# MECHANICS – 4-official

## **COIN TOSS PROCEDURES**

1. The REFEREE and UMPIRE only will meet with the captains at the center of the field for the coin toss
2. LINE JUDGE escorts captains from the press box side to the top of the numbers /nine-yard marks. HEAD LINESMAN escorts captains from chains side to the top of the numbers /nine-yard marks. The captains will continue to the middle of the field, and the HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE will remain at the top of the numbers / nine-yard marks. The LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN will have a legal ball for their respective team
3. LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN, make certain your team is either in their respective team box or in their end zone during the coin toss
4. REFEREE instructs captains. Visiting captains will call the coin toss. The visiting captain is required to indicate heads or tails prior to the toss of the coin
5. Once both teams have made the choices, move the captains so their backs are to the goal they’re defending. The REFEREE will indicate winning captains and choice or option deferred. If the captain’s choice is to defer, the REFEREE will give the proper signal (signal #10), then move to the other captains and give the signal for the appropriate choice
6. After the toss, all officials will meet in the middle of the field, record results, then jog to their specific kickoff positions

## **QUARTER**

REFEREE and UMPIRE

1. Be aware of the last-minute of play. If the ball is not in play when the clock runs out, step in to prevent the snap
2. REFEREE, announce the end of the quarter by holding the ball over your head
3. Record the down, distance, clip location, and relative filed location
4. REFEREE release the HEAD LINESMAN
5. Jog to the new spot on the opposite side of the field and spot the ball
6. Check to make certain the down, distance, and yard line is correct
7. When officials are ready, and the LINE JUDGE indicates the intermission is over, declare the ball ready for play

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Record the down, distance, clip location, and relative filed location
2. Prepare the chains to move to the new location on the REFEREE’s signal. Make certain the clip is located appropriately on the nearest yard line, and take note
3. Grab the clip and chain at the same time, reverse the chain crew, jog to the new position and place the chain on the new spot
4. Place your heel at the front of the ball for the down box

LINE JUDGE

1. Record the down, distance, clip location, and relative filed location
2. Verify that the ball placement is correct
3. Go to the spot where the ball should be put into play at the start of the next quarter
4. Time the one-minute intermission and notify REFEREE when 45 seconds have elapsed
5. Stay between the teams to show presence as you move to the new spot

## **HALFTIME**

ALL OFFICIALS

Meet and review the first-half

REFEREE

1. As soon as teams leave the field, look at the timer and wind to start the half-time clock
2. All officials will meet away from teams and coaches to review the first half

HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE

1. Extend a 5-minute courtesy call to each team
2. Confer with the coach who has the second-half decision on which way they would like to kick the ball. Do this when you provide the 5-minute courtesy call
3. Provide the information to fellow officials during the mandatory three-minute warm-up period

LINE JUDGE

Keep the unofficial halftime clock for the crew

## FREE KICK MECHANICS – 4-official

### **PRE-KICK MECHANICS**

ALL OFFICIALS

HUSTLE TO POSITION!

REFEREE

1. Take position at the goal line (or as appropriate behind the deepest receiver) in the middle of the field
2. Count the receiving team (use eyes, not fingers). Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/equal to 11 players
3. Signal HEAD LINESMAN to confirm count by extending your arm with a closed fist
4. Upon the ready signal from UMPIRE, when the receiving team is in position, blow the ready for play whistle
5. On anticipated short free kicks, may cheat-up if possible
6. On a free-kick following a safety, take position five yards deeper than the receiver(s) but not further from the goal line than the 20-yard line

UMPIRE

1. Make certain the ball is inflated properly, has “pebble grain” and white stripes
2. Count the kicking team (use eyes, not fingers). Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/equal to 11 players.
3. Signal LINE JUDGE to confirm count by extending your arm with a closed fist
4. Hand the ball to the kicker and tell him/her not to kick until the REFEREE blows the whistle
5. Be in a ready position, away from and behind the ball, before you provide the ready signal (K may be in the huddle when you signal). Signal ready to the LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN who will then raise arm for the ready signal
6. Upon a ready signal from LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN, provide the ready signal to REFEREE (K may be in the huddle when you signal)
7. After the ready-for-play whistle by REFEREE, signal the kicker to kick
8. On anticipated short free kicks, move to a position on the kicking team’s restraining line on the sideline. Hold bean bag in hand. Anticipate first touching

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Go to your position on the receiving team’s restraining line at the sideline. Have your team on the field within one minute following a score
2. Count the receiving team (use eyes, not fingers). Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/or equal to 11 players. Confirm with REFEREE
3. Hold bean bag in hand. Anticipate first touching
4. Provide ready signal only when the count is correct, receiving team is in position, sideline is clear, you are ready, and the UMPIRE signals he is ready. Be ready before the whistle

LINE JUDGE

1. Time the one-minute intermission following a score. Alert UMPIRE and HEAD LINESMAN after 45 seconds
2. Go to your position on the kicking team’s restraining line at the sideline. Have your team on the field within one minute following a score
3. Count the kicking team (use eyes, not fingers). Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/or equal to 11 players. Confirm with UMPIRE
4. Provide ready signal only when the count is correct, kicking team is in position, sideline is clear, you are ready, and the UMPIRE signals he is ready. Be ready before the whistle
5. Hold bean bag in hand. Anticipate first touching
6. On anticipated short free kicks, move to the receiving team’s restraining line

### **FREE KICK FOLLOWING A FAIR CATCH**

REFEREE – Position with the kicker.

