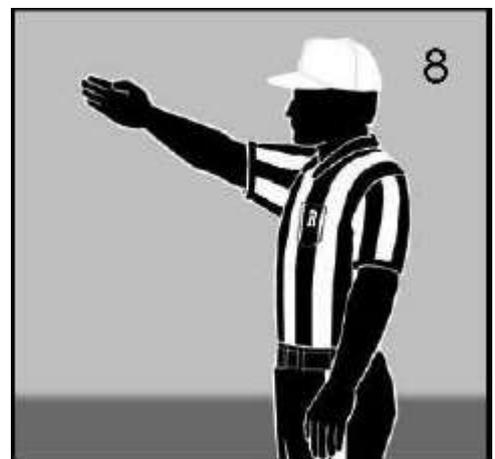




# THE IFAF MANUAL OF FLAG FOOTBALL OFFICIATING

(Fourth edition, 2021)



Contributors to the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Edited by Alexandre Roger.

Thanks to Daniel Barrera Madsen, Martin Cockerill, Wolfgang Geyer, Erick Saenz, Cédric Castaing and Riccardo Zampedri, Claes Scherwin (V1.1) and Tsutomu Negishi (V1.2) for their precious help.  
Special thanks to Jed Brookes-Lewis for correcting the “frenghish” and all the rest.

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition was based on the BAFRA/EFAF Manual of Football Officiating, 12<sup>th</sup> edition and on the BAFRA Manual of Flag Football Officiating.

The 4th edition is developing the standards for officiating Flag Football games for 2, 3 or 4 officials.

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# Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CHANGES TO THIS BOOK

Main changes:

Please consider you have a fully new document in your hands.

The 1.1 version contains the last modifications about who will keep play and game clock for 4-officials crew.

### 1.2 DEFINITIONS

#### 1.2.1 General wording

The phrase "flag football" refers to the football variant.

The word "flag" refers to the streamer worn on a player's hip.

The phrase "foul marker" refers to the yellow object that officials throw to indicate a foul.

The phrase "tournament management" refers to the organisers of a tournament who may perform some or all the functions of game management.

#### 1.2.2 Technical wording

##### 1.2.3 Point of attack

On a **running play**, it is the area in advance of the runner through which they run - if they change direction the point of attack changes.

On a **passing play**, it is anywhere in the vicinity of the passer or any player attempting to reach the passer.

##### 1.2.4 Obvious

An action is "obvious" if it would be visibly apparent to a spectator who knew the rules or to an official watching the game on video.

### 1.3 GENDER

We assume on this manual that a/the player, a/the coach, an/the official can be female or male. All references with "he" or "she" have been changed in "they".

# Chapter 2 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

## 2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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### 2.1 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1). An official must have good rules knowledge and be able to interpret the rules correctly and fairly. Judgement in all decisions must be correct and must be announced without undue delay. Officials should not go looking for fouls. They will occur on their own. Always be sure of a foul, never guess. Do not penalise a team if you are not sure. If you only think it is a foul, then it is not. If you realise that you have made a mistake, then inform the rest of the crew (if present) and ensure that the penalty is not enforced.

2). Each official must:

- a. know and announce the down, be aware of whether the line to gain is the middle line or the goal line.
- b. be ready to assist another official who is temporarily out of position.
- c. observe erroneous procedures or rulings of other officials and attempt prevention and correction whenever possible.
- d. know the prescribed signals and when and how they should be used.
- e. secure a new ball, if appropriate, after all action has ceased, and be able to handle and pass the ball properly underarm 10 yards with a flat trajectory and nose first.
- f. be alert to happenings away from the ball when play has left their immediate area - don't ball watch.
- g. call time out for any player who is obviously injured.
- h. be prepared, if necessary, to call any foul or rule infraction that they observe, regardless of specific assignment.
- i. communicate with colleagues, players, coaches, announcers or spectators as appropriate whenever anything unusual or out of the ordinary happens.

### 2.2 COMMON SENSE OFFICIATING

1). It is important that you call every foul that you see which affects the result of the play, the safety of the players, or the discipline of the game. However, please remember that neither spectators nor players come to see officials marching up and down the field. Use your discretion, and above all your common sense. Delay throwing the foul marker for a second or two to give yourself time to review the play mentally.

2). Preventive officiating enables a game to flow in a disciplined manner. Whenever necessary, talk to coaches or players regarding their conduct. Never **ignore** a foul: you must do something about **every** foul, even if you decide not to throw your foul marker.

3). Always acknowledge complaints from players. We cannot see everything on every play. If a player makes a complaint against an opponent, be prepared to observe the next encounter between them more closely. Request the assistance of other officials when necessary.

4). When speaking to players, coaches or spectators always be polite. Your position as an official does not give you the right to be abusive or derogatory. Using soothing language to defuse hostility.

5). When you have made a decision based on your observation, your experience and your knowledge, do not back down. Pressure from coaches, players, or the crowd should not be allowed to influence your judgment. When you are wrong, admit it, but do not allow it to affect your performance.

6). Praise players for good sportsmanship, but make sure you do it to both teams.

# Chapter 2 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

## 2.3 HUSTLE

- 1). Always try to keep the game flowing smoothly, but do not rush. Move quickly when required, but do not allow your desire for rapid action to interfere with your duties nor with correct determinations.
- 2). Never hurry the treatment of an injured player. The recognition of injured players is the concern of all game officials. If in doubt, stop the clock and call the attention of the medical personnel present. The clock can be started again straight away if the timeout is not necessary.
- 3). Hustle is even more important than normal if the game is being played with a running clock. However, if something unusual happens (for example, if an incomplete pass causes the ball to bounce thirty yards away from everybody), do not rush to deal with it. Stop the clock while the problem is resolved and ensure it is started on the Referee's ready-for-play signal.

## 2.4 BOXING IN

- 1). When shifting position during the game always try to surround the play when working with other officials. A position of "outside looking in" is essential for sideline and end line coverage. Keeping the play "boxed in" should ensure that each play is observed from more than one viewpoint.
- 2). While the ball is live, do not get too close to the play.
- 3). Generally, there is no need for any official to watch:
  - a. The ball while it is in the air (other than a glance to ascertain its direction if it may be coming towards you).
  - b. The ball after a pass is incomplete. The dead ball spot once it is marked (see section 5.7)
  - c. The spot of a foul after a foul marker has been thrown to it (or level with it).
  - d. The goal line after a touchdown (or safety) has been scored.
  - e. The sideline or end line after a player has been ruled out of bounds.
  - f. A player who is out of the play and has no opponent near him.
  - g. In each case, there is a need for you to concentrate on something else more important.

## 2.5 CO-OPERATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 1). It is essential that the officials work together as a team and that they communicate efficiently with each other for the purposes of effective game administration. Such communication will normally be verbal but where verbal communication is impossible or inappropriate, approved visual signals should be used.
- 2). The officials must also communicate where appropriate with players, coaches, spectators and announcers. If a ruling is puzzling or controversial, it is better to take a moment to explain it than for everyone to continue in ignorance. Your aim is to give information before someone needs to ask for it.
- 3). On the sidelines, if there is more than one coach present, appoint someone as the "Get-back coach", responsible for keeping their colleagues and players in the team area. the "Get-back coach" can devote more time than you can to keeping people out of your way.
- 4). All officials must verbally and visually signal the down number before each down. When officials disagree on the down, the referee should declare a timeout to establish it. The crew may ask the opinions or advice of any person connected with the game in order to assist with this. This discussion should be carried out in a prompt fashion to avoid unnecessarily delaying the game. When a decision has been reached, both head coaches/captains should be informed and it should be explained to them how the error came about. If the officials agree on the down but a head coach/captain does not, the referee should ask the head coach/captain if they would like to take a timeout for a conference or a challenge, unless they can

# Chapter 2 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

immediately and indisputably demonstrate that they are correct. The opposing head coach/captain should be kept aware of what is going on through this process.

5). At the end of a down, if you are the covering official and you are sure the ball is dead, blow your whistle. It should be blown with authority, not just a peep. Other officials should echo the whistle **only** if it is necessary to end continuing action in their area of coverage. Do not toot your whistle unless you have thrown a penalty flag or otherwise need to attract attention.

6). If you blow an inadvertent whistle, do not think no one will notice. Continue to blow and make sure the play is killed. Admit your mistake and follow the procedure laid down by rule.

7). Your body language says more than you think - be aware of it. An official moving hesitantly (e.g. towards the spot where a catch was attempted) is a sign that they are not sure of the call and need help. Be aware of such body language signals by colleagues and be prepared to assist them where you can. Never point at players or coaches in a disapproving or threatening manner.

8). Do not shout at people - it indicates your loss of control. Never swear at a player, coach or colleague.

9). The following points illustrate good and bad practice when officials disagree on a call. If necessary, the Referee must be the final arbiter of the decision. The game clock should always be stopped while discussion takes place.

- a. Officials who disagree on a call must be called together to discuss the matter with each other. The best place for this conference is at the dead-ball spot or the spot where the contentious matter took place. The conference should be conducted calmly, without raised voices or overt gestures. Officials not involved in the conference should keep players away (but on the field, to resume the game quickly), while maintaining coverage of the dead-ball spot and any other relevant spots.
- b. Ask the officials to describe what they saw, not just what they are ruling. One official may accept that another had a better view of the play. Make sure that all relevant facts (e.g. whether the ball was live or dead, whether the incident occurred before or after the change of possession) are mentioned.
- c. Distinguish between issues of fact (e.g. what happened?), issues of judgement (e.g. did it happen intentionally?) and issues of rule (e.g. what does the rulebook say we do in the given situation?).
- d. Cut short the conference once all the officials concerned have given their view and opinion. There is no time for repeated remarks (unless clarification is necessary) and encourage everyone to stick to the point.
- e. Ideally, the officials concerned will come to their own resolution and notify the Referee.
- f. If the officials cannot agree on the call, it is normally best to go with the call made by the official with primary responsibility for making it. Going with the call made by an "experienced" official over that made by an "inexperienced" official may cause problems in the long-term.
- g. Remember the "when in doubt" principles.
- h. Once a final decision has been made, the Referee should signal and/or announce the outcome decisively. The need for the decision to be clearly notified to everyone becomes greater the longer the conference takes. It also helps to sell the call if all the officials nod their heads in agreement during or at the end of a discussion.
- i. If an official does not agree with the final decision, they must not make any statement or gesture that would give that impression.

