter ended and then jog to the corresponding yardline on the other end of the field. The linesman places the clip on the ground at the appropriate line, then asks both stakeholders to pull the ends taut. The box is placed once the umpire has set the ball.

Game Clock Operator

When plays end at the sideline, the game clock operator should observe if the covering official signals to stop the clock. Also remind the game clock operator to look for the stop-the-clock signal when the ball goes near a sideline, there is a change of possession or there is a first down, and that tries are always untimed. The Back Judge shall instruct the play clock operator to watch for a dead ball signal or incomplete signal. The play clock operator shall immediately start the 40 second clock. The play clock operator shall watch the referee signals for any updates to the play clock.

In addition to the time allotted for halftime, there is an additional three-minute warmup that immediately follows the intermission.

If the regulation game ends in a tie and overtime is played, the game clock operator will need to put three minutes on the clock. After that, the clock is not needed unless there is a second overtime (a two-minute break occurs in that case).

As a backup, an onfield official should time the game. Those duties fall to the line judge.

Remind the game clock operator that if the scoreboard is equipped with a horn to indicate the end of a period, it should not sound while a play is in progress.

Ball Helpers

Each ball helper shall have two approved team balls for play and a kicking ball if warranted. With a ball helper with two balls on each sideline, it will avoid officials having to reset the play clock if a ball goes long out of bounds. The wing official will turn to the ball helper, relay the ball in and get the game going. The ball helper will be responsible to get the ball out of bounds.

The line judge is responsible for the ball helper activities when there is only one ball helper. If two ball helpers are available, appoint one to be responsible for each sideline. The ball helpers keep up with the play at all times, normally mirroring the position of the wing official on their side of the field.

In addition each ball helper should be made responsible for the endline in field goal and try situations. One ball should be placed on the ground behind the goalpost.

The ball helpers then take a position well behind the posts in order to recover the ball after the kick. An official can pick up the ball behind the goalpost for use on the ensuing kickoff or snap.

If the ball becomes dead out of bounds or inbounds nearer the sideline than the hashmarks, the ball helpers should give a ball as quickly as possible to the nearest official. If the dead ball goes out of bounds, or is dead because of an incomplete pass, the ball helper should then retrieve it. If the dead ball is inbounds, the ball helper should wait with the official covering the spot until it is no longer required and then take it off the field.

In inclement weather or muddy conditions, the ball helpers must ensure that their ball is kept dry and clean. It is the responsibility of game management to supply towels for that purpose.

FUMBLES

Officials have specific duties when a pile forms on top of a fumble. The ball will be spotted and the process will be much simpler if each crew member does their job.

When an official sees a fumble, they must drop a beanbag at the yardline at which the ball was fumbled (the spot may be used for penalty enforcement if a foul occurs before or while the ball is loose). He must also continue officiating.

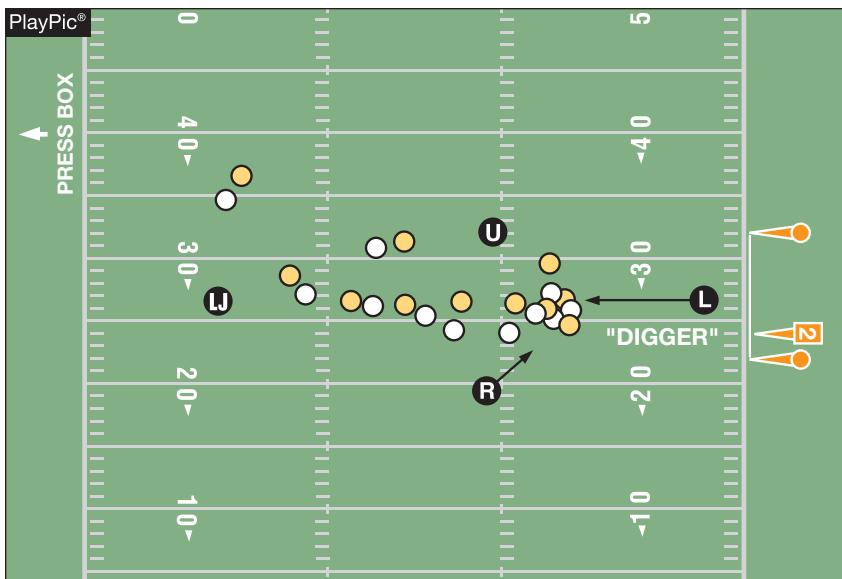
If the covering official sees a player recover the fumble from a prone position, they should blow the play dead. If the defense recovers, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team. If the offense recovers, the covering official should only signal the next down (unless a first down was achieved; in that case, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team).

If a fumble results in players from both teams forming a pile that prevents

the covering official from determining possession, the ball must be “dug out” of the pile. The official closest to the pile becomes the “digger,” the official responsible for unpiling the players and determining who has recovered the fumble. The official nearest the digger signals the clock to stop and looks at the clock to be sure it is stopped. The remaining nearby officials echo the signal.

Assuming the pile consists of four or more players, the digger begins by getting the players on top of the pile to get up. One method is to tap those players and say, “You’re out,” or “You don’t have it; get up.” Pay attention when you get close to the pile; you don’t want a mouthful of helmet. The digger can’t be shy about getting dirty. The ball is somewhere on the ground; the digger should be, too.

If the players are slow to unpile, another official can approach the pile and assist the digger; the remaining officials



should practice dead-ball officiating and observe the players not on the pile.

Another digger's trick is to grasp the arm of the player who is clearly in possession of the ball at the bottom of the pile. By saying, "I've got the ball; everyone off the pile," the digger can ensure the proper team is awarded possession while getting the players to disperse.

If the digger can clearly see the ball or is certain he knows which player has covered it, they verbally relay that information to the referee. If team A has recovered, the referee announces the next down and restarts the clock (or signals the first down if team A has achieved a first down). If team B has recovered, the referee alone signals the change of possession.

The digger can help statisticians and spectators by pointing to or otherwise identifying the player who recovered the fumble once the pile has dispersed.

When a fumble is recovered between two officials and the pile consists of four or fewer players, there is usually no need for a digger. The officials should make eye contact and confirm what they've seen (e.g. "I've got red ball." "So do I."). If they agree, both give the proper signals. If they don't agree, one must serve as the digger.

Anytime the referee is in the area of the pile, the recovery information should be verbally relayed to the referee. The referee alone then signals.

CREW OF FOUR

CREW OF FOUR

CHAPTER 1

PHILOSOPHY

Movement and compromise are the characteristics of football officiating. Twenty-two players are moving around, competing for space and position; the officials must utilize hustle, angles, distance and planned compromises to observe and control the action.

The challenge for officials in a crew of four is to observe the same number of players and the same amount of territory with one less set of eyes than in a crew of five. That means officials must expand their areas of coverage and utilize teamwork to get the job done.

Hustle

Hustle is an overused word today. Everyone knows it's needed to succeed, but what does it really mean when relating it to football officiating? Hustle to cover plays and to get into position is important regardless of how many officials work a game, but it's especially important in a crew of four because the same amount of ground and the same number of players have to be covered by fewer officials.

Significant movement by all officials is critical for proper field coverage. Hustle gives you a chance. That equates to more running and a well-placed concern for angles.

Movements

All officials must work hard at understanding then obtaining proper angles. Your line of sight must provide you with an opportunity to view a developing play or part of a play. You must be able to see completely through the play, which means your vision must be unobstructed by the players directly involved in the play and others near the play.

When the ball is snapped, all 22 players are in motion. An official's angle and distance adjustments are constant as play is in motion. A step or two in the right direction may open up a whole new viewing experience, free from obstruction; a step in the wrong direction will screen you from the critical game action.

Far too often officials who can't (or

won't) run well don't move with the flow of the play. They're afraid of getting in the way and aren't confident they can move quickly enough to avoid players and get good angles. The game suffers because coverage suffers. A good wing official, for instance, flows downfield with the play when a runner is in their coverage area — or moves onto the field to watch the players behind the play when the run is closing down on the opposite sideline.

Why such an emphasis on movement? Movement allows the non-covering officials to watch players away from the ball, **the critical component to combating illegal physical play.** When a wing official moves off the sideline when the play is concluding, they can watch the areas behind the run, where rough play often occurs.

The covering wing official also moves along the sideline to improve angles. There's usually at least three and sometimes six or seven players around the ball, either trying to throw blocks or attempting to make the tackle. Movement is critical to watching action around the ball. It's also paramount to game control.

Proper movements when the play is over are also important. Because the ball is live for only a few seconds every play, there's a tendency to think about spotting the ball for the next play and forgetting about the players. If officials ignore post-play action, players get physical with each other and game control suffers. All officials must observe player action after the ball has been whistled dead.

Field Coverage

Proper coverage is enhanced by good eye contact and a "feel" for where your crewmates are looking. You must learn about all aspects of football officiating to know who is covering what. Once you've mastered that, practical onfield application develops through communication, including eye contact and understanding. At the risk of being obvious, you've got to know exactly

what both you and your crewmates are expected to do in specific situations — then effectively communicate with your crewmates — to truly master football officiating. When you understand why angles and distance are important and how and when to obtain them, you'll find yourself in great position throughout each game.

CREW OF FOUR

CHAPTER 2

KEYS

- Balanced Formation
- Trips To Line Judge's Side
- Motion Changes Formation From Unbalanced To Balanced
- Referee And Umpire Keys

Football officials have a kind of telepathy to help them determine what's going to happen before it occurs. Those hints are called keys.

There are two basic types of keys: call them "situational" and "positional" keys.

Situational Keys

Situational keys are partially based on the down, distance, score, time remaining, offensive and defensive formations and actions of players at the snap. For example, it's third down and 11. Team A trails by two points with 1:37 to play in the fourth quarter and has the ball on its own 44 yardline. Going without a huddle, team A lines up in a shotgun formation with three receivers on the right side of the formation. All of that adds

up to a pass. That hunch is confirmed when, at the snap, the offensive linemen drop back to pass block, the quarterback retreats into the pocket and the receivers run pass patterns rather than block team B's linebackers and defensive backs.

In addition to down, distance and other game factors, offensive and defensive formations provide hints as to what type of play an official can expect in a given situation. Most teams using the wishbone formation, for instance, are predominantly running teams. Teams using four-receiver sets and shotgun formations pass more times than not.

Linemen provide situational keys. Pulling linemen indicate a sweep or trap block. Retreating linemen indicate a pass. Charging linemen indicate a

running play. When offensive linemen provide only passive resistance, allowing defensive linemen to penetrate the neutral zone, a screen pass often follows.

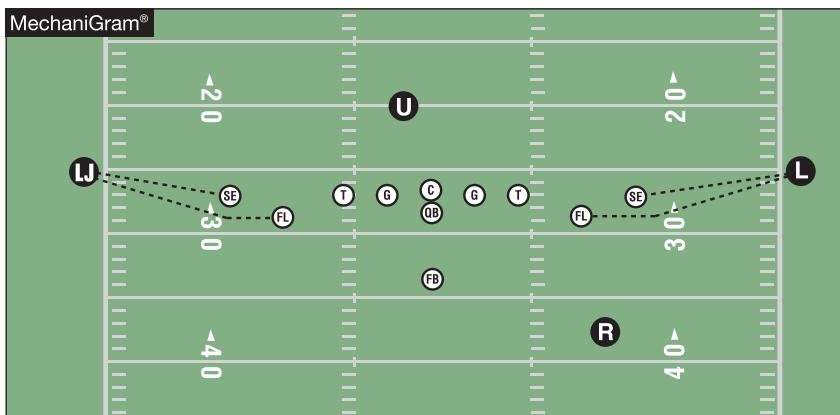
Positional Keys

Simply stated, the wing officials key on the eligible receivers who line up on their sides of the field. When there is more than one eligible receiver on a particular side, the primary key is the eligible receiver on the end of the line of scrimmage (the tight end or split end). Any flanker, slot back or motion man is a secondary key.

Motion

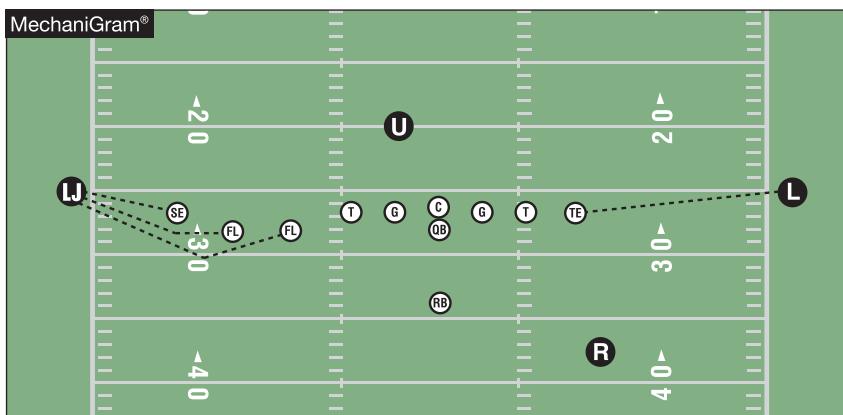
Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving. In other words, if the motion man is moving toward the linesman, the line judge is responsible for observing the motion man. If the player doubles back toward their original position, the official initially responsible remains responsible. Responsibility for observing the actions of key players after the snap changes when the players enter another official's coverage area. The motion man is a secondary key for the wing official.

BALANCED FORMATION



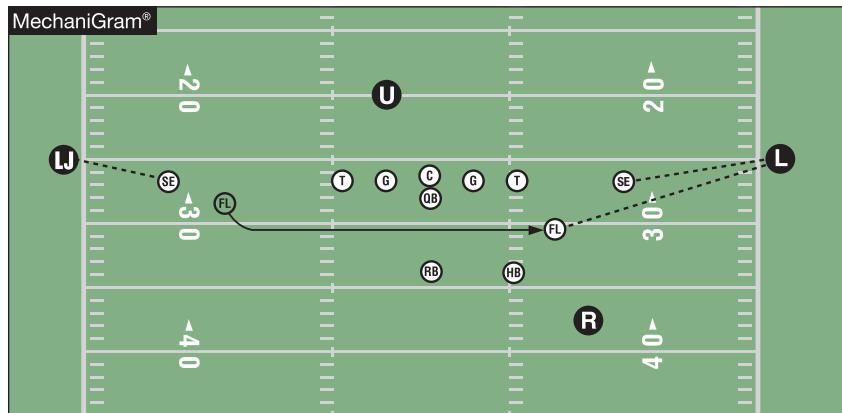
In this balanced formation, there are two receivers outside of the tackles on either side of the formation. The wing officials' main key is the widest receiver (in this case, the split end); the flankers are secondary keys.

TRIPS TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE



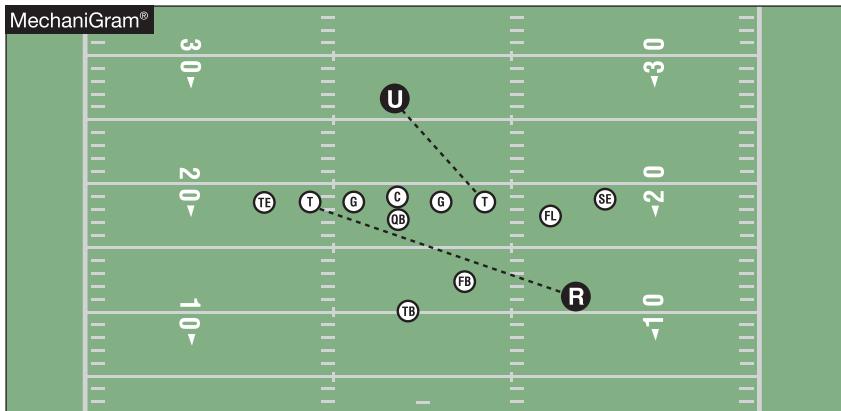
The wing official on the strong side keys on the strong side widest receiver (in this case the split end) and the two inside receivers are secondary keys. The weak side wing keys on the tight end. If another receiver motions or sets to their side, the widest receiver becomes the key.

MOTION CHANGES FORMATION FROM UNBALANCED TO BALANCED



Strength was to the line judge's side, but motion changed the strength of the formation to the linesman's side. However, the line judge observes the action of the motion man. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving. The split end is the line judge's key. The flanker and the split end are the linesman's keys.

REFEREE AND UMPIRE KEYS



Regardless of the formation, the referee and umpire key on the opposite-side tackle. In all but the rarest cases, that means the referee keys on the left tackle and the umpire on the right tackle.

CREW OF FOUR

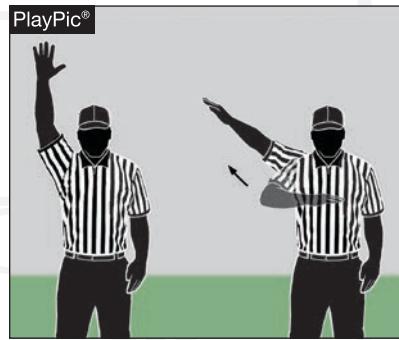
CHAPTER 3

BEFORE AND AFTER THE SNAP

The referee is responsible for observing the huddle to ensure team A is not violating substitution rules, identifying eligible receivers in the backfield, observing shifts and watching for false starts and other pre-snap violations by the offense. He also counts team A on scrimmage downs and team R on free kicks. The referee keeps track of the 25-second count. The referee should use a visible count to warn team A if 20 seconds have elapsed and the ball has not been snapped (see PlayPic).

The umpire is responsible for ensuring that team A has five players numbered 50-79 on the offensive line. The umpire should listen for defenders interfering with the offense's snap count, observe the snapper for snap infractions and observe the guards for false starts. He counts team A on scrimmage downs and team R on free kicks and mirrors the referee's play clock count (see PlayPic). That prevents the quarterback from having to look back at the referee for the play clock and gives them the same field vision in a crew of four as a crew of five.

Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field, assist the referee in monitoring substitutions, count to ensure team A has at least five players on the line and no more than four in the backfield and assist the umpire in checking the legality of uniform numbers of offensive linemen and receivers. If the receiver nearest the official is in the offensive backfield, the wing



uses the extended arm signal to alert the opposite wing. The wings count team B players on scrimmage downs and team K players on free kicks.

Forward Progress

The wing officials are primarily responsible for forward progress. Progress should be indicated by using the downfield foot. Keep your head up and observe players while marking a spot. Do not go around or jump over players to mark progress. Move into the field until you approach players, then stop.

If a spot is close to the line to gain, the spotting official must come all the way to the spot where the play ended. Wait for players to clear your path and then continue to spot the ball.

The primary official responsible for determining the forward progress spot is the official who can actually see the ball when the play is declared dead — not based on what side of the field the play ends — usually from hashmark to hashmark.

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CHAPTER 4

COIN TOSS

By state adaptation, the coin toss is normally conducted in the center of the field three minutes before the game. The toss may be held at an earlier time off the field if both coaches agree. In such a case the results may be simulated in the center of the field as soon as possible prior to the start of the game.

The referee and line judge will meet/greet with the captains of the home team while the umpire and linesman will meet/greet with the captains of the visiting team on their respective sidelines. The referee should be facing towards the scoreboard for the coin toss. The referee and umpire will then line up with each other across the field with speaking captains (those who will give options for their teams) positioned closest to them. All officials will escort captains to the center of the field with their backs to their own sidelines. During the meeting at center field, the umpire will take position with other officials opposite of the referee during introductions.

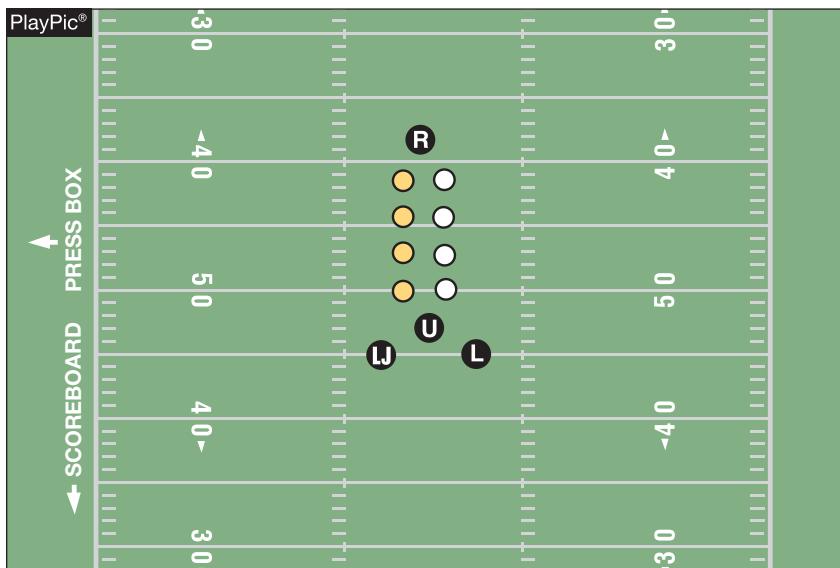
Players who are not involved in the toss should be allowed no closer than the top of the numbers. The captains are asked to introduce themselves to each other.

The referee should allow all captains to view both sides of the coin, identifying which side is heads and which is tails. The visiting captain

is instructed to call heads or tails before the coin is flipped. The umpire repeats the choice loudly enough for all to hear. The coin will be caught by the referee and turned or not turned over. If the coin is dropped, the toss should be repeated. The referee may choose to have the coin hit the ground.

Once the winner is determined, the winner is offered their choice: Receive, kick, defer, or defend a goal. It is the responsibility of the referee that the captain makes a final choice that ensures that each time has the opportunity to receive the ball. Often captains have preconceived notions on how choices are made. It is the responsibility of the referee to educate the captain until the captain clearly understand the outcome of their choice. If the choice is to defer, the referee immediately faces the press box, taps the shoulder of the deferring captain and signals the declination. The remaining choices are then presented to the other captain and the final selection is made by the deferring captain. If the winner of the coin toss does not defer, no signal is immediately given.

When the final selections are made, the captains are asked to put their backs to the goalline their team will defend and the referee gives the appropriate signal. If the choice is



to kick or receive, only the first selection is signaled. If the choice is to defend a goal, two signals are given: pointing both arms toward the goalline being defended, followed by the appropriate signal for the other captain.

If at any time during the toss the referee errs or gives incorrect information (for instance, giving the wrong team an option), the umpire should speak up immediately.

When the toss is completed, the other officials join the referee and umpire in the center of the field and record the results of the toss. All officials then initiate their pregame responsibilities.

Second Half

The game official escorting the team with the second-half choice obtains from that team's head coach its second-half choice and communicates that choice to the referee. The referee then obtains the opposing team's response to the second-half choice team's choice from the official escorting that team. Following the mandatory three-minute warm-up period after the halftime intermission expires, both

teams assume their respective free-kick formations.

Overtime Procedure

If overtime is necessary, the officials wait for the three-minute intermission to end. All officials will go to their respective sidelines and once again escort the captains to the center of the field while the other officials assume the same positions as for the pregame toss. Alternatively, both head coaches and a captain from each team can be brought to mid field. The coin toss is repeated with the visiting team again calling it. When the winner is determined, the options are explained. The winner may not defer, but may choose offense, defense or the goal to be used.

When the selections are completed, the captains of the team on offense are asked to face the goalline in the direction their team will advance and the opposing captains stand with their backs to that goalline. The referee then taps the shoulder of the captain of the team that won the toss and gives the first down signal in the appropriate direction.

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CHAPTER 5

TIMEOUTS

- Timeout With Both Teams At The Sidelines
- Timeout With One Or Both Coaches On The Field
- Injury Timeout

Any official should grant a valid timeout request and immediately stop the clock if it is running. That official reports the timeout to the referee. The referee indicates the timeout by repeating the stop-the-clock signal and indicating the team being charged the timeout by pointing to the team's end zone while facing the press box.

All officials must record the number and team of the player requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. Each official then confirms with the referee the number of timeouts each team has remaining. The linesman and line judge inform the coaches on their respective sidelines of the timeouts remaining.

The referee is responsible for timing the timeout. The one-minute count begins when the referee is informed of the timeout. When 45 seconds have expired, the referee informs the linesman

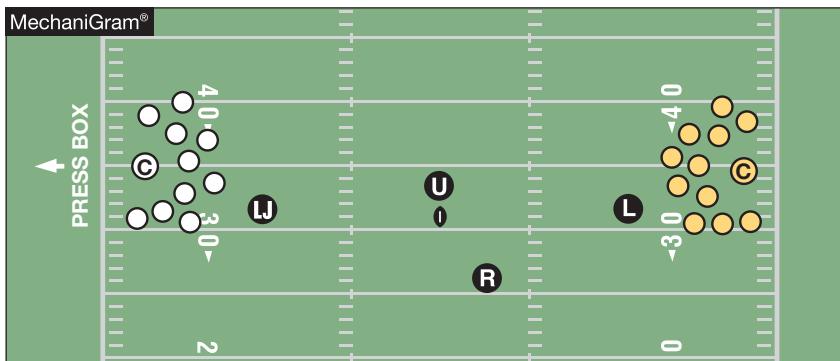
and line judge so they can inform their teams. When the minute has expired, the referee whistles the ball ready for play.

The procedure for signaling an official's timeout is the same as for a charged timeout. As an option, after stopping the clock, the referee may tap their chest to indicate it is an official's timeout. Play should resume as quickly as possible.

If the official's timeout is for injury, any team conference must be an "Outside Nine Yard Mark Conference" if approved by the referee.

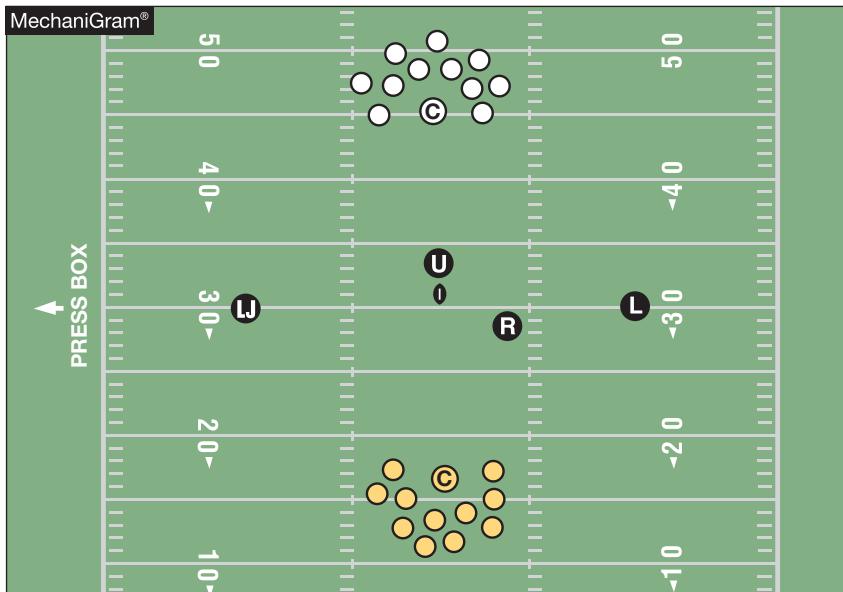
During timeouts, wing officials are responsible for monitoring conferences near your sideline. Help get players promptly back onto the field.

TIMEOUT WITH BOTH TEAMS AT THE SIDELINES



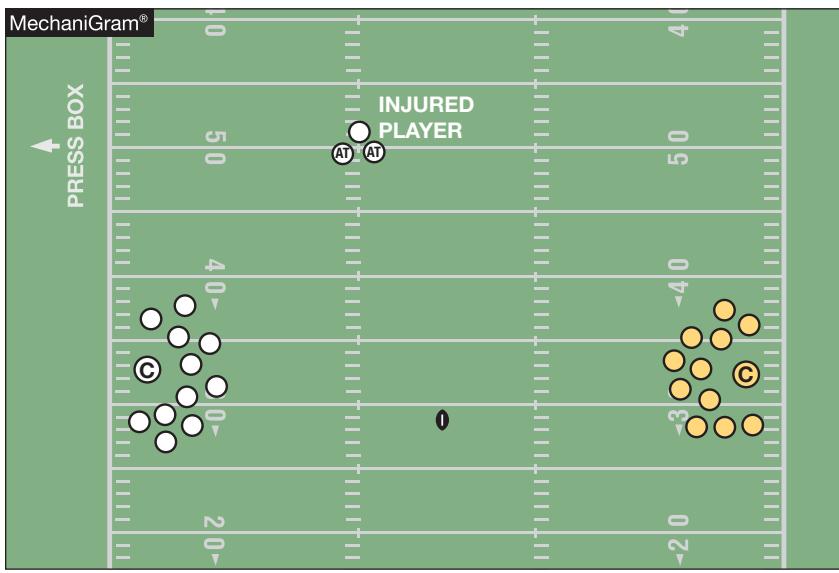
During the timeout, the referee remains in their position in the offensive backfield, the umpire stands over the ball and the linesman and line judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines.

TIMEOUT WITH ONE OR BOTH COACHES ON THE FIELD



During the timeout, the referee remains in their position in the offensive backfield, the umpire stands over the ball and the linesman and line judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines.

INJURY TIMEOUT



When an injury occurs and the referee grants an authorized conference, it must be an "outside the nine-yard marks conference." That conference provides an opportunity for players to get water. If the injured player is between the hashmarks and the numbers, the team whose sideline is affected should move away from the injured player.

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CHAPTER 6

MEASUREMENTS

- Measurement In A Side Zone
- Short Of A First Down
- Team A Awarded At First Down

When the referee calls for a measurement, the linesman should have the box moved behind the lead stake, retaining the previous down. That is a reference point in case the line to gain should somehow become lost during the process. As the chains are being brought onto the field, the line judge should use their foot to indicate the intersection of the five yardline where the chain is clipped and a line through the ball parallel to the sideline. That is the spot where the linesman will place the clipped part of the chain.

The linesman brings the chain in from the sideline with the chain crew members. Putting one hand on the links on each side of the clip improves the linesman's chances of keeping track of the proper link in case the clip falls off the chain. The clip must be placed on the back edge of the line for the measurement. A good double-check is for the linesman to state that the next

PlayPic®



down will be first if the ball is beyond the stake or the next down of the series if it is short. (Example: "It will either be first or fourth.")

Once the linesman tells the referee he has the chain on the proper mark, the umpire takes the forward stake from the chain crew member, then pulls the stake to ensure the chain is taut. The referee rules whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake.

If the measurement is in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the umpire should keep control of the stake. As seen in the PlayPic on the previous page, the referee uses their hands (or thumb and index finger if the ball is inches short of the front stake) to inform both benches how short the play ended of a first down.

The referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball and rises. The referee should grasp the chain with two hands with the link that will be used to place the ball between their hands; that will ensure the proper link is maintained. Referee, umpire, line judge and linesman walk to the nearest hashmark.

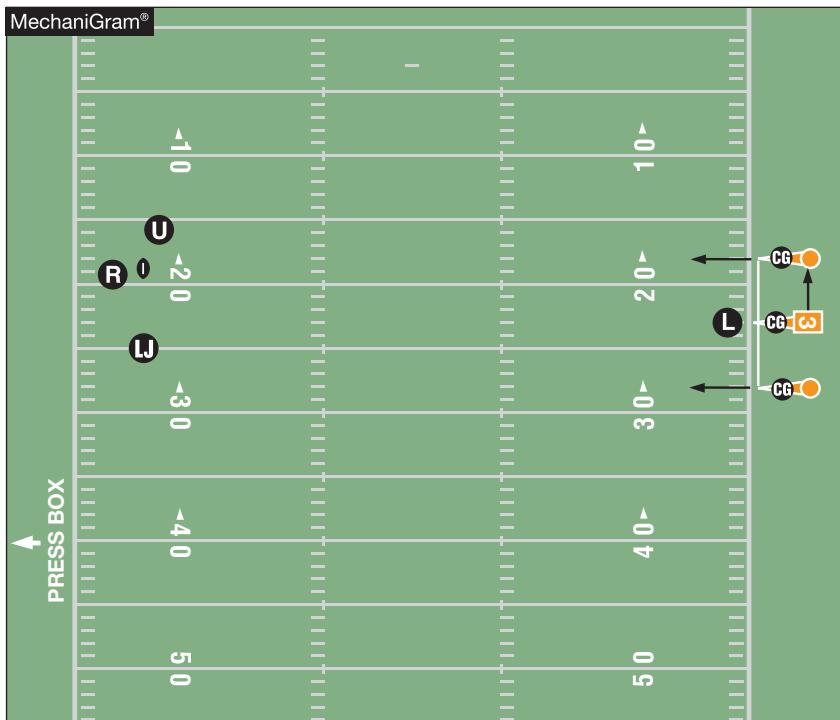
The referee must wait for the linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

If the measurement occurred on fourth down and team A is short, the referee signals the change of possession by giving the first down signal toward team A's goal line. The referee then sets the ball in the same position as it was when it became dead so its foremost point becomes the rear point when the direction is changed. The new rear stake is then moved to the new foremost point of the ball.

If the measurement results in the award of a new series, the referee signals the first down. The linesman need not hold the chain as he accompanies the chain crew back to the sideline, but he must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to the chain crew where the new series will begin.

The referee must wait for the linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

MEASUREMENT IN A SIDE ZONE



Action on the field: Play ends in side zone close to a first down.

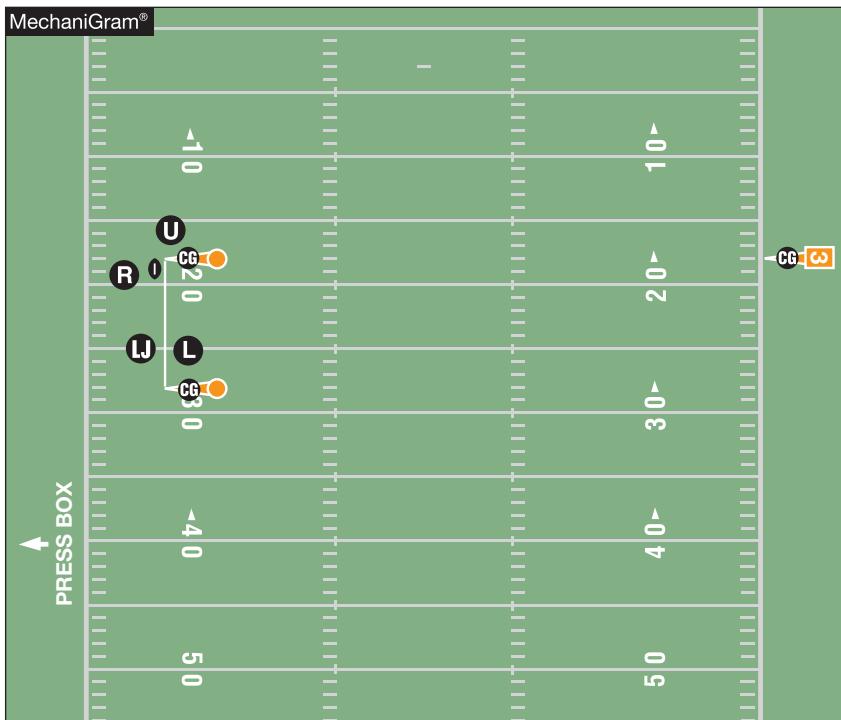
Referee: Stops clock after seeing that measurement is necessary. Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

Umpire: Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

Linesman: Has box holder move box behind lead stake. Brings chain in from sideline with chain gang members to spot indicated by line judge.

Line judge: Indicates intersection of the five yardline where chain is clipped and line through ball parallel to sideline with beanbag or foot.

SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN PART 1



Action on the field: Team A is short of a first down.

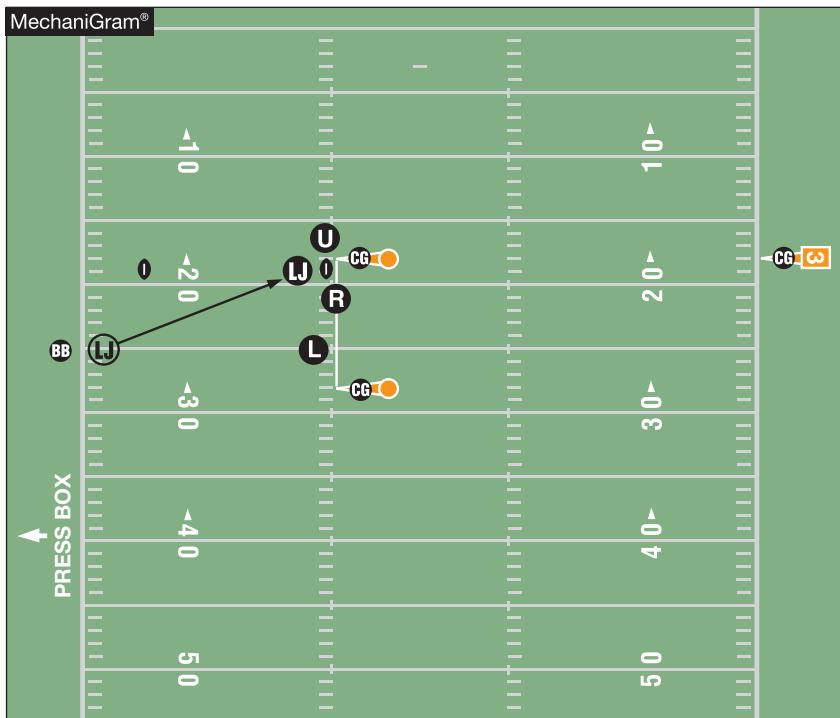
Referee: Rules whether or not ball is beyond front stake. Uses hands or fingers to inform both benches how short the play ended of first down.

Umpire: Holds lead stake.

Linesman: Places clip on the back side of yard line.

Line judge: Gets spare ball from ball helper.

SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN PART 2



Action on the field: Chains are moved to hashmark for ball placement.

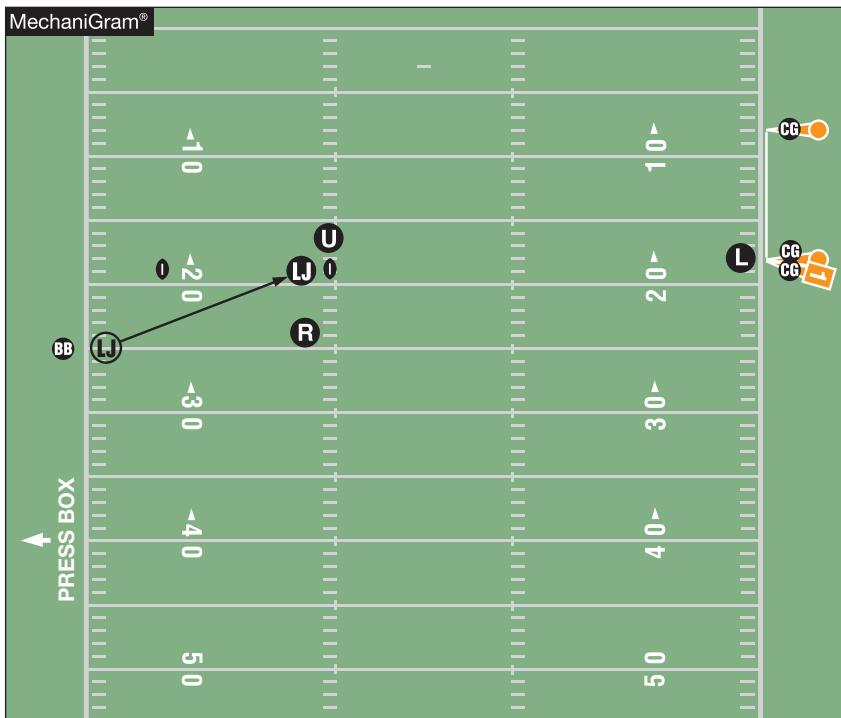
Referee: The referee will indicate using signal. Grasping the chain link at the foremost tip of the ball, the referee will relocate the ball at the chain link yard line, just inside of the nearest hashmark. Once the ball is placed, the referee must wait for linesman's signal that chain gang is back in position and other officials are ready before giving ready-for-play signal.

Umpire: Maintains control of front stake and walks to nearest hashmark.

Linesman: Maintains control of clip and walks to nearest hashmark. Accompanies chain gang back to sideline and sets chains for next down. Signals to referee when chain gang is back in position.

Line judge: Returns to sidelines.

TEAM A AWARDED A FIRST DOWN



Action on the field: Team A is awarded a new series.

Referee: Signals first down. Waits for linesman's signal that chain gang is back in position and other officials are ready before giving ready-for-play signal.

Umpire: Moves to hashmark where ball will next be snapped. Gets ball from line judge and places it.

Linesman: Returns to sideline with chain gang and indicates where new series will begin. Signals to referee when chain gang is back in position.

Line judge: Delivers ball to umpire for placement.