UMPIRE – Position under the goal post opposite the LINE JUDGE.

HEAD LINESMAN – Position on the kicking team’s restraining line.

LINE JUDGE – Position under the goal post on your side of the field.

### FREE-KICK MECHANICS

REFEREE

1. Identify your keys, the nearest receivers
2. Consider your areas of protection; goal line and sideline
3. Quickly check the direction of the ball (short, long, left, or right). If it is a short kick, move up and provide dead-ball support.
4. On a kick out of bounds, move toward the out of bounds spot and throw flag to the out of bounds spot if in your zone
5. When the ball is touched in your coverage area, start the clock (two winds)
6. When the kick breaks the goal line plane (touched or untouched), signal touchback
7. Observe action around the receivers and watch the middle players of the receiving team moving down the field. Cover blocking and other action on and by your keys
8. When the runner is downed in your coverage zone, stop the clock. Duplicate other official’s signals if the play does not end in your coverage zone. Place the ball at your feet and wait for the UMPIRE to relieve you
9. As the runner moves further downfield, assume coverage in behind the ball carrier. Maintain an inside-out view of the action around the field

UMPIRE

1. Identify your keys, the middle three players of the kicking team
2. Watch the action of the kick. Was it kicked into the air or did it bounce off the ground?
3. Quickly check the direction of the ball (short, long, left, or right). If it is a short kick, look for first touching by kicking team and use your bean bag as needed. Also, be aware of subsequent first touching spots
4. On kicks out of bounds in the air, line up sideline official at the out-of-bounds spot. If the ball is re-kicked after a foul, you are responsible for signal and penalty enforcement
5. Observe action on the kicker and watch the middle three players of the kicking team moving down the field: cover blocking and other action on and by your keys. As the runner nears, assume coverage in front of the ball carrier. Be on the goal line before the runner. Maintain an inside-out view of the action around the ball carrier
6. Flank officials have progress to the goal line. You have the goal line

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Identify your keys, the nearest four players of the kicking team
2. Watch the receiver’s restraining line for encroachment by receiving team
3. Quickly check the direction of the ball (short, long, left, or right). If it is a short kick, look for first touching by kicking team and use your bean bag as needed. Also, be aware of subsequent first touching spots
4. On short free kicks (during onside kick), when the ball is kicked to your side of the field, you have primary responsibility for the ball. Be prepared to rule on whether the ball has advanced beyond R’s restringing line or possible first touching and possession at the end of the play
5. On short free kicks, when the ball is kicked away, take a wide view and assist with blocks around the ball and blocks by K before the ball advances beyond R’s restraining line
6. On short free kicks, when the ball is kicked forward in the center of the field, you will have joint responsibility, with the opposite flank, for the ball and the legality of blocks
7. On a kick out of bounds, throw the flag to the out-of-bounds spot. If the team on your sideline is the offended team, get the enforcement choice from the coach and advise the REFEREE
8. Drift down the field to assume coverage of the runner and take all the way to the goal line. You have progress
9. On plays to the opposite side, mirror LINE JUDGE movement downfield. With wide vision, watch blocking and look for illegal acts. Use cross-field mechanics where appropriate
10. When the runner is downed in your coverage zone, stop the clock. Place the ball at your feet until the incoming ball is spotted. Duplicate other official’s signals if the play does not end in your coverage zone
11. On anticipated short free kicks (during onside kick), you have primary responsibility for the ball when the ball is kicked to your side of the field. Be prepared to rule on whether the ball has advanced beyond R’s restraining line and possession at the end of the play
12. On anticipated short free kicks, when the ball is kicked away, take a wide view and assist with backside blocks

LINE JUDGE

1. Identify your keys, the nearest four players of the kicking team
2. Watch the kicker’s restraining line for encroachment by the kicking team
3. Quickly check the direction of the ball (short, long, left, or right). If it is a short kick, look for first touching by kicking team and use your bean bag as needed. Also, be aware of subsequent first touching spots
4. On short free kicks (during onside kick), when the ball is kicked to your side of the field, you have primary responsibility for the ball. Be prepared to rule on whether the ball has advanced beyond R’s restringing line or possible first touching and possession at the end of the play
5. On short free kicks, when the ball is kicked away, take a wide view and assist with blocks around the ball and blocks by K before the ball advances beyond R’s restraining line
6. On short free kicks, when the ball is kicked forward in the center of the field, you will have joint responsibility, with the opposite flank, for the ball and the legality of blocks.
7. On a kick out of bounds, throw the flag to the out-of-bounds spot. If the team on your sideline is the offended team, get the enforcement choice from the coach and advise the REFEREE
8. Drift down the field to assume coverage of the runner and take all the way to the goal line. You have progress
9. On plays to the opposite side, mirror HEAD LINESMAN movement downfield. With wide vision, watch blocking and look for illegal acts. Use cross-field mechanics where appropriate
10. When the runner is down in your coverage zone, stop the clock. Place the ball at your feet until the incoming ball is spotted. Duplicate other official’s signals if the play does not end in your coverage zone
11. On anticipated short free kicks (during an onside kick), when the ball is kicked to your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks around the ball. Be aware of blocks by K before the ball advances beyond R’s restraining line
12. On anticipated short free kicks, when the ball is kicked away, take a wide view and prepare to assist on whether the ball has advanced beyond R’s restraining line. Be aware of backside blocks