# Chapter 2 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

## 2.6 MARKING SPOTS AND SPOTTING THE BALL

- 1). Remember that in flag football, the dead-ball spot is the point where the ball is when the runner was deflagged. A touchdown has not been scored unless the ball has broken the plane of the goal line.
- 2). At all times, inbounds spots should be marked by squaring off as follows:
  - a. If you are on or near a sideline, move quickly down it until you are level with the spot, then come infield off the sideline if appropriate.
  - b. If you are in the middle of the field, head in a straight line at a right angle towards the appropriate goal line until you are level with the spot, and then move parallel to the goal line towards the player with the flag if appropriate.
- 3). If it is necessary for you to mark the spot and then spot the ball, hold the spot until a player, official, or other person brings you the ball, then take it to the centre of the field to spot it. Try to get it as close to the centre as possible but do not waste time looking for the exact spot. Cones or pylons behind the end zones may help.
- 4). Remember that the ball has crossed the middle line and the goal line becomes the line to gain when the slightest part of it is crossing the middle of the middle line.
- 5). At the start of a new possession, position the ball with its nose on the 5-yard line. On a try, position the ball with its nose on the 5-yard or 10-yard line as appropriate.
- 6). When spotting the ball, first line up with the sideline and look for the cones behind the end-zones to align the ball in the middle of the field.
- 7). Instruct players that when they stop someone by removing their flag, they should raise the flag high in the air and actively seek out the runner to return the flag.
- 8). Relaying and spotting the ball should primarily be the responsibility of the referee and down judge as they will normally be the closest officials to the end of the play. However, every official should be prepared to be involved in the process if required. Ask the players to help you.

## 2.7 WRITTEN RECORDS

All officials should record, in writing:

- Result of the toss
- Scores: TD and tries
- Charged team timeouts
- All disqualified players
- All players penalised for unsportsmanlike conduct
- Coaches challenge: 1 by half + overtime

Officials may also be requested to nominate a candidate for a 'Player of the Match' or similar award.

## 2.8 CONDUCT

- 1). Remember that your conduct before, during, and after each game is subject to public scrutiny. Always conduct yourself in a manner befitting an official.
- 2). Officials bear a great responsibility for engendering public and participant confidence. They are judged by everything they do, on the field and off it, before, during and after the game. Greet and treat the personnel from each team equally. Do not banter with spectators. Do not fraternize with anyone.

# Chapter 2 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3). Perform warm-up exercises before the game in the privacy of the changing room or well out of sight of players and spectators. Do not test your whistle on or within hearing of the field of play. Do not toss footballs around or indulge in any other recreational activity in sight or sound of spectators, players or other personnel.
- 4). No official is permitted to consume any prohibited drug or alcoholic beverage, or be under the influence of one, either before or during any game or tournament, or to smoke near the field.
- 5). Do not provide any team, coach or player with any information pertaining to any other team, coach or player. Do not carry gossip from one team to another, nor make statements about another crew or another official.
- 6). Do not engage in arguments with anyone after the game regarding any decisions made. If they wish to make a complaint, refer them to your supervisor. Questions of judgment on the part of any official are not open to argument either on the field or after the game.
- 7). Be loyal to your fellow officials, to your officiating organization and to football.
- 8). Report immediately to your supervisor any approach by anyone regarding the possibility of an attempted bribe or any other unethical act.

## **2.9 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA**

- 1). Always be courteous when dealing with the news media but remember that your job is officiating and that you are not a spokesman for any team, league or officiating organization.
- 2). You may at any time, except in the emotion-charged atmosphere of a game or its immediate after match, explain and discuss a rule. Do not, however, discuss a particular play, ruling or interpretation except after the game to answer specific questions from reporters attending the game. The best place to do this is in or immediately outside the officials' dressing room. Be sure the crew discusses the play in private, and makes sure all the facts are clear, before the Referee talks to the reporters.

# Chapter 3 - RULES APPLICATION

## 3 RULES APPLICATION

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In order to ensure that all officials consistently interpret rules the same way, the following fouls shall be called as follows:

### 3.1 FOULS THAT INVOLVE CONTACT

#### 1). **Illegal Contact:**

- a. Flag football is a non-contact sport. However, this does not mean that all contact between opponents during play is automatically illegal. Incidental contact between opponents that does not grant either player an advantage or impact a player should not be penalised. Where contact has impact, the illegal contact rule must be enforced vigorously to protect player safety and prevent confrontations. Players who make serious contact with an opponent, either as an act of aggression or to halt the advancement of the ball, should be disqualified.
- b. Be vigilant to what a defender does with their hands when attempting to pull the runner's flag. If the player briefly grabs the opponent's clothing while attempting to reach the flag but immediately releases their grip, with the runner not being hindered, there is no foul, however, if the player prevents the runner from advancing or uses their grip for leverage to get to the flag, there is a foul for illegal contact.
- c. Strictly enforce contact against the passer due to the vulnerable position they are in (including all contact with the throwing arm/hand and displacement from their passing posture).
- d. Remember that contacting a ball in player possession (including passers and runners) is a foul.
- e. Remember that the runner has the responsibility to avoid contact with defenders, however, be aware of defenders stepping into the path of runners at the last moment, giving the runner no opportunity to avoid contact
- f. When there is a collision between a runner and a defender, try to understand which player was in control of their body and momentum and which player was not. The player not in control will normally be the one responsible for the contact and should be flagged.

#### 2). **Aiming**

Aiming is a form of illegal contact where a player seeks out and makes deliberate, forcible contact with an opponent. Aiming fouls should be considered worthy of disqualification if particularly serious.

Actions that could constitute Aiming include (but are not limited to):

- a. Blitzer contacting a receiver - A blitzer sees a receiver crossing their direct path to the QB and deliberately initiates contact with them.
- b. Blitzer contacting the quarterback – A blitzer contacts a quarterback as they are either holding, in the process of passing or have thrown the ball and displaces them or knocks them to the ground.
- c. Receiver contacting a blitzer – A receiver see the collision with a blitzer is certain and does not stop to avoid contact.
- d. Defender charging through a stationary player – A defender sees a stationary offensive player between themselves and the ball and looks to run into them as opposed to avoiding contact.
- e. Defender launching into receiver - A defender launches into a receiver in the process of making a catch in order to dislodge the ball.
- f. Runner not avoiding contact - If a runner does not try to avoid contact with a defender (especially if the defender is stationary). Another indicator would be the runner lowering their shoulder into the collision.

# Chapter 3 - RULES APPLICATION

## 3). Pass interference:

- a. For pass interference to be called on either team, the ball must be in the air and there must be physical contact between a player and an opponent. Fouls prior to the ball being thrown should be called as illegal contact. All pass interference fouls are, by definition, also illegal contact fouls.
- b. Actions that constitute pass interference include:
  - i. Not playing the ball -- Contact by a defender attempting to catch the ball that impedes or restricts the receiver's opportunity to make the catch. If it does not impede or restrict the receiver, or if the pass is uncatchable, it is not pass interference, but may be a contact foul.
  - ii. Playing through an opponent -- Playing through an opponent (i.e. contacting them in the back or on their side furthest from the ball), even if attempting to play the ball.
  - iii. Grabbing an arm -- Grabbing the receiver's arm in any manner.
  - iv. Arm bar -- Extending an arm across the receiver's body to impede their ability to catch a pass, whether or not the defender is playing the ball.
  - v. Cut off -- Cutting off the path of a receiver.
  - vi. Hook and turn -- Hooking the receiver around the waist that causes their body to turn prior to the ball arriving (even if the defender is trying to get to the ball).
  - vii. Pushing off -- Initiating contact with an opponent by shoving or pushing off, thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
  - viii. Driving through -- Driving through an opponent who has established a position on the field.
  - ix. Pick play -- A pick play occurs when a receiver runs a pass pattern in such a way that the defender is contacted. However, if it is run so that two defenders collide with each other and the receiver did not cause the collision by making contact, it is legal.
  - x. Actions that do not constitute pass interference include:
    - a. Incidental contact in the act of moving to the ball that does not affect the route of the opposing player in any way. If in doubt as to whether the route was affected, there is no interference.
    - b. Inadvertent tangling of feet when both (or neither) players are playing the ball.
    - c. Contact occurs during a pass that is clearly uncatchable by the involved players. However, there may be an illegal contact foul even if the pass is uncatchable.
  - xi. Further notes:
    - a. A stationary player (in position to catch the ball) who is displaced from their position has been fouled.
    - b. Interference must be obvious to be called.
    - c. Remember that the defense has as much right to the ball as the offense.
    - d. It is crucial to identify which players are playing the ball and which are not.
    - e. When judging whether a pass is catchable, imagine how far the receiver could have run, and how high or wide they could have jumped, if they have not been impeded.
    - f. Contact away from the play should be called (if necessary) as a contact foul, not pass interference.

## 3.2 FOULS THAT DO NOT INVOLVE CONTACT

### 1). Delay of game:

- a. If Team A is still in the huddle with 10 seconds to go, warn them verbally that they must hurry (with a shout of "Time" or similar). Always throw the foul marker on the 25th second unless the snap is very imminent (i.e. the quarterback is calling out "huts"). The secret of reducing the number of delay of game penalties is to not hurry the ready for play. In other words: do not give the teams the benefit at the end of the 25-second period, give them the benefit at the **start** of it.
- b. After a score, it is a delay of game if either team is not on the field within one minute regardless of whether the ready for play has been given or not, or if they are on the field but they have failed to bring their football with them. For a first offence, throw a foul marker and charge the team with a

# Chapter 3 - RULES APPLICATION

timeout if they have timeouts remaining. Remember you can stop the clock to write down the score if necessary.

- c. As a timeout is ending, the officials should loudly announce this fact to both teams before the referee blows the ready-for-play whistle. If team A then set to snap the ball and team B are not ready, flag team B for delay of game. Do **not** allow team A to have a “free shot” play.

2). **Illegal substitution:** If a replaced player is still technically on the field of play at the snap, but only one or two steps from the sideline and no opponent is reacting to their movement off the field, then do not call it. Similarly, if substitutes enter the field momentarily before the ball is dead but do not interfere with play, then don't call it. If Team A breaks its huddle with 6 or more players, this confuses the opposition and should always be penalised. No simulated replacements or substitutions may be used to confuse opponents. No tactic associated with substitutes or the substitution process may be used to confuse opponents.

