

Mechanics for a Crew of Seven

As the State of Wyoming has recently authorized the use of 7 officials in state playoff games (state finals in the first year), there was a need to develop a bespoke seven-person mechanics manual.

In 7 official mechanics, the positions of Side Judge and Field Judge are added to the standard crew of 5. The Field Judge and Side Judge may also be referred to as “Deep Wings” in other parts of this manual. The Field Judge is partnered with the Line Judge on the same side of the field, and the Side Judge is partnered with the Head Line Judge on the same side of the field. As in 5 official mechanics, the wing officials may switch sides for the second half. If switching, the Line Judge and Field Judge start the game with the chains side opposite the press box, and will have duties related to that side (namely the chain crew). As in 5 official mechanics the slight differences in short and deep wing mechanics are respective to which side of the field one is working, not the “title” of his position.

The biggest differences between 5 and 7 official mechanics generally have to do with kick coverage mechanics, responsibility for marking forward progress, and initial pre snap receiver keys.

What follows has been copied from the Nevada game officials manual, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) handbook for 7 official mechanics, and (perhaps most importantly) closely follows the NCAA Collegiate Commissioner’s Association (CCA) 7 official mechanics. There are also supplementary materials in the NFHS Game Officials Manual, but this version is preferred.

10.1 PREGAME

Pregame Duties and Responsibilities

REFEREE

- Go with the Umpire to meet with the Head Coaches.
- Ask the Head Coach to certify player compliance to mandatory equipment rules.
- Inspect the entire field with the BJ. Note unusual markings or irregularities. Work with home management to correct any hazardous conditions within or near the boundary lines.
- Observe Quarterbacks and Kickers during their warm-ups and note hand/foot used to throw/kick ball.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the team’s coaching staff - who will be responsible for correcting.

UMPIRE

- Go with the Referee to meet with the Head Coaches.
- Verify Head Coach certification of player compliance to mandatory equipment rules.

- Verify legality of any bandages, wraps, braces, and other possible equipment questions.
- Discuss with the short wings how to communicate position of the ball.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the team's coaching staff - who will be responsible for correcting.
- Observe offensive linemen as they warm up.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Discuss signals & communications with LJ.
- Introduce yourself to both head coaches.
- Check chain crew equipment. Tape in middle of chain.
- Have pregame conference with the chain crew.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the team's coaching staff - who will be responsible for correcting.
- See snaps from both teams.

LINE JUDGE

- Discuss signals & communications with HL.
- Introduce yourself to both head coaches.
- Join HL for pregame conference with chain crew.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the team's coaching staff - who will be responsible for correcting.
- See snaps from both teams.

FIELD JUDGE

- Discuss signals & communication with SJ and BJ.
- Introduce yourself to both Head Coaches.
- Who is the Get Back Coach on your side?
- Instruct the ball persons. SJ will assist.
- Have the captains on your side at the sideline at the appropriate time.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the team's coaching staff - who will be responsible for correcting.
- See snaps from both teams.

SIDE JUDGE

- Give crew the official time.
- Have a watch capable of timing the game if the field clock malfunctions. Keep the game time during the game.
- Discuss signals & communication with FJ and BJ.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the team's coaching staff - who will be responsible for correcting.
- See snaps from both teams.

- Introduce yourself to the both Head Coaches.
- Who is the Get Back Coach on your side?
- Assist the FJ with instruction of the ball persons.
- Have the captains on your side at the sideline at the appropriate time.

BACK JUDGE

- Instruct the game clock operator.
- Have a watch capable of timing the play clock.
- Discuss signals & communication with FJ and SJ.
- Inspect the field with R.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the team's coaching staff - who will be responsible for correcting.
- See snaps from both teams.

10.2 COIN TOSS

REFEREE

- At the appropriate time, go with the U to the middle of the field, R faces the clock.
 - FJ and SJ send captains for the coin toss.
- Once the choices have been made by both teams, 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.
- All officials meet and review toss results. Then jog to kickoff positions.

UMPIRE

- At the appropriate time, go with the R to the middle of the field, R faces the clock.
 - FJ and SJ send captains for the coin toss.
- Listen and verify captain's choices and R's options.
- All officials meet and review toss results. Then jog to kickoff positions.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Stay on your sideline at the 50-yard line with game ball. (SJ will be at the numbers).
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, provide game ball to BJ if your team will be kicking, then jog to kickoff positions.

LINE JUDGE

- Stay on your sideline at the 50-yard line with game ball. (FJ will be at the numbers).
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, provide game ball to BJ if your team will be kicking, then jog to kickoff positions.

FIELD JUDGE

- On a signal from the R, escort the captains to the numbers and send them to the R.
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, then jog to kickoff positions.

SIDE JUDGE

- On a signal from the R, escort the captains to the numbers and send them to the R.
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, then jog to kickoff positions.

BACK JUDGE

- Stay on your sideline nearest the press box at the 50-yard line (SJ will be at the numbers).
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, then jog to kickoff positions.

ENTIRE CREW

- We will meet as a crew after the coin toss and then “break it down” before moving to kickoff positions. (Assuming the toss is shortly before kickoff)

10.3 FREE KICKS

10.3.1 Free Kick – Deep/Normal

REFEREE

- Assume a starting position in the middle of the field behind the deepest receiver (usually 5 yards deep in endzone).
- Count R and confirm with the H and L.
- Once the BJ indicates the other officials and players are ready, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal.
- You are responsible for the end line. Be alert for a touchback or a kick beyond the end line.
- You are responsible for play clock.
- You are responsible for knowing if K has at least four players on both sides of the kicker when the ball is kicked.
- Move laterally to be in position to see action at the point of attack. Be alert to a handoff or reverse.