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

REFEREE

1. Touchback and kick out of bounds
2. Fair catch, including illegal signal
3. Knee on the ground on catch
4. Forward handing during return
5. Batting
6. Blocking below the waist and clipping
7. Interlocked interference
8. Action on the wedge when coming towards you
9. Continuing action dead ball action out of bounds
10. Momentum exception
11. Short free-kick support

UMPIRE, LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN

1. Short free-kick
2. First touching (subsequent first touches) – USE BEAN BAG
3. Starting-stopping the clock
4. Blocking below the waist and clipping
5. Legal substitutions
6. Kick catch interference and fair catch interference
7. Knee on the ground on catch
8. Forward handing, illegal forward pass
9. Batting
10. Interlocked interference and illegal blocking
11. Continuing action out of bounds
12. Players going out of bounds during the kick
13. Rule on the legality of the kick (no “pop-up” kicks)

### **FREE-KICK COVERAGE MECHANICS**

ALL OFFICIALS

Keep play and runner boxed in and sidelines covered at all times.

RETURNS DOWN THE CENTER OF THE FIELD

1. REFEREE and UMPIRE – Cover the secondary areas and view the blocking and other illegal activity
2. HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE – Keep the runner boxed in between you. View the action immediately around the runner
3. UMPIRE – Responsible for the goal line, action in front of the runner, inside-out coverage on the runner to the goal line

RETURNS INTO HEAD LINESMAN SIDE ZONE

1. HEAD LINESMAN is responsible for the runner and action immediately surrounding the runner
2. HEAD LINESMAN and UMPIRE will cover the action in front of the runner, viewing blocking and other illegal activity
3. REFEREE will cover behind and to the side of the runner, keeping a distance to view activity by other players, not around the play

RETURNS INTO THE LINE JUDGE SIDE ZONE

1. LINE JUDGE is responsible for the runner and action immediately surrounding the runner
2. LINE JUDGE and UMPIRE will cover the action in front of the runner, viewing blocking and other illegal activity
3. REFEREE will cover behind and to the side of the runner, keeping a distance to view activity by other players, not around the play

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. The closest official to the runner has the responsibility to declare the ball dead if and when the runner is tackled or downed
2. There should always be two officials covering the secondary areas away from the ball carrier.
3. All officials should dead ball officiate after the play
4. All officials will hustle and efficiently prepare for the start of the next series

## SCRIMMAGE PLAY MECHANICS – 4-official

### **PRE-SNAP MECHANICS**

ALL OFFICIALS

1. HUSTLE and assist in obtaining the ball/a new ball for spotting
2. Note the status of the clock (running/stopped)
3. Note down, distance, and game situation
4. Back into position, keeping a wide view of all players and dead ball action.

REFEREE

1. Signal up coming down to HEAD LINESMAN and then to rest of the crew
2. Drop the signal and start the 25-second play clock after making visual contact with all officials to determine they are ready
3. Assume a position about 12-15 yards behind the neutral zone and outside the tackle. REFEREE will be allowed to stay on the QB’s right side, even if the QB is left-handed. This must be discussed and confirmed with the entire crew during the crew’s pre-game conference.
4. Count Team A players (in the huddle, if possible) and signal to LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN.
5. Identify formation and observe initial keys: snap, QB hard count and head bob, false start, and tackle on the opposite side.

UMPIRE

1. Retrieve the ball from the runner or obtain a new ball from another official or ball boy. Hustle outside the inbounds marks as needed to assist in retrieving the ball and spotting it
2. After REFEREE signals next down, signal next down. Drop the signal after the REFEREE drops their signal.
3. If team A is in a hurry-up offense, stay at the ball until signaled off by the REFEREE. Otherwise, after the “ready-for-play” whistle, back away from the ball to your pre-snap position while keeping the ball in sight
4. Assume a ready position 7-10 yards beyond the neutral zone, typically between the inside shade of the guard and outside shade of the tackle, opposite side of the REFEREE. The UMPIRE starting position may vary throughout the game depending on the game/play needs.
5. Count Team B players and confirm with LINE JUDGE when Team A breaks the huddle
6. Count Team A players numbered 50-79. Know ineligible
7. Identify and observe your initial keys, (a) snap, (b) center, and (c) guard(s).

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Signal up coming down and confirm with REFEREE and LINE JUDGE. Drop the signal after the REFEREE drops their signal.
2. Once the REFEREE confirms the next down, move the box/chains as necessary for the correct down and distance.
3. Identify the formation and count no more than four players in the backfield.
4. Signal status of eligible receivers on your side of snapper (crew decides if signals will be used)
5. Assume a position straddling the neutral zone, outside the sideline opposite the
6. LINE JUDGE
7. Be prepared to indicate team A restraining line to team A wide receiver with your up-field foot.
8. Identify the formation and signal status of eligible receivers on your side of the snapper.
9. Know eligible receivers on your side of the snapper and identify your initial keys
10. Motion – if a motion man is going away from you, have primary responsibility for knowing if the motion is legal or illegal. If motion man is coming to your side and motion is forward, call it if you see it