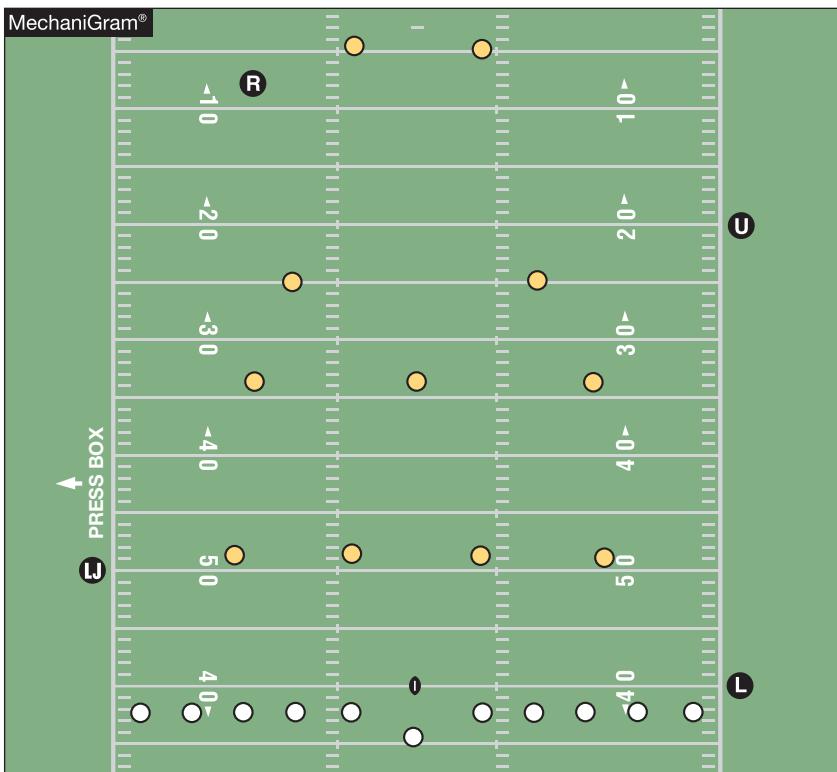
CREW OF FOUR

CHAPTER 7

POSITIONING

- Free Kick
- Onside Kick
- Scrimmage Play
- Goalline Going In
- Goalline Coming Out
- Scrimmage Kick
- Scoring Kick Outside Team R's 15 Yardline
- Scoring Kick Inside Team R's 15 Yardline

FREE KICK



Referee: Starting position is near top of numbers near R's five or 10 yardline on line judge's side of field. Responsible for noting whether K has at least four players on either side of kicker. After getting ready signals from rest of crew and kicker, blows whistle and gives ready signal.

Umpire: Starting position is on sideline at R's 20 yardline. Signals referee by lifting an arm overhead when ready for kickoff.

Linesman and line judge: Linesman is on K's free-kick line, line judge on R's free-kick line. Linesman moves toward center of field once players are on field and line judge comes to top of numbers. Linesman responsible for noting whether no K player other than kicker is more than five yards from K's free-kick line. Linesman should not give ball to kicker until K has 11 players on field and should remind kicker not to kick ball until referee has sounded whistle. When

in position and ready for kick, raise arm as ready signal for referee.

Free Kick for Points After Fair Catch

In rare events, a team may elect to attempt a free kick for point after fair catch. When this occurs, it is imperative the referee inform the receiving team about the setup. Additionally, the officiating crew needs to set up to rule on a successful kick, touchback or live ball in the field of play. The setup will mimic a normal free kick setup. The officiating crew should be aware that after the ready for play is made, the kick will occur quickly.

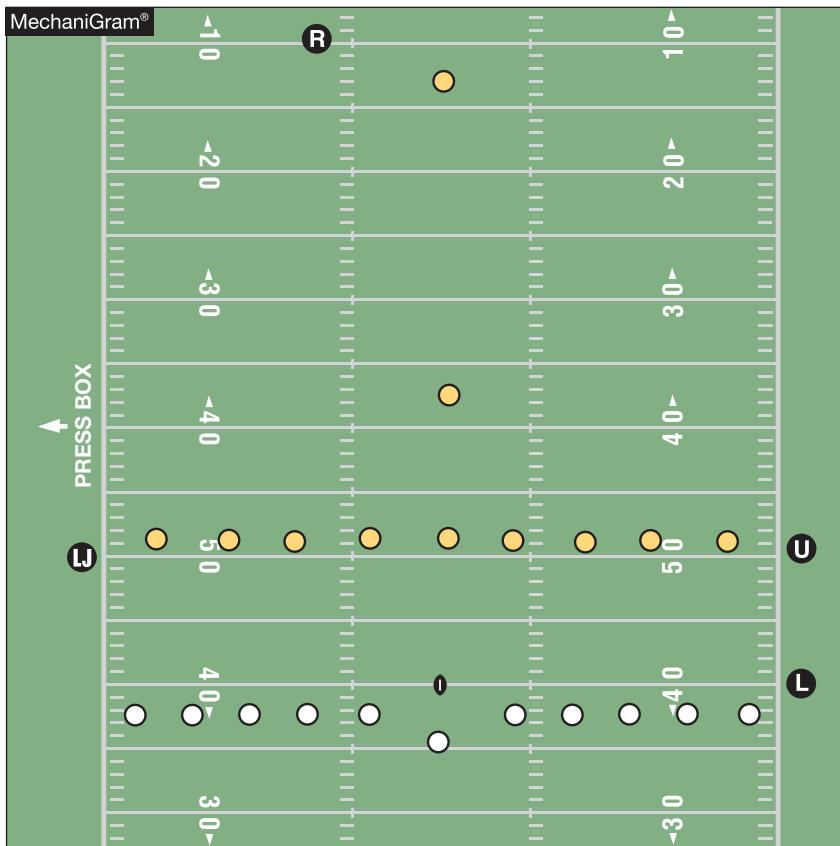
Referee: Under the goalpost.

Umpire: On the goalline.

Line judge: On receiver's restraining line.

Linesman: On kicker's restraining line.

ONSIDE KICK

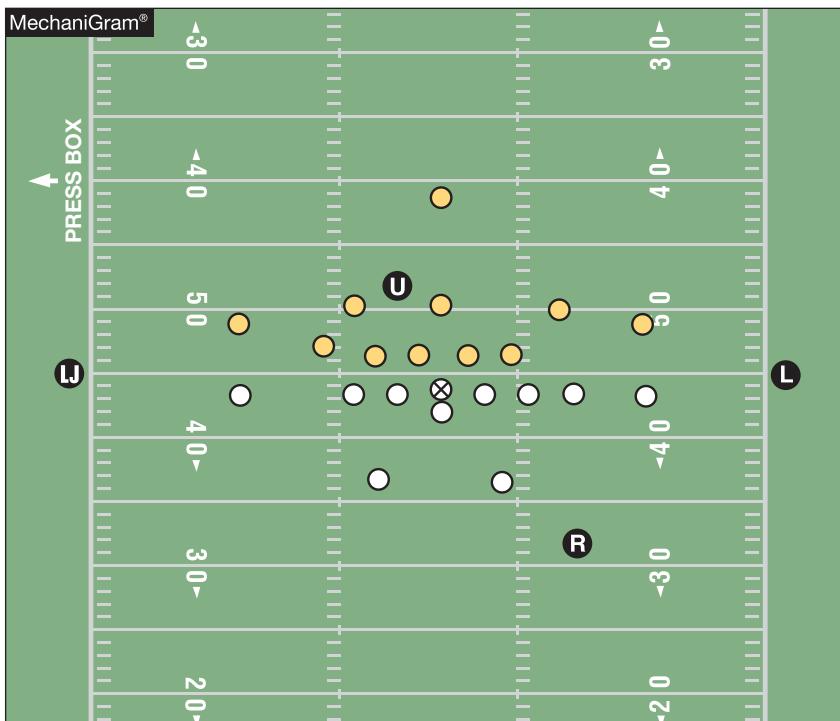


The linesman and line judge assume their regular positions while the referee moves up to about team R's 10 yardline and the umpire moves to team R's free-kick line. The referee is responsible for noting whether team K has at least four players on either side of the kicker. The linesman is responsible for noting whether no team K player other than the kicker is more than five yards from team K's free-kick line. The umpire, linesman and line judge should have their beanbags in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards. They should also observe the legality of team K's blocking.

Free Kick After Fair Catch

The referee and umpire are under the uprights. The referee is responsible for the crossbar. The linesman is on the goalline to judge the kick crossing the goalline. The line judge has both lines of scrimmage.

SCRIMMAGE PLAY

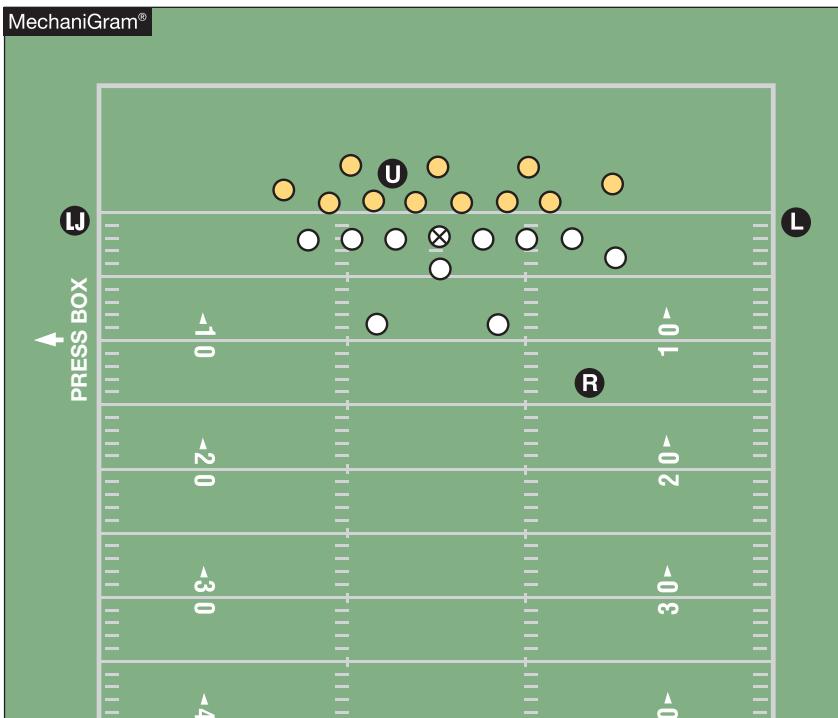


Referee: Starting position is on the passing-arm side of the quarterback, approximately 10 to 12 yards deep and at least as wide as the tight end.

Umpire: Starting position is five to ten yards behind team B's line and between the defensive ends. The umpire must be able to see the ball from the time the snapper handles the ball until the time it is snapped.

Linesman and line judge: Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline. Working on the sideline is required; all line of scrimmage officials work from the sideline.

GOALLINE GOING IN



Referee: Starting position is on the passing-arm side of the quarterback, approximately 10 to 12 yards deep and at least as wide as the tight end.

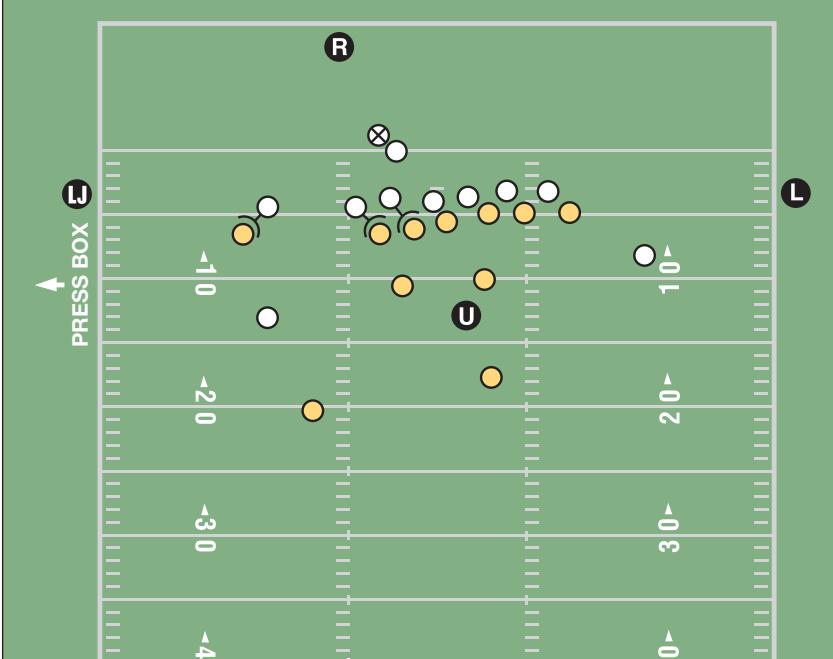
Umpire: Starting position is five to ten yards behind team B's line and between the defensive ends. The umpire must be able to see the ball from the time the snapper handles the ball until the time it is snapped.

Linesman and line judge: Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline. When the line of scrimmage is at the five or less yard line, move immediately to goalline at the snap.

All: A touchdown, safety or touchback signal is given only by an official who actually rules on the play. Mirroring the signal is dangerous; if the covering official is incorrect, the crew will find it difficult to overcome two officials making a mistake. If the covering official is correct, there is no need for a second signal.

GOALLINE COMING OUT

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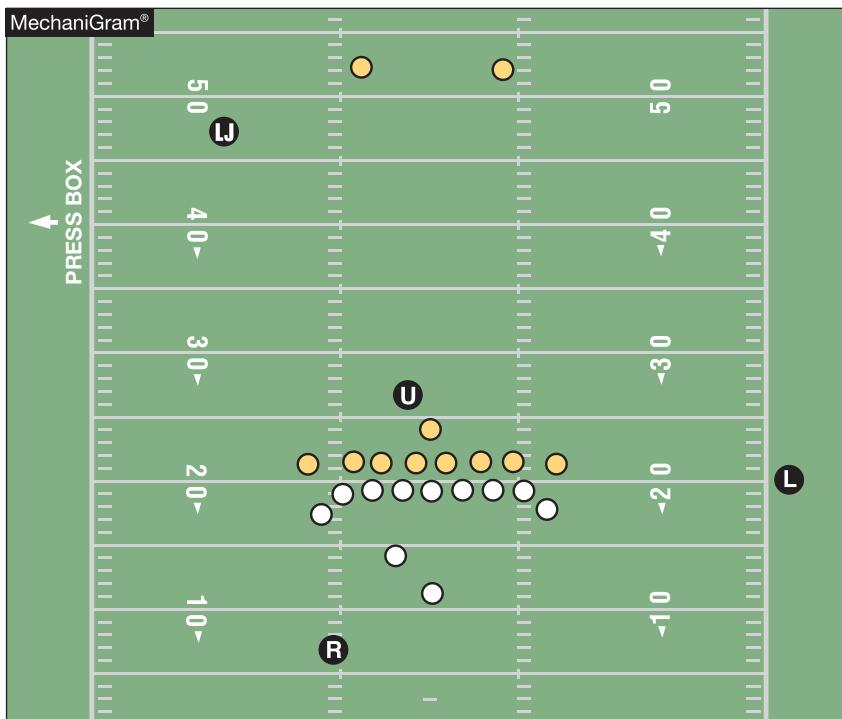
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SCRIMMAGE KICK



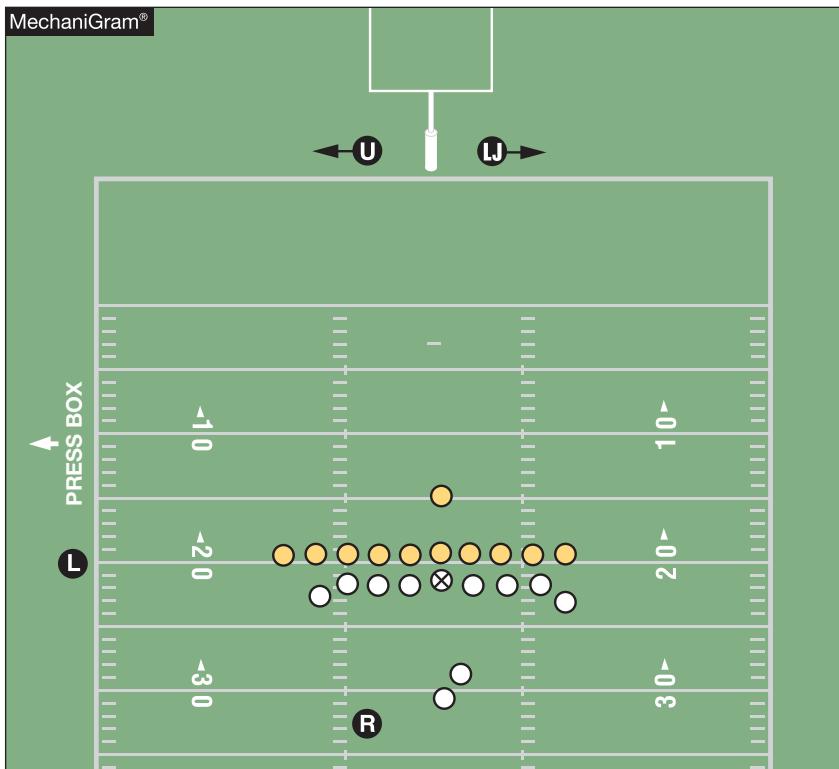
Referee: Starting position is two to three yards behind and three to five yards outside the punter, on the line judge's side.

Umpire: Starting position is five to ten yards deep and favoring the line judge's sideline. Say, "Lay off the snapper," to remind team R players about rules regarding contact on the snapper.

Linesman: Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage and from the sideline.

Line judge: Starting position is seven to ten yards wider than from the sideline.

SCORING KICK OUTSIDE TEAM R'S 15 YARDLINE



NOTES: Assumes right-footed kicker. Linesman and referee reverse for left-footed kicker. See 5-person mechanics to determine the “Hold” and “Release” official. In this lineup, linesman is the “Release” official. On a field goal attempt by free kick, the chains are set to establish the 10-yard neutral zone.

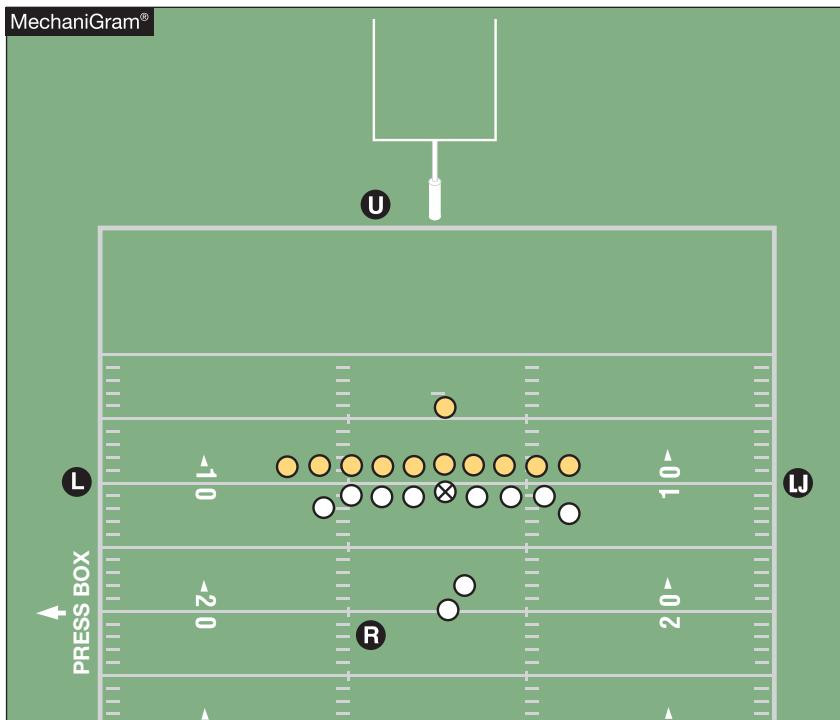
Referee: Has action against the holder and kicker.

Umpire: Positioned on the upright opposite of the “Release” official. Has the crossbar and their upright. The “Release” official has their upright. Signal only if ball is in the middle of the uprights or threatens your upright. Do not signal if the ball threatens opposite upright. That covering official will signal.

Linesman: “Hold” official remains on the LOS.

Line judge: On the upright opposite of the “Hold” official.

SCORING KICK ON OR INSIDE TEAM R'S 15 YARDLINE



Referee: Has the upright on their side of the formation.

Umpire: Positioned on the upright opposite of the referee (whose position is determined by the kicker's leg) and judges if the ball is over the crossbar and inside the upright. If both conditions met, the umpire gives the referee a visual signal of finger pointing upward. If one or none of the conditions are met, the umpire gives the "no good" signal (incomplete pass). Umpire has primary responsibility for blowing the whistle on field goal attempts.

Linesman: Stay on line of scrimmage. Rules on action against the kicker and/or holder.

Line judge: Stay on line of scrimmage.

Note: On a field goal attempt by free kick, the chains are set to establish the 10-yard neutral zone.

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CHAPTER 8

COVERAGE

- Free Kick Coverage Zones
- Free Kick
- Free Kick Out Of Bounds
- Running Play Up The Middle
- Sweep
- Deep Pass
- Screen Or Pass To Flat
- Goalline Plays: Offense Going In
- Goalline Plays: Offense Coming Out
- Scrimmage Kick Out Of Bounds
- Scrimmage Kick To Line Judge's Area

40-Second Clock

When the 40-second interval is in force, officials' signals will serve as the trigger for the play clock operator to start the play clock. One arm raised completely above the shoulder with the hand open and the palm facing forward signals the 40-second interval should begin.



Free Kicks

On kicks inside team R's five yardline, the referee is responsible for determining whether the momentum exception applies and whether the kick is to be ruled a touchback.

The referee is responsible for a rectangular area on their side of the field extending from the goalline to team R's 30 yardline and slightly more than halfway across the field.

The umpire is responsible for a rectangular area extending from the goalline to team R's 30 yardline slightly less than halfway across the field.

The linesman watches for infractions involving the free-kick line. After the ball is kicked, the linesman drifts downfield, maintaining coverage of their sideline. He should not go beyond team R's 30 yardline in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters the linesman's coverage area.

The line judge watches for infractions involving the free-kick line. After the ball is kicked, the line judge drifts downfield, maintaining coverage of their respective sideline. He should not go beyond team R's 30 yardline in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters the linesman's coverage area.

If the kick goes out of bounds, the covering official is responsible for either dropping a beanbag (if team R caused the ball to go out of bounds) or a penalty marker (if team K caused the ball to go out of bounds). Officials trailing the runner must clean up after the play.

The covering official signals the clock to start if he sees the ball is touched other than

first touching by team K. The covering official is also responsible for signaling the clock to stop if the runner is downed in their area or if the ball goes out of bounds. All officials not responsible for the runner must look for illegal blocks.

Free Kicks After a Safety

For the free kick that follows a safety, the linesman should be at team K's 20 yardline, the line judge at team K's 30 yardline and the position of the remaining officials is adjusted accordingly.

Scrimmage Plays

The referee focuses on the ball, the runner and the blocking around the runner. If the play goes to the opposite side, the referee should move toward or parallel to the line of the scrimmage and maintain a position approximately in line with the runner. If the play is to the referee's side, the referee moves behind the play and is responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone or turns upfield.

The referee should watch the handoff or the pitchout, see the runner head outside the free blocking zone, and watch to see that no one contacts the quarterback before drifting along to follow the play.

On runs that end out of bounds behind the neutral zone, the referee is responsible for marking the spot.

The umpire observes the blocking to find the point of attack. When the hole opens, the umpire should move away from it (to avoid interfering with the defensive pursuit) and laterally (thus turning their head toward the blockers in front of the runner and the tackling efforts of the defense).

Plays that end in a side zone may require the umpire to move outside the hashmark and toward the sideline in order to clean up behind the play. When play swings around to one side, the umpire should turn their attention to the blocking ahead of the runner and should prepare to cross outside the hashmark if the runner is downed in the side zone near the sideline. The umpire can help get the ball back to the hashmark and set it at the progress spot. He should not automatically halt at the hash and rely on other officials to get them the ball.

The linesman and line judge observe the

tackle on their side and read their block to determine the type of play. The wings move down the field trailing the runner. If the run is up the middle or in the wing's side zone, watch the action around and in front of the runner. When the play ends, square off at a 90-degree angle to mark forward progress. If the play is to the opposite side of the field, move into the field no farther than the numbers and observe players not directly involved in the play.

Sweeps require the referee, umpire and the appropriate wing official to react quickly. It is important for the referee to observe action around and behind the runner and for the umpire to observe action around and in front of the runner. Upon observing the pulling lineman and the formation of the wall in front of the runner, the wing official's first movement should be a step back (farther off the sideline) and laterally (into the offensive backfield). Once the runner is beyond the wing's position, they should not attempt to outrun the runner; rather, they should trail the play slightly and observe the runner and action around them.

The off wing can move onto the field as the end of the play appears imminent, but no closer than the numbers in case the play is a reverse or the runner reverses course. The off wing observes players who may not be directly blocking for or chasing the runner.

Depending on location of players not directly involved in the tackle, the umpire may have to move outside the hashmark and toward the sideline in order to clean up behind the play. When play swings around to one side, the umpire should turn their attention to the blocking ahead of the runner and should prepare to cross outside the hashmark if the runner is downed in the side zone near the sideline. The umpire can help get the ball back to the hashmark and set it at the progress spot. He should not automatically halt at the hash and rely on other officials to get them the ball.

If the runner is driven out of bounds less than five yards past the scrimmage line, the covering wing official can handle the play and supervise players outside the sideline after marking the out of bounds spot with their foot. When a play is more than a five-yard gain and the runner heads across the sideline, the covering wing official marks the spot while keeping an eye on players; the referee or

umpire must hustle to the spot and escort the players back to the field.

A play gaining considerably more than 10 yards may find the covering wing official policing activity past the sidelines. The covering wing official and the referee or umpire should work together to be sure the ball is properly spotted and off-the-field activity is monitored.

The referee is responsible for ruling on illegal forward pass. For illegal forward pass, the referee will gather information from the umpire and line of scrimmage official(s) to determine whether a passer was beyond the line of scrimmage when the pass was thrown. The referee should move to the spot of the pass and observe the location of the passer's feet. If the forward foot of the passer is clearly beyond the line of scrimmage (Rule 7-5-1), a penalty marker should be dropped. In cases where there is action engaging the referee, a beanbag should be dropped by the referee where the passer's forward foot was at the start of the pass. At the end of the play, the referee can compare the spot of the beanbag and the location of the down box to make the call.

The referee is also responsible for intentional grounding. Intentional grounding occurs when the passer is in the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone (the "tackle box") and the ball is not passed to an area containing an eligible receiver. Intentional grounding also occurs when the passer is outside the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone and the ball does not land on or beyond the line of scrimmage. The referee is responsible for knowing the location of the passer as it relates to the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone. The umpire and sideline official are responsible for providing information to the referee about where the pass ended and if there was an eligible receiver in the area.

Goaline Plays

When the ball is snapped between team B's 10 and five yardlines, the wing officials release slowly downfield at the snap, staying ahead of the runner all the way to the goalline.

The touchdown signal is given only by an official who actually sees the ball in possession of a runner break the plane of the goalline. Mirroring the signal is dangerous;

if the covering official is incorrect, the crew will find it difficult to overcome two officials making a mistake. If the covering official is correct, there is no need for a second signal.

There are very few circumstances under which the referee or umpire would declare a touchdown. Under most circumstances, the wing official will be in a much better position to rule if the ball has broken the plane of the goalline.

When team A snaps the ball at or inside its own five yardline, the wings move quickly to the goalline in order to see if the runner advanced the ball completely beyond the goalline. If so, they cover the play and mark forward progress as usual.

When the play ends inbounds near a sideline but a first down has been achieved, the covering official should give the "wind-the-clock" signal followed by the stop-the-clock signal.

Scrimmage Kicks

Once the kick is away, the referee takes a quick look to see the flight of the ball. If the kick is toward a sideline, they must be prepared to determine the spot the ball went out of bounds. If the kick is short, the referee goes directly to the out-of-bounds spot; if the kick is long and goes out of bounds, the covering official moves past where he thinks it flew out before walking toward the referee with their hand up — along the sideline — until the referee chops downward, telling them to halt.

If the runner breaks a long return, the referee may assume responsibility for the runner.

On blocked kicks, the referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball.

The umpire should move toward the line at the snap. Once the ball has been kicked and players from both teams have run past the umpire, the umpire pivots to the line judge's side and moves slowly downfield.

The linesman doesn't move downfield until the ball is beyond the neutral zone. The linesman is primarily responsible for determining if the ball crossed the line. The linesman is responsible for their sideline from endline to endline and for covering the runner when the return is to their area. If the

run is to the opposite sideline, they should clean up behind the play.

If the kick is short and in the linesman's side zone, they must know who touched a loose ball; if the kicking team is first to touch the kick, a beanbag should be dropped at the spot of the touching.

When kicks go out of bounds, the covering official should kill the clock at once. If the kick is short and toward a sideline, the referee determines the spot the ball went out of bounds. If the kick is long and goes out of bounds, the covering official moves past where he thinks it flew out before walking toward the referee with their hand up — along the sideline — until the referee chops downward, telling them to halt.

On blocked kicks, the linesman should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball. The linesman must also be cognizant of a fake punt. If a pass to the linesman's flat is used on the fake, the linesman must know if the pass was forward or backward. If the kicker initially starts to run before deciding to kick, the linesman may have to rule whether the punter was beyond the line when the ball was kicked.

The line judge is responsible for covering all kicks down the middle and to their side zone and should be prepared to get to team R's goalline to rule on momentum exception or touchback situations.

All deep receivers are the responsibility of the line judge. He should observe the receivers and the players around them rather than the ball as it flies downfield. Remaining far enough away from the receiver to retain a wide-angle view and moving in at a controlled pace, with eyes searching, once the receiver has completed the fair catch helps the linesman look for illegal action around the receiver. In such cases, it is also a good idea not to have the whistle in the mouth; it is possible for a fair catch to be muffed and a whistle blown before the ball dribbles loose from the receiver's grasp.

The line judge is responsible for their sideline from the line of scrimmage to team R's endline and for covering the runner when the return is to their area. If the runner breaks into the opposite side zone, coverage transfers to the linesman and the line judge cleans up

behind the play. On a return to the middle of the field, the line judge has responsibility for the runner until he gives up the runner to the umpire; the point at which the transfer occurs depends on how far downfield the umpire has drifted after the kick. The referee may take over coverage of the runner if the runner breaks off a long return.

Scoring Kicks (Ball snapped at or inside team R's 15 yardline)

The line judge is on the line of scrimmage and moves quickly toward the end line after the snap to rule on whether or not the kick passed over the crossbar.

If the kick fails because it goes under the crossbar or strikes an upright, the line judge signals the kick no good, then follows with the touchback signal. If the kick clears the crossbar, the line judge blows their whistle and gives a predetermined signal to the referee (a thumb's up is a common signal), but the referee rules on whether the ball went through the uprights. If the kick is good, only the referee signals.

If a kick try is blocked or obviously will not score, the referee should blow their whistle to kill the ball and give the appropriate signal (the same mechanic is used if a missed or blocked field goal breaks the plane of the goalline). If a field goal is blocked and does not break the plane of the goalline, the ball remains live and no signal is given.

Scoring Kicks (Ball snapped outside team R's 15 yardline)

The line judge moves five yards behind and directly between the uprights and is the sole judge whether the kick is good or no good.

If the kick is no good and breaks the plane of the goalline, the line judge signals the kick no good, followed by the touchback signal.

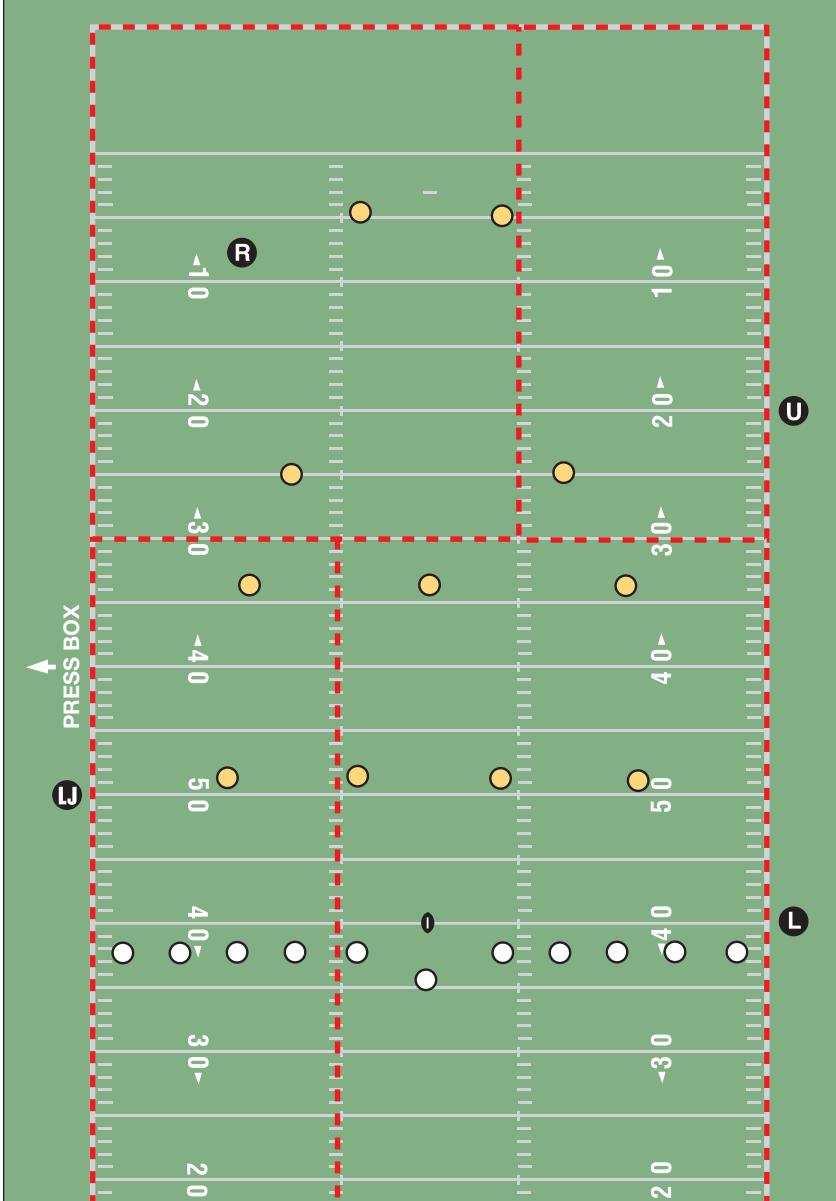
Swinging Gate Coverage for Tries

The umpire stays with the formation. If ball kicked from this formation, the referee has sole responsibility for judging whether kick is good or not.

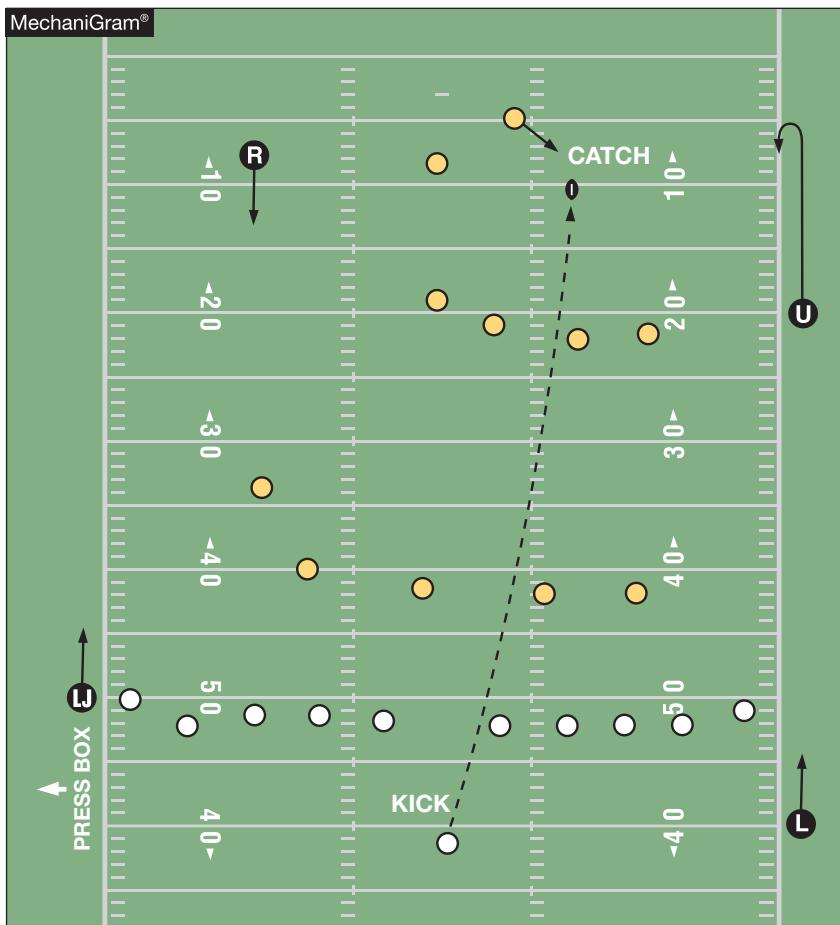
When team shifts back to normal kick try formation, the referee has one upright and the umpire has upright opposite the referee and whether ball went over the crossbar. The umpire gives the referee positive signal if good.

FREE KICK COVERAGE ZONES

MechaniGram®



FREE KICK PART 1



Action on the field: Receiver catches kick.

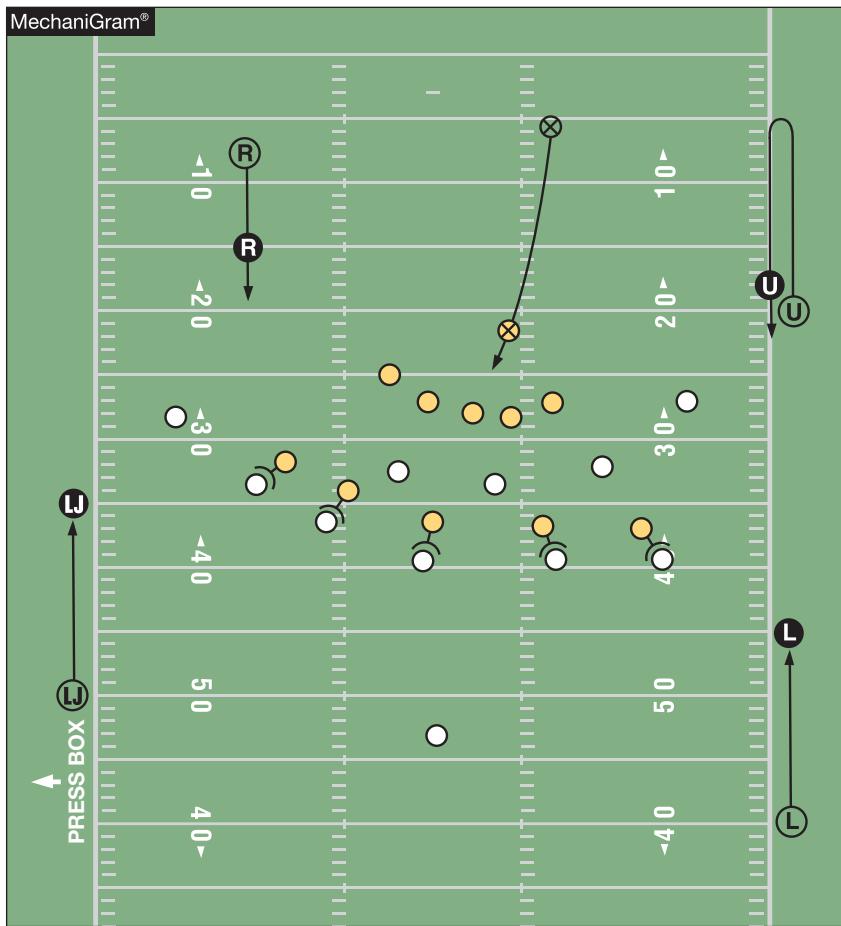
Referee: Observes action in front of receiver on their side of field. Moves slowly upfield.

Umpire: Retreats to observe catch. Signals clock to start when ball is caught by receiver. Moves to stay ahead of receiver and observes action of runner during return.

Linesman: Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on their side of field.

Line judge: Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on their side of field.

FREE KICK PART 2



Action on the field: Receiver advances.