UMPIRE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on K's restraining line. Do not switch at half.
- Count K and confirm with the BJ.
- You are responsible for clearing your sideline to K's end line.
- Umpire keys on K's players #4 and #5 from his sideline and observes action on the kicker (see diagram).
- Ensure K's players are within 5 yards of their restraining line. Watch illegal action on the kicker.
- Once the ball is kicked, move between the numbers and the hash marks moving down field no more than 8-10 yards.
- Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.
- If kick is to opposite side, move to the hash marks and observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as they normally are not threatened until they reach the Head Line Judge or Line Judge's zone (see diagram).

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at R's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility.
- Stay at the goal line until it is no longer threatened.
- Count the receiving team and confirm with R. Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/or equal to 11 players.
- Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, in your area, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down.
- When the runner is on your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner.
- When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner.

LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at R's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. Stay at the goal line until it is no longer threatened.
- Count the receiving team and confirm with R. Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/or equal to 11 players.
- Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, in your area, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down.

- When the runner is on your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner.
- When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner.

FIELD JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side on R's restraining line at the back of the Restricted Area. Assist in clearing your sideline.
- Field Judge keys on K's players #2 and #3 on his side of the field (see diagram).
- You must know if the ball was kicked into the ground.
- Move no more than 10 yards toward R's goal line to provide better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and the receiving team.
- You have sideline coverage to K's goal line on a runback.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as they normally are not threatened until they reach the Head Lines Judge or Line Judge's zone (see diagram).

SIDE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on R's restraining line. Assist in clearing your sideline.
- Side Judge keys on K's players #2 and #3 on his side of the field (see diagram).
- You must know if the ball was kicked into the ground – aka Pop-up Kick.
- Move no more than 10 yards toward R's goal line to provide better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and the receiving team.
- You have sideline coverage to K's goal line on a runback.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as he normally is not threatened until he reaches the Head Line Judge or Line Judge's zone (see diagram).

BACK JUDGE

- Count K and confirm with the U. Hand the ball to the kicker and move to your starting position at the sideline on the press box side on K's restraining line. Raise your arm to signal the R you are ready.
- You are responsible for clearing your sideline to K's end line.
- Back Judge keys on K's players #4 and #5 from his sideline and observes action on the kicker (see diagram).
- Ensure K's players are within 5 yards of their restraining line. Watch illegal action on the kicker.

- Once the ball is kicked, move between the numbers and the hash marks moving down field no more than 8-10 yards.
- Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.
- If kick is to opposite side, move to the hash marks and observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.
- You are responsible for Team K's goal line on any long return.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as they normally are not threatened until they reach the Head Line Judge or Line Judge's zone ([see diagram](#)).

10.3.2 Free Kick – Onside (anticipated)

REFEREE

- Assume a starting position in the middle of the field behind the deepest receiver. You have goal line and pylon responsibility.
- Once the BJ indicates the other officials and players are ready, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal.
- Be prepared if K kicks deep instead of onside.

UMPIRE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on K's restraining line. Have bean bag in hand.
- Treat K's restraining line as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for encroachment.
- If the kick is to your side, you have secondary responsibility for touching by either team.
- If the kick is to the opposite side, you are responsible for blocking.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by K and be prepared to cover the play if a K player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline, midway between the two restraining lines.
- Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.
- You are primary for ruling on illegal blocks by K before ball has gone 10 yards

LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline, midway between the two restraining lines. Have bean bag in hand.
- Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.
- You are primary for ruling on illegal blocks by K before ball has gone 10 yards

FIELD JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline at R's restraining line. Have bean bag in hand.
- You must know if the kick broke the plane of R's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

SIDE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline at R's restraining line. Have bean bag in hand.
- You must know if the kick broke the plane of R's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

BACK JUDGE

- Count K and confirm with the U and F. Hand the ball to the kicker and move to your starting position on the sideline on the press box side at K's restraining line. Once you are in position, raise your arm to signal the R you are ready. Have beanbag in hand.
- Treat K's restraining line as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for encroachment.
- If the kick is to your side, you have secondary responsibility for touching by either team.
- If the kick is to the opposite side, you are responsible for blocking.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by K and be prepared to cover the play if a K player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

10.4 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

REFEREE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Assume a basic position, always on the QB's throwing arm side, outside the normal tight end position and at least five yards deeper than the deepest back (12-15 yards off the line of scrimmage).
- Count the offensive team and observe their substitution process. Use visual signal to confirm count with Umpire and alert HL/LJ if there are less than 11 players on offense.
- Check the offensive formation and observe the QB and other backs for possible false start, illegal motion, illegal shift, etc.

Running Play

- After the snap, observe action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs and backward passes.
- Once you read run, focus on the blocks on the front side of the point of attack.
- On option plays, if the QB keeps the ball and turns up field, assume responsibility for the trailing back until there is no longer a threat of a foul. If the QB pitches the ball, stay with the QB.
- Stay with the runner behind the line. Trail but don't chase the runner into the side zone, covering behind the play.
- If the QB goes out of bounds, coordinate sideline coverage with the HL or LJ to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field.
- Assist in spotting the ball on runs that end in the side zone and out of bounds.
- On change of possession, be alert for action on the QB.

Passing Play

- If pass is indicated, stay put! If needed, drop at a 45-degree angle getting deeper and wider as the QB drops back into the pocket. Try to maintain a cushion.
- As the QB drops back, observe action behind the line. Observe blockers and the QB (your primary responsibility) until there is no threat of a foul.
- Ensure that the QB is not roughed or thrown to the ground. Verbally alert the defenders when the passer has released the ball.
- Rule on intentional grounding; may consult with other officials regarding positions of eligible receivers in the area of the pass; and whether the pass crossed the neutral zone.

UMPIRE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Line up seven to nine yards off the ball, inside the tackles (typically between the linebackers) and always able to see the snap clearly.
- Count offense. Signal to Referee.
- Key on guard-center-guard.
- Watch the snapper for illegal movements. Be alert to possible illegal snap and false start by the offense. Only HL and LJ call neutral zone infractions.
- Be alert to the sound and cadence of the defensive captain's signals.