### 3). **Offside and encroachment:**

- a. There are no live ball offside fouls in flag football. Defensive offside is a dead ball foul.
- b. When a defensive player, before the snap, obviously moves beyond (not simply into) the neutral zone, blow the whistle and call it as a dead-ball offside foul.
- c. Do not be picky about offside or encroachment. On most plays, players have no yard lines to guide them. Officials should be proactive in helping players line up on the correct side of the ball, especially with younger players.
- d. Encroachment on the neutral zone by the offense is a dead-ball foul. Attempt to get the player to move onto the correct side of the ball, but if the snap is imminent then blow the whistle.

4). **Illegal Motion:** A player is in illegal motion only if the move is obviously towards the line of scrimmage at the snap.

5). **Illegal Shift:** Do not be too technical on illegal shifts. If in doubt, team A has been set for the required one second after shifting or coming to the line after a huddle.

6). **False Start:** Do not call slight twitches from offensive players. Only call obvious jerky movements or if a receiver starts their route.

7). **7-second limit:** This is a live-ball foul that makes the ball dead. The count starts when the ball is snapped. Call it on the 7th second, as for delay of game. Remember that the rule only applies to the player who originally receives the snap during their initial possession of the football: if they hand it off or throw a backward pass, the limit no longer applies even if they later regain possession of the ball. The referee should visually demonstrate the first 4 seconds of the count by moving the arm out and back from the chest (this will also help to ensure a consistent count) and, from 5 seconds onwards, should also say each second loudly to ensure the quarterback is aware of the count's status.

### 8). **Illegal run:**

The player who receives the snap cannot carry the ball across the line of scrimmage unless it has been clearly released and touched by a defensive player or possessed by another offensive player. The quarterback quickly bouncing the ball off the center's back does not meet this requirement.

- a. When inside the no run zone, the ball must cross the line of scrimmage as a forward pass, unless the pass is touched by a defender.
- b. When the ball is inside the no run zone (including on 1 point tries), the referee should announce this fact to both teams.
- c. This is a live ball foul and the play continues after the runner has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- d. When in doubt, the runner has not crossed the line of scrimmage.

# Chapter 3 - RULES APPLICATION

9). **Illegal backward pass or handoff:** If in doubt, the backward pass or handoff was completed behind the neutral zone.

10). **Shielding:**

- a. Shielding is a non-contact foul, if there is contact as a part of a block, illegal contact should be called instead.
- b. Shielding occurs when a player, without making contact, impedes the progress of an opponent who has right of way over them.
- c. If an offensive player shields for the runner, call it only at the point of attack.
- d. If a defensive player shields an opponent who is running a pass pattern, it is a foul which should always be called.

11). **Illegal touching by an originally ineligible player:** At the start of a down, all players are eligible. The passer may not be the first player to touch their own forward pass unless the ball has been clearly released and it touches by a defensive player or possessed by another offensive player.

12). **Team A player out of bounds:**

- a. An eligible receiver touching the ball after voluntarily going out of bounds during a pass play should always be called. The player gains an advantage by avoiding the attention of defenders and is also violating the spirit of the rules - flag football has a defined playing area and the players should play the game inside it.
- b. Remember that a player is out of bounds even if only one foot touches the sideline or end line.
- c. If illegal contact or a shield by Team B forces the receiver out of bounds, it is a foul against Team B and the player remains eligible if they return inbounds immediately.

13). **Failure to wear mandatory equipment:** Generally, only call a violation for missing or improperly positioned equipment if the snap is imminent. If it is not, allow the player to retrieve or reposition their equipment, but do not interrupt the 25-second count.

14). **Illegal equipment:** Anything that might be a risk to participant safety must be dealt with before the start of the game. The officials should conduct a safety check prior to the game. Flags should be tested to ensure that they detach in a prompt and safe manner from players' hips. If any official has doubt on the flag, length, width, pull-of force, they must check by themselves. See IFAF Flag rules R1.3.2

Mouthpieces are optional by default but may be mandated by tournament management.

Players may not wear anything that may prevent an opponent from clearly reaching their flag. This includes long shirts that are not tucked in and/or large pants that may obstruct access to the flags. Extra-wide pants are forbidden.

15) **Illegal Blitz and Illegal Blitz Signals:** An illegal blitz signal is when a defensive player less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage raises their hand to request right of way. This is a dead ball foul.

- a. The 7 yards is a plane - If any part of the player's body is breaking the plane, they are less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- b. Try to help players to get in the correct position by instructing them to step forward or back. Do not be too fussy.
- c. If a player is less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and does not respond to instructions to back up, sound your whistle and throw a foul marker.
- d. An illegal blitz is when a defensive player lined up less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage crosses the line prior to the QB throwing, handing off or fake handing off the ball. This is a live ball foul.
- e. If a blitzer "jumps" the snap count and continues their run past the line of scrimmage, this is an illegal blitz.

# Chapter 3 - RULES APPLICATION

- f. A fake pass is not a fake hand-off and the blitz restrictions still apply.
- g. A simulated pitch, simulated hand-off for a player who is in front of the QB, and less in a yard, is a fake hand-off and the blitz restrictions do not apply.

## 3.3 UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- 1). Acts of celebration that are prolonged, clearly choreographed or taunt an opponent are illegal. Use common sense and be tolerant of reasonable celebrations that are not excessive, that do not waste time, and that do not taunt opponents.
- 2). If a player or coach shows dissent with a call or taunts an opponent, throw a foul marker immediately. There is no place in flag football for such acts. If the language or gestures used are offensive, insulting or abusive, disqualify the player or coach.
- 3). Do not penalise the conduct of anyone other than a player or coach. If someone else is giving you a problem, ask the team, game or tournament management to deal with it.
- 4). Do not penalise a player or team twice for the same act.
- 5). Be vigilant during the period when a runner approaches a defensive player to retrieve their flag. Do not allow the players to use it as a chance to confront each other. The defender should either hand the flag to the runner. For the first (non-serious) infraction, warn the player. For the second, the foul is delay of game. Any subsequent infractions, or any serious infractions, are unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 6). Remember: **2<sup>nd</sup> unsportsmanlike conduct requires disqualification.**

## 3.4 FIGHTING

- 1). It is a fight if players square up to each other and begin pushing, or if any punches, kicks or other blows are thrown, regardless of whether they make contact. If a player responds to an unsportsmanlike act by an opponent by fighting, then both players should be penalised and disqualified for fighting.
- 2). During a fight, be aware of who is really fighting and who is merely trying to separate those involved in a fight. Players who only attempted to separate the fighting players should not be disqualified if they were on the field when the fight began.
- 3). Substitutes and coaches who leave the team area during a fight should only be disqualified if they fail to respond to an order to leave the field. However, if they touch an opponent or attempt to pull a team-mate away from one then they have participated in the fight and must be disqualified. The purpose of this is to avoid getting lots of people on the field.
- 4). Only disqualify a player if you are certain of their identity. If two players are involved in a fight, do not disqualify one unless you know the identity of the other.

# Chapter 3 - RULES APPLICATION

## 3.5 MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TACKLE FOOTBALL AND FLAG FOOTBALL

The following fouls do not exist in flag football, should never be called, and if a foul marker is thrown for any of them, it should be waved off.

- 1). **Illegal formation:** There is no such thing as an illegal formation. Any player may line up on the line of scrimmage, as a back, or in a position where it is not obvious if this is a lineman or a back. There are no numbering restrictions or exceptions.
- 2). **Illegal forward handoff:** A forward handoff is only illegal if it takes place beyond the line of scrimmage, where any handoff is illegal. Behind the line of scrimmage, any player may hand the ball forwards to any other player. A direct handoff from the QB to the snapper is illegal.
- 3). **Intentional grounding:** For safety reasons, the passer is always allowed to throw the ball away to avoid being sacked, regardless of where it lands and regardless of the position of other players.
- 4). **All kind of kicks:** there is no kick in Flag football.
- 5). **Contact fouls:** roughing the passer, tripping, holding are all ruled by illegal contact.

## 3.6 OTHER RULES APPLICATIONS

### 3.6.1 Catch

See IFAF Flag rules R2.10.3

### 3.6.2 Fumble

See IFAF Flag rules R2.9.3

- 1). If the ball is fumbled, or a backward pass is incomplete, the ball is dead and the down is over. If it was fumbled backwards or forwards, it is spotted where the player lost the ball. In doubt it is rather a pass than a fumble behind the line of scrimmage. In doubt it is rather a fumble than a pass beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 2). Do not allow players to attempt recovery of any loose ball. Blow the whistle as soon as it hits the ground.

# Chapter 4 - CALLING FOULS

## 4 CALLING FOULS

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### 4.1 CALLING OFFICIAL

- 1). Any official observing a foul shall drop or throw a foul marker at the proper spot, making a mental note of its position and continuing officiating. If the foul marker falls on the wrong spot, move it to the correct spot. Move the foul marker with authority. Do not try to nudge it with your foot in the hope that no one will notice. Note which team had possession of the ball at the moment the foul occurred, and whether the ball was live or dead. On spot fouls near the goal line, it is particularly important that the foul marker falls on the correct side of the line.
- 2). If the ball is live, do **not** blow the whistle until the ball becomes dead (unless the foul causes the ball to become or remain dead).
- 3). When the ball becomes dead, continue to blow your whistle in short blasts until any other officials know that you have seen a foul. Give the timeout signal (S3) if the clock needs to be stopped. If the foul is a spot foul, cover the foul marker and, if necessary, ensure that the Referee comes to you.
- 4). Unless you are holding a spot, go quickly to the Referee and verbally report the foul. If you are the Referee, report the foul to another official. Give the following information:
  - a. The nature of the foul.
  - b. The offending team, by colour and/or by offense/defense.
  - c. The offending player, by number or position.
  - d. The enforcement spot.
  - e. Whether the ball was live or dead at the time of the foul and, if appropriate, whether it occurred before or after a change of team possession.
- 5). If more than one official throws a foul marker (e.g. scrimmage line infractions, interference), all calling officials shall consult with each other before reporting the foul. If you observe an official throw a flag which may be for pass interference and you believe the pass was uncatchable, the recommended thing to say to the official is, "Was that pass catchable?" If sure it was, they should reply, "Yes, it was." If not sure that it was, they should reply, "What did you see?" Do not assume that everyone saw the same as you. If you must throw a flag for a foul clearly in someone else's area, it is courteous to discuss it with them.
- 6). When reporting fouls to the Referee, do not point to teams or players. After reporting, stay near the Referee in case they need to ask you for further details. Avoid conferences except when absolutely necessary to obtain information from more than one official. Only those involved should be included.
- 7). In the event of a disqualifying foul, the official calling the foul, accompanied by another official (if present) as witness, shall notify the Head Coach of the number of the player who has been disqualified and the nature of the foul. When reporting to the coach, the recommended wording is "X just disqualified himself because ..." or "X is disqualified because ...", rather than "I am disqualifying X because ..." The opposing Head Coach should also be notified of the disqualification.
- 8). Verify that the penalty is enforced correctly. Check the enforcement spot, the distance, and the direction. If you think it is wrong, inform the Referee immediately. A disqualified player/coach has to remain out of view of the field.
- 9). Officials should record the main fouls: unsportsmanlike conduct, ejection, etc.