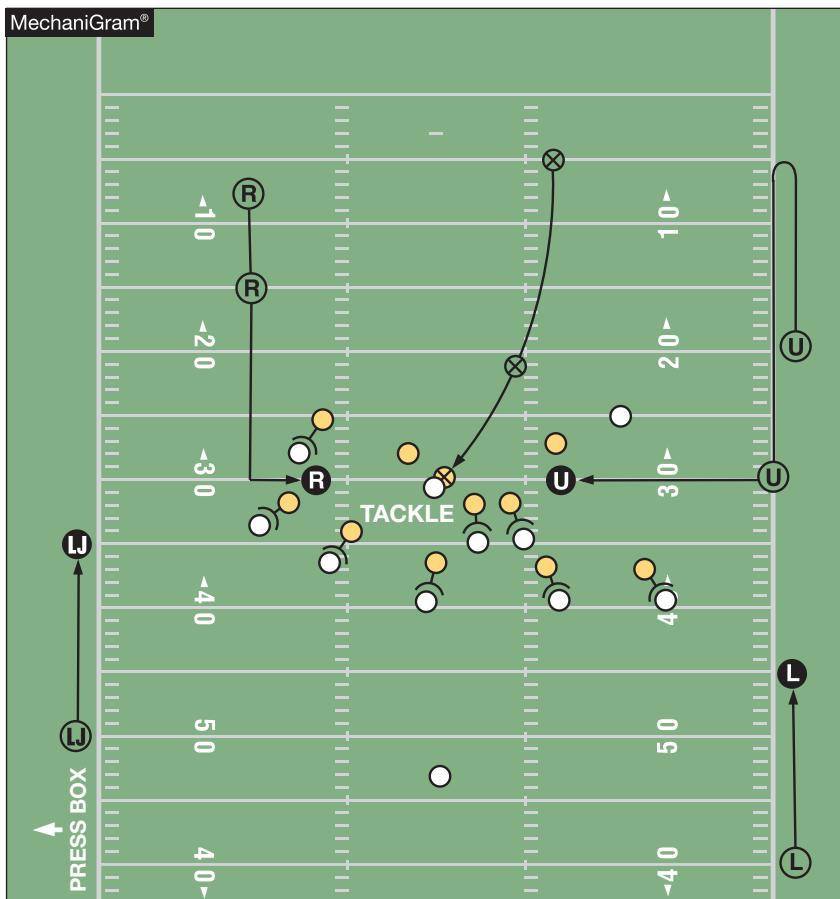
Referee: Observes action in front of receiver on their side of field. Moves slowly upfield.

Umpire: Moves to trail runner and observes action by and in front of runner during return.

Linesman: Stops 15 yards downfield from team R's free-kick line. Observes action in front of receiver on their side of field.

Line judge: Stops 15 yards downfield from team K's free-kick line. Observes action in front of receiver on their side of field.

FREE KICK PART 3



Action on the field: Receiver continues advance and is downed.

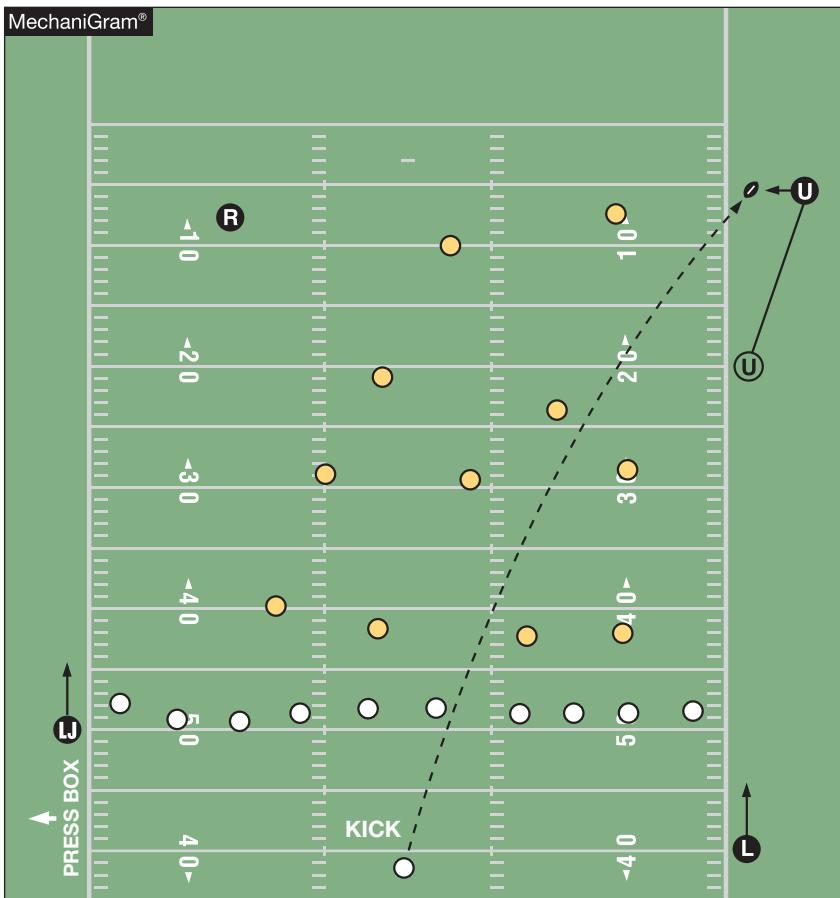
Referee: Moves upfield and observes action of players. Takes coverage of runner when runner enters their area. Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner is downed. Squares off and holds spot until umpire can mirror spot.

Umpire: Moves upfield and observes runner until runner leaves coverage area. Squares off to mirror referee's spot.

Linesman: Observes players. When referee signals possession for team R, instructs chain crew to set chains for new series.

Line judge: Observes players. Retrieves new ball from ball person.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



Action on the field: Kick becomes dead out of bounds.

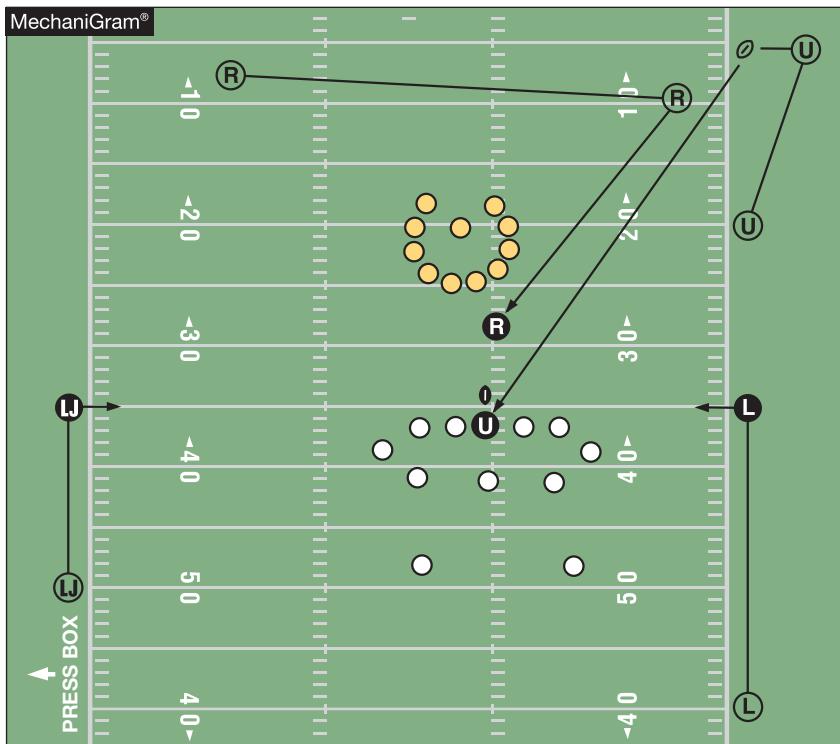
Referee: Observes action in front of receiver on their side of field.

Umpire: Retreats to observe ball. Signals clock to stop when ball is out of bounds. Throws flag, marking the out of bounds spot.

Linesman: Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on their side of field.

Line judge: Watches for infractions involving free-kick lines. After kick, moves downfield and observes action in front of receiver on their side of field.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



Action on the field: Team R chooses to take ball at its own 35 yardline.

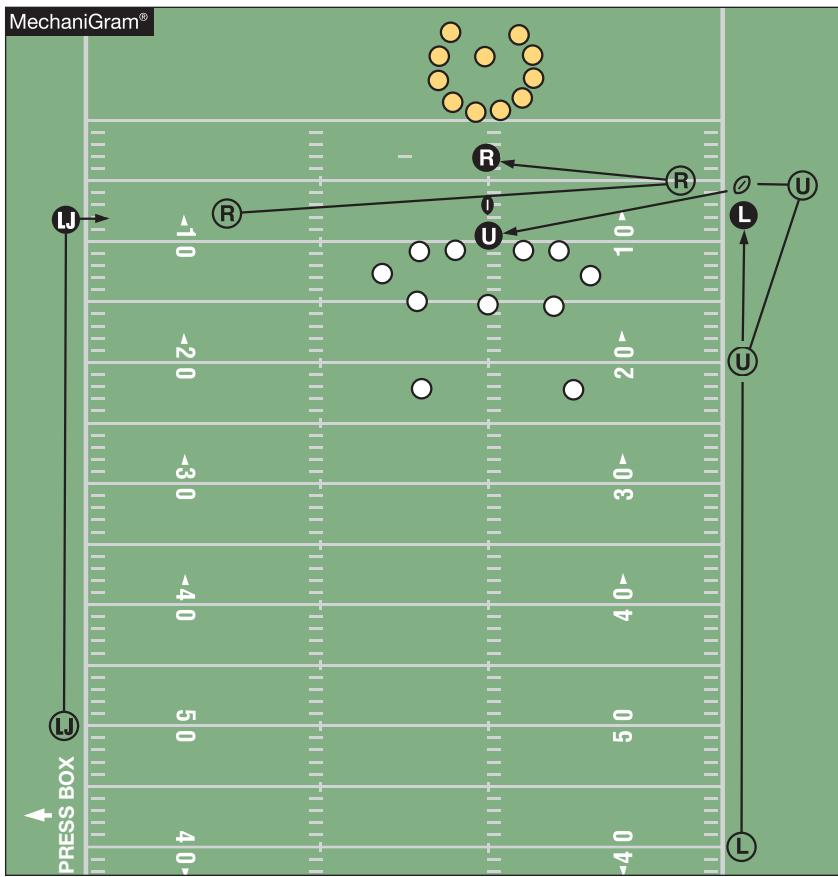
Referee: Observes action in their area. Communicates result of play with umpire. Obtains choice from team R captain. Signals team K's foul and points toward team R's 35 yardline, where ball will next be put in play. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

Umpire: Moves downfield and observes action in their area. Gives stop-the-clock signal when ball goes out of bounds. Throws flag, marking the out of bounds spot. Communicates result of play with referee. Moves to hashmark at team R's 35 yardline to set ball for new series. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

Linesman: Moves downfield and observes action in their area. Moves to team R's 35 yardline, where team R will begin new series, assists chain crew in setting chains. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, signals team K's foul, walks off penalty and returns to position for rekick.)

Line judge: Mirrors spot at team R's 35 yardline, where new series will begin. (If team R chooses a rekick after enforcement, returns to position for rekick.)

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



Action on the field: Team R caused kick to go out of bounds.

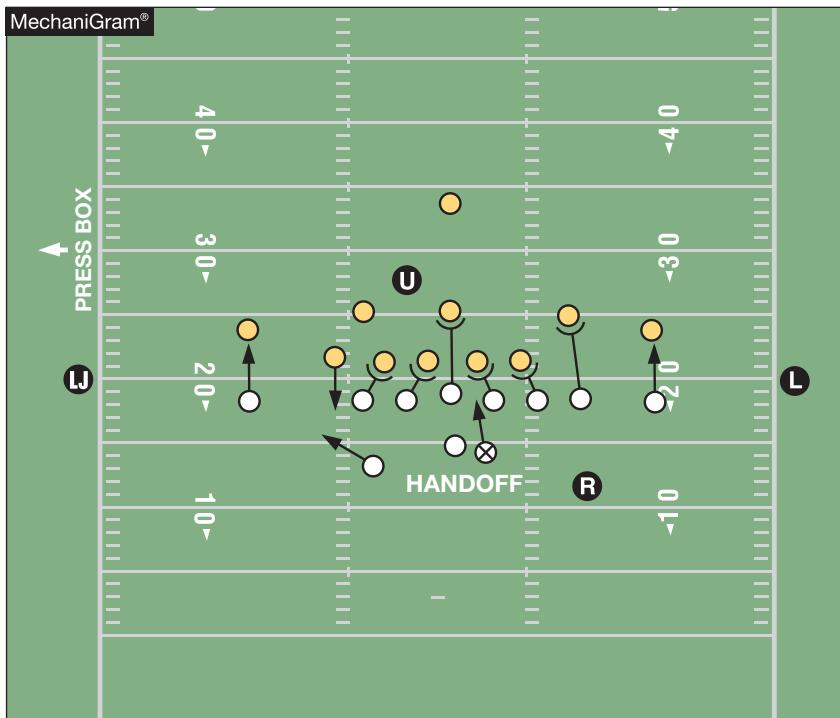
Referee: Observes action in their area. Communicates result of play with umpire. Signals new series will begin at spot where kick went out of bounds.

Umpire: Observes action in their area. Gives stop-the-clock signal when ball goes out of bounds. Communicates result of play with referee. Waits for linesman to arrive and mirror spot; moves to hashmark where new series will begin and sets ball.

Linesman: Moves downfield and observes action in their area. Takes spot where new series will begin from umpire and assists chain crew in setting chains.

Line judge: Moves downfield and observes action in their area. Mirrors linesman's spot where new series will begin.

RUNNING PLAY UP THE MIDDLE PART 1



Action on the field: Handoff to back.

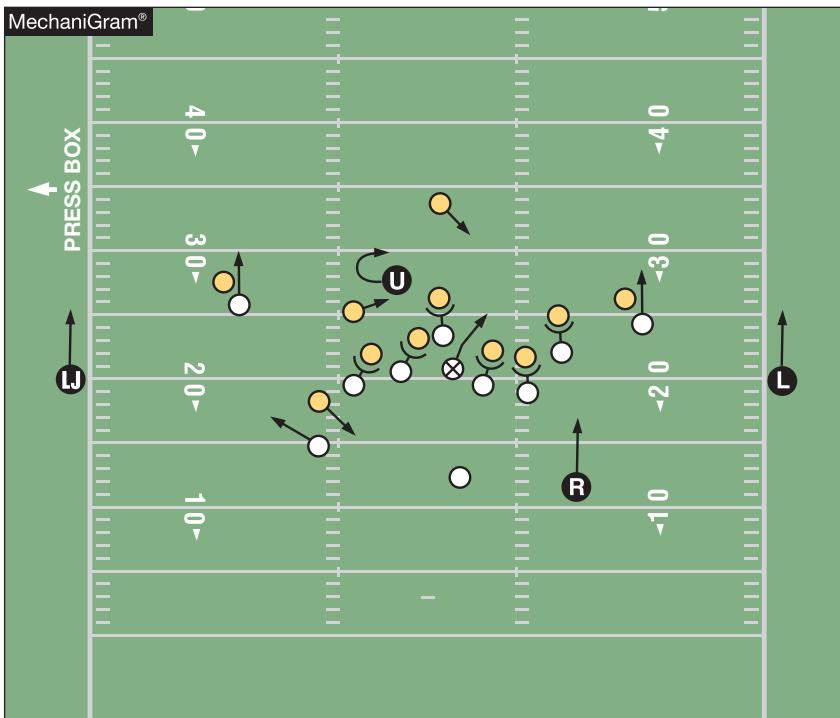
Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Observes handoff and action around quarterback after handoff.

Umpire: Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there.

Linesman: Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Observes initial line charge.

Line judge: Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Observes initial line charge.

RUNNING PLAY UP THE MIDDLE PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances.

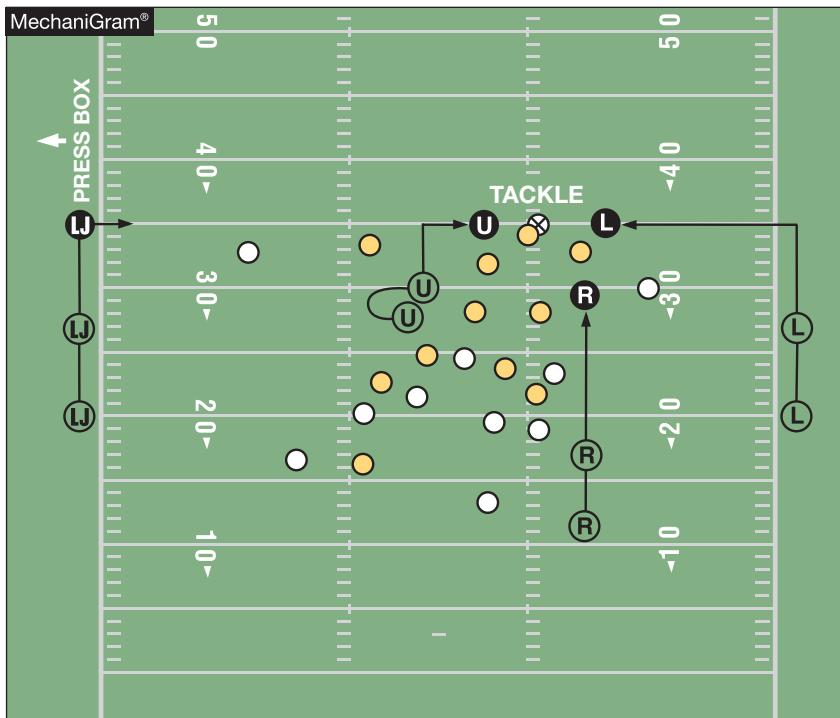
Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes action behind runner.

Umpire: Steps back to avoid interfering with play and pivots to observe play. Observes runner and action around runner.

Linesman: Moves slowly downfield and observes action in front of runner.

Line judge: Moves slowly downfield and observes action in front of runner.

RUNNING PLAY UP THE MIDDLE PART 3



Action on the field: Runner continues advance and is downed.

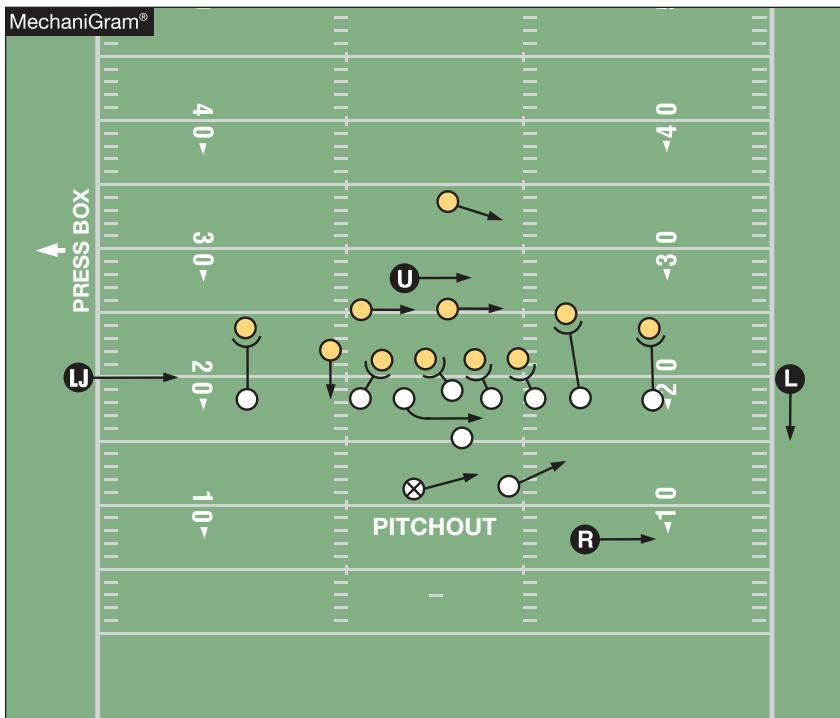
Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in their area. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, stops the clock and signals linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

Umpire: Moves quickly downfield and observes action in front of runner. Squares off to mirror spot. Observes players. Sets ball for next down.

Linesman: Moves quickly downfield and observes action around runner. Blows whistle when runner is downed. (If first down is achieved, also gives stop-the-clock signal.) Observes players. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. If first down has been achieved, gets signal from referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

Line judge: Observes action in front of runner in their area. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in their area.

SWEEP PART 1



Action on the field: Pitchout to back.

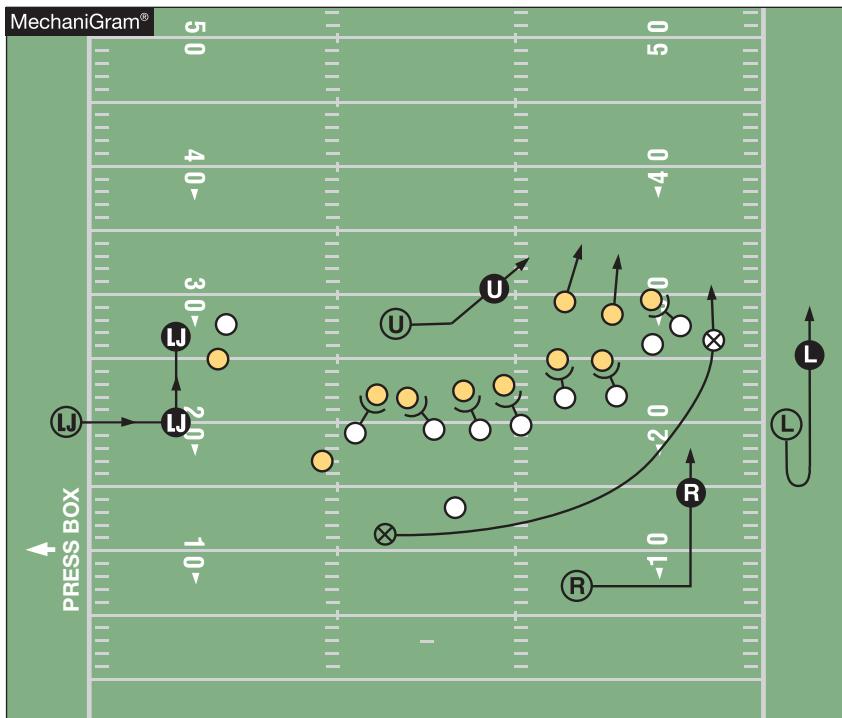
Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

Umpire: Reads blocking of pulling left guard and reads sweep. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Steps into offensive backfield. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Line judge: Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Moves slowly toward play. Observes blocking and action of players not involved in flow of play.

SWEEP PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances.

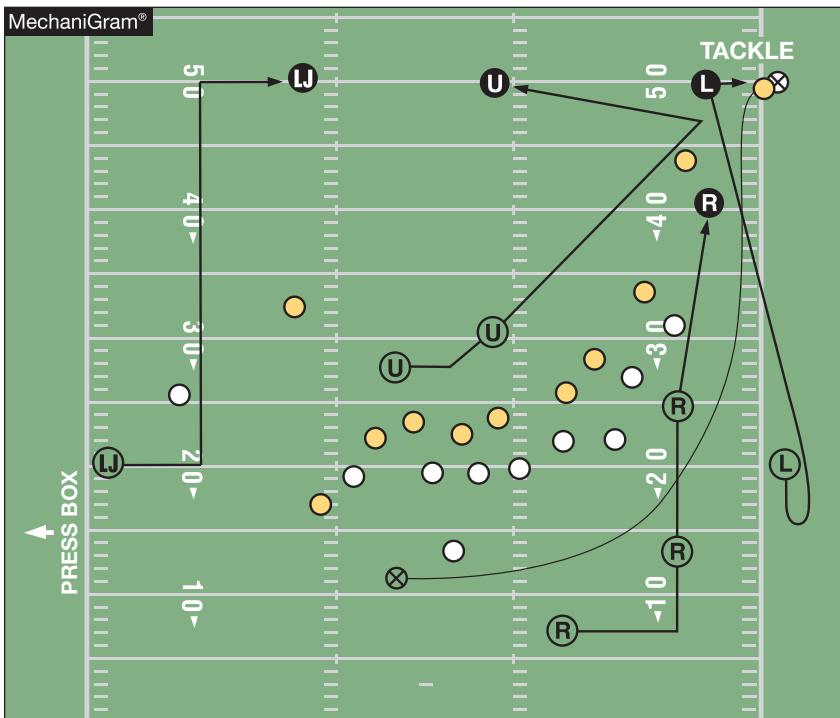
Referee: Gives up coverage of runner to linesman. Moves slowly downfield trailing flow and cleans up after the play.

Umpire: Pivots and moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Takes coverage of runner and moves up the sideline trailing the runner. Observes runner and action around runner.

Line judge: Moves slowly downfield and cleans up after the play.

SWEEP PART 3



Action on the field: Runner continues advance and is downed out of bounds.

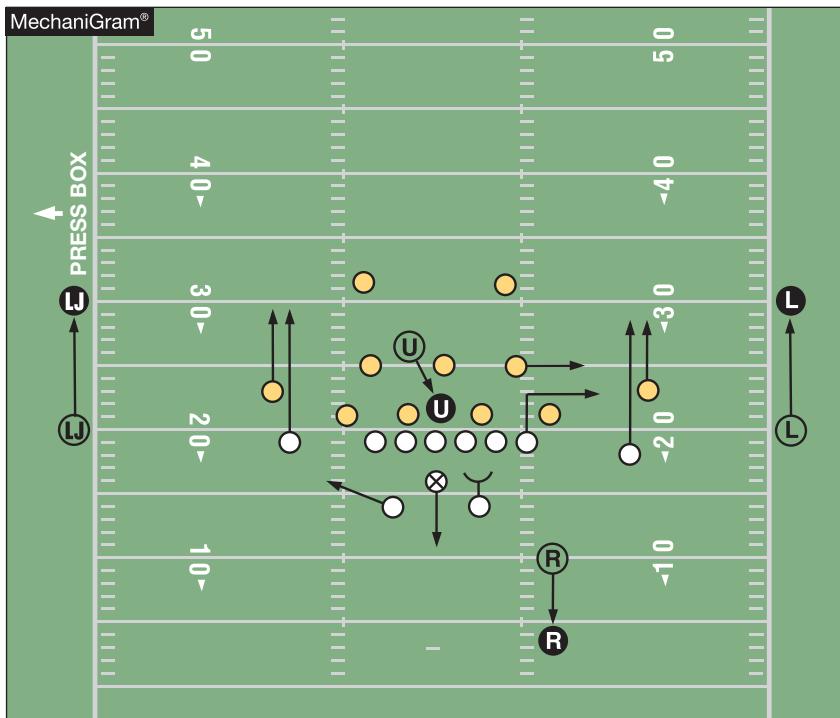
Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, stops the clock and signals linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

Umpire: Moves downfield and observes players in front of the ball. Hustles to dead-ball spot to prevent post-play action. Once all players have returned to field, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

Linesman: Continues to move downfield and observes runner and action around runner all the way down sideline. Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner steps out of bounds. Uses inside-out look to observe players and squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Holds spot until umpire arrives to set ball for new series. If first down has been achieved, gets signal from referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

Line judge: Moves downfield with flow of play and cleans up after the play. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in their area. Holds spot until released by umpire.

DEEP PASS PART 1



Action on the field: Quarterback drops back.

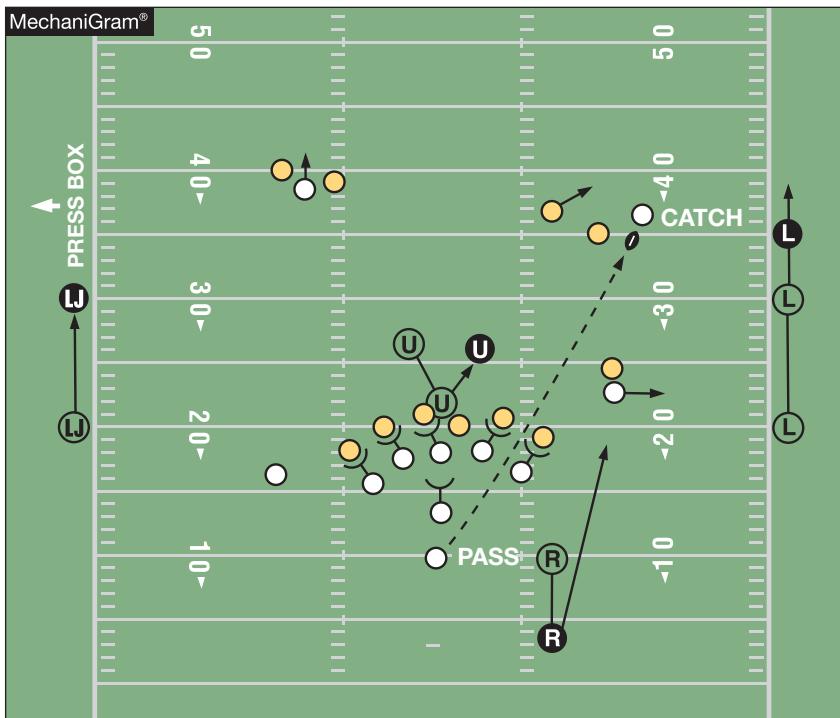
Referee: Keys on opposite-side tackle; reads pass when tackle retreats. As quarterback drops back, moves back to maintain distance between themselves and quarterback. Observes blocking by backs.

Umpire: Observes presnap adjustments and legality of snap. Keys on center and guards; reads pass when linemen retreat. Steps up to the line of scrimmage and observes blocking.

Linesman: Identifies the eligible receivers on their side of the field. Uses extended arm signal to alert line judge that end is in offensive backfield. Keys action of tight end and reads pass. Uses shuffle step to move slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

Line judge: Identifies the eligible receivers on their side of the field. Keys split end and reads pass. Uses shuffle step to move slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

DEEP PASS PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances and is downed.

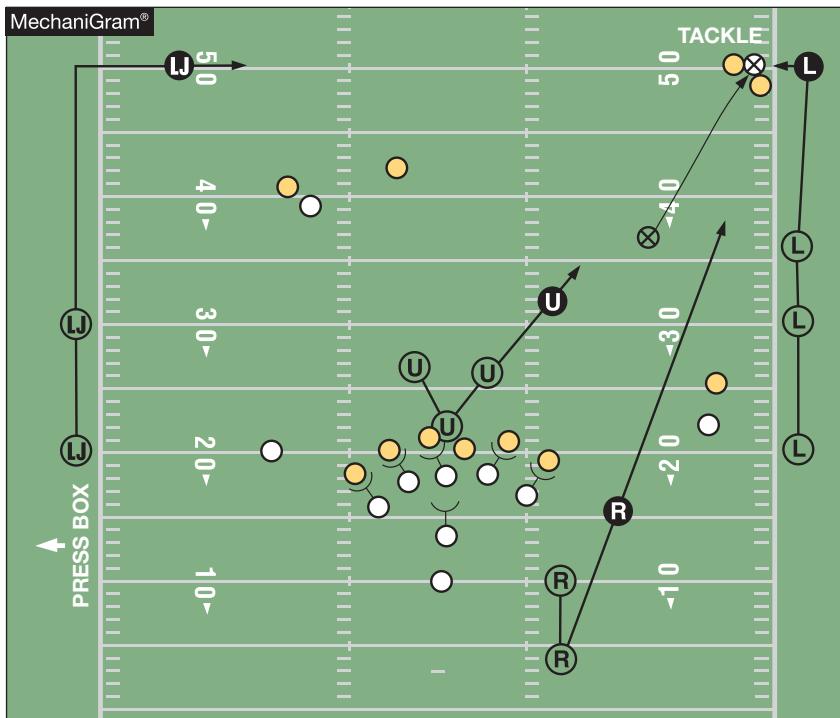
Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. If players land in team area, hustles to sideline to observe action.

Umpire: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. Once spot is established, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

Linesman: Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Gives stop-the-clock signal if first down has been achieved. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Observes any players who may land in team area.

Line judge: Continues moving downfield and observes players in their area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress.

DEEP PASS PART 3



Action on the field: Runner advances and is downed.

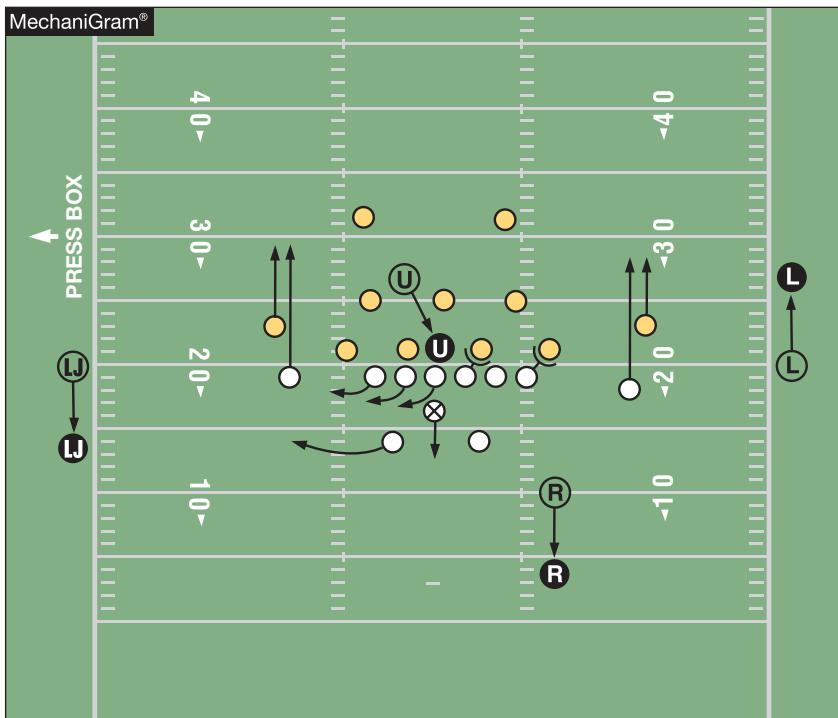
Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. If players land in team area, hustles to sideline to observe action.

Umpire: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. Once spot is established, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

Linesman: Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Gives stop-the-clock signal if first down has been achieved. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Observes any players who may land in team area.

Line judge: Continues moving downfield and observes players in their area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 1



Action on the field: Quarterback drops back.

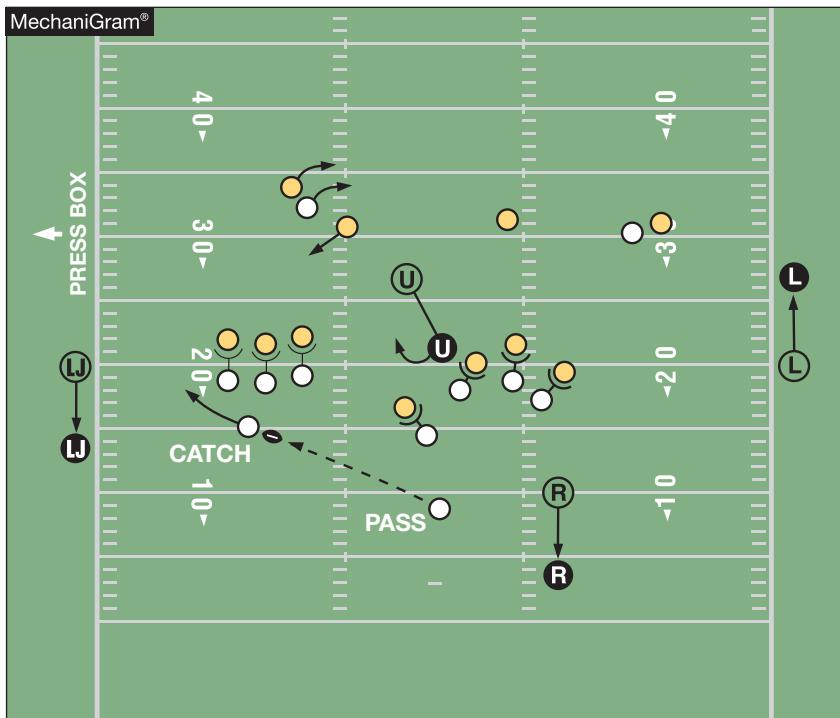
Referee: Keys on opposite-side tackle; reads screen or draw when tackle pulls. As quarterback drops back, moves back to maintain distance between themselves and quarterback. Observes blocking by backs.

Umpire: Observes presnap adjustments and legality of snap. Keys on center and guards; reads screen or draw when linemen pull. Steps up to the line of scrimmage and observes blocking.

Linesman: Identifies the eligible receivers on their side of the field. Uses extended arm signal to alert line judge that end is in offensive backfield. Reads blocking of tight end and reads run. Moves slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

Line judge: Identifies the eligible receivers on their side of the field. After snap, observes initial blocking; reads screen or draw when tackle pulls. Moves into offensive backfield to cover receiver out of backfield.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 2



Action on the field: Back catches pass and begins advance.

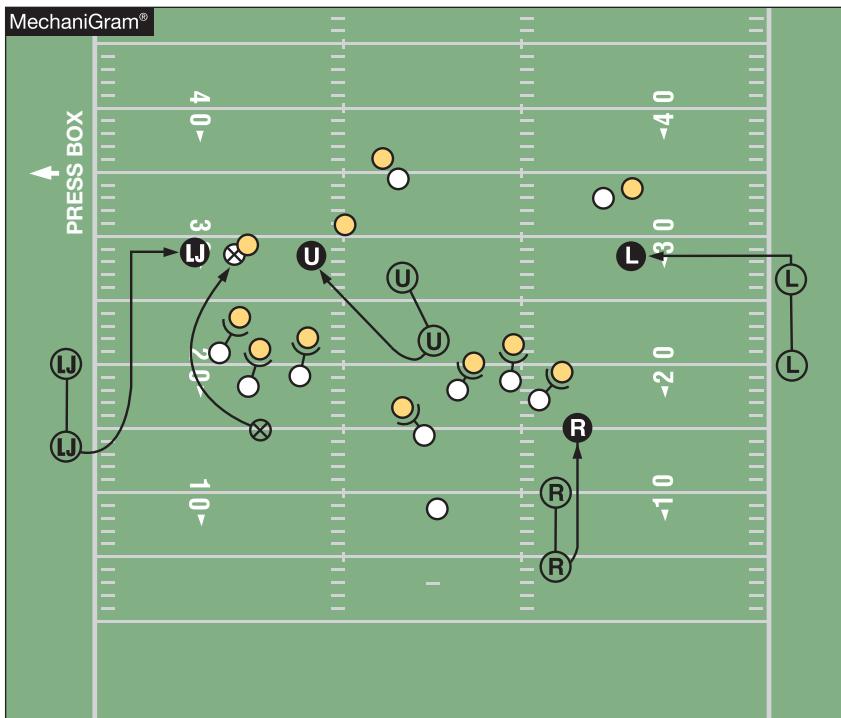
Referee: Observes passer. Looks to line judge for either backward pass signal, incomplete pass signal or no signal (complete forward pass).

Umpire: Pivots to follow flight of the ball. Observes blockers in front of ball.

Linesman: Moves slowly downfield and observes action of players in their area.

Line judge: Rules on whether pass is backward or forward. Observes action in front of runner.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 3



Action on the field: Runner continues advance and is downed.

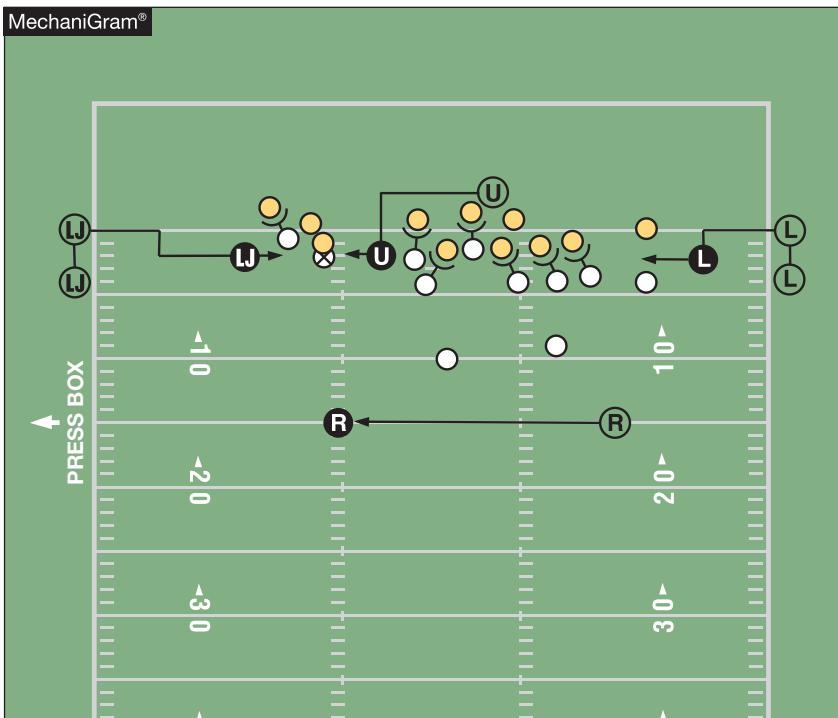
Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball.