Running Play

- Up the middle:
 - Watch lead blocks. Get out of the way.
 - Take progress from wing officials.
- Into either side zone:
 - Read keys. Watch lead blocks.
 - Watch dead ball and action behind the play.
 - Hustle to the number to receive and spot the new ball.

Passing Play

- Focus attention on action involving the center and guards. Watch for potential chop blocks, illegal blocks, clips and holds.
- Be aware of B touching the pass in or behind the neutral zone.
- Pivot and turn on passes. Help out when possible and relevant on catch-no catch.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Read the offensive formation and know eligible receivers.
- Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take a position straddling the neutral zone.
- Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen.
- Watch for illegal formations, encroachment, and false starts.
- Rule on motion – you are primary for motion going away, but rule on illegal motion to your side if you see it.

Running Plays

- Up the middle:
 - Focus on blocks and the ball carrier.
- Toward your side of the field:

- Focus on blocks in front of the ball carrier, how did he turn the corner, forward progress. Close at a 90-degree angle. Square in on the spot.
- Away from your side of the field:
 - Focus on back-side blocks (protect behind R and U) and cross-field mechanics.
- You have progress to B's 2-yard line.
- Change of possession:
 - You have goal line responsibility on long returns.
 - If the change of possession is short and you are close, you can take the spot. If there is a long return, the deep flanks will have the progress spot. This is called reverse fade. You have progress inside the 2-yard line to the goal line.

Passing Plays

- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for based on a snap-shot at the snap of the ball.
 - If balanced formation (2 rec on each side), your key is the 2nd receiver in.
 - If balanced formation (1 rec on each side), your key is a back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is weak side, your key is the back or 2nd receiver in.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 2 receivers, your key is the back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 3-4 receivers, your key is the 2nd receiver in.
 - If quads to your side, let them declare after the snap.
- SNAP-TACKLE-KEY-AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.
- Is the pass behind the line of scrimmage, was it thrown forward or backward?
- Must know if the pass is thrown from beyond the neutral zone.
- Must know if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Observe where ineligible linemen are at the time the passer releases the ball.
- Stay at line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, then move to get progress.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard/watch air.
- You have progress to B's 2-yard line.
- Reverse fade on interception. Back pedal and give up progress to the SJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.

LINE JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Read the offensive formation and know eligible receivers.
- Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take a position straddling the neutral zone.
- Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen.
- Watch for illegal formations, encroachment, and false starts.
- Rule on motion – primary for motion going away but rule on illegal motion to your side if you see it.

Running Play

- Up the middle:
 - Focus on blocks and the ball carrier.
- Toward your side of the field:
 - Focus on blocks in front of the ball carrier, how did he turn the corner, forward progress. Close at a 90-degree angle. Square in on the spot.
- Away from your side of field:
 - Focus on back-side blocks (protect behind R and U) and cross field mechanics.
- You have progress to B's 2-yard line.
- Change of possession:
 - You have goal line responsibility on long returns.
 - If the change of possession is short and you are close, you can take the spot. If there is a long return, the deep flanks will have the progress spot. This is called reverse fade. You have progress inside the 2-yard line to the goal line.

Passing Play

- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for based on a snap-shot at the snap of the ball.
 - If balanced formation, your key is the back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is weak side, your key is the back or 2nd receiver in.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 2 receivers, your key is the back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 3-4 receivers, your key is the 2nd receiver in.
 - If quads to your side, let them declare after the snap.
- SNAP-TACKLE-KEY-AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
- Is the pass behind the line of scrimmage, was it thrown forward or backward?
- Must know if the pass is thrown from beyond the neutral zone.
- Must know if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Observe where ineligible linemen are at the time the passer releases the ball.

- Stay at line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, then move to get progress.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- You have progress to B's 2-yard line.
- Reverse fade on interception. Back pedal and give up progress to FJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.

FIELD JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Basic position is on the sideline, 20-22 yards beyond the LOS.
- Count the defense and verify count with BJ and SJ.
- Observe the start of the game clock with the R's wind or ready signal.
- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for at the snap. This will be the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.

Running Play

- You are responsible for action on or by the widest receiver on your side of the field. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist, and holding.
- You have progress inside the 2-yard line.
- Toward your side of field:
 - Maintain a 10–15-yard cushion. Be at the goal line when the runner crosses.
 - You are responsible for ruling on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, the LJ will mark the spot of forward progress; you are responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and out of bounds.
- Away from your side of field:
 - Clean up behind the U.
 - Be alert to live ball personal fouls, and dead ball fouls.
 - Cover action between you and the area of the runner once the play crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Stay in front of the play at all times. Do not get beat to the goal line. Let the short wings take progress spots up to the B-2. Dead ball officiate.
- On change of possession plays, take forward progress on the return up to the 2-yard line. This is reverse fade mechanics.

Passing Play

- You are responsible for action on and by the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.

- Hold your basic position at the snap and observe the type of play as it unfolds. Begin to fade when you read pass and maintain your 10–15-yard cushion at all times.
- Be alert to the wide receiver voluntarily going out of bounds. Throw your hat to signify the receiver is voluntarily (or involuntarily) OOB.
- Cover sideline from your original position to the end line.
- Use Modified Fade Mechanics and maintain a 10–15-yard cushion.
- Watch for holding and illegal contact against eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- Once the pass is thrown, all eyes go to the ball.
- When ruling on a pass reception involving the sideline, watch foot and then ball. Give incomplete signal if incomplete, timeout signal if complete, and/or auxiliary signal as needed.
- Coordinate close sideline plays with L.
- Reverse fade on interceptions:
 - On interception run backs, switch responsibilities with the LJ.
 - You are responsible for the runner's forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line, the LJ will rule on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, you will mark the spot of forward progress; the LJ is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.

SIDE JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Basic position is on the sideline, 20-22 yards beyond the LOS.
- Count the defense and verify count with BJ and FJ.
- Observe the start of the game clock with the R's wind or ready signal.
- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for at the snap. This will be the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.