# Chapter 4 - CALLING FOULS

## 4.2 OTHER OFFICIALS

Other officials, if present, should assist by covering relevant spots and keeping players clear of conversations between officials.

## 4.3 ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE

Depending on the level of competition, you could ask directly to the coach (e.g. youth). So, the term Captain could be "Captain or Coach" in this section.

- 1). After receiving the report of the foul, the Referee shall, in a crisp and clear manner:
  - a. Give the preliminary signal(s) to the appropriate side except if the choice is obvious. [Note: A preliminary signal consists of (i) the signal for the foul; and (ii) point to the offending team.] Give the dead-ball signal (S7) before giving the foul signal for a dead-ball foul. Do **not** announce the foul verbally at this stage.
  - b. Explain the foul(s) and option(s) to the offended team. Notify the captain of the offending team of the foul called and, if possible, the number or position of the offending player.
  - c. Notify both captains and Head Coaches if the penalty involves the loss of a down.
  
- 2). While the Referee gives the preliminary signal, another official shall call the captains together, so that they may be notified of the foul and the options. Another official shall be present when the options are given and should check that they are given correctly.
  
- 3). If the offended captain's choice of option is obvious, or if the penalty must be accepted or declined by rule, the Referee shall announce it and proceed with enforcement or declination. If the captain objects or the choice is not obvious, the Referee shall fully explain the options to the captain or coach and conform to their choice. If the captain has a genuine decision to make, make sure the coach can see the captain.
  
- 4). The Referee shall instruct the Field Judge on 2-official crew, Down judge on 3-official or 4-official crew as to the spot of enforcement and the yardage to be marked off. The official, while carrying the ball, shall determine the spot to which the ball should be taken and move to it, stepping off each yard of the penalty. It is important that officials take care to enforce the correct yardage, and that they can reasonably estimate how far one yard is without the aid of marked lines.
  
- 5). While the official is marching off the penalty, the Referee shall take a position in clear view and give the final signals to the press box side of the field only.
  - a. For each foul, the Referee shall give the appropriate signal and then point towards the offending team's goal line.
  - b. In the case of a contact foul, the Referee shall use the contact foul signal (S38).
  - c. If the penalty is declined, the Referee shall also give the penalty declined signal (S10).
  - d. If there are offsetting penalties, the Referee shall signal the home team's foul, point to that team's goal line, then signal the away team's foul, point to that team's goal line, and finally give the offsetting penalty signal (S10).
  - e. While facing the press box, the Referee shall indicate the number of the next down.
  - f. The Referee shall announce the penalty, including the identity of the offending player by number (or position if the number is not known).
  
- 6). If there are multiple dead-ball fouls which do not cancel by rule, all penalties must be marched off and the position of the ball reconsidered after each. Half-distance enforcement should also be checked before each penalty.

# Chapter 4 - CALLING FOULS

7). An official **must** relay to the Head Coach details of the foul if it is by their team, including, where possible, the number or position of the offending player and precisely what the player did that was illegal. If the penalty involves loss of down, the Coach must be notified of that fact. The Coach must also be notified of any unusual enforcements or judgments whether or not they are against their team. Examples might include: flags waved off (disregarded); uncatchable passes; any unfair tactics or unfair acts calls. (See Rules 9-2-2.)

8). The Referee may forego giving a preliminary signal if the enforcement is "obvious" (e.g. false start, delay of game, other dead-ball fouls).

If a foul marker is to be disregarded, the Referee shall give the disregard flag signal (S13). This signal is not given by the official who threw the flag, unless it was the Referee.

# Chapter 5 - PRE-GAME DUTIES

## 5 PRE-GAME DUTIES

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Officials are expected to be neat and tidy at all times. They are on view from the moment they arrive at the venue until the time they leave. Dress standards must be high at all times.

Arriving and departing from the venue, all officials shall wear:

- EITHER a smart shirt or blouse, OR a plain polo shirt with no more than one small logo on the breast.
- Trousers, but not denim jeans. Smart shorts (not denim) are acceptable in hot weather.
- Shoes, but not trainers.
- Anything bearing the logo of any national team is prohibited. This includes caps.

1). Arrive at the stadium at least 1 hour before the start of the game or tournament. As early as possible after arriving at the stadium, inspect the facilities and the playing surface, particularly for hazards and obstructions. Seek the cooperation of game or tournament management to rectify any faults.

2). On-field uniform

The uniform to be worn by IFAF flag officials for all games or tournaments shall be as follows:

- Standard black and white 2" vertical striped shirt with black collar and cuffs; numbers on the shirt are prohibited; mesh shirts are permitted if worn by all members of the crew.
- Standard black pants; Standard black shorts are permitted if worn by all members of the crew.
- Black socks.
- A black belt, approximately 1½" wide, with a plain buckle.
- Black (or predominantly black) shoes with a suitable stud or tread pattern and black laces.
- A peaked cap, white for the Referee, black with white piping for the other officials; solid, sized hats are preferable to meshed, adjustable ones; rain hats are permitted.
- Only this badge expressly approved; if worn, the IFAF badge should be placed on the breast pocket; another approved badge may be worn in the corresponding place on the right sleeve; badges may either be sewn on or attached by Velcro or similar.
- Any part of the clothing worn under the uniform shirt that shows shall be black in colour.
- Rain jackets, if worn, shall be un-numbered and must have a 2" stripe pattern.
- Gloves, if worn, shall be predominantly black.

3). On-field equipment

Officials shall carry the following equipment:

- One or two foul markers, light gold in colour, approximately 15" square and weighted, worn inconspicuously.
- At least two bean bags of suitable design carried where easily accessible.
- A whistle (and a spare), either finger whistles or those on neck and wrist lanyards are recommended.
- The timekeeper and the play clock operator shall carry suitable stop watches that have been checked for accuracy before the game, spare watches should also be carried, either by the timekeepers or by other members of the crew.
- Game data card, pencil (and spare).
- Down counter (and spare).
- Coin for the toss if necessary.

4). All officials should participate in a thorough conference to prepare mentally and to review the flag football rules and mechanics. The conference should be based on a guide such as the one in the specific chapter. If there is more than one crew present, hold a joint conference if possible.

# Chapter 5 - PRE-GAME DUTIES

- 5). Prior to the game or tournament, identify and introduce yourselves to game or tournament management. Discuss with them any and all pertinent issues (for example, when you are to be paid, which clock rules are to be used, whether overtime will be played and what form it will take, which field(s) you will be working on, whether any card checks will be conducted and what form they will take, whether you will be required to take and keep roster forms, etc.)
- 6). Check your watches for accuracy against a reliable source. Each official should carry at least one countdown stopwatch, which should be checked for reliability and accuracy.
- 7). If possible, examine the game balls. If they are acceptable, return them to the teams.
- 8). Leave in enough time to arrive at the field approximately 15 minutes before the start of the game. Be aware of potential long journeys to the field and the time they will require. If neutral balls are to be used, carry them with you.
- 9). Note the location of team areas and medical facilities. Check that game management has made any necessary changes to rectify faults in the facilities or playing area. Check that representatives of both teams are present.
- 10). Conduct a check of players' equipment to ensure that it is safe and legal.
- 11). Confirm with both Head Coaches that their teams are fully present and ready to begin.
- 12). Take up position and conduct the coin toss procedure.

# Chapter 6 - PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

## 6 PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

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A pre-game conference is an opportunity for officials to get into the right frame of mind to officiate a flag football game: for this reason, a pre-game conference should always be held. Before a tournament, it may be appropriate for all the officials present to hold a joint conference. All aspects of the game must be covered during the pre-game conference, this includes both rules and mechanics. Discuss rare and unusual game situations and decide how you would cover them. Describe experiences of previous games and how you handle them.

The following checklist is provided as a guide.

### 6.1 PRE-GAME DUTIES

- Coaches certification
- Conduct a check of players' equipment
- Check balls (no need to mark)
- Identify medical facilities
- Instruction of down box operator and alternates, if present
- Location of tournament management
- Inspection of field

### 6.2 COIN TOSS PROCEDURE

- See IFAF Flag rules R3.1
- 2 Captains maximum
- Mechanics and options

### 6.3 PLAYS - GENERAL

- Positions
- Count players
- Player in motion
- Legality of snap
- Blitz line patrol
- No run zone enforcement

### 6.4 WHEN TO WHISTLE IMMEDIATELY (AND WHY)

- An official shall throw a penalty marker and whistle immediately, because it cannot be corrected:
  - R 7-1-1-b (delay)
  - R 7-1-3-a (substitution)
  - R 7-1-3-b (false start)
  - R 7-1-4-a (offside)
  - R 7-1-4-b (ball touch defense)
  - R 7-1-4-c (disconcerting signal)
  - R 7-1-4-d (more than 2 signals, less than 7yd) Act as in AR 7-1-4-V prescribed.
  - R 9-3-1-b (substitution)
  - R 9-3-1-c (unfair tactic)
- An official shall throw a penalty marker and whistle at the snap, because it cannot happen before:
  - R 7-1-1-a (snap before ready)
  - R 7-1-2 (illegal snap)
- An official shall throw a penalty marker and whistle at the snap, because it can be corrected before:
  - R 7-1-4-d (invalid signal, 1 sec)
  - Important is to wait there to judge it correctly.
  - Act as in AR 7-1-4-II prescribed.