Umpire: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. When runner is downed, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

Linesman: Continues to move slowly downfield and observes players in their area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress.

Line judge: Moves downfield with runner. Observes action of runner and players around runner. Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Stops clock if first down has been achieved.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN



Action on the field: Handoff to back.

Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner. If run results in a touchdown, observes signal of covering official and signals touchdown to press box.

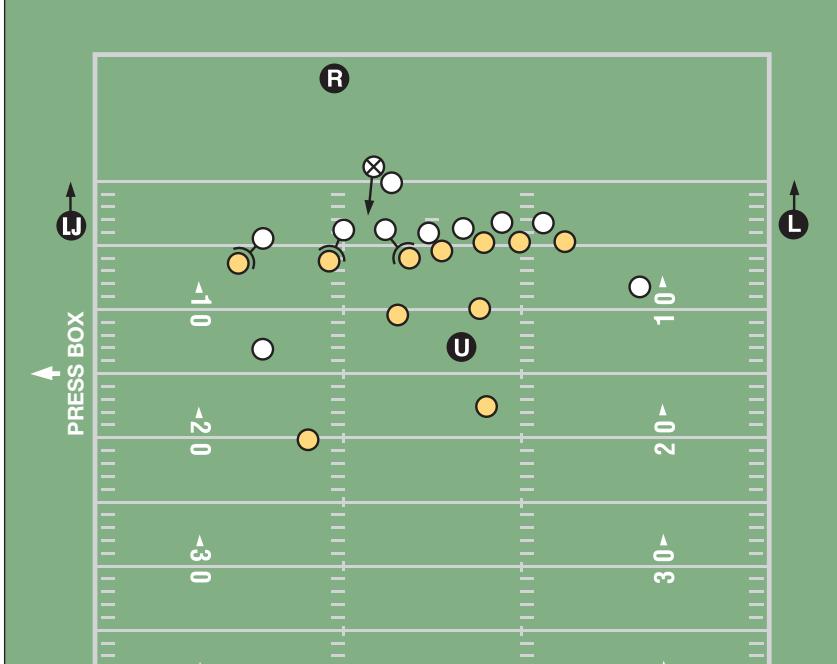
Umpire: Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Reads blocking of tight end and reads run. Observes initial blocking. If ball in runner's possession breaks plane of the goalline in coverage area, signals touchdown. If runner downed short of goalline, officiates back to the ball and marks progress.

Line judge: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Reads blocking of split end and reads run. Observes initial blocking. If ball in runner's possession breaks plane of the goalline in coverage area, signals touchdown. If runner downed short of goalline, officiates back to the ball and marks progress.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT

MechaniGram®



Action on the field: Handoff to running back.

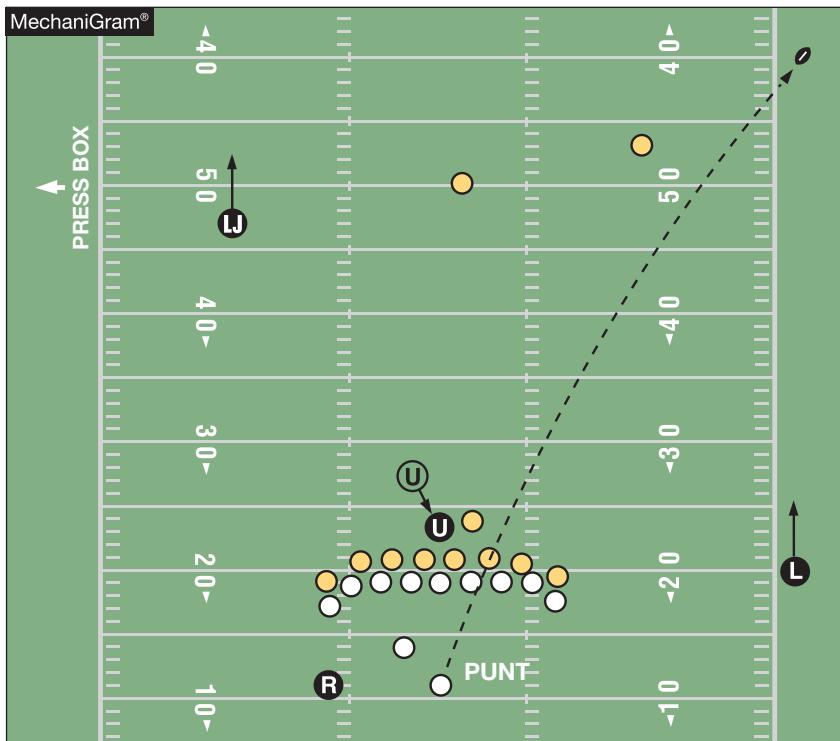
Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

Umpire: Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Observes initial blocking. If runner is in coverage area and is downed in end zone, signals safety. If runner advances beyond goalline, officiates back to the ball and covers play as usual.

Line judge: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Observes initial blocking. If runner is in coverage area and is downed in end zone, signals safety. If runner advances beyond goalline, officiates back to the ball and covers play as usual.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



Action on the field: Punt to linesman's side.

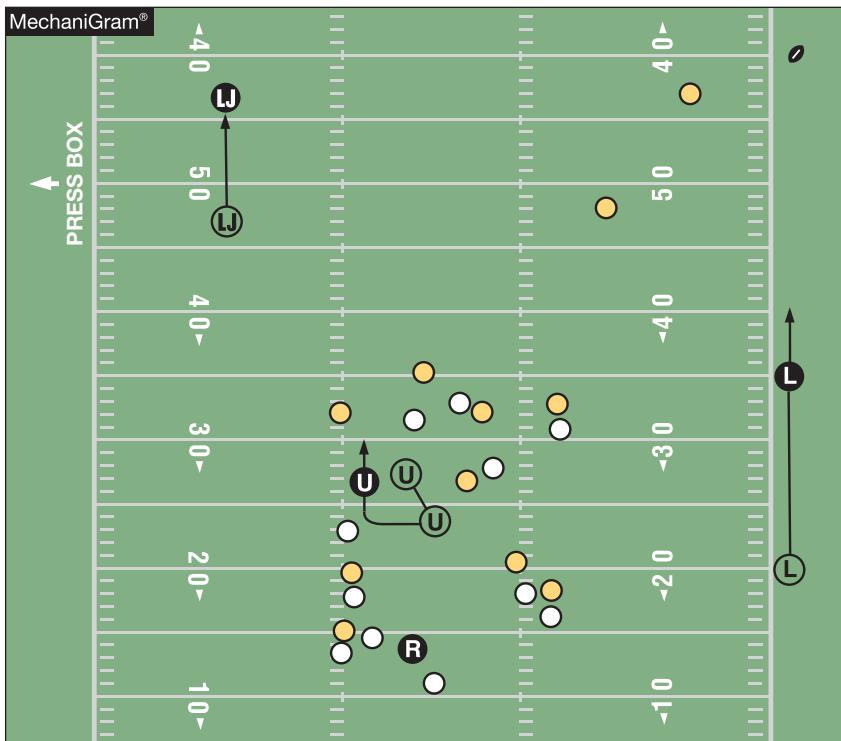
Referee: Observes snap and action around kicker.

Umpire: Moves toward the line at the snap, observing initial charge of linemen and contact on the snapper.

Linesman: Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. Moves downfield when kick crosses the neutral zone.

Line judge: Observes receivers. Moves downfield when ball flies deeper than receivers.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



Action on the field: Ball becomes dead out of bounds.

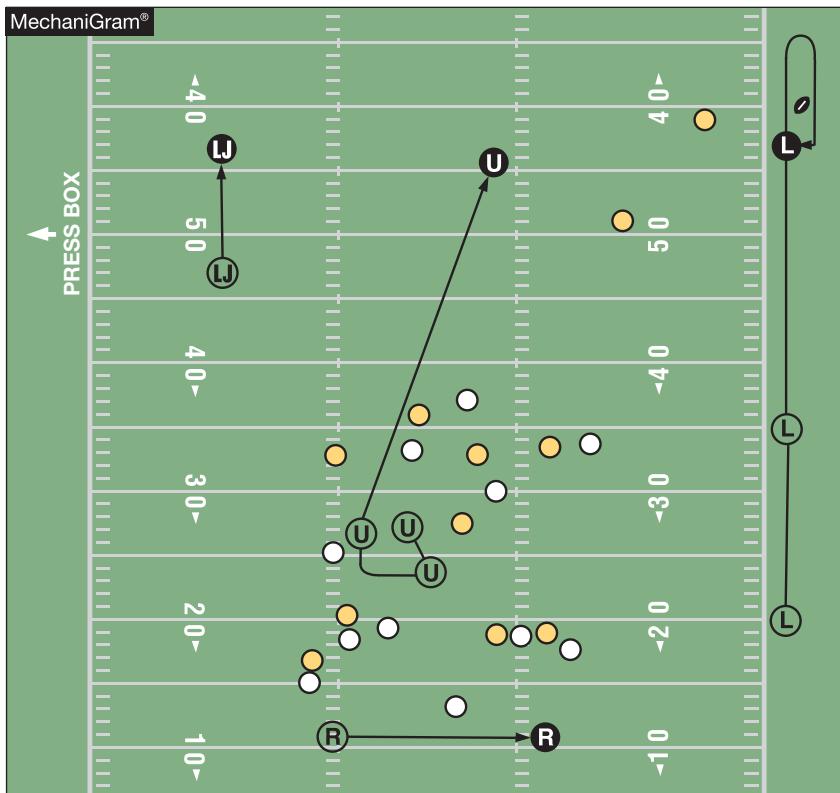
Referee: Observes flight of ball, adjusting position if necessary.

Umpire: Pivots toward the line judge's side of the field, Moves downfield with flow of players and observes players as they move downfield.

Linesman: Moves quickly down sideline, observing action of players moving downfield. Stops clock when he sees ball go out of bounds.

Line judge: Observes action of players in front of ball.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



Action on the field: Ball spotted for next down.

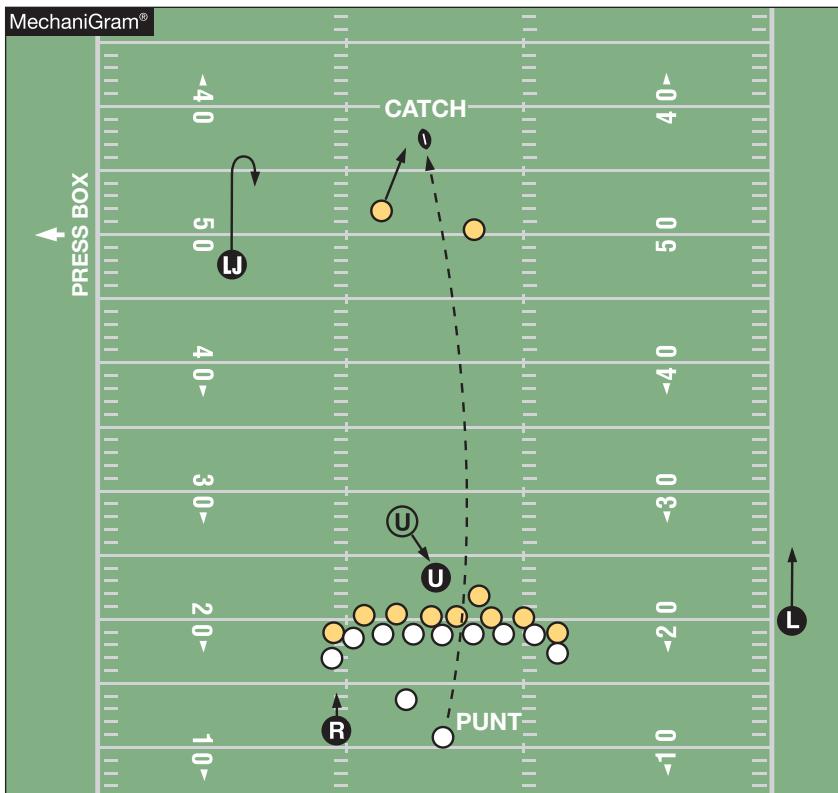
Referee: Moves parallel to line of scrimmage to ensure eye contact with linesman. With arm above head, observes linesman walking toward spot. When linesman reaches spot, drops arm with chopping motion. When certain there are no penalty markers down, signals linesman to move chain crew.

Umpire: Continues to move downfield and observes action of players in their area. Moves to hashmark to set ball for new series.

Linesman: Moves five to seven yards beyond spot where ball apparently went out of bounds, pivots and makes eye contact with referee. Walks slowly toward referee, stopping when referee drops arm with chopping motion. Signals first down for team R. Upon signal from referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot.

Line judge: Observes action of players in front of ball. Squares off and mirrors linesman's spot.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO LINE JUDGE'S AREA PART 1



Action on the field: Receiver catches kick in line judge's area.

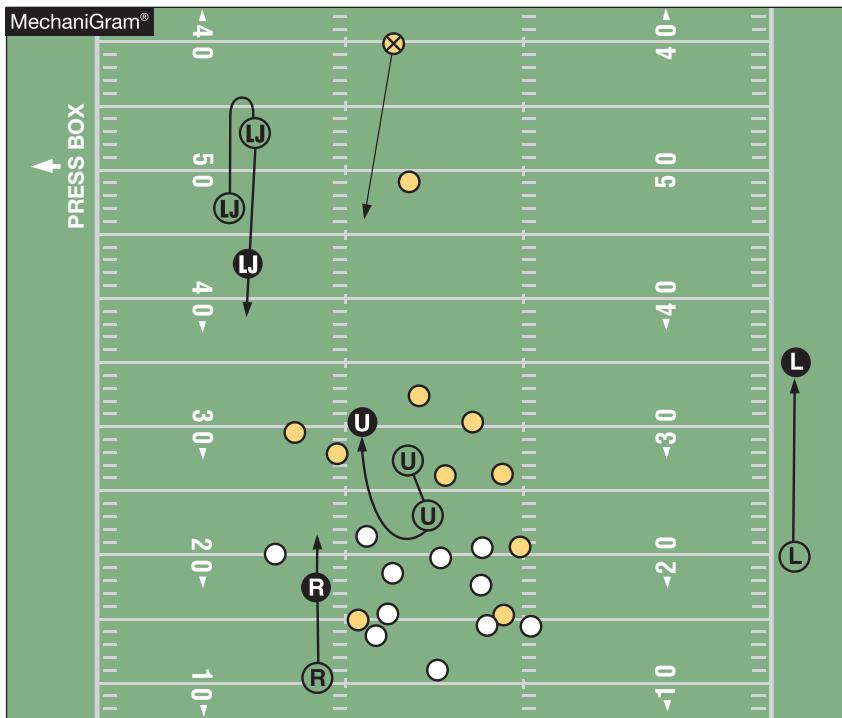
Referee: Observes snap and action around kicker. Moves slowly downfield with flow of players.

Umpire: Moves toward the line at the snap, observing initial charge of linemen and contact on the snapper.

Linesman: Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. When ball crosses neutral zone, moves downfield and observes players in their area.

Line judge: Retreats to observe catch. Drops beanbag to indicate spot where kick ended. Moves upfield slightly ahead of runner, observing runner and action in front of runner.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO LINE JUDGE'S AREA PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances.

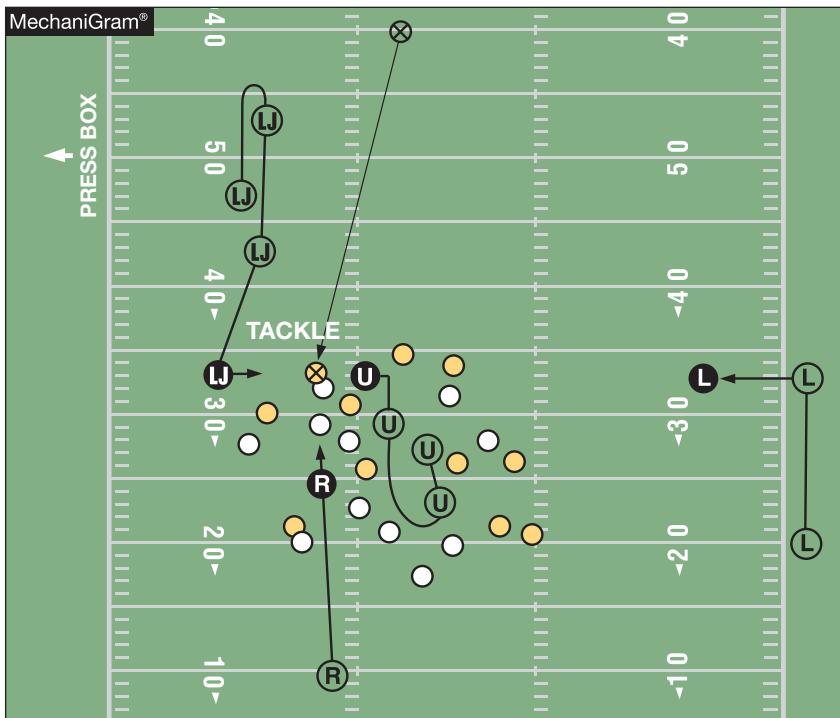
Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes action of players in their area.

Umpire: Pivots toward line judge's side. Moves with flow of players downfield and observes action of players in their area.

Linesman: Moves down sideline and observes action of players in front of ball.

Line judge: Moves to stay ahead of and observe runner as runner moves upfield. Observes action in front of runner.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO LINE JUDGE'S AREA PART 3



Action on the field: Runner continues advance and is downed.

Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes action of players in their area. Hustles toward dead-ball spot. If no penalty markers are down, signals linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

Umpire: Continues to move downfield and observes players in their area. Hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

Linesman: Observes action of players in front of ball. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. When runner is downed, practices dead-ball officiating. Upon signal from referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

Line judge: Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner is downed. Squares off to indicate spot of forward progress and practices dead-ball officiating. Holds spot until released by umpire.

CREW OF FIVE

CREW OF FIVE

CHAPTER 9

PHILOSOPHY

Movement and compromise are the characteristics of football officiating. Twenty-two players are moving around, competing for space and position; the officials must utilize hustle, angles, distance and planned compromises to observe and control the action.

Hustle

Hustle is an overused word today. Everyone knows it's needed to succeed, but what does it really mean when relating it to football officiating? Hustle to cover plays and to get into position is important regardless of how many officials work a game. The fifth official allows a crew to devote extra attention to players well downfield, such as those running pass routes or blocking ahead of the runner. But that does not diminish the need for all officials on the crew to use their keys to anticipate plays and get into proper position to cover them.

Significant movement by all officials is critical for proper field coverage. Hustle gives you a chance. That equates to more running and a well-placed concern for angles.

Movements

All officials must work hard at understanding then obtaining proper angles. Your line of sight must provide you with an opportunity to view a developing play or part of a play. You must be able to see completely through the play, which means your vision must be unobstructed by the players directly involved in the play and others near the play.

When the ball is snapped, all 22 players are in motion. An official's angle and distance adjustments are constant as play is in motion. A step or two in the right direction may open up a whole new viewing experience, free from obstruction; a step in the wrong direction will screen you from the critical game action.

Far too often officials who can't (or won't) run well don't move with the flow of the play. They're afraid of getting in the way and aren't confident they can move quickly enough to avoid players and get good angles. The game suffers because coverage suffers. A good back judge, for instance, works sideline

to sideline. That improves dead-ball coverage when a runner goes out of bounds. On plays between the hash marks and the sidelines, a back judge gives the crew a second angle — one from the inside of the field looking out — to complement the wing official's outside-in view.

Movement also allows the non-covering officials to watch players away from the ball, the critical component to combating physical play. When a wing official moves off the sideline, they can watch the areas behind the run, where rough play often occurs.

The covering wing official also moves along the sideline to improve angles. There's usually at least three and sometimes six or seven players around the ball, either trying to throw blocks or attempting to make the tackle. Movement is critical to watching action around the ball. It's also paramount to game control.

Proper movements when the play is over are also important. Because the ball is live for only a few seconds every play, there's a tendency to think about spotting the ball for the next play and forgetting about the players. If officials ignore post-play action, players get physical with each other and game control suffers. All officials must observe player action after the ball has been whistled dead.

Field coverage

Proper coverage is enhanced by good eye contact and a “feel” for where your crewmates are looking. You must learn about all aspects of football officiating to know who is covering what. Once you've mastered that, practical onfield application develops through communication, including eye contact and understanding. At the risk of being obvious, you've got to know exactly what both you and your crewmates are expected to do in specific situations — then effectively communicate with your crewmates — to truly master football officiating. When you understand why

angles and distance are important and how and when to obtain them, you'll find yourself in great position throughout each game.

CREW OF FIVE

CHAPTER 10

KEYS

- Balanced Formation, Strength Declared To Line Judge's Side
- Double Tight Ends, Strength To Linesman's Side
- Double Wing, Double Tight End Formation
- Motion Changes Strength
- Motion Changes Formation From Unbalanced To Balanced
- Motion Into Trips
- Motion Doesn't Change Strength
- Straight T
- Strength To Linesman's Side, Weak Side Tight End
- Trips To Linesman's Side
- Unbalanced Formation, Strength To Line Judge's Side
- Veer
- Wishbone
- Referee And Umpire Keys

Football officials have a kind of telepathy to help them determine what's going to happen before it occurs. These hints are called keys.

There are two basic types of keys: "situational" and "positional" keys.

Situational Keys

Situational keys are partially based on the down, distance, score, time remaining, offensive and defensive formations and actions of players at the snap. For example, it's third down and 11. Team A trails by two points with 1:37 to play in the fourth quarter and has the ball on its own 44 yardline. Going without a huddle, team A lines up in a shotgun formation with three receivers on the right side of the formation. All of that adds up to a pass. That hunch is confirmed when, at the snap, the offensive linemen drop back to pass block, the quarterback retreats into the pocket and the receivers run pass patterns rather than block team B's linebackers and defensive backs.

In addition to down, distance and other game factors, offensive and defensive formations provide hints as to what type of play an official can expect in a given situation. Most teams using the wishbone formation, for instance, are predominantly running teams. Teams using four-receiver sets and shotgun formations pass more times than not.

Linemen provide situational keys. Pulling linemen indicate a sweep or trap block. Retreating linemen indicate a pass. Charging linemen indicate a running play. When offensive linemen provide only passive resistance, allowing defensive linemen to penetrate the neutral zone, a screen pass often follows.

Positional Keys

Positional keys are predetermined by the position you are working in the game. Positional keys deal more with the back judge and wing officials. The back judge's main positional key is the eligible receiver on the strong side of

the formation (that will usually be the receiver). The wing official positional key is the inside eligible receivers. At the snap, the wing first observes the tackle to see if he's run-blocking or pass-blocking, then observes the actions of the key receiver. If the back judge key is not pressed, they can also glance at the tackle for the same observations. If that player moves into another official's coverage area, the back judge shifts their attention to players who have entered their coverage area.

In order to determine positional keys, the officials must recognize the strength of the formation (strong side vs. weak side). The strong side is the side on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackle. The back judge telegraphs their key by standing with hip position favoring the strong side.

When determining keys, it doesn't matter if a player is on or off the line of scrimmage. The widest receiver is the back judge's key whether the player is a flanker (a back usually positioned wider than the tight end) or a wide out (split outside the tackle). If players are stacked, the player nearest the line of scrimmage is considered to be the widest. For example, if a flanker is stacked directly behind the tight end, the tight end is considered the widest and is the back judge's key.

A balanced formation is one in which there are the same number of eligible receivers outside the tackles on both sides of the formation. An unbalanced formation is when one side has more eligible receivers on one side than the other.

The back judge has priority in determining keys, followed by the wing officials. Wing officials should not key the same player as the back judge.

The positional keys:

- Unbalanced formation — The back judge keys on the outside receiver(s) on the strong side. The wing officials key the inside receivers on their side, normally the tight end.

- **Balanced formation** — In a balanced formation, strength is always considered to be on the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the outside receiver (usually a wide out). The wing officials key on the inside receivers and any backs who move toward them at the snap.
- **Three-receiver (trips) formation** — The back judge keys on the outside receivers and the strong side wing official keys on the inside receivers. The weak side wing official keys on the end nearest them.
- **Double wing formation** — Strength is declared to the line judge's side. The back judge keys the outside receiver on the line judge's side. The line judge keys on the inside receiver. The linesman has both receivers on their side.
- **Wishbone** — Another balanced formation, which means strength is declared to line judge's side. The back judge has the end on the line judge's side. The back judge keys the backs. The linesman keys the end on their side.

Motion

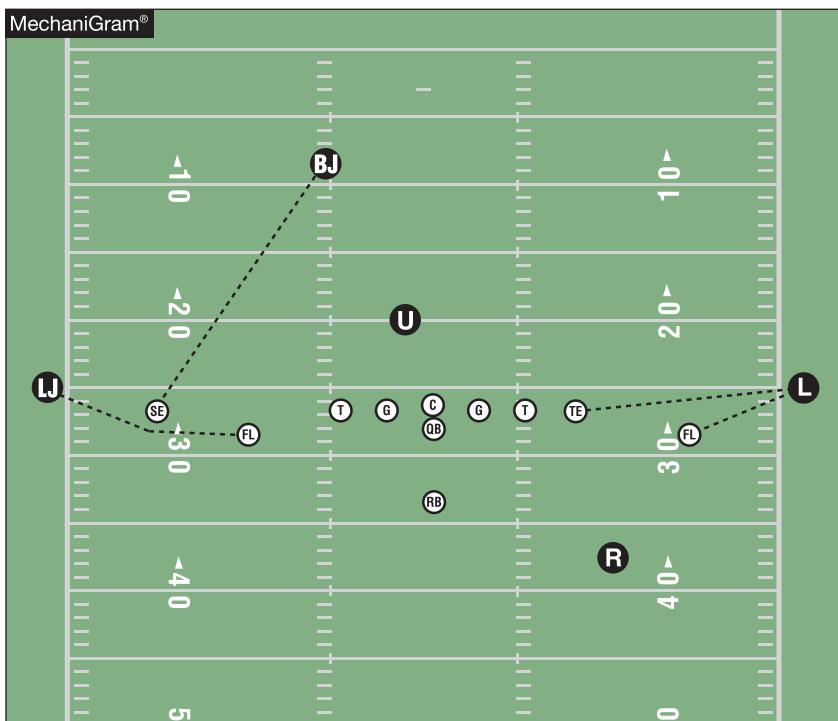
An offensive player in motion can affect positional keys. It is crucial that the back judge and wing officials know where the motion man is at the snap because the strength of the formation (and therefore the keys) may change. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

Say team A lines up strong to the linesman's side, but the flanker on the linesman's side goes in motion toward the line judge. If the motion man gets to the line judge's side of the ball at the snap, the strength of the formation is now on the line judge's side. The back judge has the wideout on the line judge's side, the line judge has the motion man and the linesman has the end on their side of the line. The linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. If the motion man does not

get to the opposite side of the formation before the snap, the keys do not change because the strength of the formation has not changed.

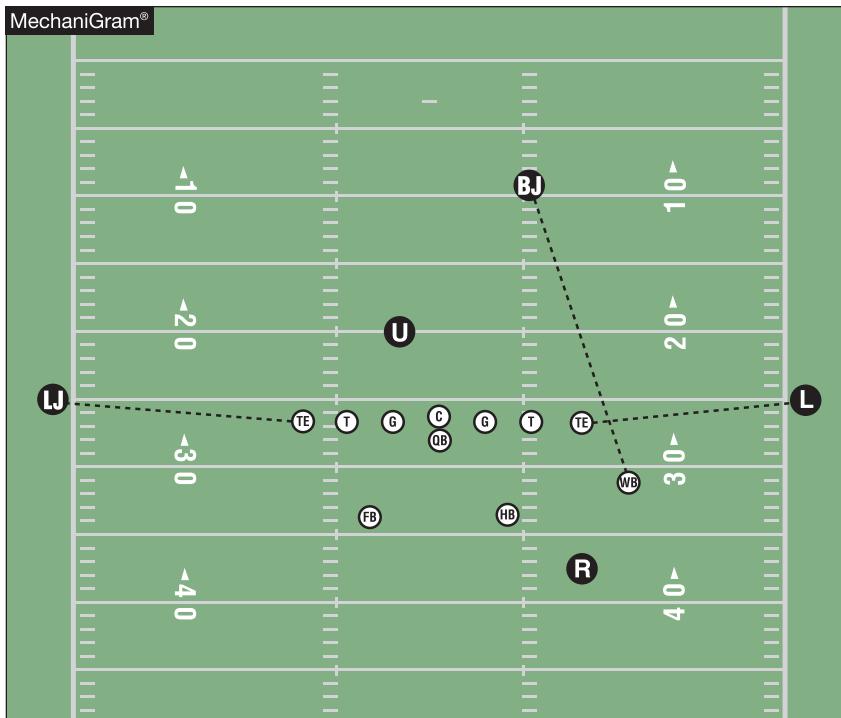
If motion turns a formation into trips, the keys for trips are in force: The line judge keys on the two inside receivers and the back judge keys on the widest receiver.

BALANCED FORMATION, STRENGTH DECLARED TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE



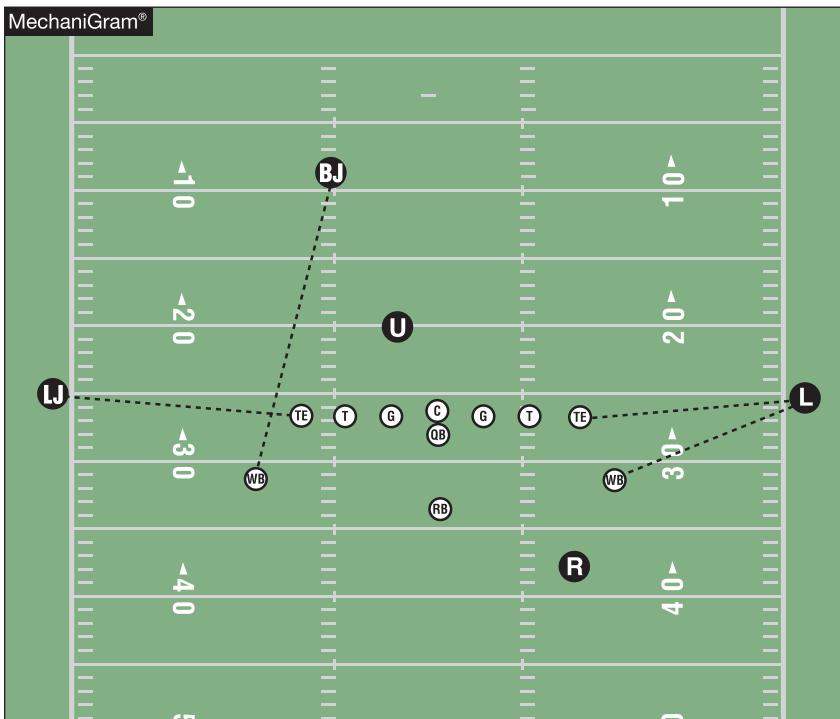
In a balanced formation, strength is always considered to be on the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the widest receiver (in this case, the split end). The line judge keys on the flanker while the linesman has both the split end and flanker on their side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

DOUBLE TIGHT ENDS, STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



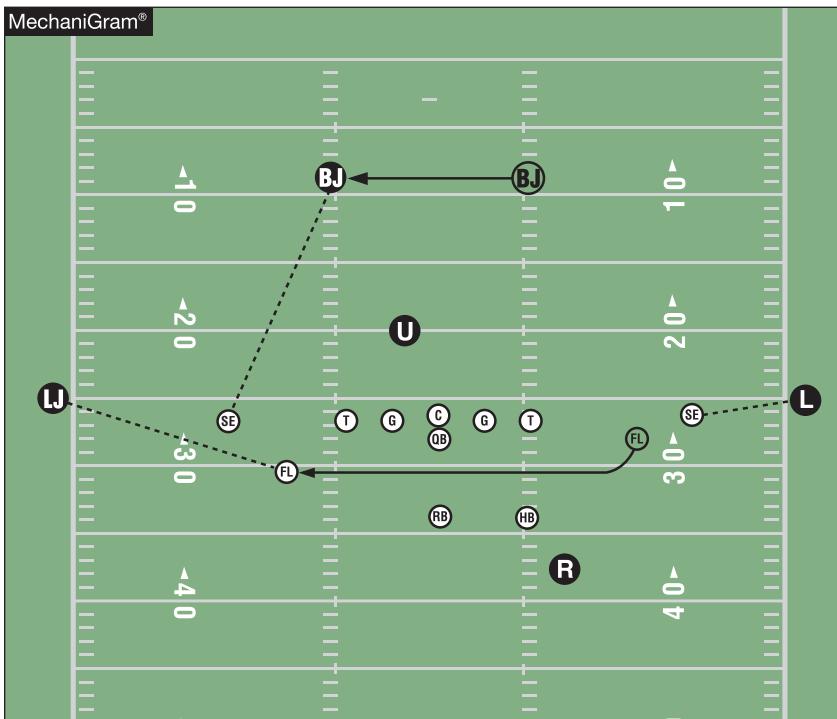
This is primarily a running formation used on short yardage, but teams sometimes throw quick passes out of this formation. The back judge keys on the widest receiver on the strong side (the wingback on the linesman's side in this case). The linesman keys on the tight end. The line judge keys on the tight end on their side. Either wing official may also have a back who runs a pass route.

DOUBLE WING, DOUBLE TIGHT END FORMATION



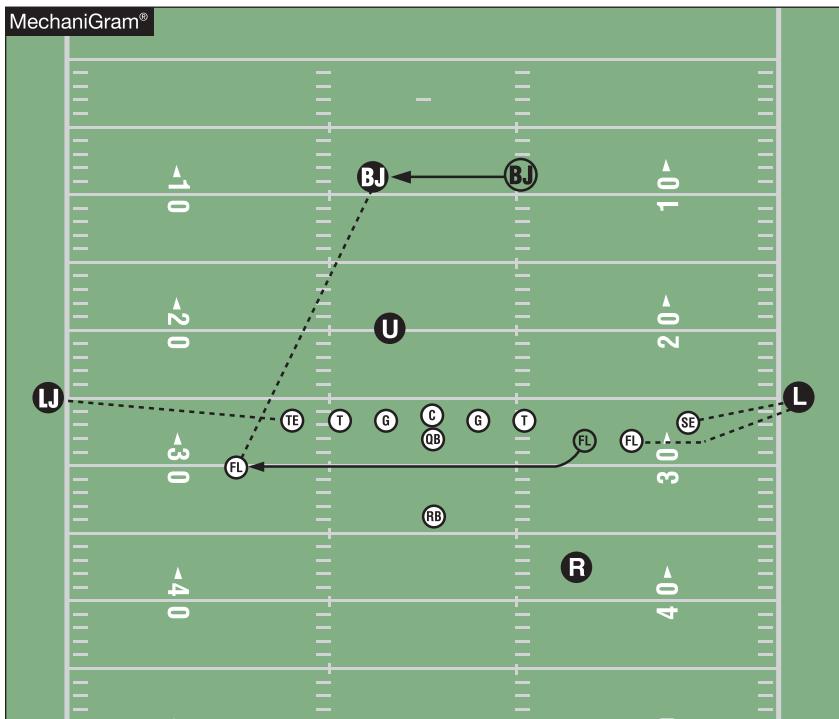
Strength is declared to the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the widest receiver on their side. In this case, that's the wingback on the line judge's side. The line judge keys on the tight end on their side. The linesman has the tight end and wingback on their side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

MOTION CHANGES STRENGTH



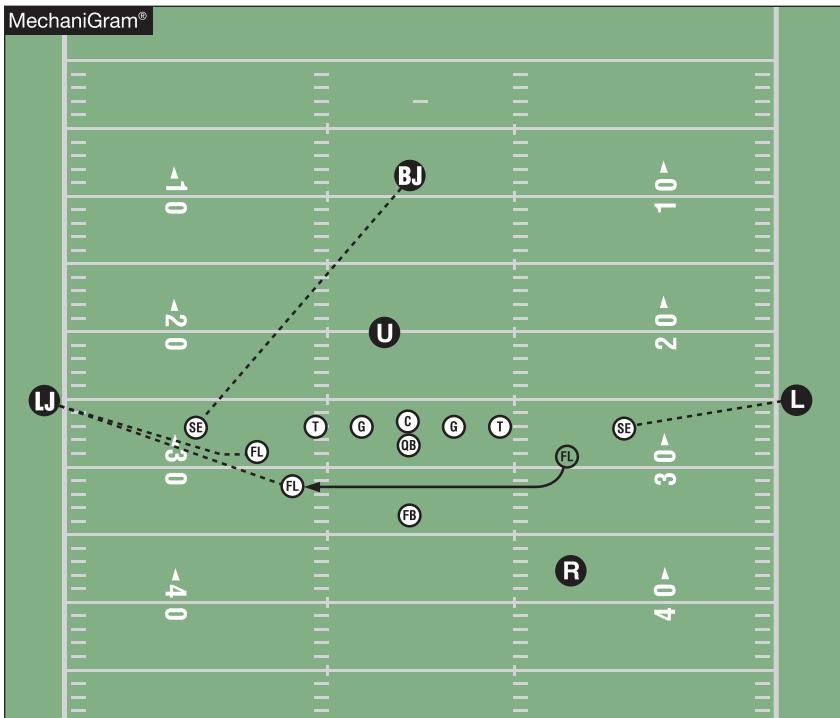
Strength was to the linesman's side, but motion changed the formation from unbalanced to balanced. In a balanced formation, strength is declared to the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the strong side flanker. Once the flanker passes the tackle, the back judge shifts hip positioning from the linesman side to the line judge side. Once the flanker passes the tight end, the line judge keys the tight end, the back judge keys on the flanker. The linesman keys on the split end and flanker on their side. Although the back judge is keying on the motion man's action, the linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

MOTION CHANGES FORMATION FROM UNBALANCED TO BALANCED



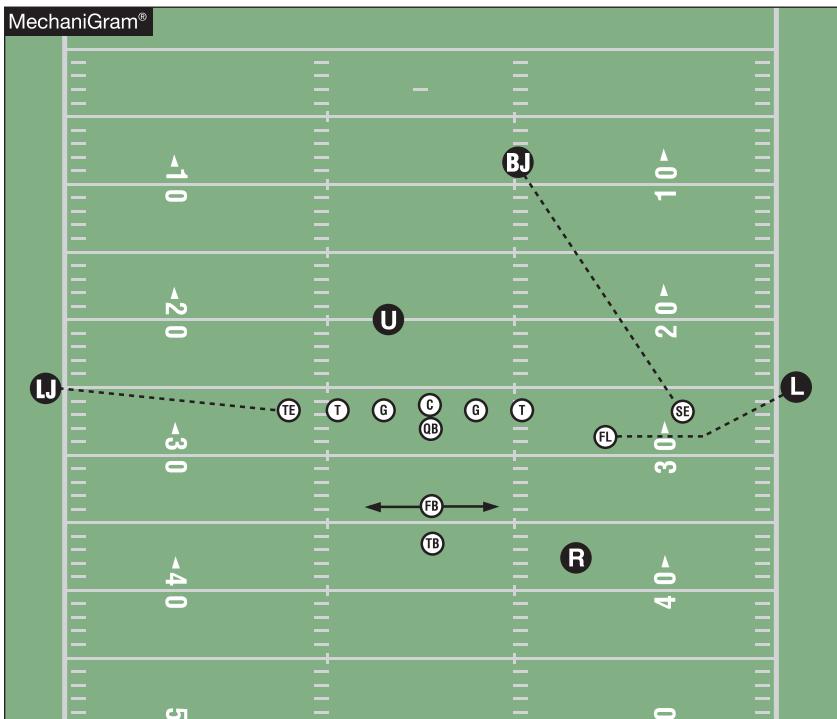
Strength was to the linesman's side, but motion changed the formation from unbalanced to balanced. In a balanced formation, strength is declared to the line judge's side. The back judge shifts position and keys on the strong side flanker. The line judge keys on the tight end and the linesman keys on the split end and flanker on their side. Although the line judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving, even if he reverses direction and returns toward their original position.

