**SDCFOA Mechanics Changes 2025- 2026**

* In **2025 a new shirt** featuring the CIF logo and the logo of the SDCFOA may be used by officials and crews if all officials on the field are all wearing the new shirt. This new shirt will be **required of all officials starting with the 2026 season.**
* **Back Judge will instruct the clock operator during warm up period and will visit him/her at halftime should there need to be adjustments made.**
* **Guidance for Announcements and Usage of Stadium Microphone (Including the Coin Toss Results)**
* **Teams from outside of San Diego Section of CIF** – “Coach, in our section, if the game is tied at the end of the game, we will play a mandatory 25-yardline overtime, similar to the college overtime. Do you have any questions?” For teams outside of California, “Coach if a player is sent out of the game for signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, they must remain out for the rest of the game.” “In addition, if one team is leading by 35-points at the start of the 4th quarter, we will use a running clock.” If the game is being played on a college field, you might confirm the width of the goal posts (college or widened for high school?) plus the use of the high school hash marks which may, or may not, be marked on the field.

## **Presentation of the Equipment Card to the Head Coach -** After each flank official has completed the survey of their team’s equipment and noted any violations on the Association’s Coaches Game Card with Equipment Check, and provided the completed card to the UMPIRE, the REFEREE and UMPIRE will present the equipment card to the head coach. The referee will:

1. Explain that the card lists the equipment violations observed during the warmup period.
2. Acknowledge with the coach that we anticipate that all players will correct these violations prior to the start of the game.
3. Confirm that any player discovered attempting to participate with illegal equipment, or equipment worn illegally, will be sent out of the game for at least one play.
4. Confirm that players will not be warned, nor will corrections be made on the field.
5. If a player is sent out of the game for equipment issues, we will communicate to you the reason why.
6. Thank you for your cooperation.
* **Halftime and Post-Game Use of Suggested Check List for Adjustment Purposes**
* **Free kick coverage now also emphasizes the observation of illegal contact on receivers.**
* **3 and 4-Person LJ scrimmage kick mechanics** - During the return, attempt to fade toward your sideline as you must rule on progress on your side of the field and your sideline. You can accomplish this even if you end up trailing the returner down your sideline. If the return is toward the head linesman’s side of the field, release him to the head linesman and fade to your sideline.
* **3-Person PAT Mechanics**

**Head Linesman** - Take a position on the sideline (on PAT move into numbers) and observe the neutral zone. You have the entire line of scrimmage. Observe the snap and the legality of the blocks. You have responsibility for roughing the kicker or holder.

**Line Judge** - Take a position in the endzone, similar to a normal umpire position, on your end of the formation on your side of the field.

* **Potential Intentional Grounding** - If there is no receiver in the area and it appears the QB is outside the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone, signal if the thrown ball crosses the LOS by moving your arm forward and backward along the LOS. If no receiver is in the pass area, and the ball does not cross reach the neutral zone, run to the referee and verbally communicate that information.
* **Both signal if the PAT/FG kick if the kick is good, or clearly failed. If the kick is close and fails, only the ruling official gives the incomplete signal.**
* **Optional Free Kick Mechanic** – switching the line judge and the umpire positioning, mechanics and responsibilities
* **LJ signals to Referee/Crew if the line to gain has been reached or not. The LJ may communicate via the radio if the referee is not in a position to see the hand signal. Do not signal overhead.**
* **A bean bag must be dropped at the spot of all fumbles**. In this way we have an accurate spot should the fumble go forward and out of bounds, or a foul occur while the ball I still loose.Officials are reminded that NO BEAN BAG IS NECESSARY when a bad snap occurs. In this case, should a foul occur, the enforcement spot for foul occurring while the ball is loose following a snap is always the previous spot. It is also improper for a bean bag to be thrown following an interception as there is no foul enforcement from the spot of a turnover.
* **The game clock should not display tenths of a second**. High school and youth games are timed in whole seconds. .9 on the clock will mean that the game is over.
* **Hold the center to prevent the snap** if the offense is in a hurry-up and wants to snap and the REFEREE has not released you, or in any situation where the the crew is not ready to officiate or play has been held up
* **Goal Line Coverage -** When the ball is snapped at, or within the five-yard line, going into the end zoe, both flanks will move to the goal line immediately following the snap. The flanks will move in a smooth manner, not sprinting or slide stepping so that their head is moving up-and-down. The flanks may move a bit deeper into the white restricted area prior to the snap so that they can move at a lesser angle as they get to the goal line but are positioned well off of the actual pylon (3-4 yards). If the runner is downed short of the goal line, the flank officials will officiate back to the dead ball, progress spot.

When the ball is snapped at, or within the three-yard line, going out of the end zone, both flanks will move to the goal line immediately following the snap. Their set-up, movements, and positioning will be identical to when the ball was going into the endzone as described in the previous paragraph.

During the pre-game meeting, the flanks and the umpire will discuss communication on close goal line plays. Umpires will never signal touchdown, but may have some important information to share with the flanks, especially if the ball was fumbled. “I have ball” is a common phrase used by umpires to communicate to the flanks that the ball is located, in possession, in the end zone. The umpire is not saying how it got there, rather, just telling the flanks the location of the ball.

On extremely tight goal line plays toward the middle of the field, as well as all scrimmage plays ending very close to the line to gain, the flanks will “pinch” or close rapidly toward the middle of the field. When “pinching” in the flanks must remain in the field of play. Do not “pinch” and run to the middle of the field in the end zone, as that would communicate that we must have a touchdown. Stay in the field of play. If you are not sure of the progress spot, continue to close until you and the opposite flank, and the umpire, are face to face and able to easily, verbally communicate. Although flank officials are responsible for progress and the exact location of the ball, DO NOT GUESSS. It is better to admit that you are not sure to your fellow officials. Between the three officials (two flanks plus information from the umpire) the proper ruling will emerge. If the group is unsure of the exact progress spot, then the location of the ball on the ground will determine the outcome of the play. If the ball is in the end zone, then it will be a touchdown. If the ball is short of the goal line then it is not a touchdown. Take your time, use great mechanics, communicate, and use strong signaling to sell the call. Referee unpostured announcements can also help with the optics.

* **Penalty Enforcement** - Unless it is an incomplete pass, make sure there is a ball on the ground
1. Hustle to the referee and report:
2. Type of play and status of the ball when the foul occurred;
3. Foul;
4. Offending team;
5. Number;
6. The spot of the foul;
7. The result of the play (this may be offered first if it will help the referee’s process and announcement)

# **Philosophies Are Now Referred to As Officiating Standards -** Football officiating requires the proper application of the Rules of the Game combined with Common Sense. Common Sense dictates that extremes are as undesirable in Officiating as in any other endeavor. Football Officials are provided Officiating Standards which have long been proven to be effective. The use of these standards will help any official become a better individual, a better member of the crew, and a more consistent and accurate official for the game of football.

* **Change to Probationary Status** - Starting with the 2025 season, the Board also identifies 1st-year officials who have completed all of their instructional requirements and demonstrated on the field a real talent for officiating at the varsity level. The Board receives help in identifying these unique individuals with the help of the first- and second-year instructors plus the instructional chair. These few individuals have clearly proven themselves on the field in varsity games, to be ready to be certified after only one probationary year. These talented officials are hand picked, recommended to the Board, certified by the Board and are eligible for the draft.

# **The Weekly Routines** have been updated to include more full crew communication and involvement.