# Chapter 6 - PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

## 6.5 RUNNING PLAYS

- Coverage of runner - in backfield, up the middle, sweeps, pitchout, option plays
- Action in front of runner
- Clean-up coverage
- Forward progress - out of bounds
- Goal line/short yardage situations
- Fumble/backward pass
- Fake

## 6.6 PASSING PLAYS

- Coverage of passer – 7-second limit, roughing, forward pass vs. fumble
- Passer/pass behind/beyond line of scrimmage: clarify jurisdiction
- Forward/backward pass/fumble: clarify jurisdiction
- Coverage of receivers
- Complete/incomplete
- Pass interference - offensive, defensive
- Touching a pass in flight
- Coverage on interception - momentum into end zone, reverse mechanics

## 6.7 MULTIPLE QB FORMATIONS

- Coverage by Referee
- 2 forward passes checking
- 7-second limit off
- Multiple backward passes
- Spot on incomplete backwards passes

## 6.8 TRY DOWNS

- Positions
- 1 pt vs 2 pts
- Coverage when defense gains possession

## 6.9 RUNNING CLOCK MANAGEMENT “MERCY RULE”

- See IFAF Flag rules R3.2.6
- In the last 2mn
- 30 points or more

## 6.10 END OF PERIOD DUTIES

- Half-time
- End of game

## 6.11 TIMEOUTS

- Records
- Positions

# Chapter 6 - PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

## **6.12 FOULS & ENFORCEMENT**

- Reporting - who, what, where, when
- Recording fouls
- Options
- Signals
- Enforcement

## **6.13 IN CASE OF INJURY**

- If one official is hurt
- If two officials are hurt

## **6.14 OVERTIME**

- Review rules for overtime

## **6.15 CHALLENGE**

- See IFAF Flag rules R12
- Timeout left
- When, what

# Chapter 7 - MECHANICS

## 7 MECHANICS

### 7.1 GENERAL DUTIES

#### 7.1.1 Crew

	Referee	Down judge	Field Judge	Side Judge
<b>2-official crew</b>	Count offense 7s 25s	-	Count defense Game clock	-
<b>3-official crew</b>	Count offense 7s 25s	Count offense Count defense	Count defense Game clock	-
<b>4-official crew</b>	Count offense 7s	Count offense	Count defense Game clock	Count defense 25s
<b>Colour in the drawings</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>DJ</b>	<b>FJ</b>	<b>SJ</b>

#### Crossing zones

: this is a zone where 2 officials have different responsibilities.

#### 7.1.2 Coin Toss

1). After completion of pregame duties:

- a. On a 2-official crew, the Referee and Field Judge should position themselves on opposite sidelines at the midfield line. They should then escort the captains (2 maximum) to the centre of the field.
- b. On a 3-official crew, the Referee should take up position in the centre of the field at midfield. The Down judge and the Field Judge should gather the captains (2 maximum), escort them to the Referee, and then stay as witnesses.
- c. On a 4-official crew, the Referee and the Down judge should take up position in the centre of the field on the middle line. The Side Judge and the Field Judge should gather the captains (2 maximum), escort them to the Referee, and then return to the sidelines.

2). When the captains (2 maximum) have arrived at the centre of the field, they should be positioned opposite each other with their backs to their own sidelines. The visiting team should then be invited to move round and shake hands with the home team. If another official will present, they should take up a position where they can witness the toss and observe both sidelines.

3). The Referee shall introduce himself and, if present, other officials to the captains.

4). During the toss ceremony, only those participating in the ceremony should be on the field of play. All other players, coaches, etc. should be in the team area.

5). The Referee shall:

- a. Ask the visiting captain to call the toss.
- b. Toss and catch the coin (unless a VIP will perform it).
- c. Indicate the winning captain by placing a hand on their shoulder. Placing the hand near the captain's shoulder is adequate providing the signal is clear.
- d. Explain the result of the toss.

6). See IFAF Flag Rules R3.1.1

7). The captains shall then be instructed to move around so that they are facing each other with their backs to the end zone which they will be defending in the first half.

# Chapter 7 - MECHANICS

8). The Referee shall go near the captains of the team that will have first possession and signal first down (S8).

9). As the captains return to their team areas, the officials will record the result of the toss. Handshakes or other crew activities at this juncture should be unobtrusive. If teams are not supplying their own footballs, the Referee shall obtain a ball to begin the game with.

10). At the request of game or tournament management, the toss of the coin may be performed by an individual or attended by a small group of persons.

## 7.1.3 Timeouts

### 7.1.3.1 Charged timeouts

1). The Referee shall signal a charged timeout by facing the requesting team's goal line and giving the timeout signal (S3) followed by a "chucking signal" with the arms shoulder high. There is no need for the Referee to sound their whistle.

2). If the timeout is the second and final one charged to that team, the Referee shall in addition give two pulls on an imaginary steam whistle (without blowing their whistle). **The Referee will personally ensure that the Head Coach and captain of the team are aware that all their timeouts have been used.**

3). The official recognising the timeout shall notify the Referee of the identity of the requesting person.

4). All officials must record all timeouts, including the period and time remaining on the clock.

5). The officials shall inform both Head Coaches of the number of timeouts remaining for each team, and the time remaining in the period.

6). The timeout interval will be timed by an appropriate official.

7). During the timeout, and while the officials are not performing other duties:

- a. The Referee remains with the ball at the succeeding spot.
- b. Other officials (if present) observe the teams from their sidelines.

### 7.1.3.2 Officials' timeouts

1). If a timeout is not to be charged to either team, the Referee shall signal timeout (S3) and then tap the chest.

2). The Referee shall declare the ball ready for play as soon as the reason for the timeout has been met (e.g. an injured player has left the field and is not in any danger).

3). If an injury timeout is prolonged, or the game is suspended for some other reason, send the players to their team areas.

4). Only the Referee can stop the clock for a Head Coach's conference or challenge. The conference will take place on the sideline. The Head Coach who requested the conference is the only coach who may attend it. If present, another official must go with the Referee to witness the conference. If after the conference the ruling is not altered, their team will be charged with a timeout, in which case the procedure for a charged timeout (including giving the team their full entitlement of time) will be carried out. If a team asks for a timeout which is in fact intended to be a request for a coach's conference and the ruling is then altered, they should only be charged with a timeout if they subsequently request a further timeout.

# Chapter 7 - MECHANICS

5). If the game is disrupted for any reason, all officials should record the down, the team in possession, the position of the ball, and the time remaining.

## 7.1.4 Declaring dead ball:

1). When you are sure that the ball is dead by rule, blow a clear, confident blast on your whistle. Remember that it is the actions of the players that cause the play to end and that your whistle is just confirming it.

2). If the clock should stop, all officials should signal timeout (S3) unless another signal supersedes it, and the timekeeper should stop the clock.

## 7.1.5 Use of Beanbags

All officials shall carry at least 2 bean bags to use to mark spots other than spots of fouls.

Never throw a bean bag; run to a position approximately level with the spot and *drop* it. If the bean bag falls on the wrong spot, move it to the correct spot. Move the bean bag with authority - do not try to nudge it with your foot in the hope that no one will notice!

Bean bags shall also be used by the appropriate official to mark:

- The spot where an eligible pass receiver voluntarily goes out of bounds - this is an indication that a foul will occur should they touch a forward pass in bounds before it has touched an opponent.
- The dead-ball spot if the official has to leave the spot to recover the ball or to observe action.
- The spot where the play will begin if there is no down box.

## 7.1.6 Down Box

1). It is the responsibility of the officials to see that the down box operator is adequately briefed before the game starts. Introduce yourself to them before the game. Stress to them the importance of their job.

2). Demonstrate to the operator the signals that you will use to indicate (i) the down number; (ii) "Stay!"; (iii) move the box.

3). Instruct the box operator never to move the down box, or change the down number, except at the direction of a game official. If they are told to move and they can see that a foul marker has been thrown, they must stay where they are and draw the official's attention to the foul marker. When they do move, they must move quickly and with no fuss to their new position.

4). Instruct the down box operator that between downs:

- a. He must not move until signalled to do so.
- b. He must position the down box level with the nose of the ball.
- c. He should change the number on the down box to that indicated by a game official.
- d. Ideally, they should change the number while moving the box to the new position, i.e. the box should show the old number at the old position, and the new number at the new position.
- e. In order to keep the sideline clear for the safety of players, officials and assistants, it is crucial that, where possible the down box is always positioned **six feet out of bounds**. This must be stressed to the down box operator.
- f. On the try, the down box shall show 1<sup>st</sup> down.

# Chapter 7 - MECHANICS

## 7.2 SIGNALS

### 7.2.1 How to use them

The official football signals are described in the rulebook, however, there are a number of additional signals described below that officials will use to communicate as a crew and players when verbal communication is impossible or undesirable.

- 1). Officials' signals should be clear, distinct and deliberate at all times.
- 2). Covering officials should signal a timeout when the rules provide for stopping the clock or when a timeout is charged to a team or to the Referee. Other officials should repeat timeout signals, S3.
- 3). The usual timeout signal is S3. However, in the following circumstances the specified signal should be used instead of the timeout signal:
  - a. When a touchdown or try is scored - S5.
  - b. When a safety is scored - S6.
  - c. When a forward pass is incomplete, or when there is no score on a try - S10.

These signals are sufficient to instruct the timekeeper or clock operator to stop the clock, and S3 should **not** be given in addition unless a foul marker has been thrown, or a charged or injury timeout awarded.

- 4). The on-field timekeeper should stop the clock before giving or repeating any timeout signal.
- 5). Signals such as 'timeout' or 'incomplete pass' should be repeated two or three times to ensure that everyone sees them. However, more repetitions are excessive. Do not bend at the waist when giving incomplete pass signals.
- 6). There is no need for the timekeeper to echo the wind the clock signal (S2). If visual confirmation is required, the timekeeper may use signal Sup12.
- 7). When giving signals at the end of a play, continue to face the players in your area of responsibility even if they are out of the field of play until all threat of further action has passed. If you signal clearly enough, your fellow crew members, the occupants of the press box and the spectators will all see the signal whatever direction it is given in. It is only the Referee's signals on penalties and unusual incidents that need to be given in the direction of the press box.
- 8). Unless you are absolutely certain that the Referee sees you and knows that the line to gain has been reached, that the play ended out of bounds, that there was a change of possession, or that there was a score, repeat the signal you have given once you have established eye contact with the Referee. Always make the corresponding signal. Do not think that everyone knows what happened or that what happened was obvious.
- 9). Do not get excited when giving signals (especially S5). Be tranquil and poised. Do not become emotional. Maintain your equanimity.
- 10). You can use the dead ball signal (S7) to indicate the end of a play, except another signal has been made (incomplete pass, score, etc.).

# Chapter 7 - MECHANICS

## 7.2.2 Supplementary signals for communication

All signals are means of visually communicating a message. The source of the message is the official who gives the signal. The destination of the message may be, in different cases, other officials, players, coaches or spectators. Visual signals may have to be used where either distance, or noise, prevent audible signals from being heard, or where an audible signal is inappropriate.