MOTION INTO TRIPS



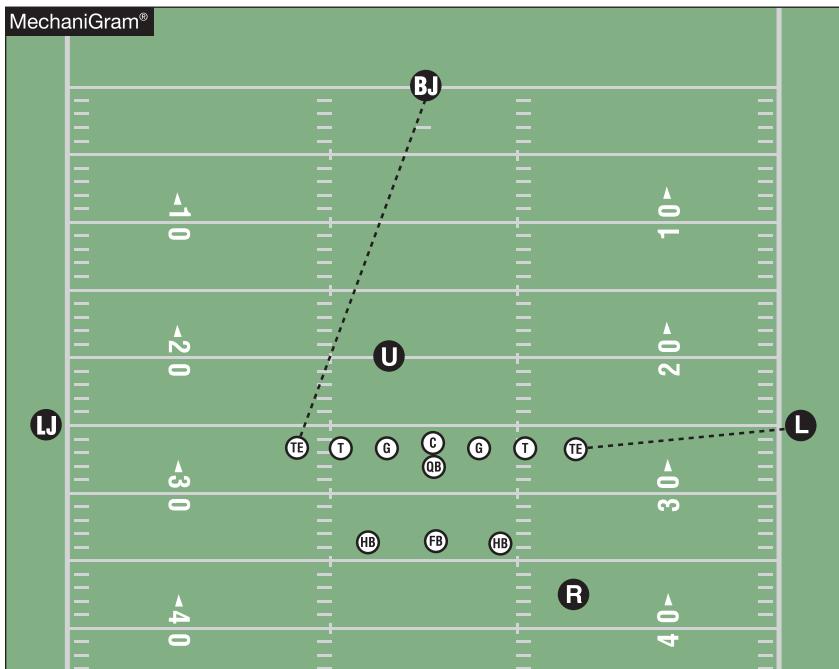
Motion by the flanker turned a balanced formation into a trips formation to the line judge's side. The line judge keys the two inside receivers. In this case, it's the set flanker and the motion man on the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the widest receiver and the linesman keys the end on their side of the line. Although the back judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

MOTION DOESN'T CHANGE STRENGTH



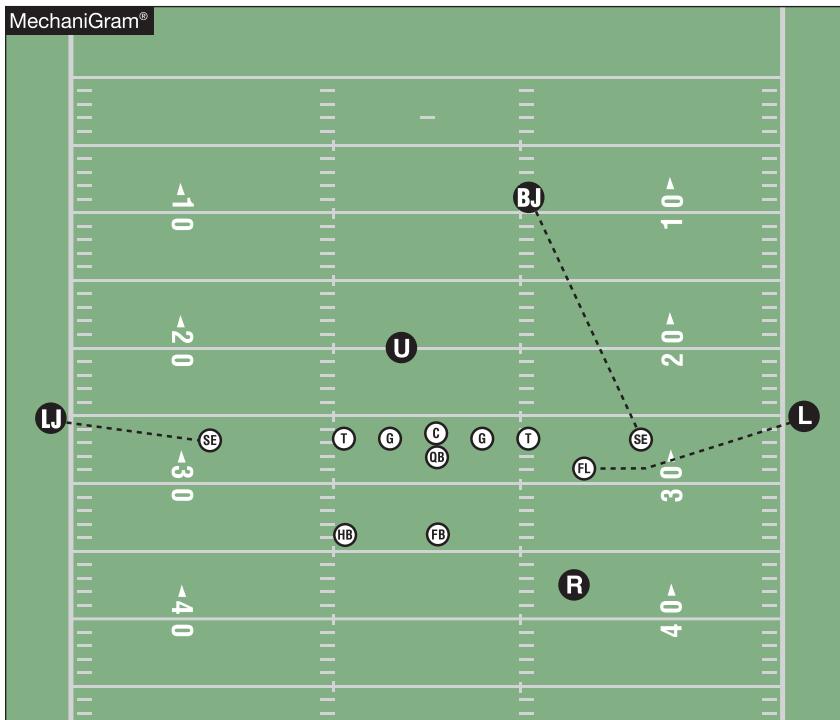
Strength is to the linesman's side. Even if the back goes in motion to the line judge's side, strength is not considered to have changed. The back judge keys the tight end and the linesman keys on the flanker. The line judge keys on the split end. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

STRAIGHT T



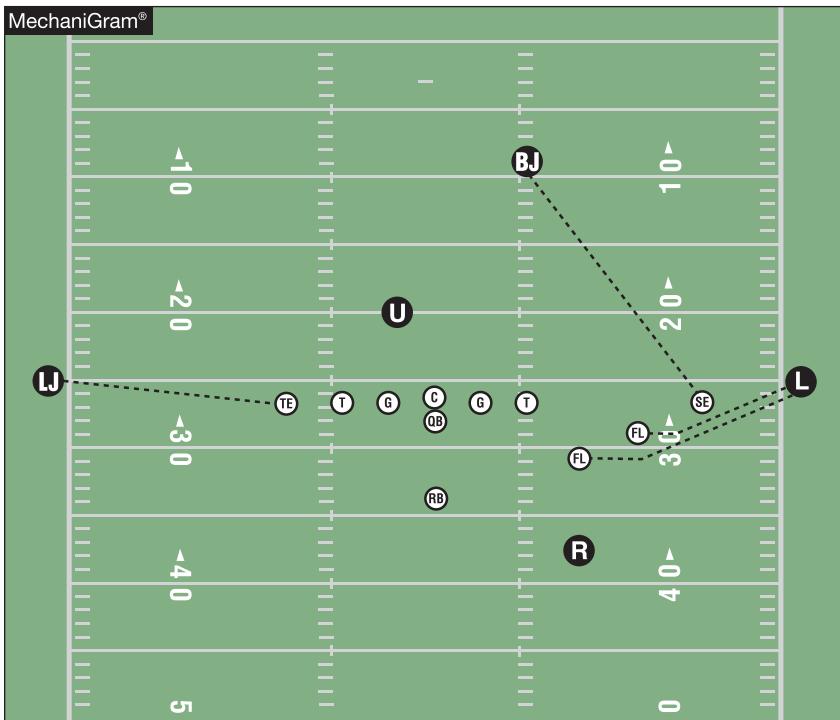
This is primarily a running formation, but on passing downs teams sometimes move a tight end to split end. It's a balanced formation, so strength is declared to the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the tight end on the line judge's side. The linesman keys on the weak side tight end. The line judge has no formal key, but should look through the tight end to observe the tackle on their side and observe the halfback after the snap. Either wing official may have a back who runs a pass route.

STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE SPLIT END



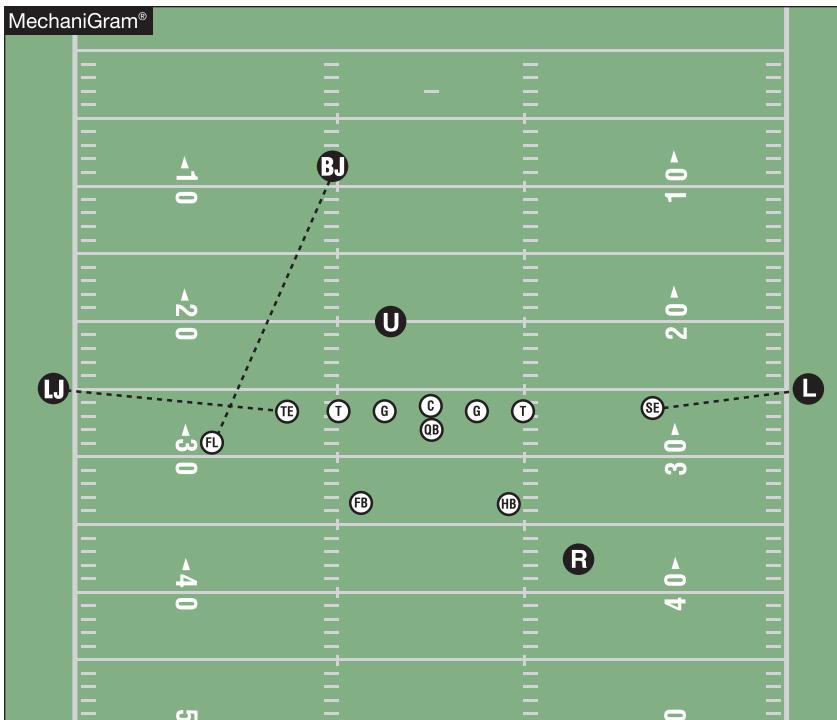
The back judge keys on the strong side split end and the linesman keys on the flanker. The line judge keys the split end on their side. The fullback will likely stay in the backfield for pass protection, but the halfback may run a pass route. If the route is to the line judge's side, the line judge takes them.

TRIPS TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



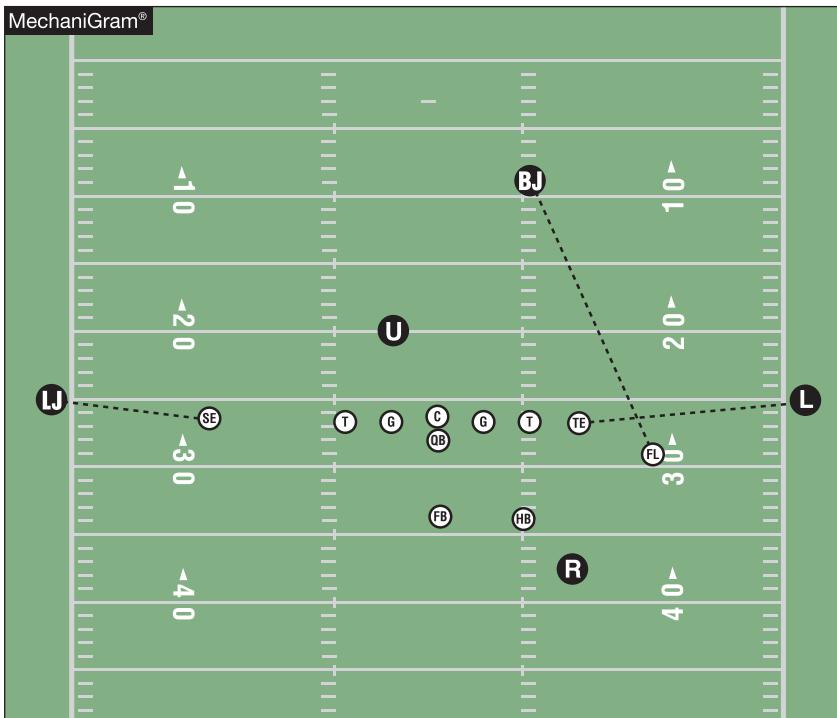
The linesman keys on the two inside receivers and the back judge keys on the widest receiver. The line judge keys on the end nearest them. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route. If the same formation were strong to the line judge's side, the back judge would key on the widest receiver and the line judge on the two inside receivers.

UNBALANCED FORMATION, STRENGTH TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE



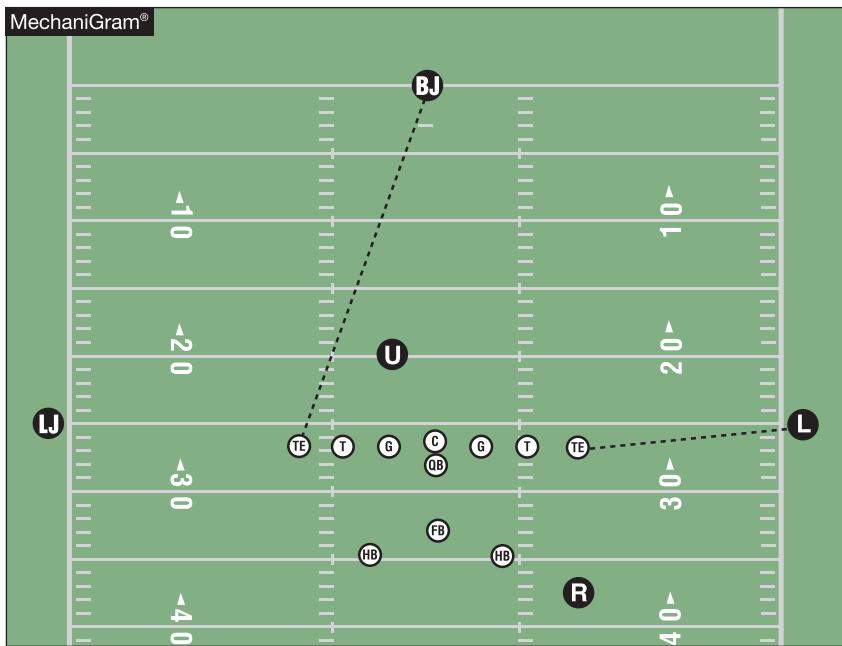
The back judge keys on the flanker and the line judge keys on the tight end. The linesman keys on the split end on their side. Either wing official may also have a back running a pass route.

VEER



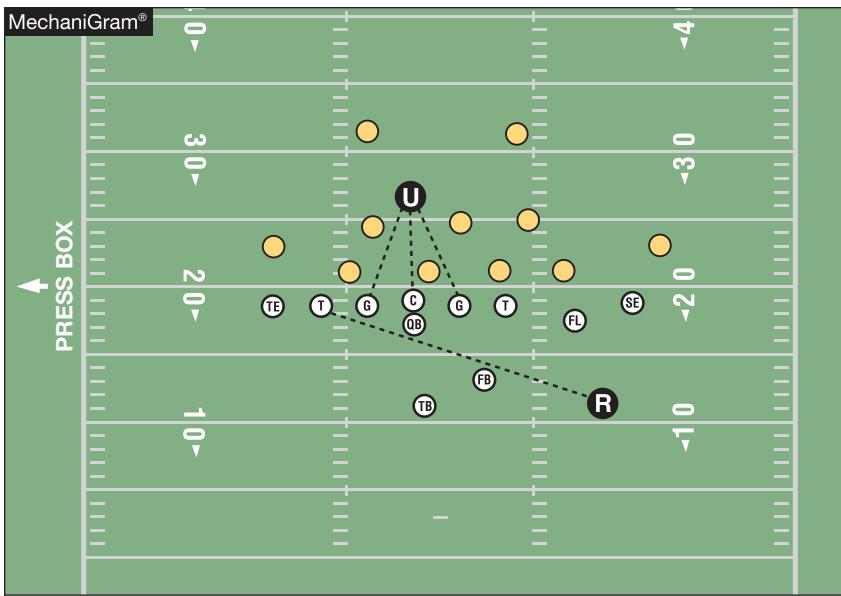
Although primarily a running formation, teams will occasionally throw to the flanker or split end. In this example, strength is to the linesman's side. The back judge keys the flanker and the linesman keys the tight end. The line judge keys on the split end on their side. The fullback's primary function is as a blocker.

WISHBONE



A balanced formation, which means strength is declared to line judge's side. The back judge keys the tight end on the line judge's side. The line judge keys the backs. The linesman keys the tight end on their side.

REFEREE AND UMPIRE KEYS



Regardless of the formation, the referee keys on opposite tackle while the umpire keys on both guards and the center.

CREW OF FIVE

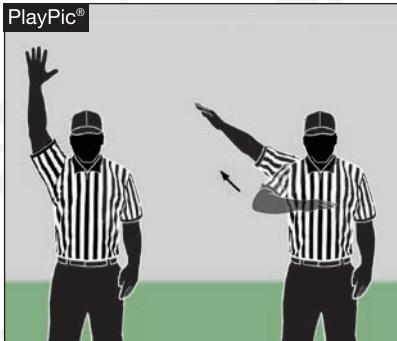
CHAPTER 11

BEFORE AND AFTER THE SNAP

The referee observes the huddle to ensure team A is not violating substitution rules, identifies eligible receivers in the backfield, observes shifts, watches for pre-snap violations by the offense and counts team A on scrimmage downs.

The umpire is responsible for ensuring that team A has five players numbered 50-79 on the offensive line. The umpire should listen for defenders interfering with the offense's snap count, observe the snapper for snap infractions and observe the guards for false starts. He also counts team A on scrimmage downs.

Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field, assist the referee in monitoring substitutions, count to ensure team A has at least five players on the line of scrimmage and no more than four in the backfield. If the receiver nearest the official is in the offensive backfield,



the wing uses the extended arm signal to alert the opposite wing. The linesman and line judge count team B players on scrimmage downs.

The back judge is responsible for the play clock. If the previous play ended in a manner that determines the play clock to be set at 40 seconds, then the back judge monitors to see it set and started

properly. If the ball has not been snapped 20 seconds after the ready signal has been given, the back judge should use a visible count to count off the last five seconds. The back judge counts team B on scrimmage plays.

Forward Progress

The wing officials are primarily responsible for forward progress. On long runs or passes, the back judge may also assist with forward progress.

Progress should be indicated by using the downfield foot. Keep your head up and observe players while marking a spot. Do not go around or jump over players to mark progress. Move into the field, generally, no farther than the nine yard mark, then stop.

If a spot is close to the line to gain, the spotting official must come all the way to the spot where the play ended. Wait for players to clear your path and then continue to spot the ball.

The primary official responsible for determining the forward progress spot is the official who can actually see the ball when the play is declared dead — not based on what side of the field the play ends. Good cross-field mechanics between linesman and line judge are essential to indicate accurate forward progress.

CREW OF FIVE

CHAPTER 12

COIN TOSS

By state adaptation, the coin toss is normally conducted in the center of the field three minutes before the game. The toss may be held at an earlier time off the field if both coaches agree. In such a case the results may be simulated in the center of the field as soon as possible before the start of the game.

The referee, back judge, and line judge will meet/greet with the captains of the home team while the umpire and linesman will meet/greet with the captains of the visiting team on their respective sidelines. The referee should be facing toward the scoreboard for the coin toss. The referee and umpire will then line up with each other across the field with speaking captains (those who will give options for their teams) positioned closest to them. All officials will escort captains to the center of the field with their backs to their own sidelines. During the meeting at center field, the umpire will take position with other officials opposite of the referee during introductions.

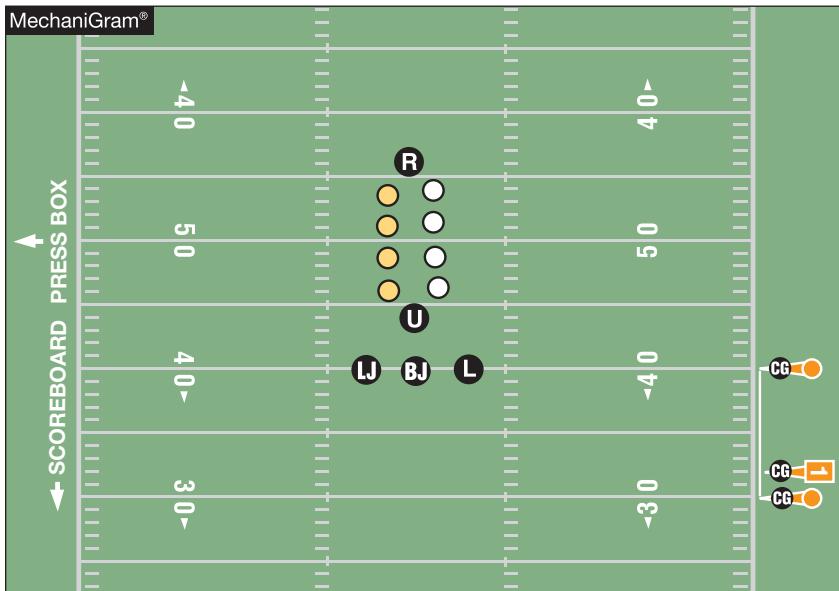
Players who are not involved in the toss should be allowed no closer than the top of the numbers. The captains are asked to introduce themselves to each other. The umpire then moves a few steps toward the referee to observe instructions and assist with the coin toss results.

The referee should allow all captains

to view both sides of the coin, identifying which side is heads and which is tails. The visiting captain is instructed to call heads or tails before the coin is flipped. The umpire repeats the choice loudly enough for all to hear. The coin will be caught by the referee and turned or not turned over. If the coin is dropped, the toss should be repeated. The referee may choose to have the coin hit the ground.

Once the winner is determined, the winner is offered their choice: receive, kick, defer, or defend a goal. It is the responsibility of the referee that the captain makes a final choice that ensures that each time has the opportunity to receive the ball. Often captains have preconceived notions on how choices are made. It is the responsibility of the referee to educate the captain until the captain clearly understand the outcome of their choice. If the choice is to defer, the referee immediately faces the press box, taps the shoulder of the deferring captain and signals the deferral. The remaining choices are then presented to the other captain and the final selection is made by the deferring captain. If the winner of the coin toss does not defer, no signal is immediately given.

When the final selections are made, the captains are asked to put their backs to the goalline their team will defend and



the referee gives the appropriate signal. If the choice is to kick or receive, only the first selection is signaled. If the choice is to defend a goal, two signals are given: pointing both arms toward the goalline being defended, followed by the appropriate signal for the other captain.

If at any time during the toss the referee errs or gives incorrect information (for instance, giving the wrong team an option), the umpire should speak up immediately.

When the toss is completed, the other officials join the referee and umpire in the center of the field and record the results of the toss. All officials initiate their pregame responsibilities.

The game official escorting the team with the second-half choice obtains from that team's head coach its second-half choice and communicates that choice to the referee. The referee then obtains the opposing team's response to the second-half choice team's choice from the official escorting that team. Following the

mandatory three-minute warm-up period after the halftime intermission expires, both teams assume their respective free-kick formations.

Overtime Procedure

If overtime is necessary, the officials wait for the three-minute intermission to end.

All officials will go to their respective sidelines and once again use the same procedures as for the pre-game coin toss.

The coin toss is repeated with the visiting team again calling it. When the winner is determined, the options are explained. The winner may not defer, but may choose offense, defense or the goal to be used.

When the selections are completed, the captains of the team on offense are asked to face the goalline in the direction their team will advance and the opposing captains stand with their backs to that goalline. The referee then taps the shoulder of the captain of the team that won the toss and gives the first down signal in the appropriate direction.

CREW OF FIVE

CHAPTER 13

TIMEOUTS

- Timeout With Both Teams At The Sidelines
- Timeout With One Or Both Coaches On The Field
- Injury Timeout

Any official should grant a valid timeout request and immediately stop the clock if it is running. That official reports the timeout to the referee. The referee indicates the timeout by pointing to the team's end zone while facing the press box.

All officials must record the number and team of the player requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. Each official then confirms with the referee the number of timeouts each team has remaining. The linesman and line judge inform the coaches on their respective sidelines of the timeouts remaining.

The back judge is responsible for timing the timeout. The one-minute count begins when the referee is informed of the timeout. When 45 seconds have expired, the back judge sounds their whistle twice so the linesman and line judge can inform their teams. When the

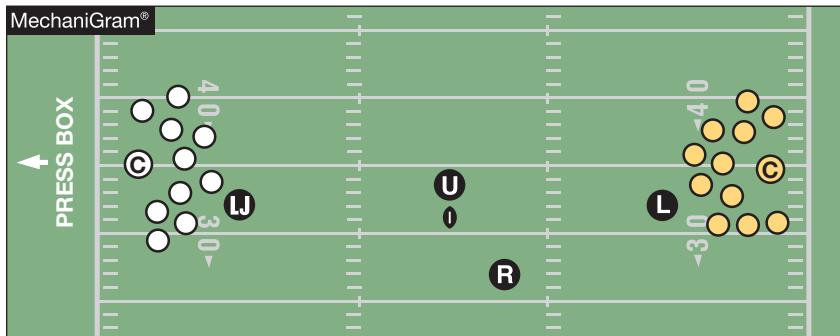
minute has expired, the referee whistles the ball ready for play.

The procedure for signaling an official's timeout is the same as for a charged timeout. After stopping the clock, the referee will indicate an official time out by tapping their chest.

Team conferences outside the nine yard mark may be approved by the referee during extensive injury timeouts.

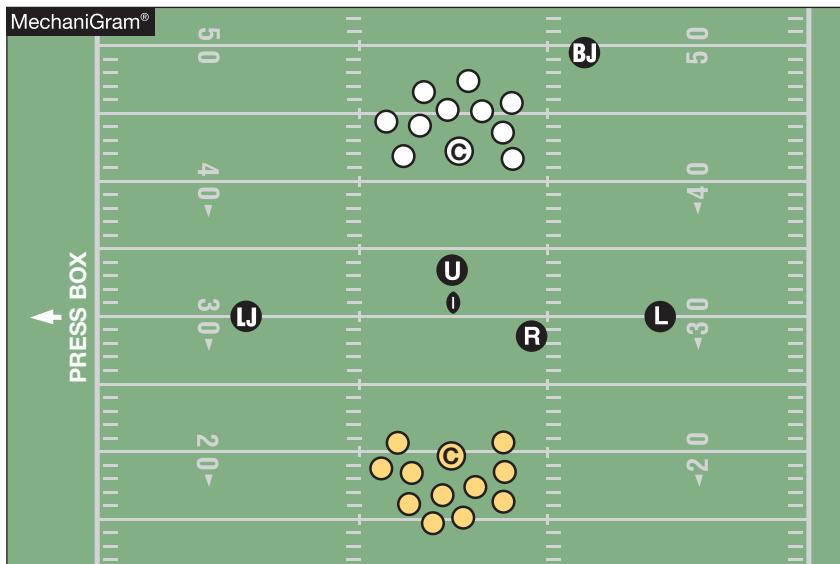
During timeouts, wing officials are responsible for monitoring conferences near your sideline. Help get players promptly back onto the field.

TIMEOUT WITH BOTH TEAMS AT THE SIDELINES



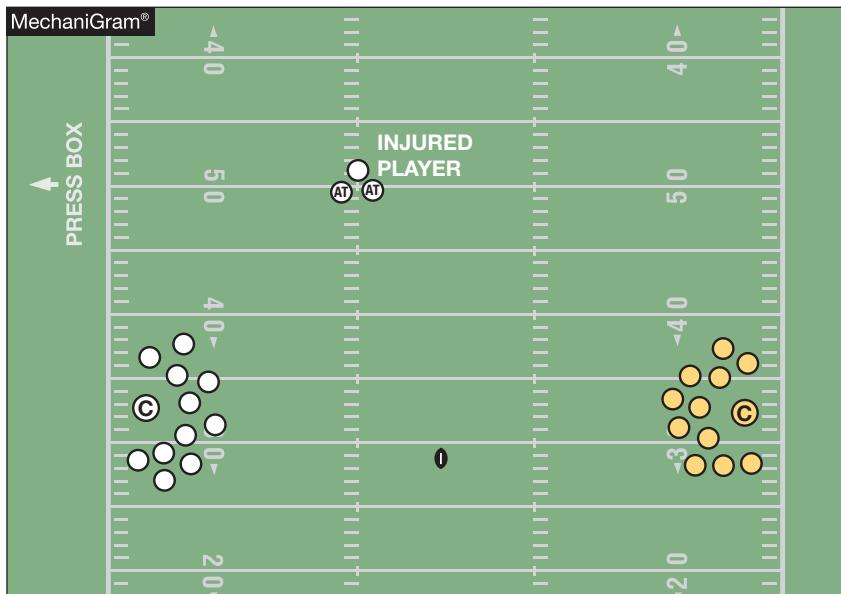
During the timeout, the referee and back judge remains in their positions in the offensive and defensive backfield respectively, the umpire stands by the ball and the linesman and line judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines.

TIMEOUT WITH ONE OR BOTH COACHES ON THE FIELD



During the timeout, the referee and back judge remain in their positions in the offensive and defensive backfield respectively, the umpire stands by the ball and the linesman and line judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines.

INJURY TIMEOUT



When an injury occurs and the referee grants an authorized conference, it must be an "outside the nine-yard marks conference." That conference provides an opportunity for players to get water. If the injured player is between the hashmarks and the numbers, the team whose sideline is affected should move away from the injured player.

CREW OF FIVE

CHAPTER 14

MEASUREMENTS

- Measurement In Side Zone Opposite The Chains
- Short Of A First Down
- Team A Awarded At First Down

When the referee calls for a measurement, the linesman should have the box moved behind the lead stake and retain the previous down. That is a reference point in case the line to gain should somehow become lost during the process. As the chains are being brought onto the field, the line judge should use their foot to indicate the intersection of the five yardline where the chain is clipped and a line through the ball parallel to the sideline. That is the spot where the linesman will place the clipped part of the chain.

The linesman brings the chain in from the sideline with the chain crew members. Putting one hand on the links on each side of the clip improves the linesman's chances of keeping track of the proper link in case the clip falls off the chain. The clip must be placed on the back edge of the line for the measurement. A good double-check is for the linesman to state that the next

down will be first if the ball is beyond the stake or the next down of the series if it is short. (Example: "It will either be first or fourth.")

The back judge holds the ball in place from the downfield side (the side of the ball opposite from the sideline the chains are coming from). Once the linesman tells the referee he has the chain on the proper mark, the umpire takes the forward stake from the chain crew member, then pulls the stake to ensure the chain is taut. The referee rules whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake.

Short of a First Down

If the measurement is in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the umpire should keep control of the stake. The referee uses their hands (or thumb and index finger if the ball is inches short of the front stake) to inform both benches how short the play ended of a first down.

The back judge continues to hold the ball in place. The referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball and rises. The referee should grasp the chain with two hands with the link that will be used to place the ball between their hands; that will ensure the proper link is maintained. If short of line to gain, the referee will indicate using signal below. Grasping the chain link at the foremost tip of the ball, the referee will relocate the ball just inside of the nearest hashmark line.

Once the ball is placed, the referee must wait for the linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

If the measurement occurred on fourth down and team A is short, the referee signals the change of possession by giving the first down signal toward team A's goalline. The referee then sets the ball in the same position as it was when it became dead so its foremost point becomes the rear point when the direction is changed. The new rear stake is then moved to the new foremost point of the ball.

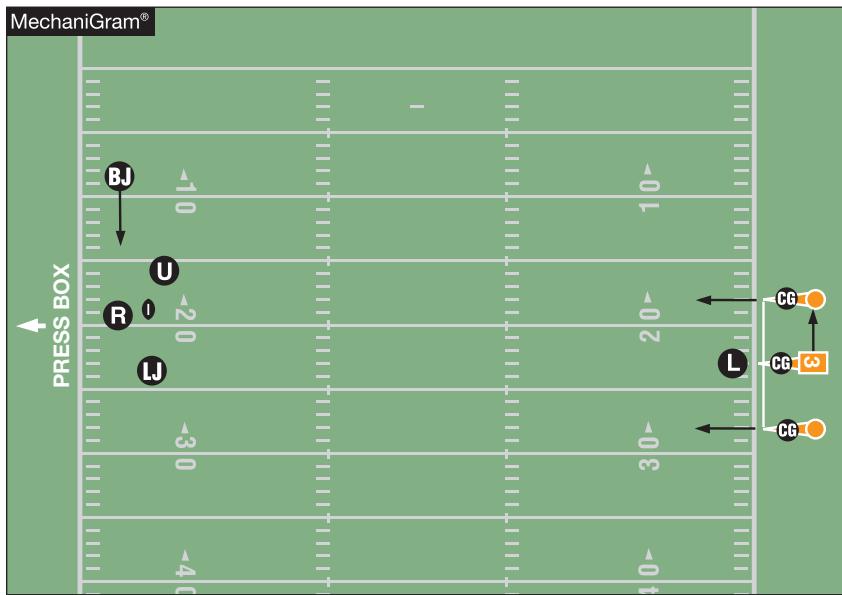
First Down

If the measurement results in the award of a new series, the referee signals the first down. The linesman need not hold the chain as he accompanies the chain crew back to the sideline, but he must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to the chain crew where the new series will begin.

The referee must wait for the linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.



MEASUREMENT IN SIDE ZONE OPPOSITE THE CHAINS



Action on the field: Play ends in side zone close to a first down.

Referee: Stops clock after seeing that measurement is necessary. Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

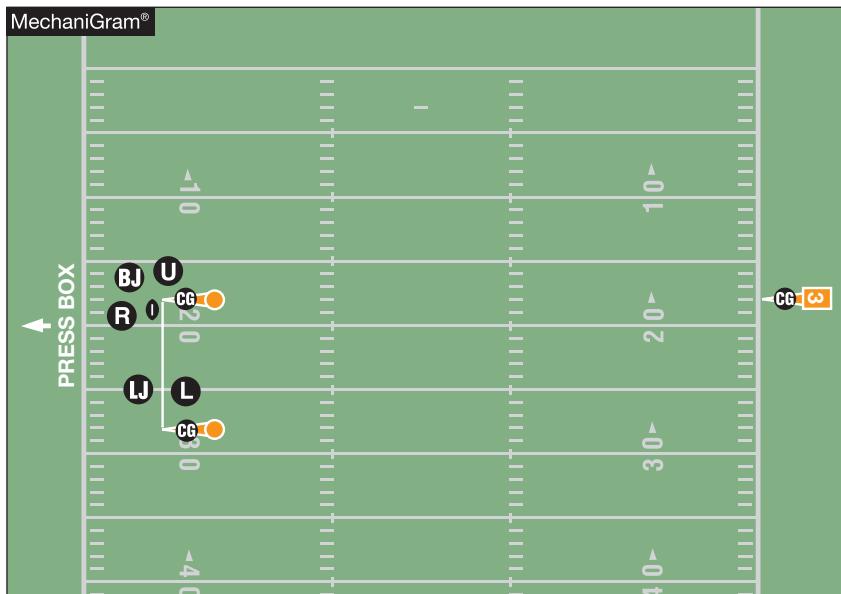
Umpire: Waits at spot for arrival of chain gang.

Linesman: Has box holder move box behind lead stake. Brings chain in from sideline with chain gang members to spot indicated by line judge.

Line judge: Indicates intersection of the five yardline where chain is clipped and line through ball parallel to sideline with foot.

Back judge: Moves to spot to hold ball in place on ground.

SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN PART 1



Action on the field: Team A is short of a first down.

Referee: Rules whether or not ball is beyond front stake. Uses hands or fingers to inform both benches how short the play ended of first down.

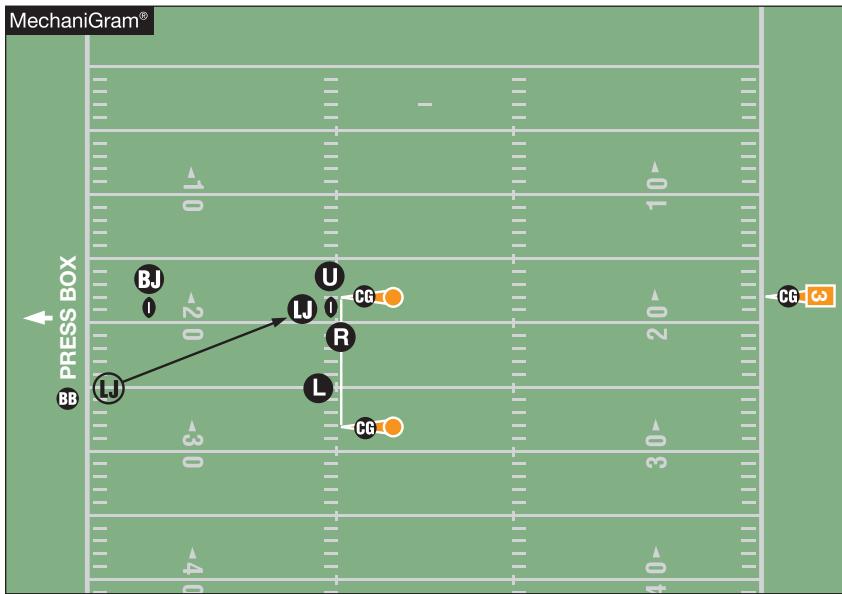
Umpire: Holds lead stake.

Linesman: Holds chain in place.

Line judge: Secures the chain by stepping on it just in front of clip.

Back judge: Holds ball in place on ground.

SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN PART 2



Action on the field: Chains are moved to hashmark for ball placement.

Referee: The referee will indicate using signal. Grasping the chain link at the foremost tip of the ball, the referee will relocate the ball just inside of the nearest hashmark line. Once the ball is placed, the referee must wait for the linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

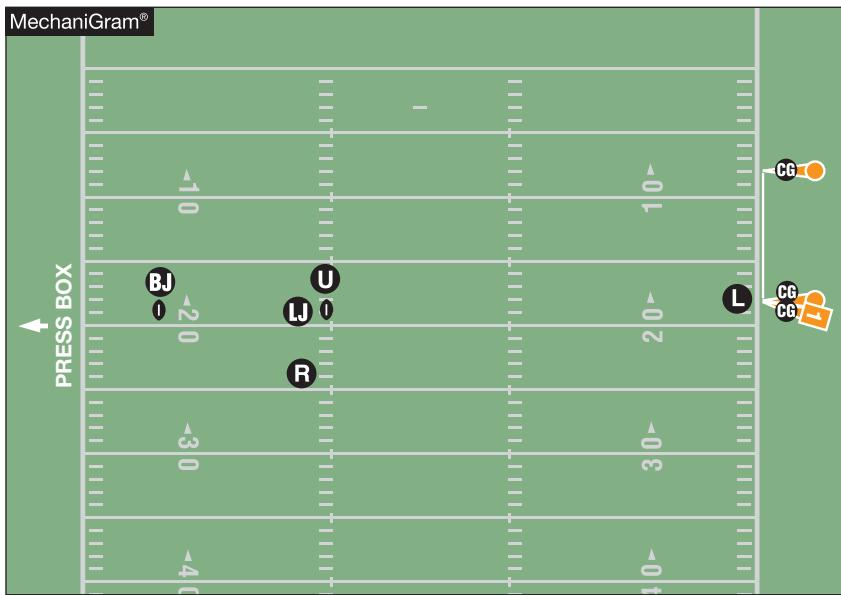
Umpire: Maintains control of front stake and walks to nearest hashmark.

Linesman: Maintains control of clip and walks to nearest hashmark. Accompanies chain gang back to sideline and sets chains for next down.

Line judge: Returns to sideline.

Back judge: Holds ball in place on ground.

TEAM A AWARDED A FIRST DOWN



Action on the field: Team A is awarded a new series.

Referee: Signals first down. Waits for linesman's signal that chain gang is back in position and other officials are ready before giving ready-for-play signal.

Umpire: Moves to hashmark where ball will next be snapped. Gets ball from line judge and places it.

Linesman: Returns to sideline with chain gang and indicates where new series will begin.

Line judge: Delivers ball to umpire for placement.

Back judge: Holds spot of first down.

CREW OF FIVE

CHAPTER 15

POSITIONING

- Free Kick
- Onside Kick
- Scrimmage Play
- Scrimmage Kick
- Scoring Kick

Referee: Starting position on goalline between hashmarks and center of field. Count R players. Responsible for noting whether K has at least four players on either side of the kicker. After seeing ready signal from each official, whistle and gives the ready for play signal.

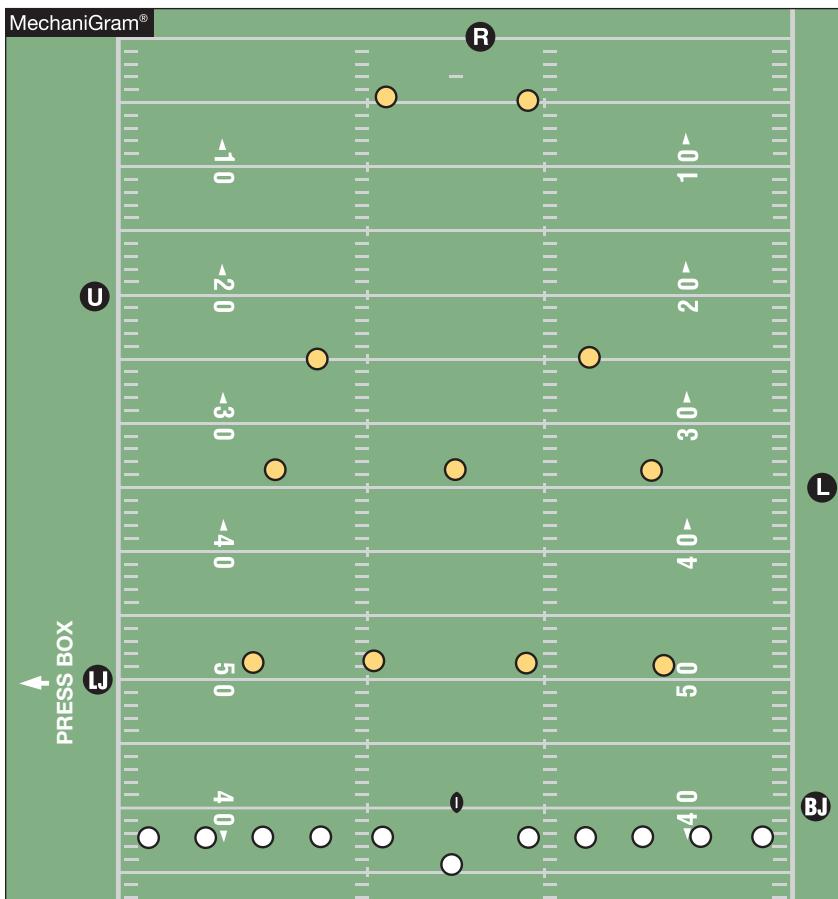
Line judge: Once players are on field, moves to middle of the field, on R's free-kick line. Reminds R that all blocks must be above the waist and to check their equipment. Ensures there are 11 K players. Concurs readiness with back judge, then moves to sideline. Starting position is on sideline on side opposite the chains, on R's free-kick line. Ensures sideline personnel on their side are properly positioned. When in position and ready for kick, raises arm as ready signal for referee.