LINE JUDGE

1. Signal upcoming down and confirm with HEAD LINESMAN and REFEREE
2. Communicate with the REFEREE if necessary to indicate the status of the game clock (on the ready with wind signal at the waist or, on the snap with arms crossed at the chest)
3. Identify the formation and count no more than 4 players in the backfield
4. Signal status of eligible receivers on your side of snapper (crew decides if signals will be used)
5. Assume a position straddling the neutral zone, outside the sideline opposite the HEAD LINESMAN
6. If directed by a signal from the REFEREE in a “Hail Mary” situation, the LINE JUDGE may establish his position at the goal line or up to 15 yards down the field in anticipation of a last-second desperation play
7. Count Team B players, confirm count with UMPIRE when Team A breaks the huddle
8. Be prepared to indicate team A retraining line to team A wide receiver with your up-field foot
9. Identify formation and signal status of eligible receivers on your side of the snapper
10. Know eligible receivers on your side of snapper and identify your initial keys
11. Motion – if a motion man is going away from you, have primary responsibility for knowing if the motion is legal or illegal. If motion man is coming to your side and motion is forward, call it if you see it

## RUN MECHANICS – 4-official

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE SNAP**

ALL OFFICIALS

1. Concentrate on your area of responsibility. “Fish in your own pond”
2. Verify no false starts, encroachment, and legal snap

REFEREE

1. Observe the snap, then read the action of the Quarterback, Backs, and Lineman to determine the type of play
2. Allow your reads to help you identify the point of attack while maintaining primary responsibility for action on and by the quarterback

UMPIRE

1. Observe the snap, then read run/pass by observing the block(s) by the guard(s) or center (block down, cross block, pass block, pulling, reach block, etc.)
2. Allow your reads to help you identify the point of attack

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Observe the snap, then momentarily read run/pass by observing the block by the near tackle (block toward, pass block, pull, etc.)
2. Locate the ball and the point of attack but do not focus on it
3. On plays beginning at or within the five-yard line, going into the end zone, move to the goal line, and officiate back to the line of scrimmage
4. On plays beginning at or within the three-yard line, going out of the end zone, move back to the goal line and officiate forward to the line of scrimmage

LINE JUDGE

1. Observe the snap, then momentarily read run/pass by observing the block by the near tackle (block toward, pass block, pull, etc.)
2. Locate the ball and the point of attack but do not focus on it
3. On plays beginning at or within the five-yard line, going into the end zone, move to the goal line, and officiate back to the line of scrimmage
4. On plays beginning at or within the three-yard line, going out of the end zone, move back to the goal line and officiate forward to the line of scrimmage

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER THE SNAP**

ALL OFFICIALS

1. Know when you have responsibility for the runner and progress and when you have responsibility for action away from the ball
2. Maintain separation from the players and other officials and keep a wide view, even when you have responsibility for the runner and progress

REFEREE

1. As the previous scrimmage play is signaled dead inbounds by you or another covering official, start your 40-second play clock. Provide a visible countdown for the final 5 seconds.
2. Retrieve the ball from the runner or obtain a new ball from another official or ball boy. Hustle outside the inbounds marks as needed to assist the crew and UMPIRE in retrieving the ball and spotting it.
3. If the game clock was running and a first down was achieved inbounds, re-start the game clock with the use of a silent wind.
4. If the down requires the use of a 25-second play clock (see new 40-25 Second Play Clock Mechanics Insert), make visual contact with all officials to determine if they are ready and indicate “Ready for Play” with a short whistle and hack or long whistle and wind (two times). Start your 25-second play clock. Be sure to stay in view of the press box when giving the signal. Provide a visible countdown for the final 5 seconds
5. After determining the point of attack, shift your focus to the appropriate run zone. Know where the runner is, but he should not be your focus once he is beyond the line of scrimmage.
	1. If the point of attack is toward you, you have responsibility for the legality of blocks in Zone 2
	2. If the point of attack is away from you, you have responsibility for the legality of blocks in Zone 3
	3. If the point of attack is up the middle, you and the umpire both have responsibility for the legality of blocks in Zone 2
	4. If the point of attack is outside the inbounds marks, move to that side while maintaining your view of the action behind and around the runner
	5. If the point of attack is between the inbounds marks, box in from the rear, again focusing on blocks behind at the point of attack and around the runner
6. After the runner is down, maintain a wide view of the dead ball action. If the play ends out of bounds, hustle to the sideline and ensure players separate and return inbounds. Assist with getting the ball to the UMPIRE
7. If the ball is dead between the inbounds marks, hustle to that spot while keeping your head up to observe the action around the pile. If you declare the ball dead, inbounds well into the backfield, raise your arm to signal the start of the 40-second play clock and start your 40-second play clock. Assist the UMPIRE

UMPIRE

1. After determining that the initial blocks of the center and guards are legal and determining the point of attack, shift your focus to the appropriate Run Zone. Know where the runner is, but he should not be your focus
	1. If the point of attack is away from you, you have responsibility for judging the legality of blocks in Zone 3
	2. If the point of attack is toward you, you have responsibility for judging the legality of blocks in Zone 2
	3. If the point of attack is up the middle, you and the referee both have responsibility for judging the legality of blocks in Zone 2
2. If the ball is dead outside the inbounds marks, hustle to the dead-ball spot while maintaining a wide view of the dead ball action. The umpire must go outside the inbounds marks to assist in retrieving the ball and spotting it
3. If the ball is dead between the inbounds marks, hustle to that spot while keeping your head up to observe the action around the pile
4. You are responsible for maintaining control around the pile. Talk to players as they un-pile, encouraging them to do so in a sportsmanlike manner
5. Communicate to the flank officials with “I’VE GOT BALL” on a goal-line play if the flank officials look for assistance and you are certain the ball is across the goal line and in possession

HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

1. After reading the block of the near tackle, momentarily locate the point of attack, and the runner
2. You always have the progress spot all the way until the runner crosses the goal line. This includes an accurate spot when the runner goes out of bounds
3. On plays within the 10-yard line, if a play threatens the goal line, be prepared to be at the goal line to make the appropriate call
4. If the point of attack is away from you, you have responsibility for judging the legality of blocks and action in Zone 4, maintain a wide view of the action while paralleling the progress spot, observing player conduct away from the play
5. If the point of attack is toward you, you have responsibility for judging the legality of blocks in Zone 1; observe blocks in front of the runner until you take over responsibility for the runner at the line of scrimmage. If the runner is headed toward your sideline, allow the play to go past you (move into the offensive backfield, if necessary), then trail the play. If the runner crosses the sideline, hustle to the spot and mark progress. Signal timeout while observing the out-of-bounds dead ball action. Do not look at the ground. If the runner crosses the goal line and continues out of bounds, signal touchdown while observing all dead ball action
6. After the ball is dead, close to the dead-ball spot, if the ball is declared dead inbounds, short of the line-to-gain, raise your arm to signal the start of the 40-second play clock to the REFEREE. You must move into the field on every play (unless safety prohibits) to show presence until the colors separate. Do not pass players and do not close beyond the near inbounds mark unless:
	1. The line to gain is threatened
	2. The goal line is threatened
	3. The ball is loose then recovered
	4. In these three cases, hustle to the dead-ball spot.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

REFEREE

1. False starts
2. Illegal shift and motion
3. Blocking around the runner and by team A backs
4. Illegal acts around the runner
5. Reverses and trick plays
6. Free blocking zone

UMPIRE

1. False starts
2. Illegal snaps
3. Illegal use of hands and other illegal blocks
4. Free blocking zone

HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

1. Encroachment
2. False Starts
3. Illegal motion, shifts, formations
4. Illegal acts in front of the runner
5. Clipping, blocks in the back, and use of hands

## PASS MECHANICS – 4-official

### **COVERAGE MECHANICS**

REFEREE

1. Observe the ball relay and spot the ball if necessary. Maintain wide vision, including a view of the clock, substitutions, movement of the box and chains, and the readiness of the crew to officiate the next play.
2. Accordion back out to your regular position.
3. View the legal cadence and movement of the QB.
4. Observe initial blocking of off-side tackle while determining the type and direction of the play.
5. Be alert for blocks by backs as you transition to “read/soft vision” and identify any threats (“bad color”)
6. On QB scrambles toward LOS, determine forward point where the ball is released
7. Announce “ball is away” and protect QB until immediate action is complete or QB moves to participate. You have all calls on QB behind the line of scrimmage
8. Use tip ball signal if pass is touched in or behind the neutral zone.
9. ANTICIPATE
	1. Forward or backward pass
	2. Pass attempt vs. fumble
	3. Roughing passer
	4. Illegal pass (beyond LOS or intentional grounding)
10. Continue to provide wide-vision of play until the ball is declared dead.
11. If you declare the ball dead, inbounds well into the backfield, raise your arm to signal the start of the 40-second play clock and start your 40-second play clock.
12. Dead ball officiate

UMPIRE

1. Following the spotting of the ball, be prepared to prevent the center from prematurely snapping the ball when the offense is in a hurry-up and the REFEREE has not signaled you off the ball.
2. Start at your usual position and rule on the legality of the snap.
3. Observe your initial keys (G-C-G) as you read the pass and move forward toward the LOS.
4. You might stop your forward movement and set up 3-yards from the LOS to avoid crossing routes and be in a position to rule on ineligible downfield beyond the expanded neutral zone (2 yards).
5. Transition to” read/soft vision” and identify any defensive linemen who are successfully penetrating through the offensive blockers (especially to the referee’s side of the center as the referee’s view is more generally to his opposite side of the center). Move vision away from double-team blocks to one-on-one conflicts.
6. Rule on pass blocking technique of offensive linemen
7. On roll-outs & scrambles toward LOS, assist REFEREE in determining if the ball is released beyond LOS
8. Know uncovered offensive lineman on your side, determine pass vs. run
9. Move toward the spot of snap (on LOS)
10. Rule on any ineligible downfield
11. Use tip ball signal if pass is touched in or behind the neutral zone. Know if the pass crosses the neutral zone
12. Pivot on all passes to assist with catch/no catch, illegal personal contact, illegal helmet contact, and illegal blocks
13. Dead ball officiate

HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE

1. During pre-snap, identify the down and distance (goal line mechanics?), the line to gain (pick play on short yardage), formation, tendencies, and location of best player(s), and your initial key.
2. Read through the key receiver to the nearest offensive lineman to read the play
3. If an initial key is threatened/pressed, observe his release and observe for holding, OPI, DPI.
4. Remain near LOS until a pass is thrown unless all receivers are deep, stay underneath the shortest receiver
5. If a pass is thrown away from you, you have primary responsibility for knowing if the pass's initial direction was forward or backward. You will signal to the opposite flank by punching forward or backward accordingly
6. If the pass is to your side, you will relay the signal provided by the opposite flank
7. If the pass is to your side and you do not receive help from the opposite flank, you will rule forward or backward and signal accordingly
8. It is preferred that the flank official quickly identify that the QB is throwing a quick pass to the opposite away flank take one or two slide steps into the offensive backfield, giving a better view for the ruling on forward or backward and more visibility to your opposite flank.
9. If initial key is free of foul, transition to zone coverage and maintain underneath coverage and focus on short receiver.
10. On catch attempts near the sideline, focus on feet then hands. Near end line, focus on hands, then feet
11. Keep your focus on the receivers and defenders downfield while only quickly glancing back at QB to read the play. Do not watch the QB throughout the play, thereby disregarding the actions in the secondary. Do not focus on the flight of the ball.
12. Maintain Outside-in coverage, move parallel to sideline, responsible for sideline from end line to end line
13. If a pass is caught in bounds and then the player goes out of bounds, blow the whistle, stop the clock, mark the spot, continue to officiate
14. On catch attempts near the intersection of the sideline and end line, make eye contact with BACK JUDGE before signaling
15. If a pass is caught in bounds and then the player goes out of bounds, blow the whistle, stop the clock, mark the spot, continue to officiate
16. If the receiver catches the ball out of bounds and the covering official wants to “sell the call,” he/she may signal incomplete and then, using both hands, make a sweeping motion toward the sideline.
17. If the pass is completed and there is a need to “sell the call” and communicate that the ball was caught, the official shall raise both arms and then lower them in unison to mimic the actual catching of the ball. This signal must be performed in an exaggerated manner and is usually reserved for catches at the sideline.
18. Do not mark the spot of passes caught out of bounds
19. You are responsible for progress to the goal line. If you declare progress is stopped inbounds, short of the line-to-gain, raise your arm to signal the start of the 40-second play clock to the BACK JUDGE
20. Off-ball officiate on plays away. Come into the numbers on plays into the opposite side zone. Be prepared to offer cross-field spot if necessary on push-backs or when the opposite flank uses the “wind the clock” signal to request your assistance with a cross-field spot.
21. Be prepared to communicate with the referee when a pass is incomplete and intentional grounding may be in question. If a receiver is in the area, move to an open area as you signal by pointing demonstratively toward the eligible receiver. If no receiver is in the pass area, run to the referee and verbally communicate that information. The referee is responsible for the final decision and will throw his flag if necessary.
22. Dead ball officiate

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

REFEREE

1. Forward or backward pass
2. Pass attempt vs. fumble
3. Roughing passer
4. Illegal pass (beyond LOS or intentional grounding)

UMPIRE

1. Holding, Clipping, and Illegal blocks
2. Ineligible downfield
3. Assist in illegal pass determination
4. Touching of a pass in or behind the neutral zone
5. Illegal personal contact, illegal helmet contact

HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

1. Holding
2. Pass interference
3. Catch/No-catch
4. Unnecessary contact / Personal fouls
5. Forward/backward pass
6. Illegal participation

### **PASS RECEIVER COVERAGE KEYS**

Definitions

Receiver – End or back lined up outside of offensive tackles

Strength of the formation – Determined by the number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the offensive formation. The strong side is the side with the most eligible receivers outside the tackles

Tight End – The end man on the line of scrimmage lined up no more than 4 yards from the nearest offensive lineman. If he is lined up wider, then he is a split end.

Back in the backfield – A player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.

Trips – Three or more receivers on one side of the offensive formation outside the tackles.

Widest receiver – If players are stacked one behind another, the one nearest the line of scrimmage is considered to be the widest.

The HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE key on the eligible receiver(s) of the offensive formation on their side of the field

Keys are established at the snap by taking a snapshot of the formation, regardless of changes in formation prior to the snap

## SCRIMMAGE KICK MECHANICS – 4-official

### **PRE-KICK MECHANICS**

ALL OFFICIALS

1. Observe substitutions as you hustle to your scrimmage kick positions
2. Strange things happen on kicks. Be mentally prepared for various scenarios by reviewing the Points of Emphasis for your position

REFEREE

1. Position to the LINE JUDGE side of the field and slightly behind the kicker (approximately 7 yards to the side and 5 yards deeper than the kicker)
2. Count the kicking team
3. View the lineman and know numbering exceptions
4. Observe the cadence and anticipate a hard count or a fake

UMPIRE

1. Position ten to 15 yards from the line of scrimmage and favor the LINE JUDGE side of the field. The initial position should allow for clear visibility to rule on snap, typically shading the outside shoulder of the widest down lineman.
2. Count the receiving team and confirm with the LINE JUDGE
3. View the lineman and know numbering exceptions
4. Tell the receiving team lineman, “DO NOT HIT THE SNAPPER.”

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Position on the line of scrimmage in front of the down marker
2. Count the kicking team and look for confirmation from REFEREE for eleven players
3. View the formation to see that there are no more than 4 kicking team players in the backfield
4. View the position of the outside kicking team players. Know who is eligible to catch a pass or go downfield prior to the kick

LINE JUDGE

1. Position slightly behind and to the side of the deepest receiver on your side of the field (no further than halfway between the near sideline and the receiver) and 3-5 yards behind the receiver. If two receivers, your starting field position is between the receivers, 3-5 yards behind the receivers. On kicks from inside the receiving team’s 40-yard line, take a position on the goal line.
2. Count the receiving team and confirm with UMPIRE.
3. View the position of the outside kicking team players. Know who is eligible to catch a pass or go downfield prior to the kick.
4. Provide fair catch instructions to the receiver(s) if possible, and ask the receiver(s) to show you their signal. Remind the receiver that if they are going to make a fair catch, make sure it’s a good signal.
5. Hold a beanbag in your hand.

### **SCRIMMAGE KICK COVERAGE MECHANICS**

ALL OFFICIALS

Strange things happen on kicks. Be mentally prepared for various scenarios based on your position.

