# APPROVED SIGNALS

## **GENERAL SIGNALS**

All signals should be slow, crisp, and clean. Refer to the rule book for official signals. The following have been highlighted for emphasis:

STOP THE CLOCK

Two strokes of the arms overhead, glance at the clock; if it hasn’t stopped, the signal can be continued until no longer needed.

START THE CLOCK

Two easy swings of one arm at full extension.

READY FOR PLAY – 25-SECOND PLAY CLOCK

1. Extend one arm fully upward and “pull a light chain” while simultaneously blowing a short and loud whistle.
2. If the ready for play includes starting the clock, use the START THE CLOCK signal and a longer and loud whistle.

START 40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK

At the end of a scrimmage down, when the officials see that the ball is down in possession, inbounds short of the line to gain, raise your arm fully upward and hold for 2-3 seconds or until the REFEREE declares the next down.

INCOMPLETE PASS

1. Do not bend forward at the waist when giving the signal.
2. One signal by covering official(s) for an obviously incomplete pass. All other officials stop the clock.
3. Two or three strong signals for an incomplete pass when it is necessary to “sell” the call. All other officials stop the clock.
4. If the receiver is barely out of bounds, signal incomplete and then, using both hands, make a sweeping motion toward the sideline.
5. Use a “juggling signal” when the receiver juggles the ball as he crosses the sideline and then possesses the ball out of bounds.
6. Use a “slap the ground signal” when the ball makes contact with the ground prior to possession by the receiver. The official will go to their one knee while slapping the ground with one hand.
7. The official covering the play and signaling incomplete does not also give the STOP THE CLOCK signal.

COMPLETE PASS

If the pass is completed and there is a need to “sell” and communicate that the ball was caught, the official shall raise both arms and then lower them in unison in a manner that mimics the actual catching of the ball. This signal must be performed in an exaggerated manner and is usually reserved for catches at the sideline. Umpires may also use this signal on tight catches.

BALL DECLARED DEAD, START 40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK

The covering official will extend one arm fully upward and hold the signal for 2-3 seconds after the ball is judged dead inbounds, short of the line to gain.

VISIBLE 5-SECOND COUNT BY BACK JUDGE

Time the 40-second or 25-second play clock and provide a raised arm when there are five (5) seconds remaining. Provide a visible countdown of each remaining second by moving your arm from your chest to an extended position to the side or slightly above your shoulder each second.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY SIGNALS**

DOUBLE STAKES

Hands with the index finger extended, in front of the face, moving forward and backward.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE SIGNALS (Optional, use when necessary):

If there is a question when counting no more than four offensive players in the backfield:

1. You may use your O2O system to clarify the legality of the formation with your opposite flank if there is adequate time to do so before the snap.
2. If you need to communicate that your widest player of the offensive formation is on the line of scrimmage, place your arm across your chest, so your hand is on your downfield shoulder.
3. If you need to communicate that your widest player of offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage, signal back with your arm extended.
4. If you need to communicate that your two widest players are off the line of scrimmage, signal twice with hand-wave motion back (over the head) with two fingers extended.

COUNTING PLAYERS

1. When counting players, do so with your eyes and not with your fingers.
2. Eleven players – Arm extended with a closed fist. Make certain the other official confirming your count can see your arm and fist.
3. More than eleven – Squirrel cage your hands to notify the other official(s) to recount. Be prepared to blow your whistle and throw your flag for illegal substitution.
4. Less than eleven – Push down with your arms slightly in front of your body, with palms down, to alert other officials.

SIDELINE PLAYS (WITHIN TWO YARDS)

1. If the play ends within two yards of the sideline, the covering official will use the WIND THE CLOCK signal two times to indicate that the play ended in-bounds.
2. If the play ended beyond the line to gain, use the WIND THE CLOCK signal two times and then use the STOP THE CLOCK signal two times.
3. All other officials should stop the clock.