Running Play

- You are responsible for action on or by the widest receiver on your side of the field. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist, and holding.
- You have progress inside the 2-yard line.
- Toward your side of field:
 - Maintain a 10–15-yard cushion. Be at the goal line when the runner crosses.
 - You are responsible for ruling on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, the LJ will mark the spot of forward progress; you are responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and out of bounds.

- Away from your side of field:
 - Clean up behind the U.
 - Be alert to live ball personal fouls, and dead ball fouls.
 - Cover action between you and the area of the runner once the play crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Stay in front of the play at all times. Do not get beat to the goal line. Let the short wings take progress spots up to the B-2. Dead ball officiate.
- On change of possession plays, take forward progress on the return up to the 2-yard line. This is reverse fade mechanics.

Passing Play

- You are responsible for action on and by the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.
- Hold your basic position at the snap and observe the type of play as it unfolds. Begin to fade when you read pass and maintain your 10–15-yard cushion at all times.
- Be alert to the wide receiver voluntarily going out of bounds. Throw your hat to signify the receiver is voluntarily (or involuntarily) OB.
- Cover sideline from your original position to the end line.
- Use Modified Fade Mechanics and maintain a 10–15-yard cushion.
- Watch for holding and illegal contact against eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- Once the pass is thrown, all eyes go to the ball.
- When ruling on a pass reception involving the sideline, watch foot and then ball. Give incomplete signal if incomplete, timeout signal if complete and/or auxiliary signal as needed.
- Coordinate close sideline plays with L.
- Reverse fade on interceptions
 - On interception run backs, switch responsibilities with the LJ.
 - You are responsible for the runner's forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line, the LJ will rule on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, you will mark the spot of forward progress; the LJ is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.

BACK JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Basic position is in the middle of the field 25 yards from the LOS.
- When the snap is inside the 25-yard line, your position is on the end line.

- Count the defense and confirm with FJ and SJ.
- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for based on a snap-shot at the snap.
 - If a balanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the LJ side.
 - If an unbalanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the strong side.
 - If trips, your key is the third receiver on the trips side.
 - If quads, your keys are the third and fourth receivers on the quads side at the snap, then let them declare if they are bunched or stacked.
- You are responsible for the play clock and giving the visual signals of 10 and 5 (on down) to the QB.

Running Play

- You are responsible for action on or by your receiver. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist, and holding.
- Maintain a 10–15-yard cushion. Be at the goal line when the runner crosses unless you started on the end line.
- You are responsible for ruling on action in advance of the runner.
- If the run ends between the numbers, hold your position and observe dead ball action.
- If the run ends near a sideline, move towards the play and observe dead ball action.
- Be alert to live ball fouls and dead ball personal fouls.

Passing Play

- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for at the snap based on a snap-shot at the snap.
 - If a balanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the LJ side.
 - If an unbalanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the strong side.
 - If trips, your key is the third receiver on the trips side.
 - If quads, your keys are the third and fourth receivers on the quads side at the snap, then let them declare if they are bunched or stacked.
- Hold your basic position at the snap and observe the type of play as it unfolds. Begin to fade only when your 10–15-yard cushion is threatened.
- You are responsible for action on or by your receiver. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist and holding.
- Watch for holding or illegal checking of eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- Once the pass is thrown, all eyes go to the ball.
- When ruling on a pass reception involving the end line, watch foot and then ball. Ensure receiver/defender controls the ball throughout the process, even if out of bounds.
- Coordinate with S, F on plays that involve the side line/end line and plays snapped from 7-yard line and in.

10.4.3 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – PUNTS

REFEREE

- Take position 3 to 5 yards behind the kicker and wider than the normal tight end position on the kicking leg side. See the ball from snap to kick. Be in position to see blockers, rushers, and kicker at the same time.
- Count the kicking team.
- Be alert to the kicking team's substitution process and timing.
- Warn the kicker if he is near the end line prior to the snap.
- Watch blocking and action by players behind the line of scrimmage.
- Observe action by and against the kicker. Give signal #11 if ball is tipped.
- If the kick remains in bounds, observe players (especially the kicker) while proceeding down field.
- If the kick is caught or recovered inbounds, be ready to use reverse fade on the return and be at the goal line when the runner crosses.

UMPIRE

- Line up a little deeper than normal position.
- Always able to see the snapper's hands.
- Count kickers and signal to R.
- Get numbers of interior linemen. Know exception rules.
- Remind defense to avoid the snapper.
- Watch for illegal blocks and holding by both teams.
- Pay particular attention to the team B player over the snapper.
- Pivot once linemen pass you and watch action ahead of the runner.
- On a fake or broken play, move to the line of scrimmage and cover play.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Stay at the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, move downfield no more than 10-15 yards
- Reverse fade on punt returns. Back pedal and give up progress to the SJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.
- Look for legal and illegal blocks into the kicker.
- On a bad snap/ blocked kick behind LOS, bracket the ball with the R if you are facing him. LJ has the LOS.
- On fakes, know eligible receivers.

LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Stay at the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, then move slowly downfield, no more than 10-15 yds.
- Reverse fade on punt returns. Back pedal and give up progress to the SJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.
- Look for legal and illegal blocks into the kicker.
- On a bad snap/blocked kick behind LOS, bracket the ball with the R if you are facing him. HL has the LOS.
- On fakes, know eligible receivers.