REFEREE

1. Normal Kick – Watch blocking by Team A backs and protect the kicker. Stay with the kicker until all is clear. Be the last official down the field and box in all players from behind with wide vision. If the return breaks through the defense, be prepared to take the runner all the way to the goal line.
2. Bad Snap - When there is a bad snap on a scrimmage kick, and the play goes deep into the backfield, you will follow the ball back and bracket with HEAD LINESMAN
3. Kick Out of Bounds – If the kick goes out of bounds in flight, move to the spot of the kick and then proceed to line up the out-of-bounds spot with the covering official by signaling with a hack
4. After the Play - Indicate to HEAD LINESMAN when to move chains, hustle to the new spot, and indicate first down and direction of the ball.

UMPIRE

1. Watch the action on the snapper
2. Normal Kick – Initially view line play action and the release of the kicking team players as they move downfield to cover the kick. Pivot and release down the field, watching the action of the players and blocking. Maintain wide inside-out vision.
3. Bad Snap – When there is a bad snap on a scrimmage kick, and the play goes deep into the backfield, you will move up to the line of scrimmage and rule on whether the ball crossed the line of scrimmage
4. Glance at the kick to determine direction and distance. Do not continue to watch the ball at the end of the play, dead ball officiate

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Glance at the kick to determine direction and distance. Do not continue to watch the ball
2. Determine if the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage.
3. Normal Kick – View the blocking and action around the kicking team’s eligible players (the widest players on your side) and view line action until the ball clears. After the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage, quickly release down the field and parallel the play from the outside with wide vision. Continue to watch the action as the players and ball move toward the receiver. Observe blocking down the field and in front of the runner. Mark first touching with a bean bag.
4. Bad Snap – When there is a bad snap on a scrimmage kick, and the play goes deep into the backfield, you will follow the ball back and bracket with REFEREE (the UMPIRE will then have kick crossing or not crossing the LOS)
5. If you are the covering officials, at the end of the play, spot progress and square up with the LINE JUDGE, stop the clock and signal the direction of the team in possession
6. Kick Out of Bounds – You are responsible for obtaining the proper spot on extremely short kicks that bounce out of bounds near you or land within two yards of the sideline out of bounds near you. On punts that are shanked out of bounds near you, you should be prepared to line up deeper than where the ball went out of bounds on the sideline with your outside arm straight above your head. Make eye contact with the REFEREE and begin to walk toward the original line of scrimmage. The REFEREE will hack when you have reached the out-of-bounds spot. Signal the direction of the team in possession.
7. If you are holding the spot, cover the ball until you are relieved by another official.
8. Look to the REFEREE for confirmation to move the chains
9. Dead ball officiate

LINE JUDGE

1. Glance quickly at the kick to determine direction and distance. Do not continue to watch the ball.
2. Normal Kick – View the receiver and run up to be even with the receiver as he prepares to catch the ball. Your only view is the receiver, and stay to the side of him by 7-12 yards. Look to see that the receiver catches the ball cleanly and that there was no kick catch interference or to rule on a fair catch.
3. Drop your beanbag where the kick ends. Remember that the kick ends when any player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead. If the kick crosses the goal line, blow your whistle and signal touchback.
4. Keep the runner between you and the flank official. You are responsible for coverage of the runner from an inside-out view.
5. Fair Catch - View the receiver and run up to be even with the receiver as he prepares to catch the ball. View the fair catch signal (valid or invalid?). Make certain the receiver catches the ball cleanly, and it does not go through his hands. With a confirmed catch, determine the spot of the fair catch and toss your bean bag to identify that spot. Signal to stop the clock and use your whistle to signal the end of the kick. Signal the direction of the team in possession.
6. First Touch Violation – Use a beanbag if there is a first touching violation by the kicking team. Note: there may be more than one spot of the first touching violation
7. If you are the covering official, stop the clock at the end of the play and signal the team's direction in possession.
8. Kick Out of Bounds – Determine the out-of-bounds spot on medium or long kicks out of bounds that bounce out of bounds or land within two yards of the sideline. On medium or long kicks that are kicked well out of bounds, you should be prepared to line up deeper than where the ball went out of bounds on the sideline with an outside arm straight above your head. Make eye contact with the REFEREE and begin to walk toward the original line of scrimmage. The REFEREE will hack when you have reached the out-of-bounds spot. Signal the direction of the team in possession.
9. Dead ball officiate
10. Communicate possession and direction to the REFEREE

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

REFEREE

1. Fake kicks
2. Bad Snaps
3. Blocked Punt
4. Roughing or Running into the Kicker; Incidental Contact
5. Illegal Blocks
6. Illegal Use of Hands
7. Clock Status before and after the play

UMPIRE

1. Snapper
2. Blocking; legal or illegal, illegal use of hands
3. Numbering exceptions
4. Check first touches, forced touching, muffs, fumbles, blocked punts

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Blocking
2. Touching of the ball; beyond the line of scrimmage
3. Illegal Kicking
4. Interference
5. Muff and First Touching Violations
6. Ineligible players downfield

LINE JUDGE

1. Fair Catch Signals
2. Blocking
3. Goal Line
4. Illegal Batting or Forward Handing
5. Muff and First Touching Violations
6. Fair Catch or Kick Catch Interference
7. Ball Out of Bounds in Flight