Sup Signal N°	Explanation	Signal
3	The team I am responsible for counting has 5 players on the field	Clenched fist at shoulder height (with optional upward pointing thumb); arm outstretched to side (see also Sup24)
4	The team I am responsible for counting has more than 5 players on the field	One hand on top of head
5	The last pass in the backfield was a backward pass	Punch arm into backfield
6	The line to gain is the goal line	Wagging index fingers discreetly at chest height <b>(Note 1)</b>
8	The clock stops after the next play	Crossed wrists at chest height
11	The game clock starts on the snap	Click fingers
12	The game clock starts on the ready	Circular motion of finger from wrist
13	The catch was complete	Clutch hands to chest in catching motion
14	The pass was caught out of bounds (incomplete)	Throw arms to out of bounds side
24	The team I am responsible for counting has 4 (or fewer) players on the field	Clenched fist with downward pointing thumb; arm outstretched to side (see also Sup3)
25	I believe all the conditions for a touchdown are met	Fists together (in front of chest) with thumbs up
26	The receiver touched the ball inbounds but did not have control of it until they was out of bounds	Move hands (palms up) alternately up and down in front of chest
27	The down box is displaying the wrong number	Give signal S17 (uncatchable forward pass) before the snap
46	The blitzer is in correct position	Arm extended in front of the official, thumb up
47	"I am responsible for the GL"	Both hands remove dust from chest

*[Note1: This signal should only be used when the ball is in Team A's half]*

# Chapter 7 - MECHANICS

## 7.3 AFTER EACH DOWN

- 1). The appropriate official shall whistle and mark the spot.
- 2). Either official may retrieve and/or spot the ball. All officials have primary responsibility for doing so.
- 3). Change your down indicator to reflect the new down. Announce it verbally and visually. On 4<sup>th</sup> down, you must be sure that both Head Coaches are aware that it is 4<sup>th</sup> down.
- 4). The Referee shall check the status of the game clock with the appropriate official and declare the ball ready for play by blowing their whistle and giving signal (S2) when the officials are in their final position. If the clock should start on the ready-for-play, they should give signal (S3).
- 5). The 25-second count starts when the Referee declares the ball ready for play. If Team A are not in position to snap the ball, warn them with a call of "Time" when there are approximately 10 seconds left.

## 7.4 INTERCEPTION RETURNS

- 1). When there is an interception, the officials should reverse their normal mechanics and then officiate the play as a long run, with the Referee responsible for Team A's goal line.
- 2). Remember that the ball is not returned to the 5-yard line for the start of the next series. Play continues from either the end of the run, the spot where the ball is relocated by penalty, or with a try down.

## 7.5 SCORING PLAYS AND THE TRY

- 1). When you are sure that there is a score, blow your whistle and give the appropriate signal (S5 for a touchdown, S6 for a safety). If you are not the Referee, hold it until you are sure the Referee has seen you. If you are the Referee, drop it after a second while performing clean-up duties. Then give a final, confirming signal. Hold it for 5 seconds.
- 2). If a touchdown has been scored, the nearest official (Referee or Down judge) shall obtain a ball and move towards Team B's 5-yard line. Spot the ball there unless Team A clearly indicates its desire to attempt a 2-point conversion, in which case the ball should be spotted 10 yards from the goal line.
- 3). Remember that you must accept the first choice made by the scoring team and they may not change their minds after the ready-for-play has been given.
- 4). If the try is good, the Referee shall signal (if necessary) and confirm it as they would a touchdown, and also confirm whether it is for 1 or 2 points. If it is no good, give signal (S10).
- 6). After a safety, the scoring team takes possession at its 5-yard line.

# Chapter 7 - 2-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.6 2-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

On 2-official mechanics, you will not see everything. Warn the coaches to help you if necessary. Players must bring the ball back and sometimes replace it for the snap to save time.

### 7.6.1 Pre-snap

- Referee
  - Whistle to start the 25s clock.
  - Positioned on the Line of Scrimmage with the down marker on visiting team sideline.
  - Clear the sideline.
  - Check the status of the game clock.
  - Count the offense (twice, you are alone) and note where the QB is (shotgun or below the snapper). A QB below the snapper could cross the LoS more easily.
  - Check the ball and the players on/near the line.
  - Check the number of legal blitzers with the field judge and try to draw a direct line between the blitzer(s) and the QB (RoW).
  - Monitor the status of the play clock, inform team A when there are 10 seconds remaining, and whistle if it expires.
  - Watch for any pre-snap fouls.
  - When the ball is close to the mid or goal line, communicate with the field judge as to who will be responsible for which line.
  
- Field Judge
  - Positioned at 7 yards from the Line of Scrimmage on the home team sideline.
  - Clear the sideline.
  - Count the defense.
  - Check the number of blitzers with the R.
  - Check the status of the game clock and be prepared to start it when necessary.
  - Check that any blitzer requesting right of way is at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage - Attempt to get them in the correct position if possible. Kill the play and throw your foul marker if you cannot get them to move back.
  - When the ball is close to the mid or goal line, communicate with the referee as to who will be responsible for which line.

### 7.6.2 Post-snap

- Referee
  - Start the 7 second count with your arm moving as per the process set out in 4.2.5.
  - From 5 seconds and onwards, also loudly audibilise your count.
  
- Field Judge
  - Move to the first line to cover (the mid or goal line depending on field position) whilst maintaining a wide view of players.
  - If receivers continue to move downfield, be ready to cover the goal or end line, depending on which is threatened.

### 7.6.3 Passing plays

- Referee
  - Check the run of the blitzer(s) to the QB for blocks or illegal contact. Once the blitzer is no longer threatened, switch focus to the QB and watch the QB/Blitzer interaction for sacks and potential illegal contact fouls
    - Remember: If the blitzer changes their path, they lose their right of way.

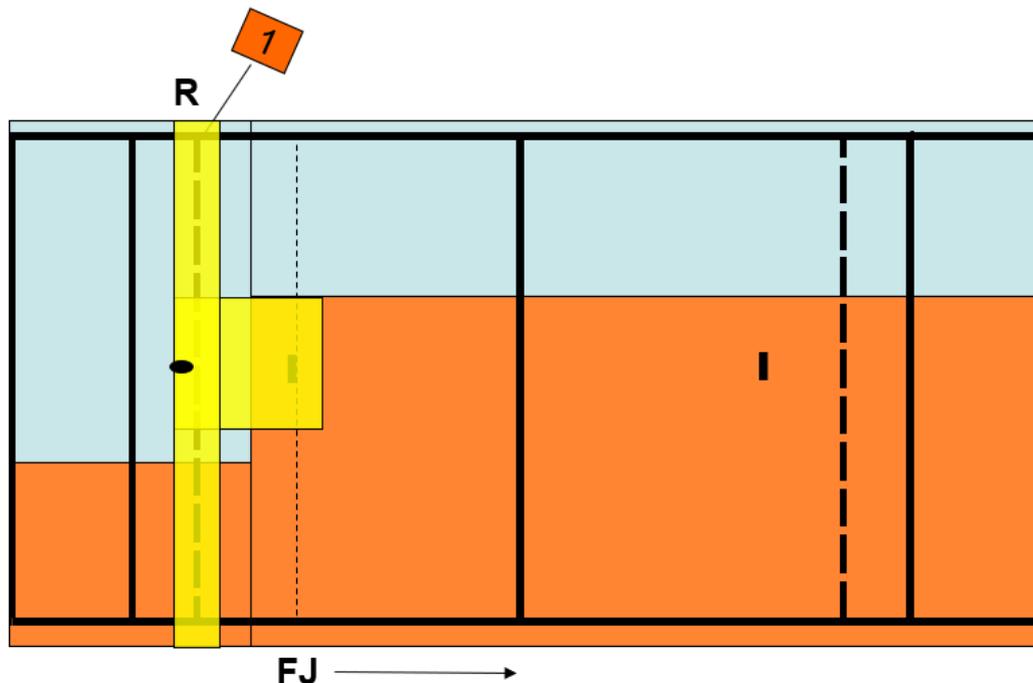
# Chapter 7 - 2-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

- Monitor the line of scrimmage to ensure the QB does not cross it. This is especially true on plays that start below the snapper.
  - After the pass has been released, start moving downfield while maintaining visibility on the QB for any potential fouls committed against/by him. Then switch your focus to the runner.
  - Be ready to rule on a potential safety if the QB drops back into the endzone
- Field Judge
    - As soon the ball has been released, find the potential receivers and watch for fouls committed against/by them.
    - Be ready to rule on catches and fouls on both sides of the field as the referee may not always have a view on them
    - If the ball is caught, focus on the run and getting to the threatened line as quickly as possible.

## 7.6.4 Running plays

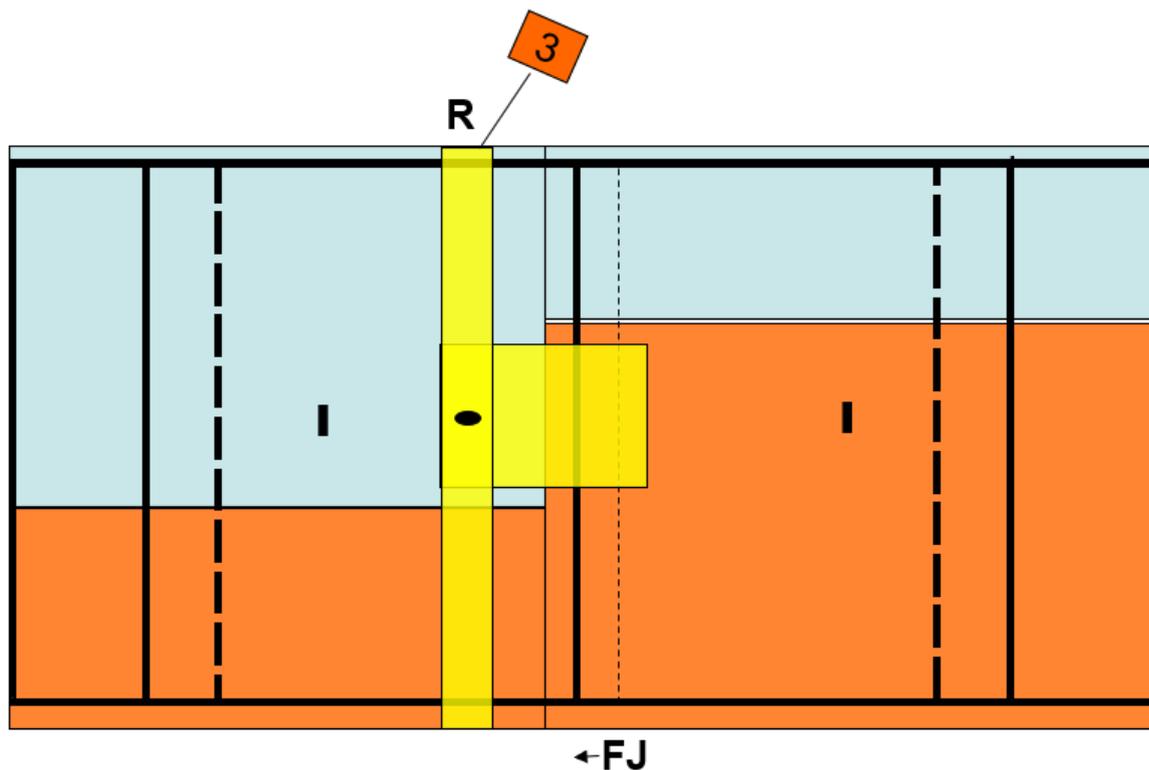
- Referee
  - Watch the area around the runner for any blocks by team A players
  - Depending on the position of the runner on the field, watch for illegal contact committed on or by them and other fouls such as diving or jumping.
  - Be ready to rule on potential safety at the goal line.
- Field Judge
  - Move to the line to gain or goal line and wait to pick up the runner if they come towards you.
  - Watch the area around the runner for any blocks by team A players
  - Depending on the position of the runner on the field, watch for illegal contact committed on or by them and other fouls such as diving or jumping.