FIELD JUDGE

- Take a position on the sideline on your side of field no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver.
- When the ball is snapped at approximately Team A's 45-yard line, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.
- You have responsibility for contact on or by your flyer(s).
- Have a beanbag in your hand.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and SJ.
- Be alert for blocked or fake kick. You have the widest receiver.
- Be alert to kicking team's 'flyers' voluntarily going out of bounds. Be ready to throw your flag at the spot of the player's return to the field and participation in the play.
- You must see any illegal blocks on or by your flyer, especially blocks into the receiver.
- Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. The offside official is responsible for blocking by the fair catch signaler.
- Be prepared to rule on interference with the catch opportunity by your gunner.
- When it is obvious that the kicked ball will not land in your area of responsibility:
 - Hold fast in your original position while the ball is in the air.
 - Cover action in front of the receiver and then cover action around the runner if the play is away from you. Use cross-field mechanics to assist the SJ with progress.
 - Be ready to clean up and be alert for dead ball fouls.
- If the return is to your side, take over the runner when he takes a step after catching the ball. You are responsible for his forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line.
 - The LJ will cover action in front of the runner and is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.
 - When the ball comes down near your sideline, be prepared to rule on the receiver's position when he first touches the ball; inbounds or out of bounds.
 - Be in position to rule on the legality of hand-offs on the kick return.

- On a kick out of bounds in flight, go to the spot where you think it crossed sideline and look for the Referee if you need help. You are responsible for the out of bounds spot on kicks that come down inbounds and then roll out of bounds on your sideline.

SIDE JUDGE

- Take a position on the sideline on your side of field no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver.
- When the ball is snapped at approximately Team A's 45-yard line, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.
- You have responsibility for contact on or by your flyer(s).
- Have a beanbag in your hand.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and FJ.
- Be alert for blocked or fake kick. You have the widest receiver.
- Be alert to kicking team's 'flyers' voluntarily going out of bounds. Be ready to throw your flag at the spot of the player's return to the field and participation in the play. h) You must see any illegal blocks on or by your flyer, especially blocks into the receiver.
- Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. The offside official is responsible for blocking by the fair catch signaler.
- Be prepared to rule on interference with the catch opportunity by your gunner.
- When it is obvious that the kicked ball will not land in your area of responsibility:
 - Hold fast in your original position while the ball is in the air.
 - Cover action in front of the receiver and then cover action around the runner if the play is away from you. Use cross-field mechanics to assist the FJ with progress.
 - Be ready to clean up and be alert for dead ball fouls.
- If the return is to your side, take over the runner when he takes a step after catching the ball. You are responsible for his forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line.
 - The HL will cover action in front of the runner and is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.
 - When the ball comes down near your sideline, be prepared to rule on the receiver's position when he first touches the ball; inbounds or out of bounds.
 - Be in position to rule on the legality of hand-offs on the kick return.
 - On a kick out of bounds in flight, go to the spot where you think it crossed sideline and look for the Referee if you need help. You are responsible for the out of bounds spot on kicks that come down inbounds and then roll out of bounds on your sideline.

BACK JUDGE

- Basic position is 7-10 yards behind and just outside shoulder of the deepest punt receiver, always inside the hash marks. Have a bean bag in your hand.
- Count defense and confirm with FJ and SJ.
- You are responsible for the receiver and the ball from sideline to sideline with help from the FJ and SJ when the ball comes down outside the numbers.
- Find the path of the ball and move with the receiver to maintain a 45° viewing angle when ball is caught.
- Rule touchback if the kick crosses R's goal line.
- Rule on legality of a fair catch signal, validity of the catch, kick catch interference, first touching and batting by the kicking team.
- Follow the ball if it is not caught.
- Bean bag the spot of first touching and/or the spot where the kick ends (if there's a return by R).
- After the catch, cover the runner until he takes the first step and then observe blocks around the runner.
- On the return, observe action around the runner while remaining between the hash marks. FJ and SJ have coverage of the runner and forward progress.
- Coordinate with FJ, SJ on fakes and blocked punts.

10.4.4 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – FIELD GOALS AND KICK TRY

REFEREE

- Take position mid-way between the holder and kicker outside the normal tight end position and facing the holder. See the ball from snap to kick. Be in position to see blockers, rushers, and kicker at the same time.
- Referee is responsible for action by and on the kicker and holder.
- Be alert to possible fakes and/or bad snaps. Holder must rise to hand, pitch or pass.
- On broken plays and fakes, observe action behind the line of scrimmage and the runner while he is behind the neutral zone.
- Cover passer if runner throws a legal forward pass.
- If the kick is caught or recovered inbounds, be ready to use reverse fade on the return and be at the goal line when runner crosses.

UMPIRE

- Line up behind the defense, always able to see the snapper's hands. Shade to one side opposite SJ.
- Focus is on the snapper.
- Count kickers.

- Get numbers of interior linemen. Know exception rules.
- Watch for holding, pull-and-shoot, and personal fouls.
- Watch for the defense using a teammate or opponent to gain leverage to block the kick.
- Hustle to the end of the kick and clean up action.
- On a fake or broken play, move to the line of scrimmage and cover play.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Know down & distance, signal with LJ, identify formation, identify eligible receivers, ensure legal snap, watch wing back, think kick rules, who's facing R to help with blocked kick?
- Watch action of widest blocker on LOS.
- Help Referee if rusher is illegally blocked into the kicker.
- You have the goal line and must be at the pylon and ready to rule on a possible touchdown.
- If you are facing the referee, you will retreat on blocked kicks and snaps over the kicker/holder's head and bracket the play with the referee to the opposite goal line. If you are not facing the referee, you will remain on line of scrimmage.
- You have sideline responsibility to the goal line on a runback.

LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Know down & distance, signal with HL, identify formation, identify eligible receivers, ensure legal snap, watch wing back, think kick rules, who's facing R to help with blocked kick?
- Watch action of widest blocker on LOS.
- Help Referee if rusher is illegally blocked into the kicker.
- You have the goal line and must be at the pylon and ready to rule on a possible touchdown.
- If you are facing the referee, you will retreat on blocked kicks and snaps over the kicker/holder's head and bracket the play with the referee to the opposite goal line. If you are not facing the referee, you will remain on line of scrimmage.
- You have sideline responsibility to the goal line on a runback.

FIELD JUDGE

- Take a position just behind the upright of the goal on your side of the field.
- Count Team B players and verify count with the BJ and SJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility/eligibility.