## FIELD GOAL & PAT MECHANICS – 4-official

### **PRE-SNAP MECHANICS**

ALL OFFICIALS

Prior to all field goal attempts, all officials should remind themselves of live ball by using the illegal procedure signal (#S19)

REFEREE

1. Take a wide position, 10–15 yards (or more) wider than the potential kicker and 2–3 yards deeper, on the open side of the holder. Help direct the appropriate official to be under the goal post with the UMPIRE
2. Count the kicking team
3. Beware of a fake field goal or PAT. Be ready to assist in covering the open sideline/pylon
4. Before the snap, observe any linebackers that may be attempting to shoot the gap to block the kick
5. Before the snap, check for any illegal locking of legs by offensive linemen

UMPIRE

1. Line up six feet or less behind the goal post closest to the opposite side of the official that is under the goal post with you
2. Count receiving team and confirm HEAD LINESMAN or LINE JUDGE of your count
3. You always have sole responsibility for the protection of the snapper
4. Check for the use of numbering exception by team A

HEAD LINESMAN

1. Take a position on the sideline (on PAT, move into numbers) and observe the neutral zone

OR (if facing the back of the REFEREE)

1. Line up six feet or less behind the goal post on your side of the field. Count defense and orally communicate with UMPIRE of your count.
2. Callout the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side of the offensive formation

LINE JUDGE

1. Take a position on the sideline (on PAT, move into numbers) and observe the neutral zone

OR (if facing the back of the REFEREE)

1. Line up six feet or less behind the goal post on your side of the field
2. Count kicking team
3. Callout the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side of the offensive formation

ALL OFFICIALS – SWINGING GATE

1. All officials will be in their normal positions for a scrimmage down. However, if team A shifts to a formation normally used for a PAT or attempted a field goal, all officials will move to their appropriate positions.
2. If the play is a fake kick, attempt to get to your normal scrimmage position while maintaining your usual scrimmage play responsibilities.

### **FIELD GOAL & PAT KICK COVERAGE MECHANICS**

REFEREE

1. At the snap, observe the cadence of the holder with a wide vision of all kicking team members looking for any false starts
2. Immediately following a successful snap, mentally rule if the holder’s knee was down upon receiving the snap
3. You are solely responsible if the kicker or holder is roughed or has been run into
4. Do not blow any blocked field goal dead as the ball is still live. If it is obvious that a PAT kick has been blocked and grounded, blow the play dead immediately.
5. After the kick and the kicker and holder are free of any foul, shift your observation to the offensive line to dead ball officiate. Do not hurry to see if the kick was judged successful by the officials under the goal post. Continue to dead ball officiate until the players cease their actions and begin to move to their benches
6. After you have observed the signals from the officials under the goal post, turn to the press box and repeat their signal
7. If a field goal is blocked, or a PAT or field goal is faked, or a bad snap causes the kicking team to abort the attempt, move so that all players are bracketed in and cover as you would any run or pass. You have primary responsibility for ruling on plays ending at the pylon if there is no flank official present. The UMPIRE and flank official will hustle and provide support if possible

UMPIRE

1. You always have sole responsibility for the protection of the snapper and holding by interior linemen by both offensive and defensive players (pull & shoot)
2. As the ball arrives at the goal post, step up and look straight-up to determine if the ball was kicked between the uprights and not directly over the goal post
3. Orally communicate with LINE JUDGE or HEAD LINESMAN as to the success or failure of the kick
4. Both should withhold any signal but immediately step to the end line where you both simultaneously give the signal ruling on the kick.
5. Give incomplete signal if the kick fails
6. Give touchdown signal if the kick is good
7. Hold your signal until the referee turns to repeat your signal to the press box.
8. On a fake or broken play, move to your normal position and be alert for any ineligible downfield
9. Dead ball officiate after the play ends

HEAD LINESMAN

1. IF UNDER THE GOAL POST
	1. As the ball arrives at the goal post, step up and look straight-up to determine if the ball as kicked between the uprights and not directly over the goal post
	2. Orally communicate with UMPIRE as to the success or failure of the kick
	3. Both should withhold any signal but immediately move to the end line where you both simultaneously give the signal ruling on the kick
	4. Give incomplete signal if the kick fails
	5. Give touchdown signal if the kick is good
	6. On fake plays, be ready to cover passes or runs as usual. You are responsible for the goal line and sideline
	7. Watch line play after kick ends
2. IF ON THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE
3. After the snap, observe the legality of the blocks of the backs protecting the kick
4. You are responsible for the goal line plane
5. If it is a pass, observe any illegal lineman downfield. This is your responsibility, along with the umpire
6. If a field goal is blocked, you are responsible in determining if the kick crossed the neutral zone or the goal line and where it is recovered, and by whom
7. After the kick, sprint into the hash to dead ball officiate

LINE JUDGE

1. IF UNDER THE GOAL POST
	1. As the ball arrives at the goal post, step up and look straight-up to determine if the ball was kicked between the uprights and not directly over the goal post
	2. Orally communicate with UMPIRE as to the success or failure of the kick
	3. Both should withhold any signal but immediately move to the end line where you both simultaneously give the signal ruling on the kick
	4. Give incomplete signal if the kick fails
	5. Give touchdown signal if the kick is good
	6. On fake plays, be ready to cover passes or runs as usual. You are responsible for the goal line and sideline.
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	4. If a field goal is blocked, you are responsible for determining if the kick crossed the neutral zone or the goal line and where it is recovered, and by whom
	5. After the kick, sprint into the hash to dead ball officiate