## 7.6.5 A Goal Line



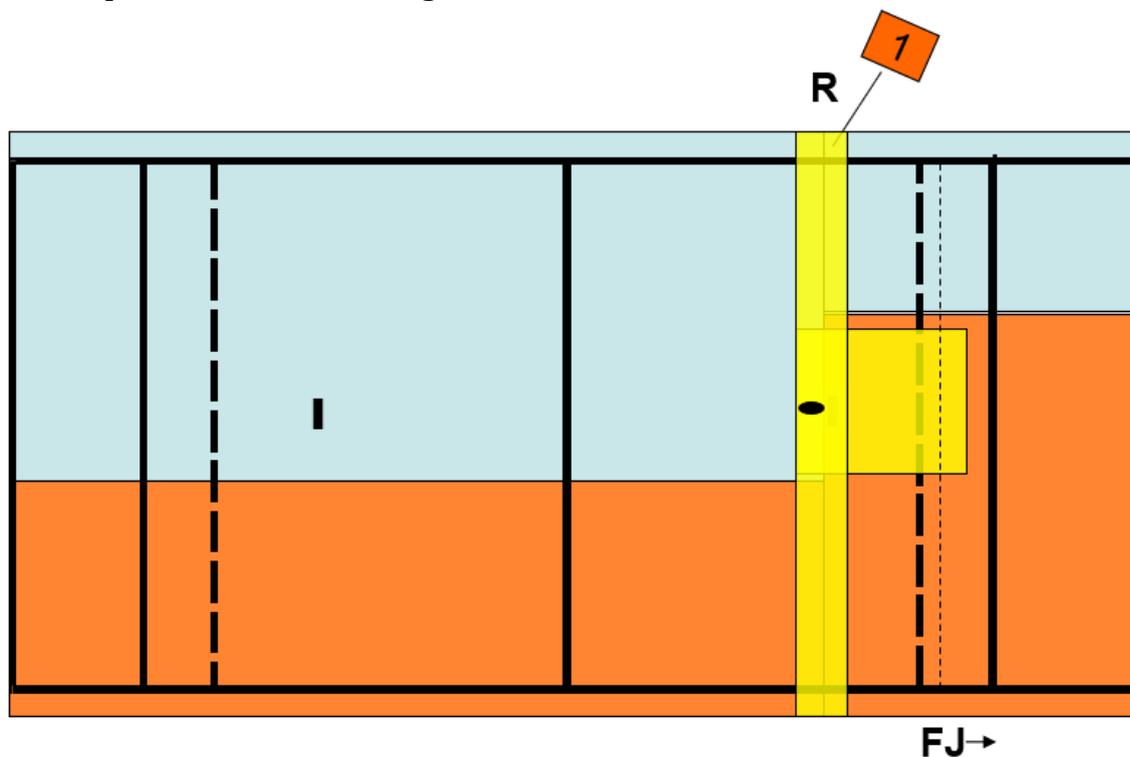
# Chapter 7 - 2-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.6.6 Mid-field



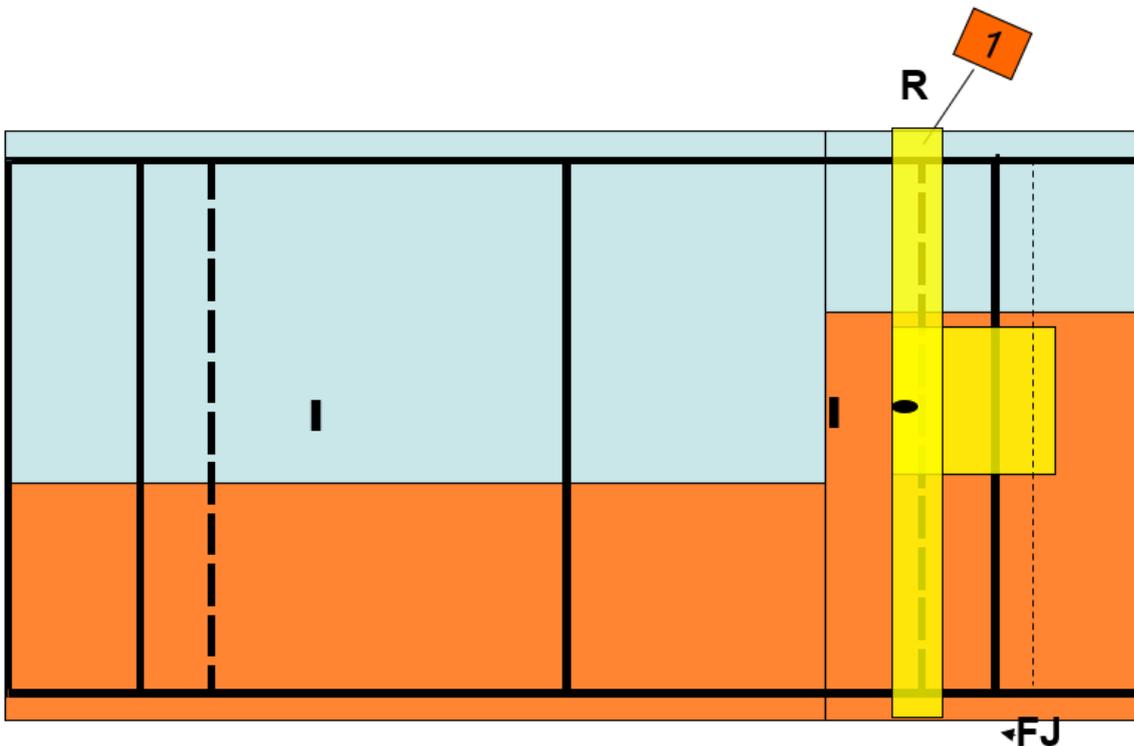
If the ball is snapped less 3 yards to the midfield, R must take both lines, Line of scrimmage and midline making sup47 to FJ.

## 7.6.7 2-point conversion or long distance



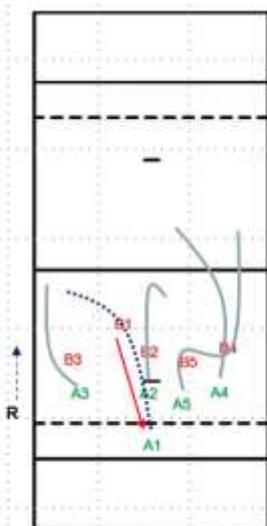
# Chapter 7 - 2-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.6.8 1-point conversion or short distance

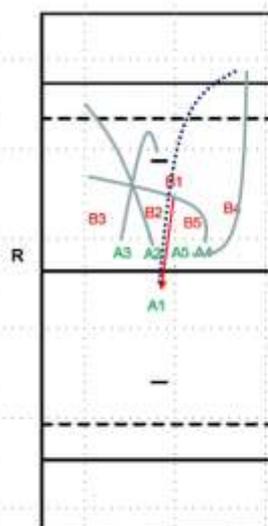


If the ball is snapped less than 3 yards to the B GL, R must take both lines, Line of scrimmage and GL making sup47 to FJ.

## 7.6.9 Some situations for 2-official mechanics



**Situation : Pass on the WR of the weak side.**  
**R :** Blitzzer B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). As soon as the pass is thrown, verify QB A1 is not threatened anymore and turn to see the pass. Follow the play and check the flag pull or the feet out of bond  
**FJ :** move back, stop at midfield and when the pass is thrown, run and watch A3 catching (or not) the ball. If the catch is made, try to be on the GL before A3



**Situation : Pass on the Slot of the strong side.**  
**R :** Blitzzer B1 is on the strong side (check the moves of other defenders). As soon as the pass is thrown, verify QB A1 is not threatened anymore. Follow the play and watch any illegal contact  
**FJ :** move back and when the pass is thrown, run and watch A5 catching (or not) the ball. If the catch is made, try to be on the GL before A5

# Chapter 7 - 2-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

	<p><b>Situation : Run on the weak side.</b>  <b>R :</b> Blitzzer B1 is on the strong side (check the pattern of A2). Follow the pitch from A1 to A5 and check any illegal flag pull  <b>FJ :</b> move back, watch where A5 goes out of bound</p>		<p><b>Situation : Interception.</b>  <b>R :</b> after the interception, watch the A players and go on the A GL.  <b>FJ :</b> move back and when the pass is intercepted by B4, follow him and watch when he goes out of bond</p>
	<p><b>Situation : short pass for the first down.</b>  <b>R :</b> Blitzzer B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). Check short pattern and contact between A's and B's  <b>FJ :</b> move back and watch short patterns, seek for help if 1st down</p>		<p><b>Situation : short pass for the TD.</b>  <b>R :</b> Blitzzer B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). Check short pattern and contact between A's and B's  <b>FJ :</b> move back and watch short patterns, seek for help if A's crosses GL</p>

# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.7 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

It will be easier to see what is going on the field as the ball relay. But you can ask to the receiver to come back with the ball in case of incomplete pass.