Linesman: Ensures sideline personnel on their side are properly positioned and there are 11 R players. Starting position is on sideline opposite press box on R's 35 yardline. When in position and ready for kick, raises arm as ready signal for referee.

Umpire: Starting position is on sideline on side opposite chains on R's 20 yardline. Once in position and team R players are on the field, umpire counts team R players and gives signal to the referee. When in position and ready for kick, raise arm as a ready signal for referee.

Back judge: Move on field toward the kicker after checking legality of kicking tee. Do not give ball to kicker until K has 11 players on field, remind kicker not to kick ball until referee has sounded whistle and note whether no K player other than kicker is more than five yards from K's free-kick line. Identify K's free-kick line and jog off to sideline opposite press box. Starting position is on sideline on K's free-kick line. When in position and ready for kick, raise arm as ready signal for referee. If football falls or blows off tee just prior to free kick, sound whistle to prevent action and move to kicker to give instructions.

FREE KICK



Free Kick for Points After Fair Catch

In rare events, a team may elect to attempt a free kick for point after fair catch. When this occurs, it is imperative the referee inform the receiving team about the setup. Additionally, the officiating crew needs to set up to rule on a successful kick, touchback or live ball in the field of play. The setup will mimic a normal free kick setup. The officiating crew should be aware that after the ready for play is made, the kick will occur quickly.

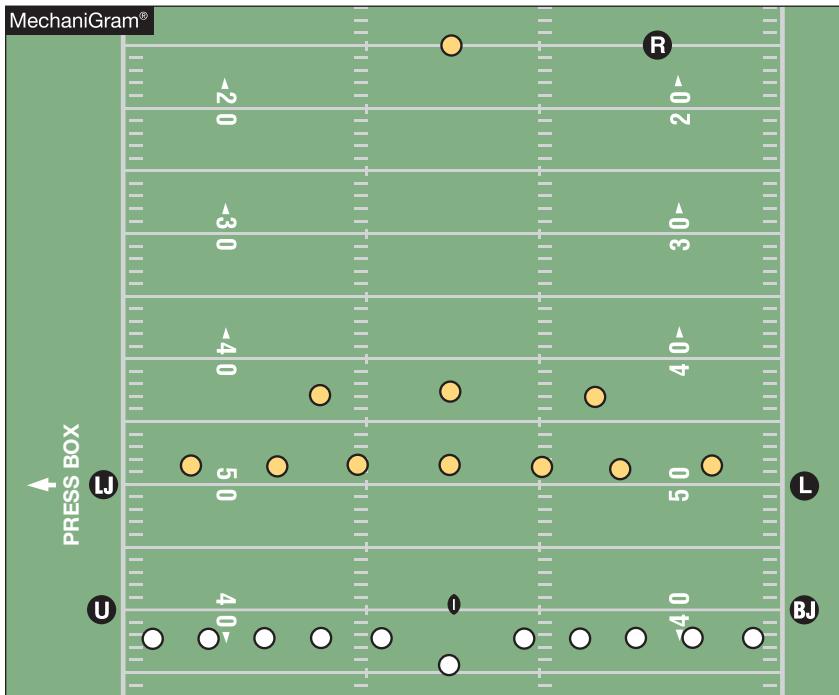
Referee and umpire: Under the goalpost, Referee responsible for crossbar.

Linesman: On goalline. Rules on kick crossing goalline.

Line judge: On receiver's restraining line.

Back judge: On kicker's restraining line.

ONSIDE KICK



Referee: Starting position is on the side of the field on which the chain crew is positioned, 10 yards wider than and 2-3 yards behind the deepest receiver.

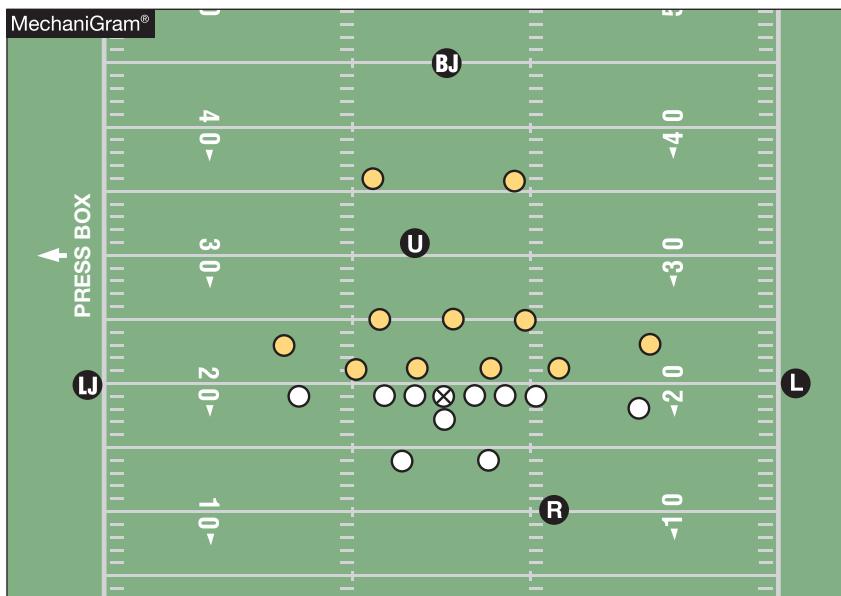
Umpire: Starting position is on the same side of the field as the line judge, on team K's free-kick line. The umpire should have their beanbag in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

Linesman: Starting position is on team R's free-kick line. The linesman should have their beanbag in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

Line judge: Starting position is on team R's free-kick line. The line judge should have their beanbag in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

Back judge: Starting position is on the linesman's side of the field and on team K's free-kick line. The back judge should be prepared to blow the whistle (signaling the ball is dead) on a popup kick or if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

SCRIMMAGE PLAY



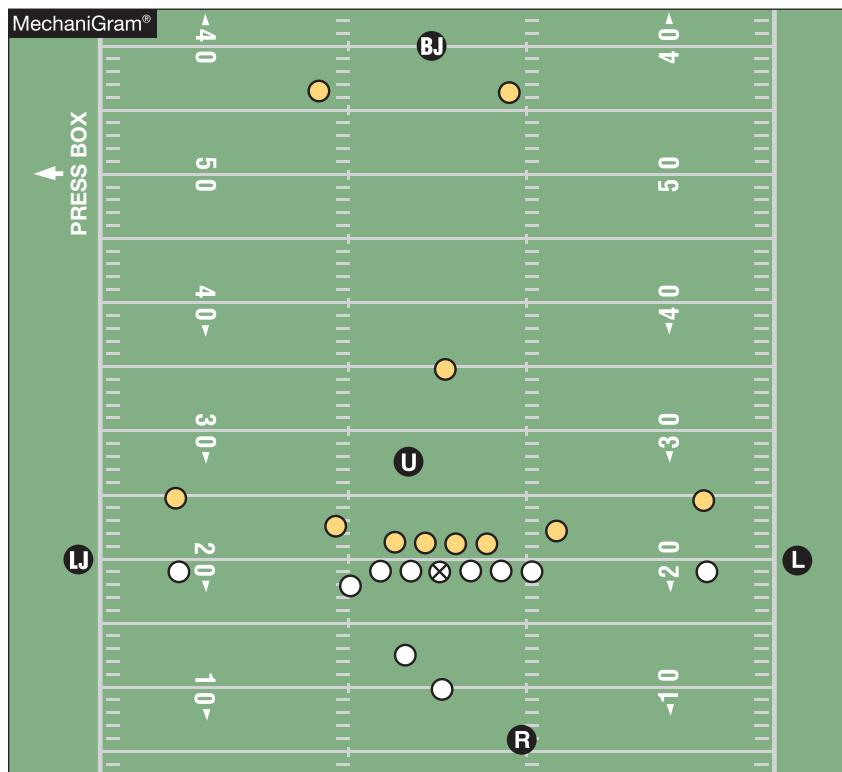
Referee: When team A is in its huddle, the referee should be positioned so that he is visible to the clock operator, approximately 10 yards deep and five yards wide of the huddle when marking the ball ready. Once team A is at the line, starting position is on the passing-arm side of the quarterback, approximately 10 to 12 yards deep and at least wide enough for both tackles to be in field of view.

Umpire: Starting position is five to seven yards behind team B's line and between the guards. The umpire must be able to see the ball from the time the snapper handles the ball until the time it is snapped.

Linesman and line judge: Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage and on the sideline.

Back judge: Starting position is in the middle of the field, approximately 20 to 25 yards beyond the line of scrimmage and deeper than the deepest defender.

SCRIMMAGE KICK



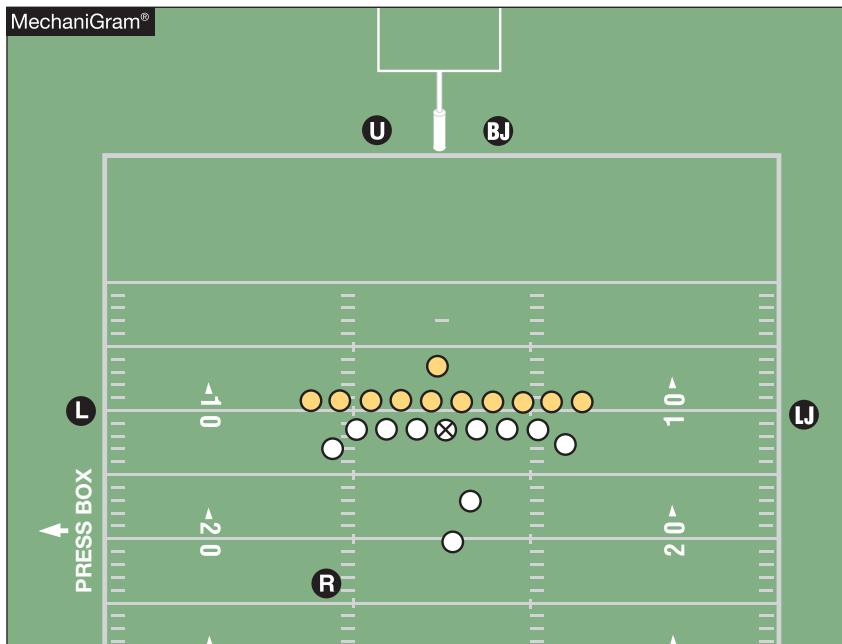
Referee: The referee's position is three to five yards outside the tight end and two to three yards behind the kicker, on kicking-leg side. That position allows the referee to view the snap as well as the action around the kicker before, during and after the kick. The referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction if an errant snap leads to a loose ball in the offensive backfield.

Umpire: The umpire sets up four to seven yards deep and favoring the line judge's sideline. Favoring the line judge's side compensates for the line judge moving downfield immediately at the snap. Option: The umpire may line up in team K's backfield, opposite the referee and at the same depth and width as the referee. On a long return the field is divided in half longitudinally.

Linesman and line judge: The wing officials' starting position on scrimmage kicks is the same as for other plays from scrimmage.

Back judge: The back judge begins the play at least 10 yards wider than and two to three yards behind the deepest receiver on the wide side of the field. If there are two receivers, the back judge is positioned between them. The back judge must be prepared to move upfield if the kick is short or downfield if the receiver has to retreat.

SCORING KICK



Referee: Starting position is at 45 degree angle facing the ball side of the holder. Be approximately 5 yards back and 5 yards to the side of the holder. Be positioned to see both blocking backs on each side of the formation.

Umpire: Initial position is on the upright on opposite the press box side. Prior to taking your position, instruct defense to restrain from hitting snapper immediately following snap.

Head linesman/Line judge: Initial position is same as scrimmage play — run. In fake kick situation officiate the same as in regular scrimmage play — run or pass.

Back judge: Behind the upright on press box side.

Note: On a field goal attempt by free kick, the chains are set to establish the 10-yard neutral zone.

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CHAPTER 16

COVERAGE

- Free Kick Coverage Zones
- Free Kick To Side Zone
- Free Kick Out Of Bounds
- Run Up The Middle
- Sweep To Linesman's Side
- Deep Pass
- Screen Or Pass To Flat
- Goalline Plays: Offense Going In
- Goalline Plays: Offense Coming Out
- Scrimmage Kick Out Of Bounds
- Scrimmage Kick To Back Judge's Side Zone
- Scoring Kick

Free Kicks

If the ball blows off the tee just prior to the kick, the back judge should sound their whistle and the ball should be re-kicked.

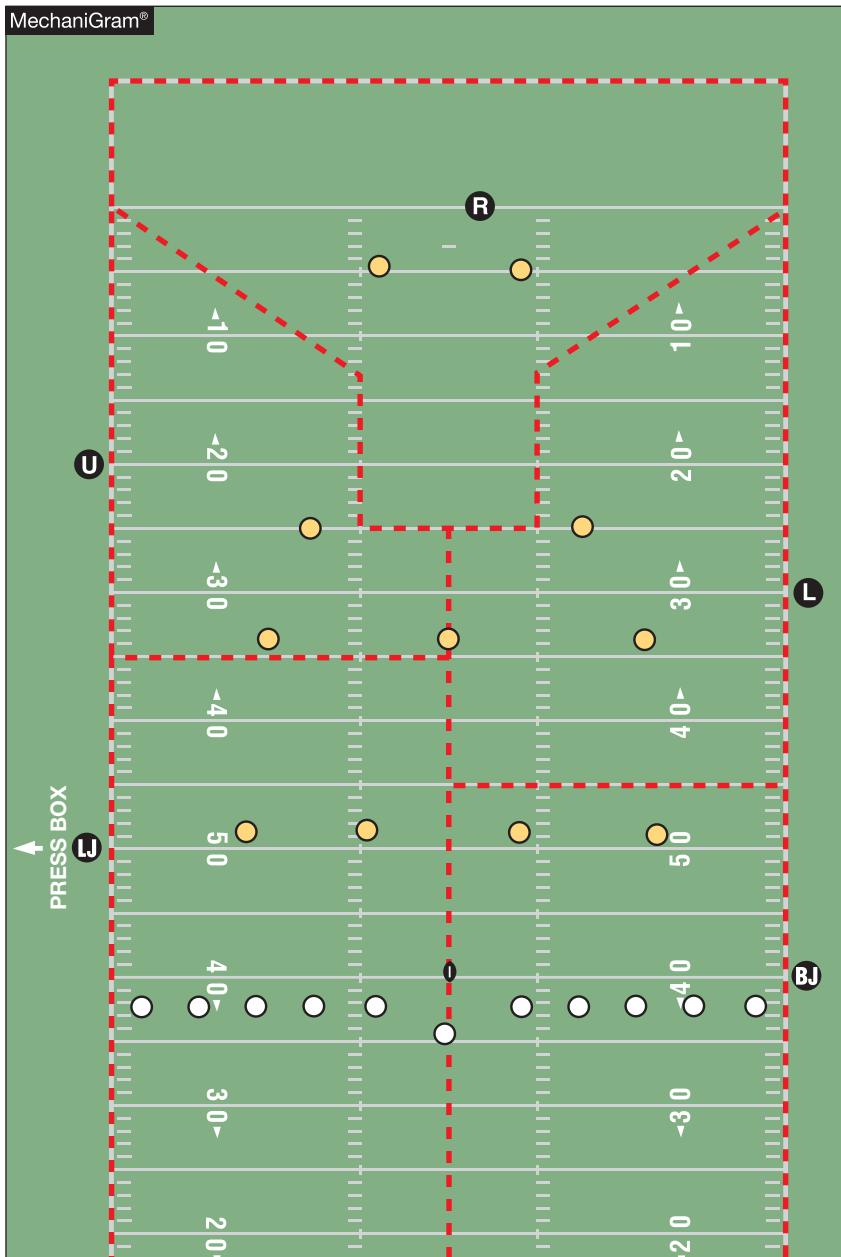
If the kick is down the middle of the field, the referee stays with the runner to about team R's 25 yardline. If the return is to the umpire's side and as wide as the hashmark, the umpire picks up coverage and stays with the runner to team R's 35 yardline, where the line judge takes over. If the kick is

to the opposite side and as wide as the hashmark, the linesman takes up the coverage and stays with the runner to about team R's 35 yardline, where he gives up coverage to the back judge.

If the umpire is responsible for the initial coverage of the runner, the referee cleans up behind the play, but must move cautiously in case team R runs a reverse or the runner reverses their field.

After the ball is kicked, the linesman moves quickly downfield while the line

FREE KICK COVERAGE ZONES



judge drifts downfield, maintaining coverage of the sideline.

After the kick, the back judge moves toward the center of the field at least 10-15 yards while maintaining inside-out coverage. The back judge is responsible for team K's goaline.

On kicks inside team R's five yardline, the referee is responsible for determining whether the momentum exception applies and whether the kick is to be ruled a touchback. If a touchback occurs, the referee should move quickly toward the middle of the field to prevent late hits on receivers.

Free Kicks After a Safety

The coverage areas and mechanics are the same for the free kick that follows a safety.

The back judge should be at team K's 20 yardline, the umpire and linesman at team K's 30 yardline and the position of the remaining officials is adjusted accordingly.

Field Goal Attempt by Free Kick After a Fair Catch

If team K attempts a field goal by free kick after a fair catch (or awarded fair catch), the referee and umpire move behind the upright. The umpire rules whether or not the kick cleared the crossbar while the referee determines if the kick was between the uprights.

The remaining officials assume their normal positions for a free kick.

Scrimmage Plays

On a running play, the referee focuses on the ball, the runner and the blocking around the runner. If the play goes to the opposite side, the referee should move toward or parallel to the line of the scrimmage and maintain a position approximately in line with the runner. Overaggressiveness is to be avoided in case the play is a reverse.

If the play is to the referee's side, the referee moves behind the play and is responsible for the runner until

he crosses the neutral zone. The referee should watch the handoff or the pitchout, see the runner head outside the free blocking zone, and watch to see that no one contacts the quarterback before drifting along to follow the play. He will not have much to observe besides the quarterback because little significant action is likely to take place behind the runner, and the runner himself is being watched by the appropriate wing official.

On passing plays, the referee observes blocking by the backs as the quarterback drops back. The referee should move to maintain the 10- to 12-yard distance between themself and the quarterback (e.g. if the quarterback drops back seven yards, the referee retreats seven yards).

Once the pass has been released, the referee should verbalize that the ball has been thrown to help prevent roughing the passer but continues to observe the passer. By maintaining spacing between themself and the quarterback, the referee will widen their field of vision. The wider view allows the referee to determine if the pass is forward or backward (using the extended arm signal to indicate a backward pass) yet continue to focus attention on the passer. If the flight of the pass is altered because the passer's arm is hit by a defender, the referee must determine whether the resultant loose ball is a forward pass or a fumble. If the referee rules the play to be an incomplete pass, they must blow their whistle and signal emphatically. If the play results in a fumble, the referee must beanbag the spot where possession was lost and continue officiating.

The referee is responsible for ruling on illegal forward pass. For illegal forward pass, the referee will gather information from the umpire and line of scrimmage official(s) to determine whether a passer was beyond the line of scrimmage when the pass was

thrown. The referee should move to the spot of the pass and observe the location of the passer's feet. If the forward foot of the passer is clearly beyond the line of scrimmage (Rule 7-5-1), a penalty marker should be dropped. In cases where there is action engaging the referee, a beanbag should be dropped by the referee where the passer's forward foot was at the start of the pass. At the end of the play, the referee can compare the spot of the beanbag and the location of the down box to make the call.

The referee is also responsible for intentional grounding. Intentional grounding occurs when the passer is in the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone (the "tackle box") and the ball is not passed to an area containing an eligible receiver. Intentional grounding also occurs when the passer is outside the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone and the ball does not land on or beyond the line of scrimmage. The referee is responsible for knowing the location of the passer as it relates to the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone. The umpire and sideline official are responsible for providing information to the referee about where the pass ended and if there was an eligible receiver in the area. The referee can elect to beanbag the spot of a muff, fumble or quarterback sack in the offensive backfield, but it is not an enforcement spot.

Until the referee blows the ready for play signal, the umpire should stand near the ball. After the signal, the umpire moves to their position.

Umpires must observe the point of attack because of the potential for holding, chop blocks and other fouls.

Plays that end in a side zone may require the umpire to move outside the hashmark and toward the sideline in order to clean up behind the play. When play swings around to one side, the umpire should turn their attention

to the blocking ahead of the runner and should prepare to cross outside the hashmark if the runner is downed in the side zone near the sideline. The umpire can help get the ball back to the hashmark and set it at the progress spot or relay it to the referee.

On pass plays, the umpire must step up and reach the line of scrimmage. That takes the umpire out of short pass routes and puts them in a position to judge ineligibles downfield and passes thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage.

When the pass is thrown, the umpire pivots to follow the flight of the ball. The umpire has catch/trap responsibility if the receiver is facing the umpire.

Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field and count to ensure team A has at least seven players on the line of scrimmage. Wing officials count four in the backfield checking that the referee and umpire are signaling 11 players on offense. If the receiver nearest the official is in the offensive backfield, the wing uses the extended arm signal to alert the opposite wing. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving, even if the player reverses their motion.

Because they will mark forward progress the vast majority of the time, the line judge and linesman must be especially alert for quick-hitting running plays into the line. On running plays the wing officials must hold the line of scrimmage until the runner has gone past it, after which, the wing officials will trail the runner.

On passing plays the wing officials on the strong side must hold their position on the line of scrimmage. They must be prepared to rule on intentional grounding, illegal forward pass, and ineligible man downfield. The weak side wing official has to follow receivers downfield but should look back to see if

a passer is truly setting up to pass. On quick passes in the flat, the wings must be ready to rule if the pass is forward or backward and signal with extended arm in the direction of the pass.

Wing officials have responsibility for the passer if he scrambles past the line of scrimmage. If the quarterback is tackled out of bounds the wing official must rule on the legality of the contact. If the runner is driven out of bounds, the covering wing official can handle the play and supervise players outside the sideline. When a play is more than a five-yard gain and the runner heads across the sideline, the covering wing official marks the spot while the referee or back judge escorts the players back to the field. The umpire waits for the ready for play signal and waits for the crew to be in position before backing away from the ball.

If the play ends beyond the line and in a side zone, the back judge should be the middle man in the V. The wing official tosses the ball to the back judge, who relays it to the umpire.

The back judge notes blocking ahead of the runner, or to the runner himself if the runner should advance more than 10 yards downfield.

When a play is more than a five-yard gain and the runner heads across the sideline, the back judge should hustle out of bounds to protect players. On a play gaining considerably more than 10 yards, the wing official maintains the spot while the back judge or referee escorts the players who went out of bounds back to the field.

The back judge is responsible for team B's goalline until the ball is snapped at or inside team B's 15 yardline. When the ball is snapped at or inside team B's 15 yardline, the back judge's starting position is on the endline.

On pass plays, the back judge must retreat far enough so he is always deeper than the deepest receiver.

When the pass is in flight, the back

judge must quickly determine the intended receiver and get into the best possible position to observe the play. Both the offensive and defensive players must be observed for possible interference.

When a play ends inbounds near a sideline the covering should give the "wind-the-clock" signal. If a first down has been achieved, the "wind-the-clock" signal should be followed by the stop-the-clock signal.

Scrimmage Kicks

The referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction in case of an errant snap or blocked kick.

Once the kick is away, the referee takes a quick look to see the flight of the ball. If the kick is short and toward a sideline, the covering sideline official should be prepared to determine the spot the ball went out of bounds. If the kick is long and goes out of bounds in the air, the covering official moves past where he thinks it flew out before walking toward the referee with their hand up — along the sideline — until the referee chops downward, telling them to halt.

If the receivers begin a return, the referee should move slowly downfield; if the runner breaks a long return, the referee may assume responsibility for the runner. The referee will get an inside-out look regardless of which sideline is involved since the appropriate wing official has sideline responsibility from endline to endline. If the optional umpire positioning is utilized, the referee and umpire have the runner on their respective half of the field.

On blocked kicks, the referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball.

The umpire should move toward the line at the snap. Once the ball has been kicked and players from both teams have run past, the umpire pivots to the

line judge's side. After the pivot, the umpire should move slowly downfield and observe action in front of the runner.

On a return to the middle of the field, the back judge has responsibility for the runner until the umpire takes the coverage; the point at which the transfer occurs depends on how far downfield the umpire has drifted after the kick.

If the optional umpire positioning is utilized, the umpire should move slowly downfield; if the runner breaks a long return on their half of the field, the umpire may assume responsibility for the runner. The umpire will get an inside-out look since the appropriate wing official has sideline responsibility from endline to endline.

The linesman observes the initial line charge and remains on the line until the kick crosses the neutral zone while the line judge releases on the snap and observes action on their side of the field between the neutral zone and the receivers.

On the vast majority of punts, however, both wing officials are responsible for their sideline from endline to endline and for covering the runner when the return is to their area. If the run is to the opposite sideline, clean up behind the play.

All deep receivers are the responsibility of the back judge. Once the ball is kicked, they judge the validity of any fair catch signal. The back judge has coverage responsibilities until the runner breaks into a side zone, when coverage transfers to the appropriate wing official. On a return to the middle of the field, the back judge has responsibility for the runner until the umpire takes the coverage; the point at which the transfer occurs depends on how far downfield the umpire has drifted after the kick.

The covering official, regardless of position, must beanbag the spot

where the kick ends. That spot may be used for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement.

Scoring Kicks

A field goal is no different than a scrimmage kick (punt) except it may score points. Be prepared to adjust your position if a field goal attempt becomes a simple scrimmage kick (no chance to score points). Be alert for the ball breaking the plane of the goalline. If this happens, the ball is dead.

The umpire is always under the goalpost regardless if the kick is a field goal or try and no matter the yardline from which the kick is made.

Referee: Ensure crew is in proper position before giving ready for play. Other pre-snap requirements are same as in scrimmage kicks — punts. At the snap, observe action of the blocking back(s). Observe action against the holder and kicker. Running into and roughing are the same as scrimmage kicks — punts. Note: a player punting or kicking a field goal/try may get hit after getting both feet back on the ground. In the case of the punter, contact at this point is considered on the basis of a personal foul, not as roughing or running into the kicker. In a field goal or try situation, the kicker tends to watch their kick and is in an unprotected position longer after both feet are back on the ground. In this case we extend the time in which we rule the contact as roughing and/or running into the kicker. Make sure the kicker or holder are not faking a fall. On a fake kick or a broken play, officiate the same as regular scrimmage play — run or pass. When the play ends, primary responsibility for blowing whistle at end of kick try. Ensure all action has ended then look for signal from the back judge and/or umpire. Give final signal to the press box.

Umpire: If ball is kicked, rule if ball passes completely inside the upright.

Signal only if ball is in the middle of the uprights or threatens your upright. Do not signal if the ball threatens opposite upright. That covering official will signal. If ball is not kicked (for whatever reason), move to goalline. If ball touches or crosses goalline from the kick, the play is dead. If play is run or pass, move to goalline and box in play with the wing official. After judging kick, ensure all action ceases at the LOS. The exception is a field goal attempt where the goalline is threatened or where there may be a runback. In this case move towards the goalline and assist the back judge with the ball touching or crossing the goalline. If there is a runback, officiate the middle of the field as you do in normal scrimmage kick situation. If there is a fake field goal, officiate the middle of the field as you do in a normal scrimmage play. The back judge also goes to the goalline and boxes in any action at the goalline with the wing officials. It is possible in this one situation that the umpire could call pass interference. Remember that any field goal that cannot score is still a scrimmage kick. It could:

- Cross the goalline (dead at that point).
- Be first touched by the kickers (bean bag spot).
- Be touched by the receivers (loose ball).
- Be advanced by the receivers.

Be alert for all listed under scrimmage kicks — punt, plus any leverage attempts (using a teammate to gain height in a jump). When the play ends, hold good/no good signal to allow the referee to see it, allowing time for the referee to complete the necessary responsibilities before looking at you. Stop all action between opposing linemen. If the kick is successful, begin clearing your sideline for kickoff.

Head linesman/line judge: At the

kick (or fake kick), if ball is not kicked (for whatever reason), move to goalline. On the LOS (field goal), if ball is kicked, do what you would do on a scrimmage kick — punt. If ball is not kicked (for whatever reason), do what you would do on a normal scrimmage play — run or pass. If ball is on or inside the 5 yard line, go to the goalline. Remember that any field goal that cannot score is still a scrimmage kick. It could:

- Cross the goalline (dead at that point).
- Be first touched by the kickers (bean bag spot).
- Be touched by the receivers (loose ball).
- Be advanced by the receivers.

When the play ends on the LOS, when a kick is made, move onto field to help the umpire control the linemen. Responsible for clean up of all dead-ball action in front of you. Since the umpire is always under the goalpost, assist in getting ball to the back judge. (kickoff) or umpire (scrimmage play) for next play. When kick is a try and ball is kicked, move in quickly to the hash and dead-ball officiate action on your side of the ball.

Back judge: If ball kicked (try or field goal), judge if ball went over crossbar and inside your upright. Signal only if ball is in the middle of the uprights or threatens your upright. Do not signal if the ball threatens opposite upright. That covering official will signal. If ball not kicked (for whatever reason), adjust according to play. Stay at the end line if you read pass. Move to goalline if you read run. Be alert for ball touching kicking team player before passing over crossbar. If not a kick, watch for holding, clips, blocks below the waist and pass interference (offensive and defensive). When the play ends, primary responsibility for blowing whistle at the end of a field goal. Hold good/no good signal to allow the referee to see it. He needs to

completes their duties before looking at you. Responsible for clean up of all dead-ball action in front of you. If kick not made, clean up responsibilities are same as scrimmage play — pass or run. Time 1 minute intermission following a score.

Swinging Gate Coverage for Tries

Referee: Initial position does not change. If ball kicked from this formation, responsible for upright on your side.

Umpire: Initially go to normal umpire position behind LOS in the middle of field, assuming play will be a run or pass. When team shifts back to normal kick try formation, assume normal position under the upright opposite the press box.

Head linesman/Line judge: Initial position does not change. If ball is snapped when main body of offensive lineman is away from snapper, you are responsible to determine if snapper is eligible pass receiver.

Back judge: Initially take upright opposite the referee, assuming a kick. When team shifts back to a normal kick try formation, assume normal position under the upright on the press box side.

Free Kick (Field Goal) After Fair (or Awarded) Fair Catch

Team restraining lines are based on spot of catch or awarded catch. Team lineups are same as other free kicks. Because this free kick can score, adjust positions of two deepest officials, the referee and head linesman.

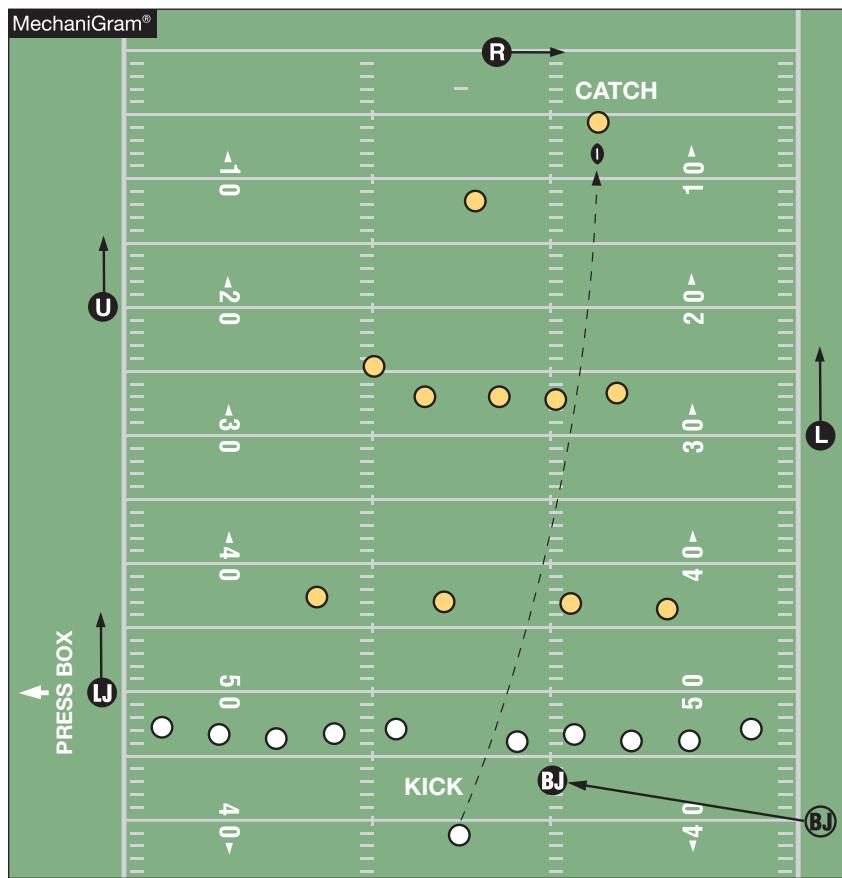
Referee: Positioned under the uprights. If kick short and does not reach goalline, moves up middle of field.

Umpire/ line judge/back judge: Responsibilities and Mechanics remain same as regular free kick.

Head linesman: Positioned under the uprights. If kick short and does not reach goalline, moves to their sideline

and is responsible for sideline and forward progress.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE PART 1



Action on the field: Receiver catches kick.

Referee: Observes catch. Signals clock to start when ball is caught by receiver. Moves to trail receiver and observes action of runner during return.

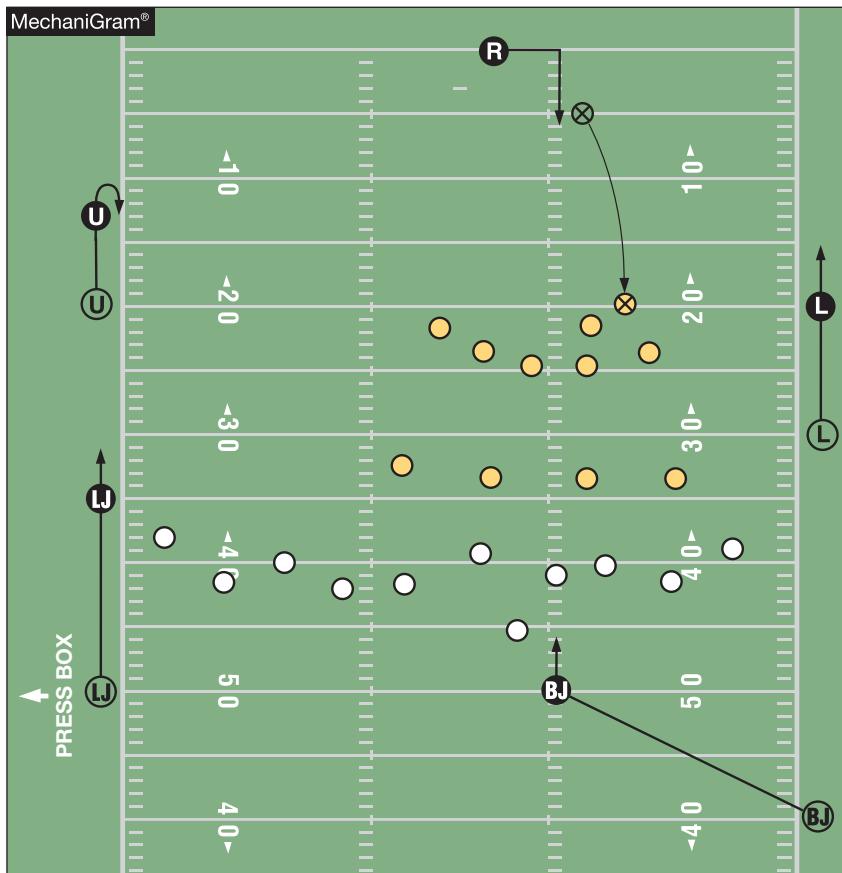
Umpire: Observes players in their area.

Linesman: Moves quickly upfield and observes action in their area.

Line judge: Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest them while moving upfield no farther than team R's 35 yardline.

Back judge: Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest them including kicker. Moves into field.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances.

Referee: Gives up coverage of runner to linesman. Observes action in front of runner.

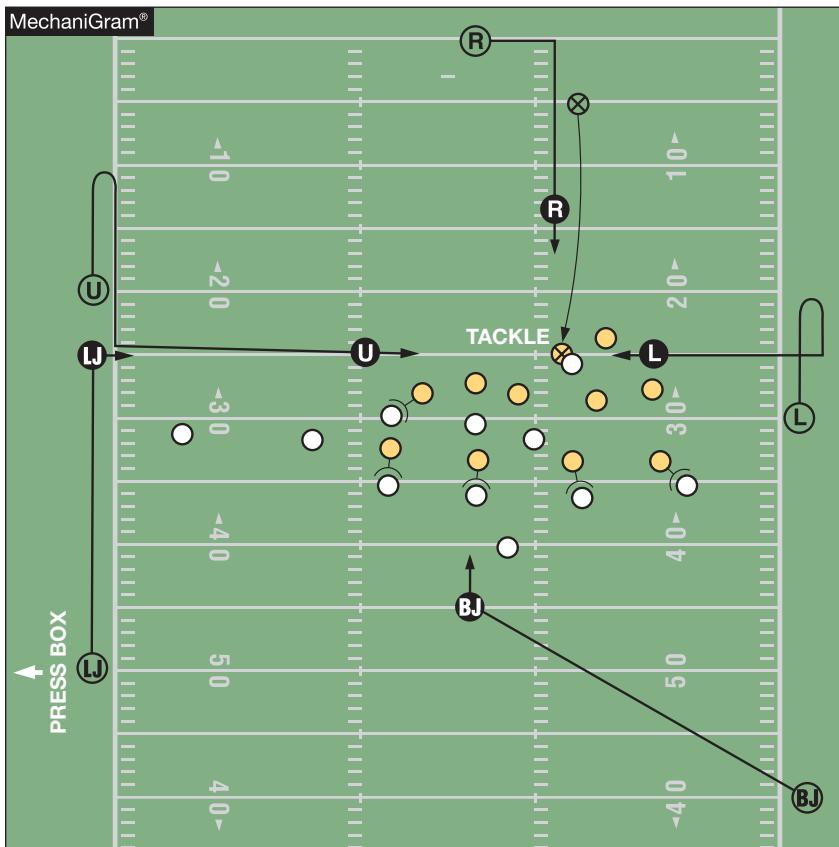
Umpire: Moves downfield with runner. Observes action in front of runner.

Linesman: Continues to move upfield. Takes coverage of runner when runner enters area.

Line judge: Observes action in front of runner.

Back judge: Observes action in front of runner. Goes no farther than team R's 45 yardline.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE PART 3



Action on the field: Runner continues advance and is downed.

Referee: Moves slowly downfield trailing runner. Observes players. When certain no penalty flags are down, signals new series for team R.

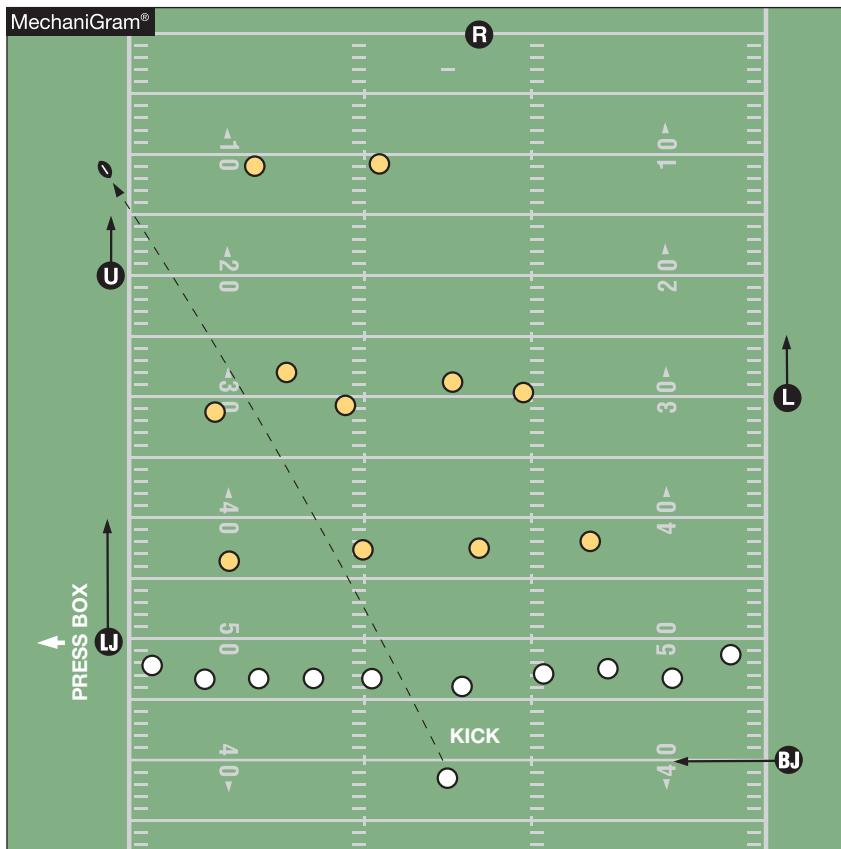
Umpire: Observes players. Mirrors spot until linesman marks progress. Moves to middle of the field and spots ball for next down. Retrieves game ball from ball helper.