- Be ready to rule on success or failure of field goal/try attempt.
- Be alert for fake field goal attempts; be ready to cover runs or passes.
- Be alert for the ball striking an upright or crossbar. If the ball strikes your upright, you are responsible for the ruling.
- Coordinate with BJ on fakes and blocked kicks:
 - When the ball is snapped outside the 20-yard line:
 - Move at a 45-degree angle to the intersection of the goal line and sideline on your side of the field. Be at the pylon. You have goal line responsibility.
 - When the ball is snapped on or inside the 20-yard line:
 - Move to the intersection of the end line and sideline on your side of the field. Be at the pylon. LJ has goal line responsibility.
 - If the return is to your side of the field, you are responsible for forward progress to the opponent's goal line. The LJ will cover action in front of the runner and is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.

SIDE JUDGE

- Take a position as a “double umpire” behind the defensive line.
- The SJ should be over the tackle on the side he's coming in from. Communicate your position with the U.
- Count Team B players and verify count with FJ and BJ.
- Observe line play on your side of the center.
- Be alert for fake field goal attempts; be ready to cover runs or passes.
- If there is a Swinging Gate Formation, start in your normal scrimmage play position then shift to the “double umpire” position if the offense subsequently shifts.

BACK JUDGE

- Take a position just behind the upright of the goal post on the HL side opposite the FJ.
- Make sure FJ is under the goal post with you.
- Give the illegal procedure signal to remind you and other officials that the ball is live during kick on a “field goal” attempt.
- Count Team B players and confirm with FJ and SJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility/eligibility.
- Be ready to rule on success or failure of field goal/try attempt. Whistle at the end of play when appropriate.
- Be alert for fake field goal or try attempts; be ready to cover runs or passes. You are responsible for the end line
- Be alert for the ball striking an upright or crossbar. If the ball strikes the crossbar or upright, you are responsible for the ruling.

- If a long field goal attempt is short, you may need to move to the goal line and rule on possible touchback.
- Coordinate with F on fakes and blocked kicks.

10.4.5 GOAL LINE PLAYS

The Crew will go to Goal Line Mechanics when the ball is snapped from the **B-7 or closer.**

REFEREE

- Positioning is the same as for any other scrimmage play.
- COMMUNICATE AND THINK GOAL LINE.
- Reverse Goal Line Mechanics – Be prepared to rule on the ball and the goal line (safety)
- Start on a position on or near the end line.
- From seven-yard line and in, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is forward or backward.

UMPIRE

- Use basic scrimmage play mechanics.
- In the pregame, discuss with the flanks how to communicate position of the ball.
- Never, ever signal touchdown.
- From seven yard-line and in be prepared to assist in determining if the passer was beyond the LOS and if the pass is beyond the LOS.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 7 yard-line and in.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play-rule on progress from there.
- Stay wide & know the location of the ball when it crosses the goal line.

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 5 yard-line back.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play, rule on progress from there.

LINE JUDGE

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 7 yard-line and in.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play-rule on progress from there.
- Stay wide & know the location of the ball when it crosses the goal line.

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 5 yard-line back.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play, rule on progress from there.

FIELD JUDGE

- When the ball is snapped outside the 25, assume your normal position. You are responsible for being at the goal line when the runner crosses.
- When the ball is snapped from the 25 to the 7-yard line, your position is on the goal line at the pylon. WHEN THE PLAY TERMINATES ON OR NEAR THE GOAL LINE, YOU MUST BE ON THE GOAL LINE TO RULE ON PLAY. You are responsible for progress inside the B-2.
- When the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line in, take a position at the pylon at the intersection of your sideline and the end line.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and SJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility.
- Concentrate your attention on the sideline in the end zone and the end line in your area.
- Coordinate with BJ on plays that involve the end line.

SIDE JUDGE

- When the ball is snapped outside the 25, assume your normal position. You are responsible for being at the goal line when the runner crosses.
- When the ball is snapped from the 25 to the 7-yard line, your position is on the goal line at the pylon. WHEN THE PLAY TERMINATES ON OR NEAR THE GOAL LINE, YOU MUST BE ON THE GOAL LINE TO RULE ON PLAY. You are responsible for progress inside the B-2.
- When the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line in, take a position at the pylon at the intersection of your sideline and the end line.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and FJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility.
- Concentrate your attention on the sideline in the end zone and the end line in your area.
- Coordinate with BJ on plays that involve the end line.

BACK JUDGE

- Start on the end line near the middle of the field.
- Same coverage of receivers as for normal plays.

10.5 GENERAL GAME DUTIES

REFEREE

- Substitutions and counting players
- R (and U) is primarily responsible for counting offense and kickers. Count offense while in their huddle; observe their substitution process.
- Give visual signal to confirm count with Umpire and notify HL/LJ.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.
- At the end of the down, communicate with and signal HL the next down.
- R may spot the ball on 2nd and 3rd downs if it helps the flow of the game.

UMPIRE

- Substitutions and counting players
- Always count offense or kickers.
- Use wristbands for lateral position of the ball on the field.
- Spot the ball on runs up the middle, on change of possession, fourth down, hurry-up or no-huddle offense.
- R may help spot the ball on normal 2nd and 3rd downs.
- Know ball location and be ready to advise R of the position when he spots the ball.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.

LINE JUDGE

- Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.

FIELD JUDGE

- Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.
- Count B players before every down and confirm with BJ and SJ.

SIDE JUDGE

- You have primary responsibility for the game clock. Know status of the clock before and after every play. Keep the game clock during the game.
- You are responsible for all other timing *except* for the 25/40-second play clock.
- Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.
- Count B players before every down and confirm with BJ and FJ.

BACK JUDGE

- You are responsible for the 25/40-second play clock. Call delay of game penalty if the ball is still on the ground after observing the play clock reading “00”. Always give the visual 10 and 5 (on down) signals to the QB.
- Know status of the game clock before and after every play.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.

