



2025 Flag Football 3-Official Mechanics

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FLAG FOOTBALL 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

Please note that our tackle mechanics are the basis for our movements and coverage for any level or style of football. If a mechanic is not addressed in this section, then please refer to the tackle mechanics for the answer to your question.

UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

1. The uniform will be the same as we use for all high school level games. No shorts will be worn.
2. The use of radios and/or a wireless microphone is the decision of the Referee.

SITE ARRIVAL

1. The referee will reach out to the crew 24-hours before game time to confirm their assignments.
2. Arrival time is 30-minutes before the start of the contest.
3. Officials should be fully dressed as they go directly to the field.
4. The crew will gather immediately for their pre-game.

CREW PREGAME

1. Confirm position assignments.
2. Confirm responsibilities and duties to be performed during the warm up period.
3. Discuss any new bulletin information from the Instructional Chair.
4. Clarify any rules or mechanics questions.

WARM-UP PERIOD

1. The Referee, Field Judge and Head Line-Judge will meet with the head coaches starting with the home team.
 - a. Introductions
 - b. Coach is everyone legally equipped? (legal flags? Jerseys tucked in?)
 - c. Come out on the field to request time outs if necessary.
 - d. Any unusual plays or formations?
 - e. Confirm game time and game clock operator.
 - f. Identify the "Down Box" operator.
2. Head Line-Judge instructs the Down Box operator.
3. Field Judge instructs the timer.
4. All officials evaluate player equipment and correct any equipment or adornment issues.
5. Officials observe the warm-up activities for play and player insights.
6. The crew meets just prior to the coin toss to share information from the meeting with the head coaches, and to review the basic mechanics to be used during the game.

COIN TOSS

1. Referee faces the scoreboard while the Head Line-Judge and Field Judge escort their captains to the center of the field.
2. The Head Line-Judge and Field Judge move opposite the Referee with their backs to the scoreboard.
3. The coin toss procedure is identical to the one used in tackle football but the options of “kick, receive, defer or defend a goal” are replaced with “offense, defense, defer or defend a goal.” There is no specific order used by all Referees.
4. The second half choices are the same as tackle football.

HALFTIME

1. Quickly meet to clarify rules or mechanics issues.
2. Confirm with the crew which team will be on offense.
3. Obtain the choice of direction from the opponent.

SCRIMMAGE PLAY MECHANICS

1. Referee
 - a. The Referee will always spot the ball unless another official helps and spots the ball out of convenience. Players do not spot the ball.
 - b. Confirm the next down with the Head Line-Judge, and the Field Judge.
 - c. Count offense.
 - d. Whistle “ready for play” and start your 25-second play clock.
 - e. Initial responsibilities are the snap and any movement by the backs.
 - f. Rule on progress for plays that end behind the line of scrimmage.
 - g. Trail all plays downfield and assist with fouls on, or by, the runner.
 - h. Observe player movements for potential blocking or fouls against receivers during short routes.
 - i. Rule on roughing the passer.
 - j. On change of possession, use reverse mechanics to the goal line.
2. Head Line-Judge
 - a. Confirms the down with the Referee.
 - b. Locates the Down Box at the proper spot and confirm the Down Box is displaying the correct down.
 - c. Count defense
 - d. Observe the entire neutral zone for violations
 - e. Observe initial release to rule on contact created by either team.
 - f. Read run or pass
 - g. Rule on complete, incomplete and progress spots.
 - h. You have sideline responsibilities from endline to endline
3. Field Judge
 - a. Responsible for the backup game clock.
 - b. Initial position 15-20 yards downfield.
 - c. Confirm the next down with the Referee and visually confirm the proper down is displayed on the Down Box.
 - d. Count defense

- e. Responsible for the goal line and the end line.
- f. Observe initial release to rule on contact created by either team.
- g. Read run or pass
- h. Rule on complete, incomplete and progress spots.
- i. You have sideline responsibilities from endline to endline
- j. You have sole responsibility for the endline.

GOAL LINE MECHANICS

- 1. Head Line-Judge moves directly to the goal line if the ball is snapped on/inside the 10-yard line.
- 2. Field Judge is on the goal line, if possible, when the ball is snapped outside of the 10-yard line.
- 3. Field Judge moves the intersection of the sideline and endline when the ball is snapped on/inside the 10-yard line.

SCRIMMAGE KICK MECHANICS

- 1. Referee
 - a. Confirm punt with the head coach and communicate their decision to the defensive team and their coaches.
 - b. Observe the snap and the kick.
 - c. Use reverse mechanics during the return.
 - d. Signal to the Head Line-Judge to move the Down Box at the end of the play.
- 2. Head Line-Judge
 - a. Hold position at the line of scrimmage and rule on the kick crossing the line of scrimmage or not.
 - b. Mark the spot that the kick ends, or the spot of the end of the return.
- 3. Field Judge
 - a. Position yourself on your sideline slightly deeper than the receiver.
 - b. Allow the returner one opportunity to possess the airborne or grounded kick.
 - c. Mark the spot that the kick ends, or the spot of the end of the return.

PENALTY MECHANICS

- 1. The crew may use radios to expedite the communication of penalty information and the proper enforcement of the penalty.
- 2. The Referee marks off all penalties unless another official helps and marches off the ball out of convenience.

AFTER THE GAME

- 1. The crew immediately leaves the field together and the Referee will lead a post-game discussion.