Linesman: Observes players. Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner is downed. Squares off and holds spot. When referee signals possession for team R, instructs chain crew to set chains for new series.

Line judge: Observes players and hustles to spot.

Back judge: Observes players. When referee signals possession for team R, moves into position for next down.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



Action on the field: Ball kicked out of bounds in umpire's side zone.

Referee: Observes action in their area.

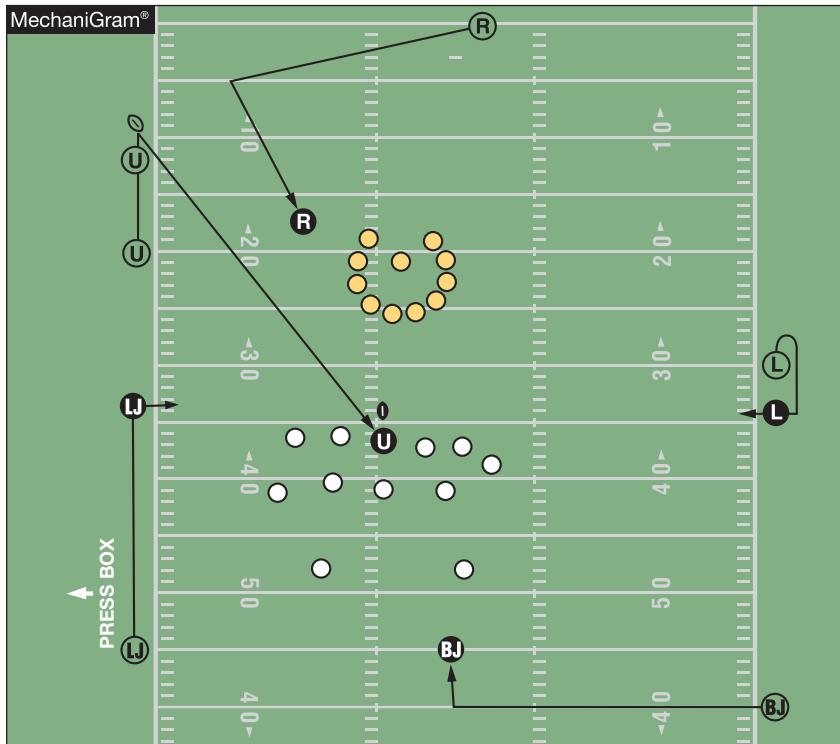
Umpire: Observes action in their area. Moves into position to judge which team caused kick to go out of bounds. If caused by K, the covering official throws the flag at the out of bounds spot. Gives stop-the-clock signal when ball is out of bounds.

Linesman: Watches for contact involving players nearest them.

Line judge: Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest them.

Back judge: Watches for infractions involving free-kick line and contact involving players nearest them including kicker.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



Action on the field: Team R chooses to take ball at its own 35 yardline.

Referee: Observes action in their area. Communicates with umpire to determine result of play. Obtains choice from team R. Signals team K's foul and points toward team R's 35 yardline, where ball will next be put in play. (If team R chooses a rekick, returns to position for rekick.)

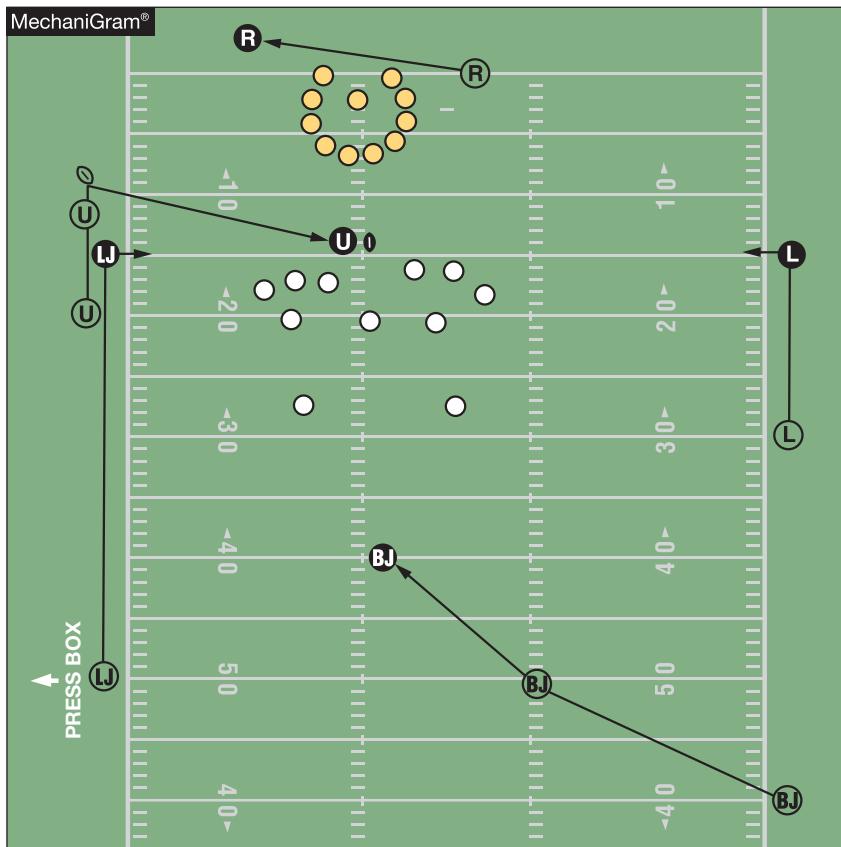
Umpire: Observes action in their area. If caused by team K, the covering official throws the flag at the out of bounds spot. Communicates result of play to referee. Moves to hashmark at team R's 35 yardline to set ball for new series. (If team R chooses a rekick, returns to position for rekick.)

Linesman: Observes action in their area. Moves to team R's 35 yardline, where team R will begin new series, assists chain crew in setting chains. (If team R chooses a rekick, returns to position for rekick.)

Line judge: Observes action in their area. Moves to team R's 35 yardline, where new series will begin. (If team R chooses a rekick, returns to position for rekick.)

Back judge: Observes action in their area. Moves to position for start of new series. (If team R chooses a rekick, signals team K's foul, walks off penalty and returns to position for rekick.)

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



Action on the field: Team R caused the ball to go out of bounds.

Referee: Observes action in their area. Communicates with umpire to determine result of play. Signals new series will begin at spot where kick went out of bounds.

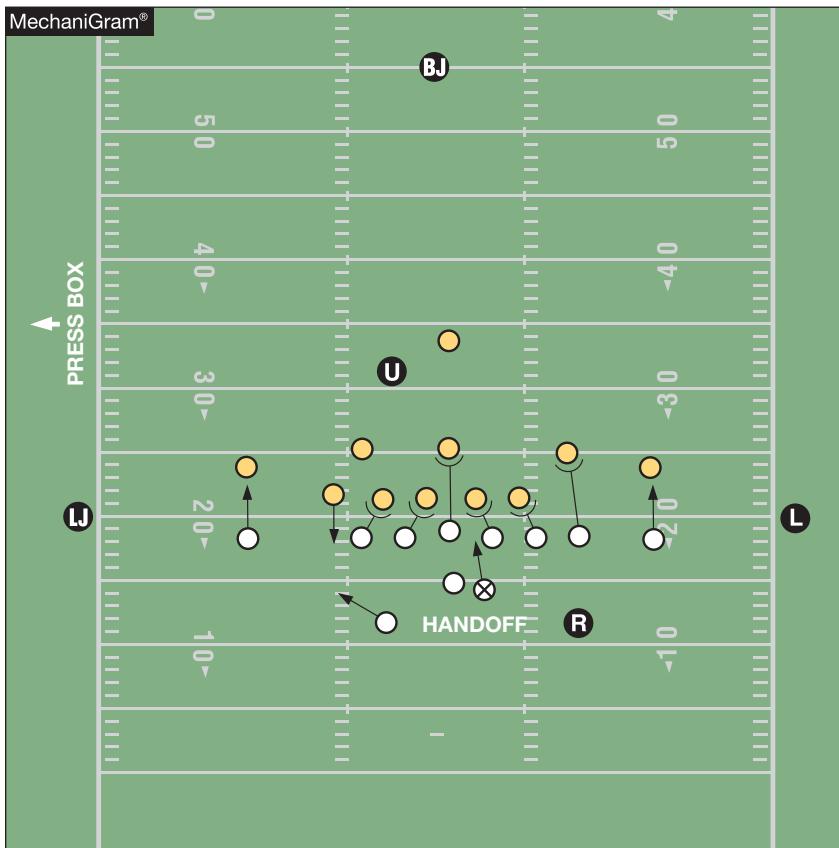
Umpire: Observes action in their area. Communicates result of play to referee. Moves to hashmark where new series will begin and sets ball.

Linesman: Observes action in their area. Moves to spot where new series will begin and assists chain crew in setting chains.

Line judge: Observes action in their area. Moves to spot where new series will begin. Holds spot until umpire sets ball for new series.

Back judge: Observes action in their area. Moves to position for start of new series.

RUN UP THE MIDDLE PART 1



Action on the field: Handoff to a back.

Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Observes handoff and action around quarterback after handoff.

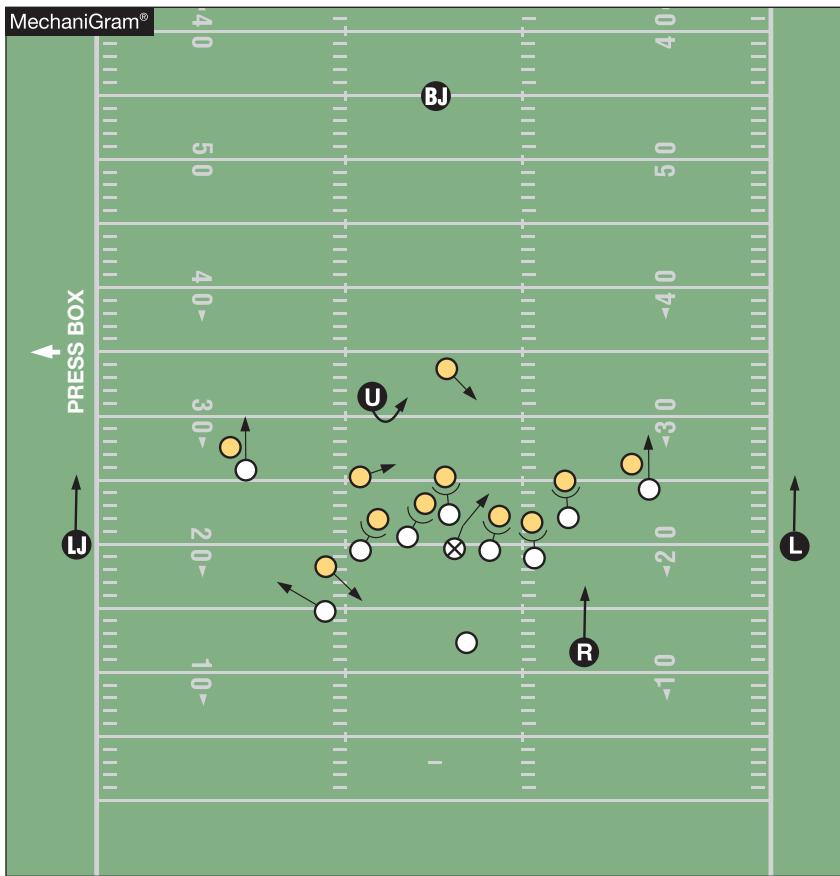
Umpire: Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there.

Linesman: Reads blocking of tight end and reads run. Observes blocking.

Line judge: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Observes blocking.

Back judge: Reads blocking of tackle and reads run. Observes blocking.

RUN UP THE MIDDLE PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances.

Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes action behind runner.

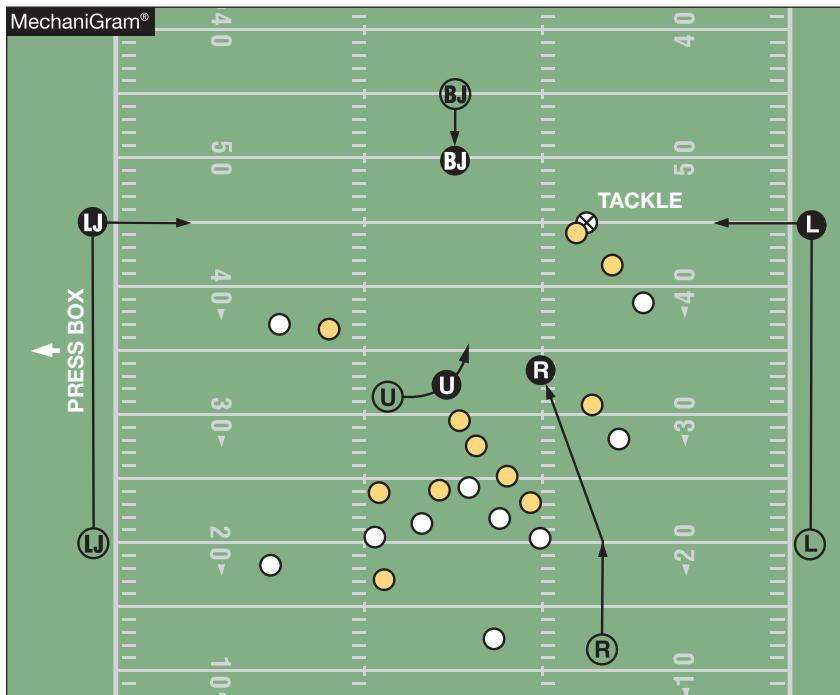
Umpire: Steps back to avoid interfering with play and pivots to observe play. Observes action around runner.

Linesman: Maintains position on the line of scrimmage and, as the runner passes the line of scrimmage, observes action in front of runner and trails the play.

Line judge: Maintains position on the line of scrimmage and, as the runner passes the line of scrimmage, observes action in front of runner and trails the play.

Back judge: Observes action in front of runner.

RUN UP THE MIDDLE PART 3



Action on the field: Runner continues advance and is downed.

Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players behind the ball in their area. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, stops the clock and signals linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

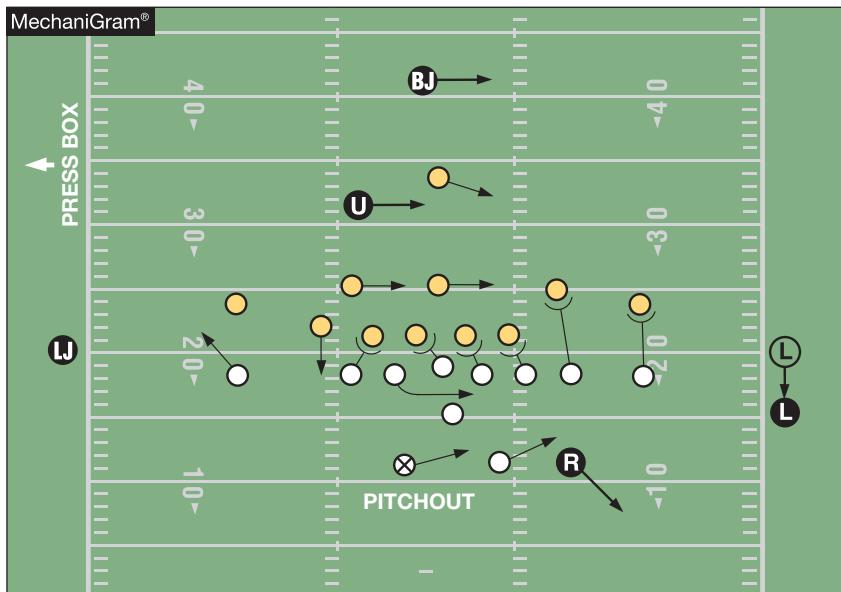
Umpire: Moves downfield and observes action behind runner. Observes players in their area.

Linesman: Moves downfield and observes action around runner until runner enters back judge's coverage area. Observes players. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Blows whistle when runner is down. If first down has been achieved, stops the clock and gets signal from referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

Line judge: Observes action in front of runner on their side of the field. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in their area.

Back judge: Moves into position to observe runner when runner enters coverage area. If first down is achieved, also gives stop-the-clock signal. Observes players. Assists with the spot if linesman needs help.

SWEET TO LINESMAN'S SIDE PART 1



Action on the field: Pitchout to back.

Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

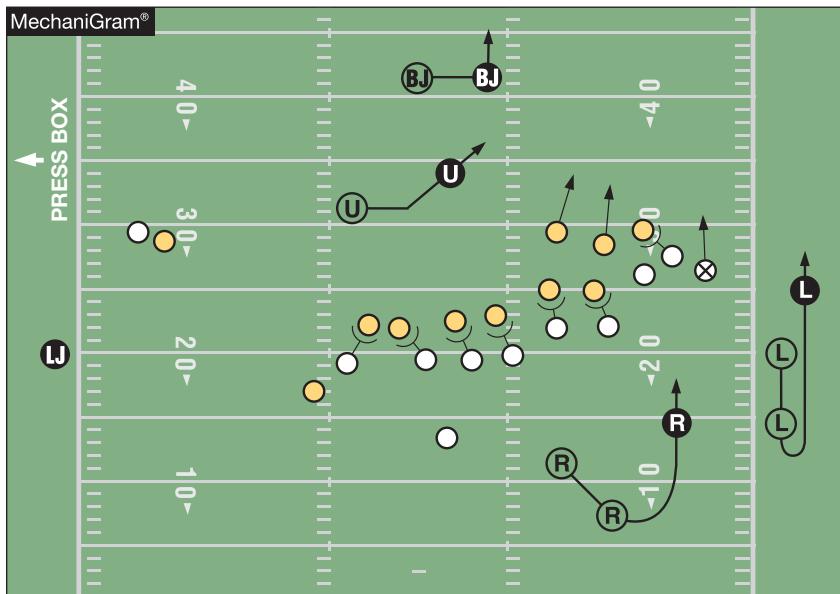
Umpire: Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Looks through split end, reads blocking of tight end and reads run. As flow comes to their side, steps backward across sideline to prevent interfering with play. Waits until players have flowed downfield before moving to cover play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Line judge: Looks through end, reads blocking of pulling left tackle and reads sweep to opposite side. Observes blocking and action of players not involved in flow of play.

Back judge: Observes blocking of tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

SWEEP TO LINESMAN'S SIDE PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances.

Referee: Gives up coverage of runner to linesman. Moves slowly downfield trailing flow and cleans up after the play.

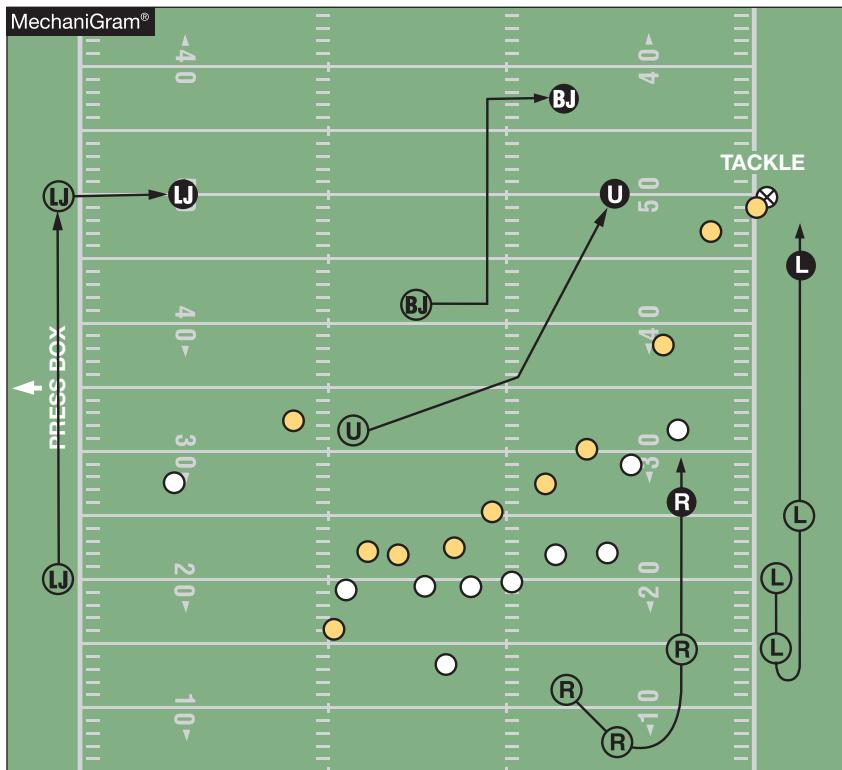
Umpire: Pivots and moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Takes coverage of runner and moves quickly up sideline, allow play to get past you-trail slightly. Observes runner and action around runner.

Line judge: Moves slowly downfield and cleans up after the play.

Back judge: Moves toward play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

SWEET TO LINESMAN'S SIDE PART 3



Action on the field: Runner continues advance and goes out of bounds.

Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. If first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, signals linesman to have chain crew move the chains.

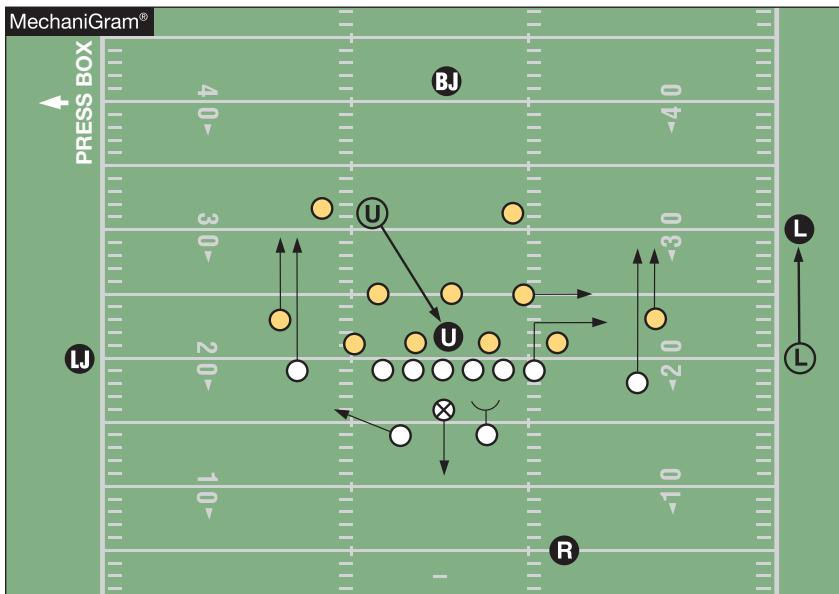
Umpire: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. Once spot is established, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

Linesman: Moves down sideline and observes action of the runner and behind the runner. Blows whistle and gives stop-the-clock signal when runner steps out of bounds. Hustles to dead-ball spot to prevent post-play action. If first down has been achieved, gets signal from referee and instructs chain crew to move to spot. Assists chain crew in setting chains for new series.

Line judge: Moves downfield with flow of play and cleans up after the play. Squares off to mirror spot of forward progress. Observes players in their area.

Back judge: Observes players. Assists the wing with dead-ball spot.

DEEP PASS PART 1



Action on the field: Quarterback drops back.

Referee: Keys on opposite-side tackle; reads pass when tackle retreats. As quarterback drops back, moves back to maintain distance between themselves and quarterback. Observes blocking by backs.

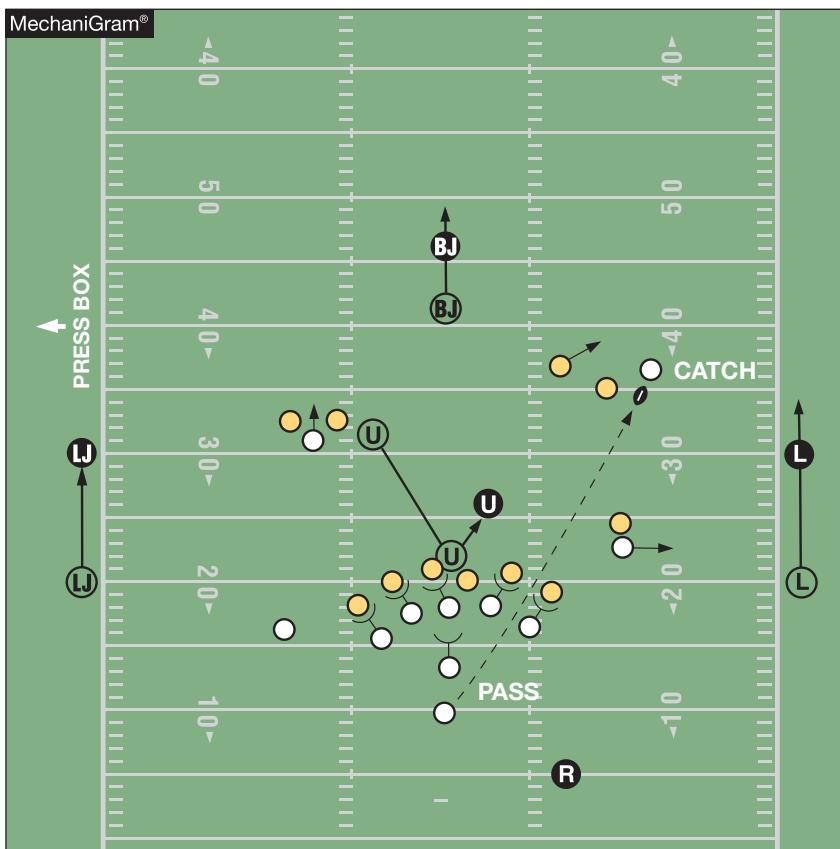
Umpire: Observes presnap adjustments and legality of snap. Keys on center and guards; reads pass when linemen retreat. Steps up to the line of scrimmage and observes blocking.

Linesman: Identifies strong side and the eligible receivers on their side of the field. Uses extended arm signal to alert line judge that end is in offensive backfield. After snap, observes initial blocking, then if on the weak side of the formation moves slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders. If on the strong side of the formation they will maintain position on the line of scrimmage and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

Line judge: Identifies strong side and the receivers on their side of the field. After snap, observes initial blocking, then if on the weak side of the formation moves slowly downfield and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders. If on the strong side of the formation they will maintain position on the line of scrimmage and watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

Back judge: Observes tackle's block and reads pass, then shifts focus to split end. As receivers move downfield, moves back to maintain distance between themselves and receivers. Watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

DEEP PASS PART 2



Action on the field: Pass thrown to and caught by receiver.

Referee: Observes passer. Moves downfield with flow of play.

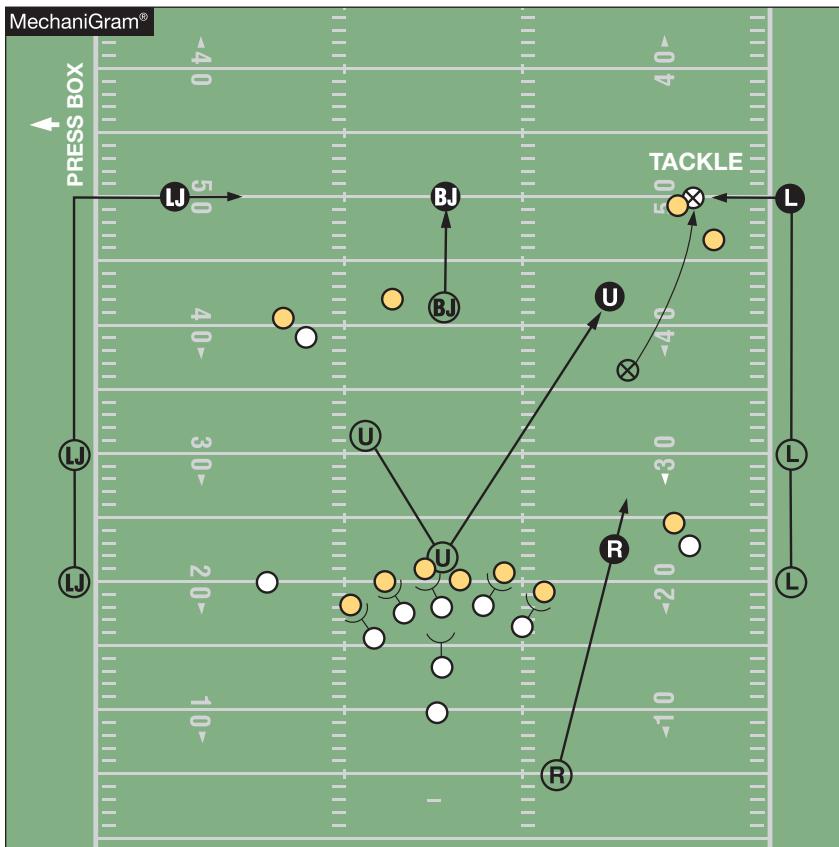
Umpire: Pivots to follow flight and moves in direction of the ball.

Linesman: Determines intended receiver and pivots to get angle to observe attempted catch.

Line judge: Continues to watch keys. Observes action of players in the area.

Back judge: Determines intended receiver and pivots to get angle and observe attempted catch.

DEEP PASS PART 3



Action on the field: Runner advances and is downed.

Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball.

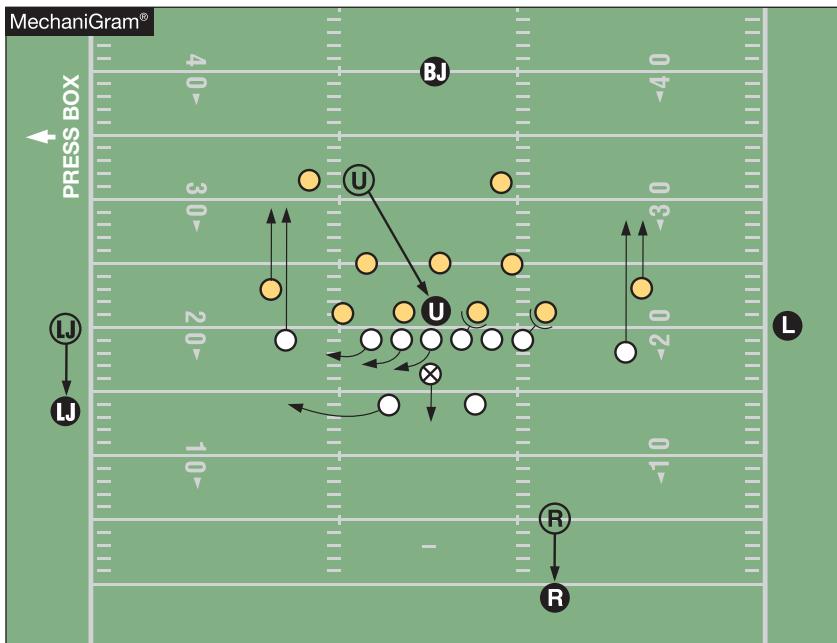
Umpire: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in front of the ball. Once spot is established, hustles to hashmark to set ball for next down.

Linesman: Continues to move downfield. Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Stops clock if first down has been achieved.

Line judge: Moves downfield and observes players behind the ball in their area. Practices dead-ball officiating.

Back judge: Moves downfield and observes players in their area. Assists the wing with dead-ball spot. Echoes stop-the-clock signal if first down has been achieved.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 1



Action on the field: Quarterback drops back.

Referee: Keys on opposite-side tackle; reads screen or draw when tackle pulls. As quarterback drops back, moves back to maintain distance between themselves and quarterback. Observes blocking by backs.

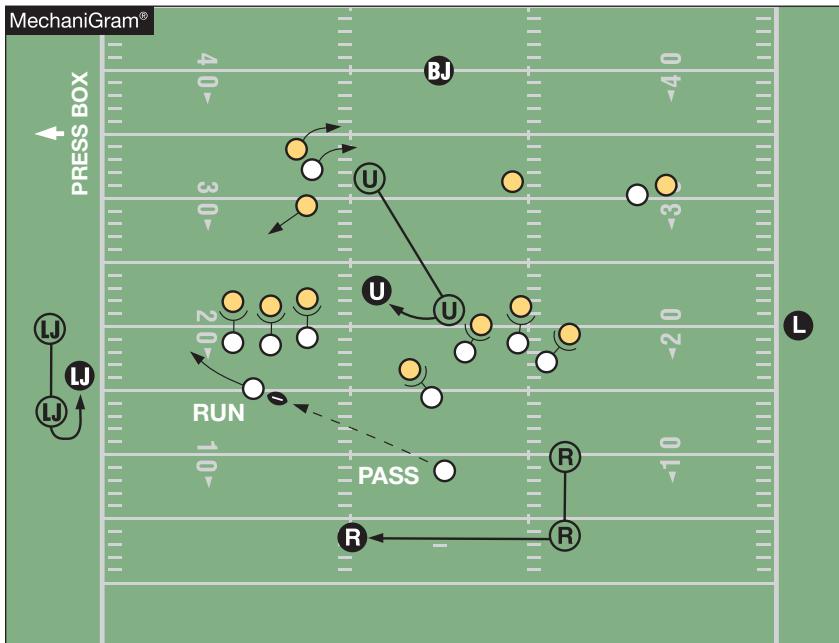
Umpire: Observes presnap adjustments and legality of snap. Keys on center and guards; reads screen or draw when linemen pull. Steps up to the line of scrimmage and observes blocking.

Linesman: Identifies the eligible receivers on their side of the field. Uses extended arm signal to alert line judge that end is in offensive backfield. After snap, observes initial blocking. Watches initial contact between receivers and defenders.

Line judge: Identifies the eligible receivers on their side of the field. After snap, observes initial blocking; reads screen or draw when tackle pulls. Moves into offensive backfield to cover receiver out of backfield.

Back judge: Reads run when tackle fires out. Observes blocking by their keys.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 2



Action on the field: Pass thrown to and caught by back.

Referee: Observes passer. Looks to line judge for either backward pass signal, incomplete pass signal or no signal (complete forward pass). When passer is not longer threatened, moves to follow play.

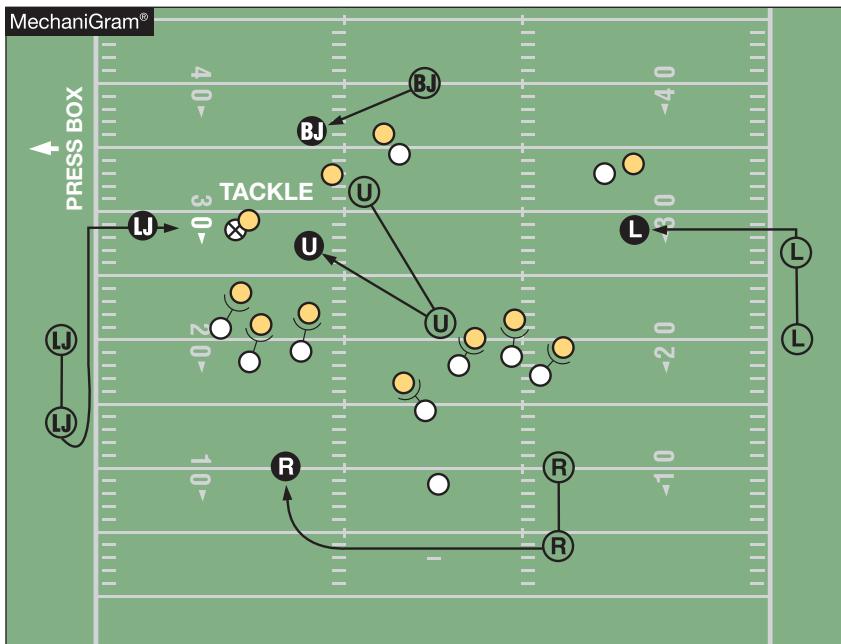
Umpire: Observes blocking.

Linesman: Observes action of players in their area.

Line judge: Rules on whether pass is backward or forward. Observes action in front of runner.

Back judge: When position of ball is established, moves toward line judge's sideline and observes action in front of runner.

SCREEN OR PASS TO FLAT PART 3



Action on the field: Runner advances and is downed.

Referee: Moves slowly downfield and observes players in their area.

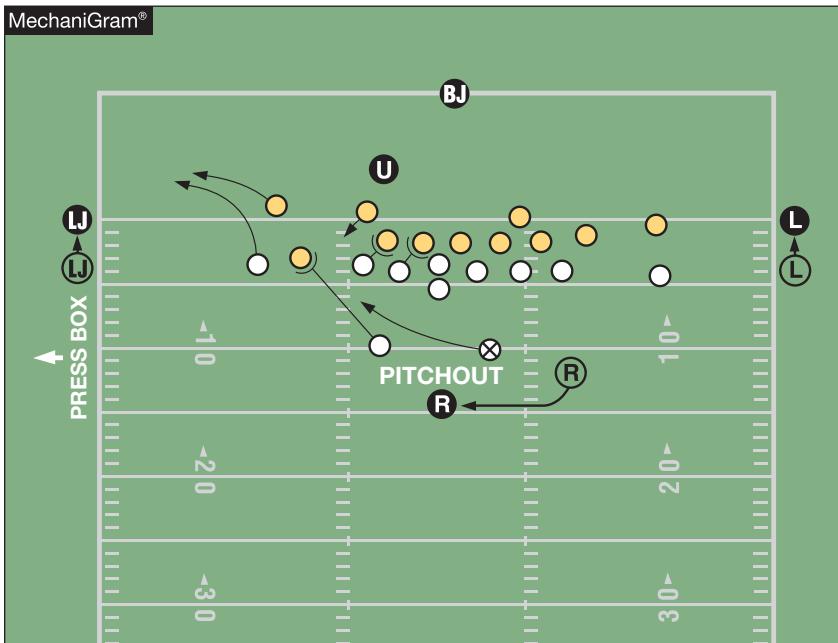
Umpire: Pivots toward play and moves slowly downfield. Observes players in front of the ball. Moves to hashmark to set ball for next play.

Linesman: Moves downfield and observes players in their area. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress.

Line judge: Blows whistle when receiver is downed. Squares off to mark spot of forward progress. Stops clock if first down has been achieved.

Back judge: Moves toward play and observes players around pile.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN PART 1



Action on the field: Pitchout to back, sweep left.

Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

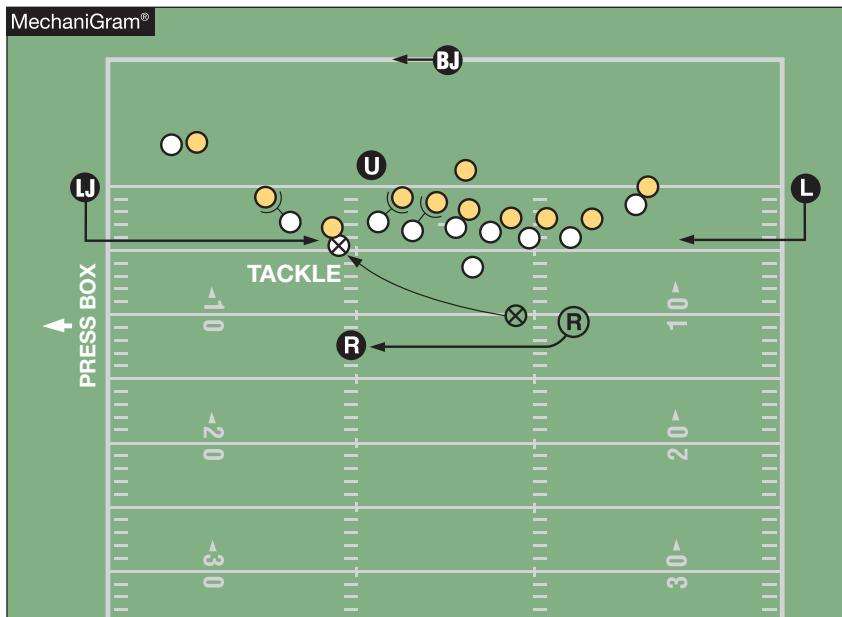
Umpire: Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Observes initial blocking.

Line judge: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Observes initial blocking.

Back judge: Reads blocking of tight end and tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN PART 2



Action on the field: Runner stopped short of goalline.