10.5.1 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

REFEREE

Same as 5 official mechanics

UMPIRE

Same as 5 official mechanics

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Mark off all penalties with the U. Verify accuracy.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.
- If you are on the side opposite of the chains, stay at the enforcement spot until the march-off is complete, then verify accuracy.

LINE JUDGE

- If you are on the side opposite of the chains, stay at the enforcement spot until the march-off is complete, then verify accuracy.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.
- If you are on chain side, walk off penalty with U.

FIELD JUDGE

- You are responsible for reporting the type of foul, number of player who fouled and a brief description of ‘what he did’ to the Head Coach on your sideline.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.

SIDE JUDGE

- You are responsible for reporting the type of foul, number of player who fouled and a brief description of ‘what he did’ to the Head Coach on your sideline.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.

BACK JUDGE

- Cover the dead ball spot and/or flags thrown by other officials if you are not involved.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.

10.5.2 MEASUREMENTS FOR FIRST DOWN

REFEREE

- When spotting the ball after each play, be alert to the possible need for a measurement.
- Avoid unnecessary measurements; however, if in doubt, measure.
- When the ball becomes dead in the side zone or out of bounds, the measurement should be from at the dead ball spot.
- Once the chain is down, face the press box and rule whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake. Signal appropriately (1st down, or uses hands or fingers to indicate the distance that the ball is short of the 1st down).
- If the ball is short and in the side zone, grasp the chain with the link that will be used to place the ball, and bring the ball with you to re-set the ball at the proper inbounds location, or have the SJ or FJ provide you with a new ball if considered necessary.

UMPIRE

- Pull the forward stake.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Box is at the forward stake with the old down. Take the clip into the field.
- If not a first down, personally reset the chains.

LINE JUDGE

- Provide the spot on the appropriate line to place the clip.

FIELD JUDGE

- Ensure that players and/or officials do not block a view of the ball from the press box.

SIDE JUDGE

- Ensure that players and/or officials do not block a view of the ball from the press box.

BACK JUDGE

- Hold the ball. Your back should be to the defensive side of the field.

10.6 FADE MECHANICS

At the snap the FJ / BJ / SJ are to read their keys and the play and react accordingly.

- If the receiver's action at the snap indicates a run or short pass pattern:
 - Maintain initial position until cushion (at least 7 to 10 yards from the receiver) is threatened. At that time, begin to fade remaining at least 7 to 10 yards in front of the receiver and, if necessary, be at the goal line when the receiver/runner crosses the goal.
- If the receiver's action at the snap indicates a deep pass pattern:
 - Begin to fade immediately in order to maintain cushion of at least 7 to 10 yards from the receiver and, if necessary, be at the goal line when the receiver/runner crosses the goal.
 - The key is to read the receivers initial action at the snap and work to be in the best position to cover the play that is indicated.

10.6.1 REVERSE FADE MECHANICS

Reverse Fade Mechanics are employed when there is a change of team possession. This could be a punt return, interception return or a fumble return.

HEAD LINE JUDGE AND LINE JUDGE

- Once you realize team position has changed, begin to fade immediately in order to maintain cushion of at least 7 to 10 yards from the runner and, if necessary, be at the goal line when the runner crosses the goal line.
- You have progress from the 2-yard line to the goal line.

FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE

- Trail play. You have progress up to the 2-yard line.

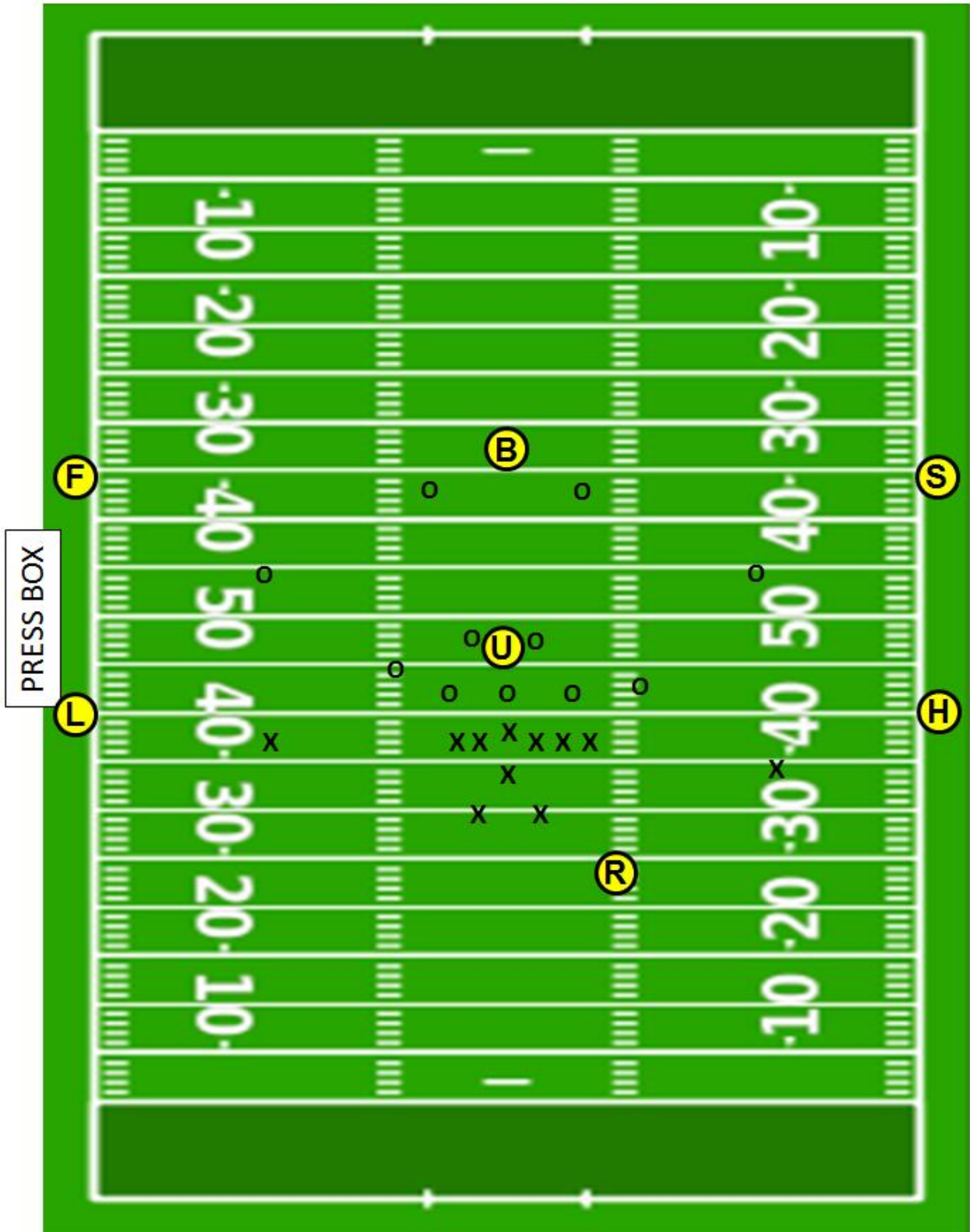
The diagram shows a football field with yard lines and numbers. The Press Box is located on the left side of the field, near the 50-yard line. The Quarterback (QB) is positioned near the 40-yard line, and the Running Back (RB) is positioned near the 30-yard line. Arrows indicate the line of sight from the Press Box to the QB and RB.