Referee: Observes action.

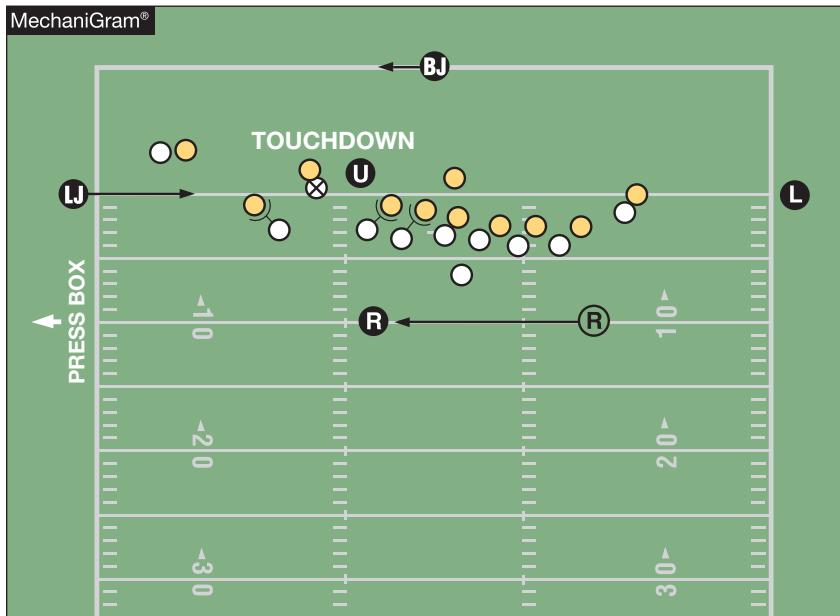
Umpire: Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Officiates back to the ball and squares off to mirror line judge's spot.

Line judge: Officiates back to the ball to observe contact on runner and squares off to indicate forward progress. Blows whistle when runner is downed.

Back judge: Moves with flow of play and observes action.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN PART 3



Action on the field: Runner scores.

Referee: Observes action. When line judge signals touchdown (if no flags are down), turns to press box and mirrors signal.

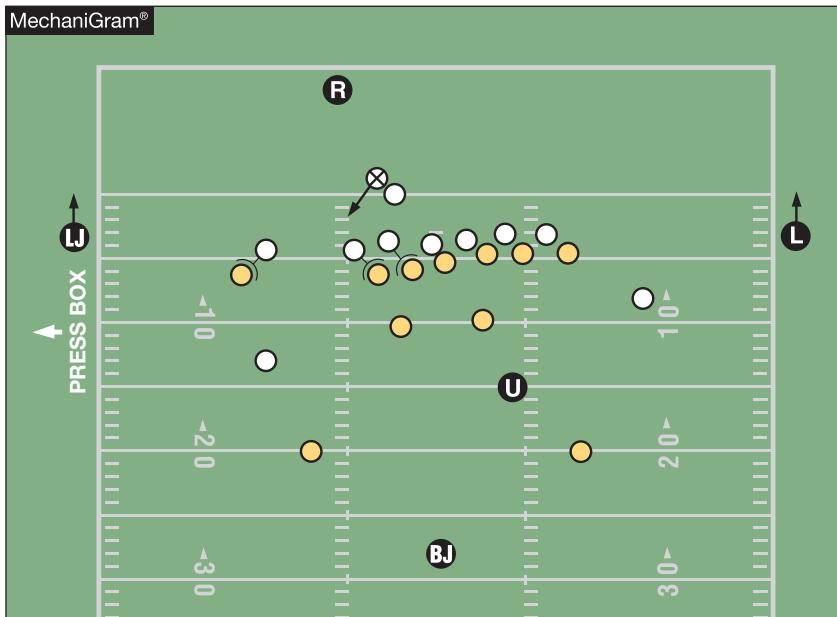
Umpire: Observes action.

Linesman: Observes action.

Line judge: Observes runner. When ball in possession of runner breaks plane of goalline, moves toward runner while straddling goalline, blows whistle and signals touchdown.

Back judge: Moves with flow of play and observes action.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT PART 1



Action on the field: Handoff to running back.

Referee: Reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

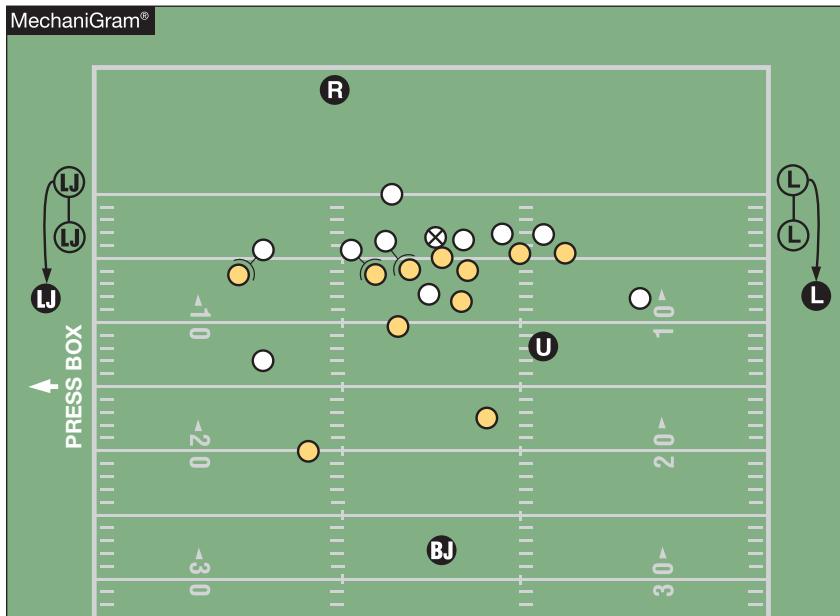
Umpire: Reads blocking of center and right guard and reads run. Determines point of attack and observes blocking there. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

Linesman: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Observes initial blocking.

Line judge: Moves immediately to goalline at snap. Observes initial blocking.

Back judge: Reads blocking of tight end and tackle and reads run. Moves with flow of play. Observes blocking and action in front of runner.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT PART 2



Action on the field: Runner advances beyond goalline.

Referee: Moves with flow of play. Observes runner and action around runner.

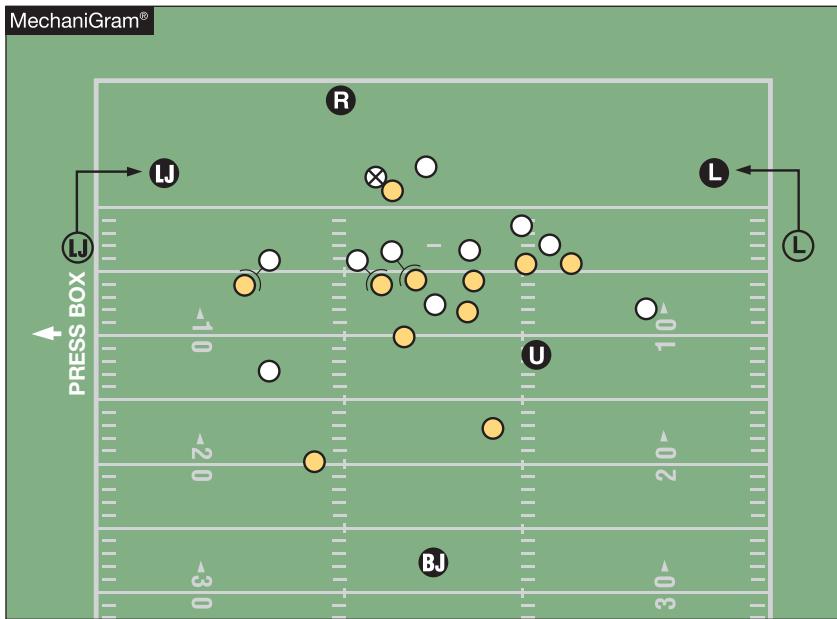
Umpire: Steps back to avoid interfering with play and pivots to observe play. Observes action around runner.

Linesman: Reverses field, moves with flow of play and observes action in front of runner.

Line judge: Reverses field, moves with flow of play and observes action in front of runner.

Back judge: Observes action in front of runner.

GOALLINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT PART 3



Action on the field: Runner downed in end zone.

Referee: Looks to appropriate wing official for progress spot or safety signal.

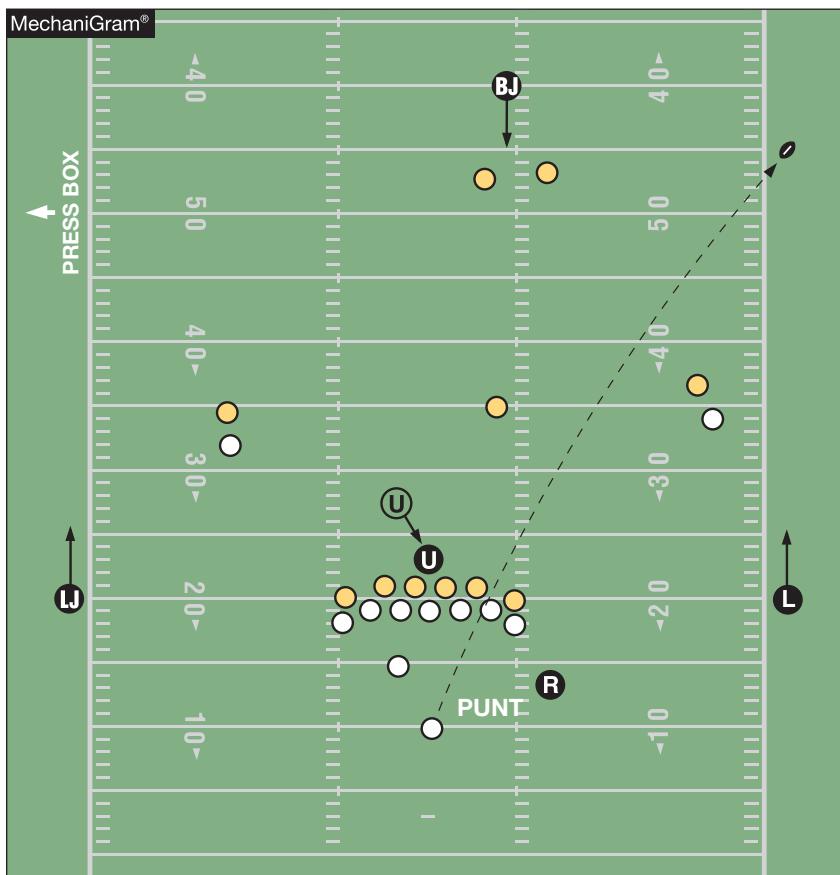
Umpire: Continues to observe blocking.

Linesman: If runner is clearly downed in end zone in coverage area, hustles in and signals safety. If runner is out of coverage area, hustles in for dead-ball officiating.

Line judge: If runner is clearly downed in end zone in coverage area, hustles in and signals safety. If runner is out of coverage area, hustles in for dead-ball officiating.

Back judge: Observes action of players away from pile.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 1



Action on the field: Ball kicked toward sideline.

Referee: Observes snap and action around kicker.

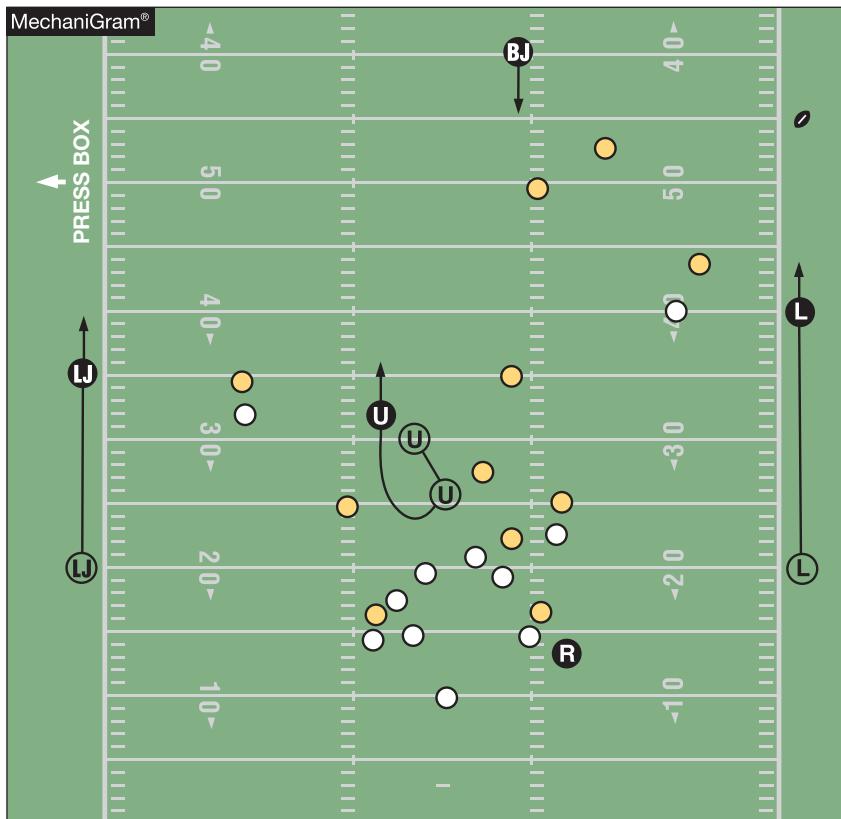
Umpire: Moves toward the line at the snap, observing initial charge of linemen and contact on the snapper.

Linesman: Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. Moves quickly downfield when ball crosses neutral zone.

Line judge: Moves downfield on snap, observing action of players moving downfield.

Back judge: Observes receivers. Retreats to observe result of kick.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 2



Action on the field: Kick is dead out of bounds.

Referee: Moves quickly toward sideline to observe flight of ball.

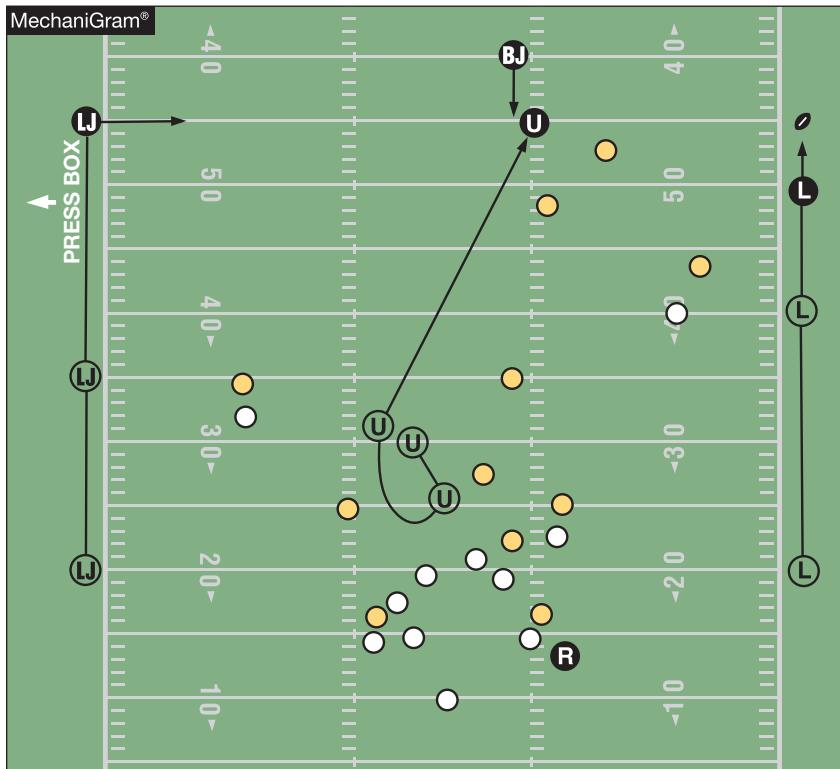
Umpire: Pivots toward the line judge's side of the field, observing players as they move downfield. Moves downfield on line judge's side of field.

Linesman: Moves down sideline. Observes action of players in front of ball. Gives stop-the-clock signal when he sees ball go out of bounds. Moves five to seven yards beyond spot where ball apparently went out of bounds, pivots and makes eye contact with referee.

Line judge: Moves down sideline. Observes action of players in front of ball. Gives stop-the-clock signal when he sees ball go out of bounds.

Back judge: Observes action of players away from the ball.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS PART 3



Action on the field: Ball spotted for new series.

Referee: With arm above head, observes linesman walking toward spot. When linesman reaches spot, drops arm with chopping motion. When certain there are no penalty markers down, signals linesman to move chain crew.

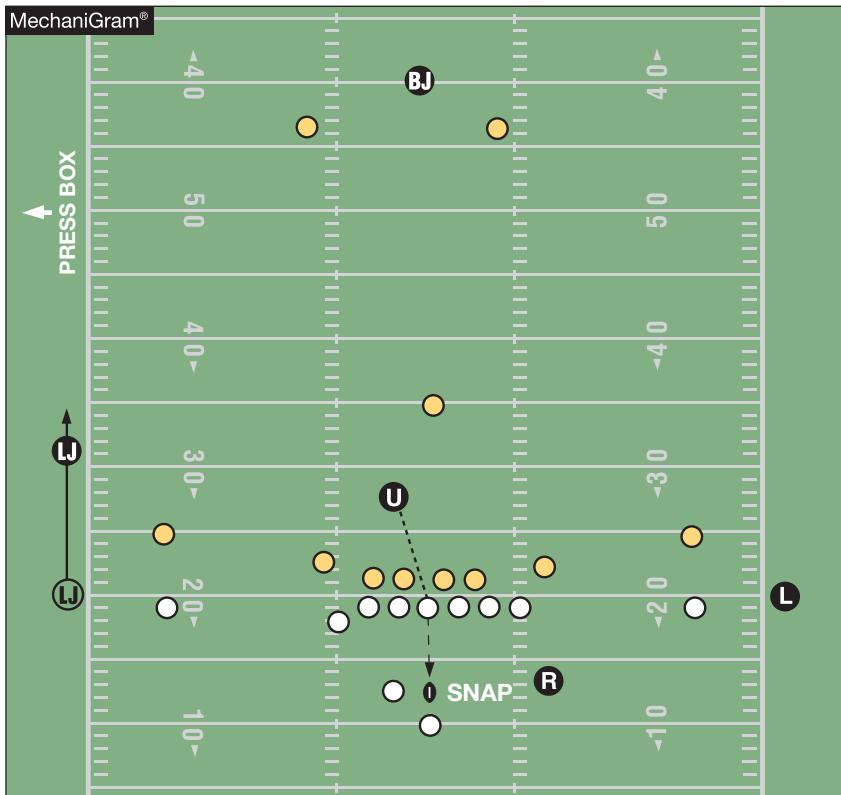
Umpire: Continues to move downfield and observes players. Moves to spot to set ball for new series.

Linesman: Hustles to dead-ball spot to prevent post-play action. Walks slowly toward referee, stopping when referee drops arm with chopping motion. Signals first down for team R. Upon signal from referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot.

Line judge: Continues to move downfield and observes players. Squares off and mirrors linesman's spot.

Back judge: Observes action of players away from the ball. Assist to relay the team K ball to the press box-side ball person.

SCRIMMAGE KICK ENDING INBOUNDS PART 1



Action on the field: Ball snapped to punter.

Referee: Observes snap and action in front of and around kicker.

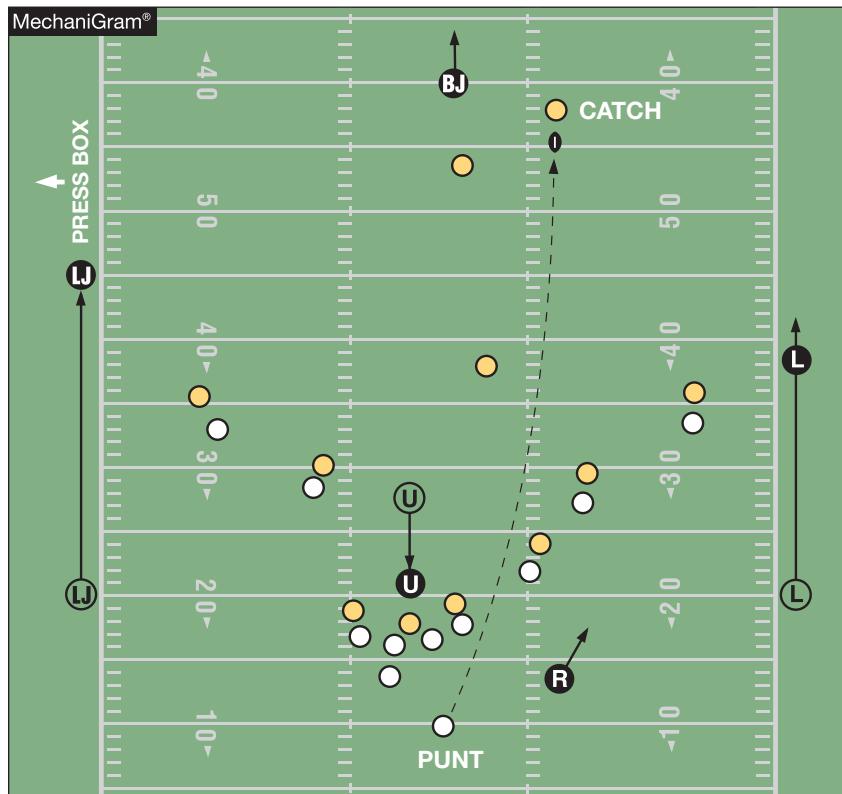
Umpire: Moves toward the line at the snap, observes initial line charge.

Linesman: Observes initial line charge and remains on the line to rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone.

Line judge: Releases on snap and begins to move downfield, observes action on their side of the field between the neutral zone and the receivers.

Back judge: Observes action of receivers.

SCRIMMAGE KICK ENDING INBOUNDS PART 2



Action on the field: Receiver catches punt.

Referee: Observes line play after ball has cleared neutral zone. Moves slowly downfield.

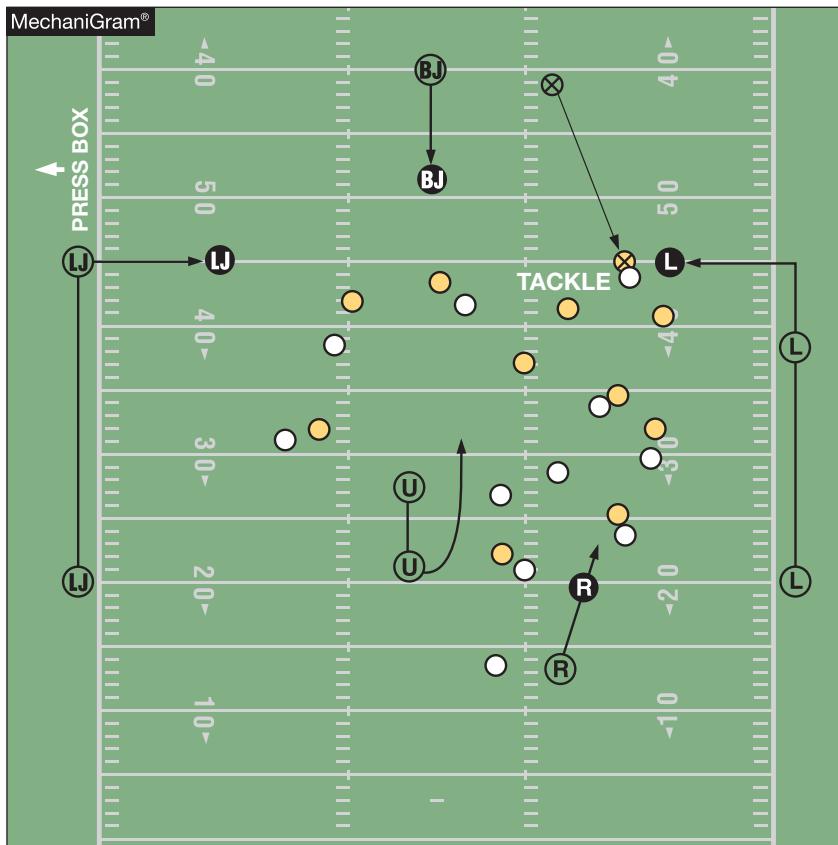
Umpire: Pivots toward line judge's side of the field. Observes players as they move downfield. Moves downfield with flow of players.

Linesman: Observes action of players in front of ball.

Line judge: Observes action of players in front of ball.

Back judge: Drops beanbag at spot the kick ends. Moves with runner.

SCRIMMAGE KICK ENDING INBOUNDS PART 3



Action on the field: Runner advances and is downed.

Referee: Observes action of players. When certain there are no penalty markers down, signals linesman to move chain crew.

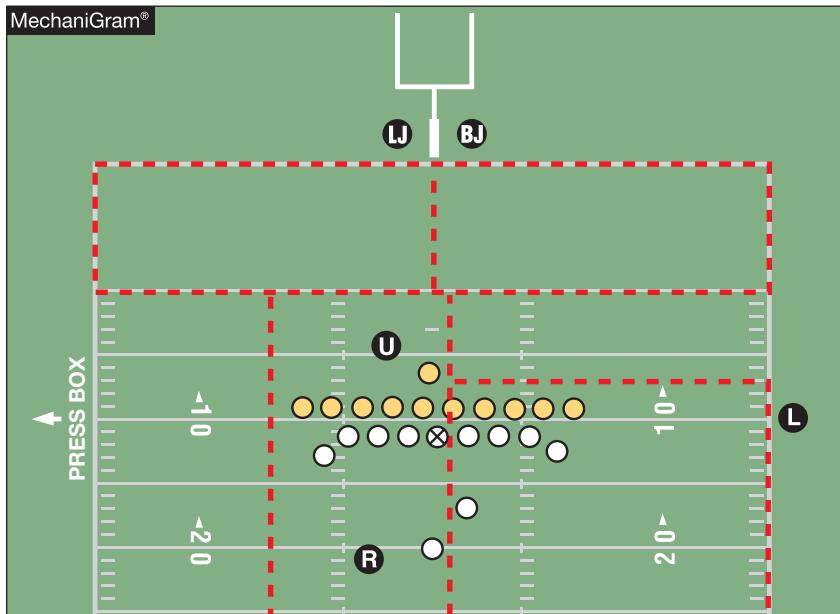
Umpire: Observes action of players. Moves to spot to set ball for new series.

Linesman: Takes coverage of runner when runner enters coverage area. When runner is downed, squares off to spot and stops the clock. Upon signal from referee, instructs chain crew to move to spot.

Line judge: Observes action of players. Squares off to mirror linesman's spot.

Back judge: Gives up coverage of runner when runner enters linesman's coverage area. Observes action of players.

SCORING KICK



After the snap, the referee observes the actions of the kicker and holder. If the holder has to leave a kneeling position to catch or recover a poor snap, the referee must rule on the holder's ability to return to a kneeling position.

In cases of a fake or a broken play, the referee assists on sideline coverage on the open side of the field (the one vacated by either the line judge or linesman).

Once he is confident the kicker and holder are in no danger of being roughed, the referee looks to the deep officials to learn the result of the kick. The signal should then be relayed to the press box.

The umpire moves toward the line at the snap, which will improve the view of the initial line charge.

If a blocked kick or fake results in a play toward the goalline on open side of the field (the one vacated by either the line judge or linesman), the umpire moves toward the goalline to assist on coverage

of the runner. The umpire also helps rule whether or not a blocked kick crossed the neutral zone on their side of the field.

Whether the linesman or line judge remains on the line or goes behind the goalposts depends on which side the referee lines up on. The wing official facing the referee remains on the line. The MechaniGram depicts a situation in which the linesman remains on the line.

On a blocked field goal attempt, the wing on the line will rule whether or not the kick crossed the neutral zone. That official also has sole responsibility for encroachment and rules on the legality of the snap.

If a pass is used on the fake, the wing must know if the passer was beyond the line. He can also help rule on ineligibles downfield on fake kicks that lead to passes. When a runner approaches the goalline, the wing must be at the goalline to rule on the potential score.

The wing can move toward the

offensive and defensive linemen after the kick and use their voice to encourage players to unpile.

The back judge and wing official with them should confirm their ruling verbally before signaling, using “good” or “no, no, no.”

The wing is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on their side; the back judge is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on their side as well as whether the ball cleared the crossbar.

When a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball breaks the goalline plane and it is obvious it will not score, the back judge sounds their whistle and gives the appropriate signals. If the kick is blocked, is obviously short or the play turns out not to be a kick (fake or busted play), the deep officials should move along the endline and toward the nearest sideline. Once the sideline has been reached, the deep official can move toward the goalline to assist on coverage of the runner.

Note: On a field goal attempt by free kick after a fair catch, the chains are set to establish the 10-yard neutral zone.

CREWS OF FOUR OR FIVE

CHAPTER 17

PREGAME CONFERENCE

A pregame conference is required for all games.

There are as many different pregame conferences as there are officials. There is no magic formula for a “successful” pregame conference. There are a number of topics, however, that should be included:

Rule Changes/Major Differences

Cover recent rule changes, especially in the beginning of the season when the rules and interpretations may still be a bit unclear.

Special Coverage

Discuss what to do in the event of hurry-up offense, obvious onside kick situation, etc. If the weather is threatening, discuss how the crew will handle a suspension of play due to lightning. The crew should also decide how it will handle fights or similar altercations.

Making the Call

Go over signals between officials (receivers on or off the line, “two sticks” for a first down, etc.). Discuss which crew members are responsible for counting players and what signals will be used to indicate a team has enough, too many or too few players. Remind officials

who are sharing coverage to make eye contact and to practice good dead-ball officiating.

Reporting Fouls to the Referee

The referee should tell crew members how he wants fouls reported to them. The official should identify the offending team by referring to them as offense or defense / kicker or receivers. Remind officials to indicate the status of the ball at the time of the foul (loose ball, dead ball, etc.) and the result of the play (incomplete pass, scoring kick was good, etc.). Remind wing officials they are to tell the coach who committed the foul, the nature of the infraction and any special enforcement (loss of down, quarter extended for an untimed down, etc.).

Timeout Responsibilities

Who’s timing the timeout? Where are the officials positioned during the timeout? How are you going to inform the teams that the timeout is over? Who will tell the coach how many timeouts each team has remaining? It is recommended that the coach be told how many timeouts each team has left after every charged team timeout.

CREWS OF FOUR OR FIVE PREGAME CONFERENCE

Bench Decorum

This is a key element, often overlooked in pregame conferences. It is especially important if the crew does not work together often. Make sure that the officials involved have roughly the same idea about what conduct is out of line and what isn't. Remind wing officials to find the "get back" coach, the assistant who will help keep players and team personnel out of the coaching belt.

Injured Officials

Discuss how the crew will adjust assignments if an official is injured or becomes too ill to work. Which officials will move where is up to the crew, but generally a crew of four works without a line judge and a crew of five works without a back judge when a crewmate is ill or injured. In the rare and unplanned circumstance when a crew is reduced to two officials, it is recommended that one official work as the referee and the other as a linesman.

Halftime

Are you going to let the coaches and teams leave the field before heading off yourselves? The officials may choose to meet at a designated place on the field, allow the teams to leave and have the referee signal the timer to start the clock. Also, someone needs to make sure the officials and teams are properly notified of the time on the clock so they can return in time. The game manager should let the officials know if someone has been designated or if the officials will be responsible.

Leaving the Field

Reminder that the crew will leave the field together.

Game Expectations

If you know of some team history that may affect the game, discuss it. For example, if the two teams were involved in a fight the last time they met, you may want to talk about those ramifications on the game and the players' and coaches' attitudes.

PREGAME DUTIES

Meeting with Coaches

The pregame meeting with the coaches should be conducted off the field. In that instance, the referee and the umpire should visit each lockerroom, then report back to the rest of the crew in the officials' lockerroom.

If the meeting with the coaches occurs on the field, meet with the home coach first if possible. Either way, the meeting should begin with the referee introducing themself and giving the coach a card listing names of crew members.

With the umpire within earshot, ask the coach if all players are properly equipped. Have the umpire inspect any suspect equipment or tapings. The referee should ask for the game ball from the coach. The referee should also ask the coach if the passer, punter, and kicker are "right or left."

Ask if the team plans on using any unique formations or trick plays. Foreknowledge helps the crew be prepared for such instances and increases the chances the play will be officiated correctly.

Get the captains' numbers. Some crews also obtain the captains' names. If an official wishes to speak to a captain during the game, perhaps to seek their help in calming an angry teammate, the captain will respond better if he is called by name rather than number. Some crews also ask the coach what their choice would be if their team wins the coin toss. In the excitement that is felt before the game, captains sometimes blurt out something other than their coach's wishes. If you've asked the coach and the captain gives a different answer, a preventive officiating technique is to ask the captain, "Are you sure that's what you want?"

Inform the coach when the coin flip is to take place (conference or association rules may dictate; "normal" is three minutes before game). Tell them he is responsible for having their team on the field for the mandatory three-minute

warmup after halftime. Also, if there is a planned extended halftime, make sure the coach is aware of it.

The crew should take the field together. Unless conference or state association rules state otherwise, the crew should be on the field in uniform 30 minutes before kickoff.

Once on the field, the officials' duties are as follows:

Referee

- Inspect the field. The referee should walk down both sidelines and along each endline at a brisk but unhurried pace. You don't need to inspect every blade of grass, but if you discover potholes, broken glass or other hazards, ask game management to have the problem taken care of immediately. If the field is marked for another sport (many football fields are also used for soccer), make sure the crew knows which lines are being used for football. Make sure the goalposts are straight and free of decoration and that the goalpost pads are securely fastened. Check the pylons to ensure they are properly placed.

- Spot-check players. Make a casual visual inspection of players as they warm up. Look for tinted eyeshields, knotted jerseys, towels with decorations and other uniform-related violations. Before the game, ask the head coach to have the players make the necessary corrections.

- Check with the crew. Verify that the umpire has inspected any tapings or protective equipment, that the linesman has met with the chain crew and that the line judge has met with the timer and the ball helpers. Discuss unusual plays or formations either team may have.

Umpire

- Spot-check players. Make a casual visual inspection of players as they warm up. Look for tinted eyeshields, knotted jerseys, towels with decorations

and other uniform-related violations.

Before the game, ask the head coach to have the players make the necessary corrections.

- Keep track of the game balls. Ensure that game balls are kept separate from practice balls; players are not allowed to warm up with the game balls. If the game balls are delivered to the officials' locker room before the game, the air pressure can be checked with a gauge.

- Air can be removed from balls that are over-inflated; balls that are under-inflated should be returned to game management and corrected or not used. If the game balls are given to the officials on the field, a visual and touch inspection should be used. Once approved, game balls should be marked (e.g. official's initials) so only approved balls are used in the game.

Linesman

- Inspect the box and chains. Make sure the chain is securely attached to the poles and is free of kinks. If there is no tape at the midway point of the chain (to facilitate the determination of whether a five-yard defensive penalty will result in a first down), ask a trainer for tape and mark the chain. The ends of the box and chain poles must be properly covered. If they are not, ask game management to remedy the situation.

- Meet with the chain crew.

Line Judge

- Meet with the ball helpers.
- Inspect the field (crew of four). The line judge should walk down both sidelines and along each endline at a brisk but unhurried pace. You don't need to inspect every blade of grass, but if you discover potholes, broken glass or other hazards, ask game management to have the problem taken care of immediately. If the field is marked for another sport (many football fields are also used for soccer), make sure the crew knows

CREWS OF FOUR OR FIVE PREGAME CONFERENCE

which lines are being used for football. Make sure the goalposts are straight and free of decoration and that the goalpost pads are securely fastened. Check the pylons to ensure they are properly placed.

- Meet with the timer(s). The timer(s) should come to the field to meet with the appropriate official. That prevents officials from having to walk through the crowd to meet with the clock operator and increases safety of officials.
- Meet with the auxiliary down box operator (when applicable).

Back Judge (Line Judge)

- Meet with the timer(s). The timer(s) should come to the field to meet with the back judge and line judge. That prevents officials from having to walk through the crowd to meet with the clock operator and increases safety of officials.
- Inspect the field. The back judge should walk down both sidelines and along each endline at a brisk but unhurried pace. You don't need to inspect every blade of grass, but if you discover potholes, broken glass or other hazards, ask game management to have the problem taken care of immediately. If the field is marked for another sport (many football fields are also used for soccer), make sure the crew knows which lines are being used for football. Make sure the goalposts are straight and free of decoration and that the goalpost pads are securely fastened. Check the pylons to ensure they are properly placed.

When Duties are Completed

After onfield pregame duties have been completed, the referee, linesman and back judge (crew of five) move to midfield on the linesman's side of the field while the umpire and line judge move to midfield on the opposite side.

That is an ideal time to casually observe both teams for information that

will be helpful during the game: Is the quarterback right-handed or left-handed? How strong are the punter's and kicker's legs? How is the wind affecting kicks? Watch both teams without giving the appearance they are being inspected. Before the kickoff, exchange information with other crew members.

Avoid using pregame time for non-essential chat with players, coaches, spectators or others, especially if it could give the appearance of favoritism.

CREWS OF FOUR OR FIVE

CHAPTER 18

POSTGAME DUTIES

Once in the locker room, the officials should discuss incident reports, if needed. If there is any breakdown in cooperation between game officials and the clock operators during the game, or if any malfunction of the clocks occur, the official in charge of the timer should inform the state association or assigning agency. Timers are encouraged to report crews that are not cooperative or whose signals are not clear and accurate.

If a player was ejected for fighting or for receiving two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, the incident must be reported to the proper authority after the game and in accordance with state association policy.

The referee should contact the conference officiating coordinator and inform them who was disqualified. The report must include the point of the game in which the disqualification occurred. Many state associations require notification of ejections or incidents of poor sportsmanship as well.

Coaches disqualified from a game must remain in the locker room (or similar facility) for the rest of that game. Coaches may not participate in any coaching activities after they've been ejected.

Postgame Review

A postgame review is strongly encouraged, including a self critique. The postgame review is another important part of the learning process.

Strange Plays, Rulings

Discuss and review any strange plays or rulings. If necessary, confirm your ruling with the rulebook and casebook. Make sure you've got the rule down so you can apply it correctly if it happens again. Discuss any unusual penalty enforcements and confirm they were handled properly.

If a situation involving a new rule or interpretation occurred, is the crew confident it was applied correctly? Discuss if you need to take more or less time when discussing enforcements and other facets of penalties among yourselves or when presenting options to the captains.

Points of Emphasis

Were the pregame points of emphasis handled effectively? Many times, rough play and sportsmanship are emphasized. Did you control the game effectively? Were dead-ball situations handled

appropriately? If the points of emphasis were not handled properly, discuss remedies for your next game.

Sideline Decorum

How did you handle the benches? Did you let the coaches go too far? Were you approachable? Did you communicate penalty, timeout and other information sufficiently with the coaches?

Tempo

Did you let the game come to you or did you assert yourself when you didn't need to? Did the game develop a flow? If not, is there anything you could have done to keep the game moving?

Solicit constructive criticism

One of the ways to improve is to get opinions and advice from others. Your crew is a great source. Always ask if there's anything you could have done differently or better.

After asking, accept the constructive criticism. Don't be one of those referees who asks, "How'd I do?" expecting a shower of praise. If you don't want to know the truth, don't ask. Take the criticism offered, analyze the comments and apply the changes if you feel they're appropriate.

Be ready to offer a critique when asked. It's frustrating for an official who wants to learn to invite criticism only to hear, "You did a good job." There must be something that needs improving! You ought to be able to give your crew at least three things to think about after every game.

If you don't usually work in crews, or if an official is substituting for a regular member of your crew, ask if you did anything better or less effectively than is done on other crews. While many facets of mechanics or positioning are done virtually the same all over, nuances or variations may be worth trying.

Write a Journal

Consider keeping a journal during your season. Write down strange plays, your feelings about your performance, notes about your crew, things you did well and things you can improve on. The journal is a great way to look back during and after the season to see if there are patterns. If the same things keep appearing in your journal, you know there are things that need to be addressed.

Reviewing the journal is also a great way to start thinking about officiating before next season.

The Locker Room

The host school or facility allowed you the use of the locker room. Regardless of the condition it was in when you arrived, take a few minutes to tidy up.

If the game was played on a muddy field, wait until you get outside to clean the mud from your spikes. If mud was tracked into the room, clean it up with paper towel and dispose of it.

After your shower, if you were provided with towels, toss them in the appropriate container or pile them out of the traffic lane.

If you brought bottles of water or sports drinks into the locker room, toss the empty bottles into a waste container or take them with you.

Under no circumstances should officials take towels, equipment or other items that do not belong to them. Theft is theft, whether or not anyone's watching. If your dressing facility was a coach's or teacher's office, do not disturb personal items or rifle through desk drawers.