PRESS BOX

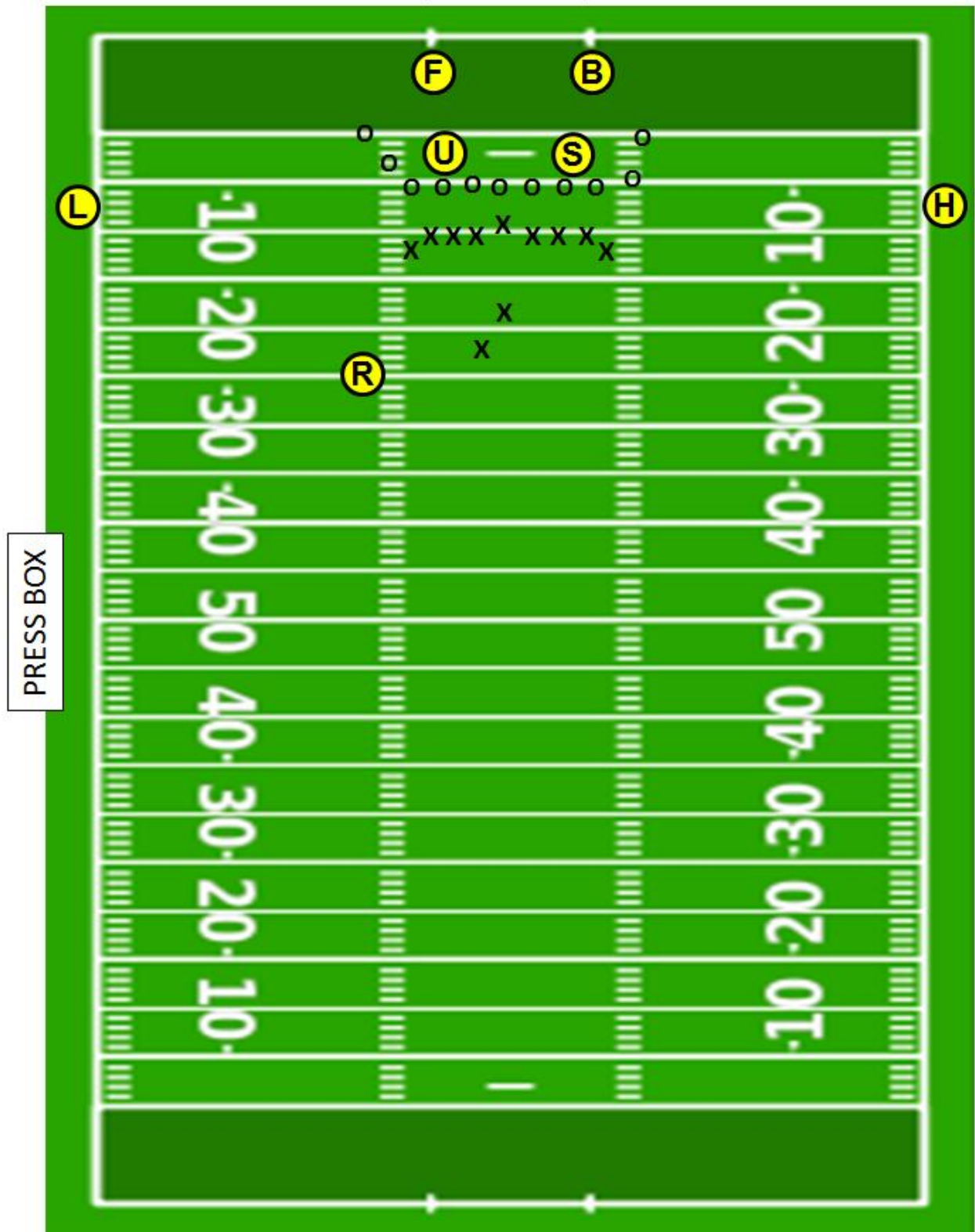
The diagram illustrates a football field layout for a play. The field is marked with yard lines from 10 to 50 on both sides of the 50-yard line. A line of scrimmage is marked with an 'X' at the 40-yard line on the left and a 'K' at the 40-yard line on the right. A receiver is marked with an 'R' at the 50-yard line. A line of defense is marked with an 'O' at the 40-yard line on the left and an 'O' at the 40-yard line on the right. The diagram is labeled 'FIELD BOX' on the left and 'S H U' on the right.

BOXES

BASIC SCRIMMAGE POSITION



BASIC SCRIMMAGE KICK POSITION (FG AND TRY)



BASIC SCRIMMAGE KICK POSITION (PUNT)