### 7.7.1 Pre-snap

- Referee
  - Whistle to start the 25s clock.
  - Normal positioning should be in the offensive backfield on the opposite side of the DJ. If there is a lot of contact between the QB and the blitz, you can move on the arm side of the QB. Be aware to move back opposite the DJ on goal line situations and multiple QB situations. You must be at least 5 yards deeper than the deepest back. You should be able to see all the players from this position.
  - When the ball is snapped on Team A's 5 yard line and back, be positioned on the same sideline as the field judge, at the goal line pylon.
  - Check the status of the game clock.
  - Counts the offense with the down judge.
  - Checks the number of legal blitzers with the field judge and try to draw a direct line between the blitz(s) and the QB (RoW).
  - Monitor the play clock, inform team A when there are 10 seconds remaining and whistle when it expires.
  - Watch for any pre-snap fouls.
  
- Down Judge
  - On the Line of Scrimmage with the down marker on visiting team side.
  - When the ball is snapped on Team B's 5 yard line and in, start on the goal line.
  - Clear the sideline.
  - Count the offense with the referee and the defense with the field judge.
  - Check whether the QB is in shotgun or below the snapper - A QB below the snapper is more likely to step over the line of scrimmage before passing.
  - When the ball is close to the mid or goal line, communicate with the field judge as to who will be responsible for which line.
  - Watch for any pre-snap fouls.
  
- Field Judge
  - 7 yards from the Line of Scrimmage, opposite the down judge.
  - Clear the sideline.
  - Counts the defense with the down judge.
  - Checks the number of blitzers with the referee.
  - Check the status of the game clock and be prepared to start it when necessary.
  - Check that any blitz requesting right of way is at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage - Attempt to get them in the correct position if possible. Kill the play and throw your foul marker if you cannot get them to move back.
  - Communicate with the down judge as to who will be responsible for which line.

### 7.7.2 Post-snap

- Referee
  - Start the 7 second count with your arm moving as per the process set out in 4.2.5.
  - From 5 seconds and onwards, also loudly audibilise your count.

# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

- Down Judge
  - Hold position on the line of the scrimmage until the ball/ball-carrier crosses it before releasing downfield.
  - Focus primarily on the first 5 yards downfield of where the ball is snapped - This is where the majority of interactions between team A and Team B players will occur.
  - Wait until the ball/ball carrier crosses the LoS then move downfield.
- Field Judge
  - Move quickly to the first line to cover (the mid or goal line depending on field position) whilst maintaining a wide view of players.
  - If receivers continue to move downfield, be ready to cover the goal or end line, depending on which is threatened.

## 7.7.3 Passing plays

- Referee
  - Check the run of the blitzer(s) to the QB for blocks or illegal contact. Once the blitzer is no longer threatened, switch focus to the QB and watch the QB/Blitzer interaction for sacks and potential illegal contact fouls.
    - Remember: If the blitzer changes their path, they lose their right of way.
  - After the pass has been released, start moving downfield while maintaining visibility on the QB for any potential fouls committed against/by him.
  - Be ready to rule on a potential safety if the QB drops back into the endzone.
- Down Judge
  - Monitor the line of scrimmage to ensure the QB does not cross it. This is especially true on plays that start below the snapper.
  - As soon the ball has been released, find the potential receivers and watch for fouls committed against/by them.
  - If the ball is caught, focus on the run and follow the play downfield.
- Field Judge
  - As soon the ball has been released, find the potential receivers and watch for fouls committed against/by them.
  - Be ready to rule on catches and fouls on both sides of the field as the down judge may not always have a view on them.
  - If the ball is caught, focus on the run and getting to the threatened line as quickly as possible.

## 7.7.4 Running plays

- Referee
  - Watch the area around the runner for any blocks by team A players.
  - Drift downfield following the run whilst maintaining a wide view of the action around and behind him.
  - Be ready to rule on a potential safety at the goal line.
- Down Judge
  - Hold the line of scrimmage until the runner passes you. Be aware of potential trick plays with the runner throwing a forward pass.
  - Depending on the position of the runner on the field, watch for illegal contact committed on or by them and other fouls such as diving or jumping.

# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

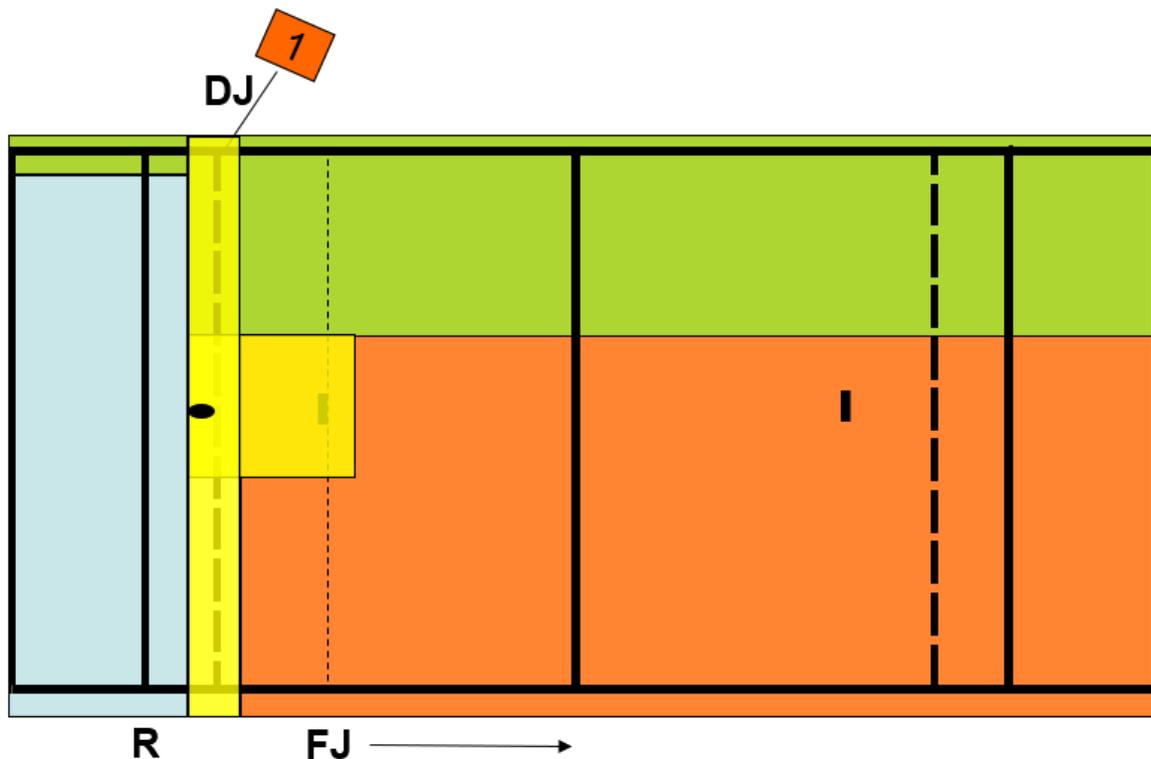
- Field Judge
  - Move to the line to gain or goal line and wait to pick up the runner if they come towards you.
  - Watch the area around the runner for any blocks by team A players
  - Depending on the position of the runner on the field, watch for illegal contact committed on or by them and other fouls such as diving or jumping

## 7.7.5 Multiple Quarterback Formations

You may encounter situations where teams look to utilise multiple quarterbacks on a play, involving multiple backwards passes between them before the ball is eventually thrown downfield.

- Referee
  - Move to the sideline on the field judge's sideline, level with the deepest offensive player
  - Punch into the backfield (supplementary signal 5) for each backwards pass that is thrown
- Down Judge
  - Stays on the line of scrimmage
  - Should NOT look into the offensive backfield unless the offense is utilising three or more quarterbacks
- Field Judge
  - Reacts as the plays develops: pass or run

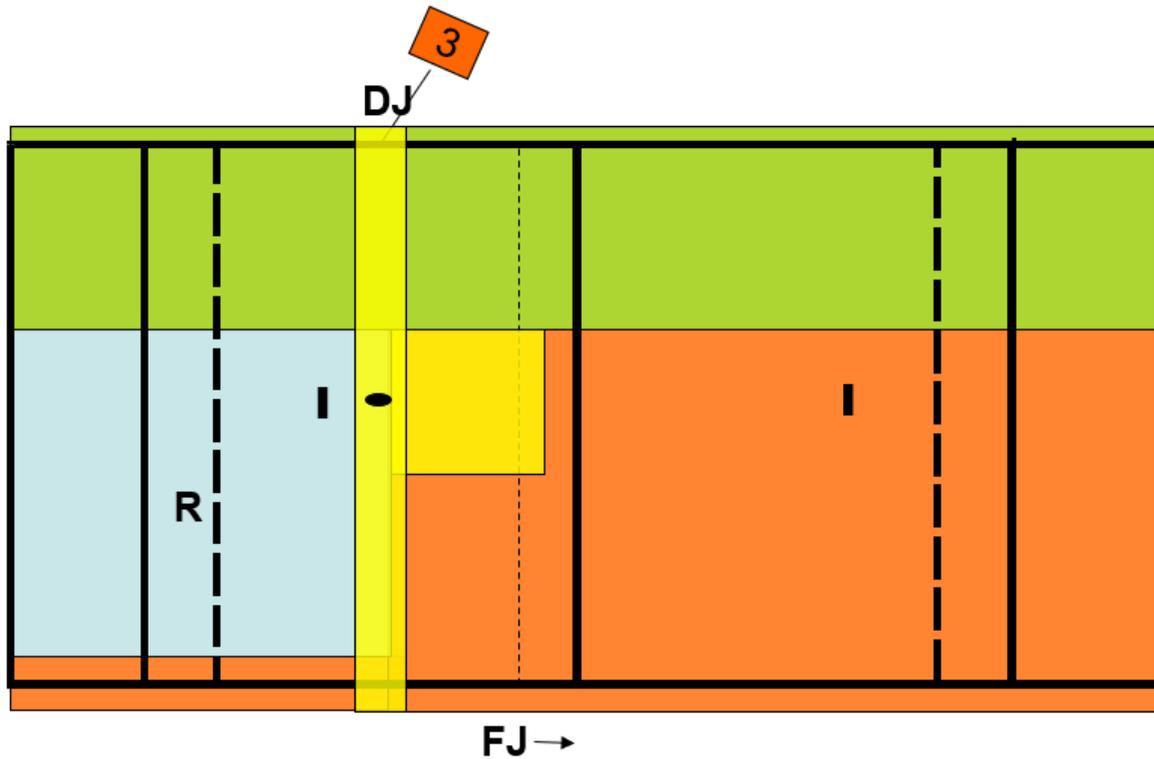
## 7.7.6 A Goal Line



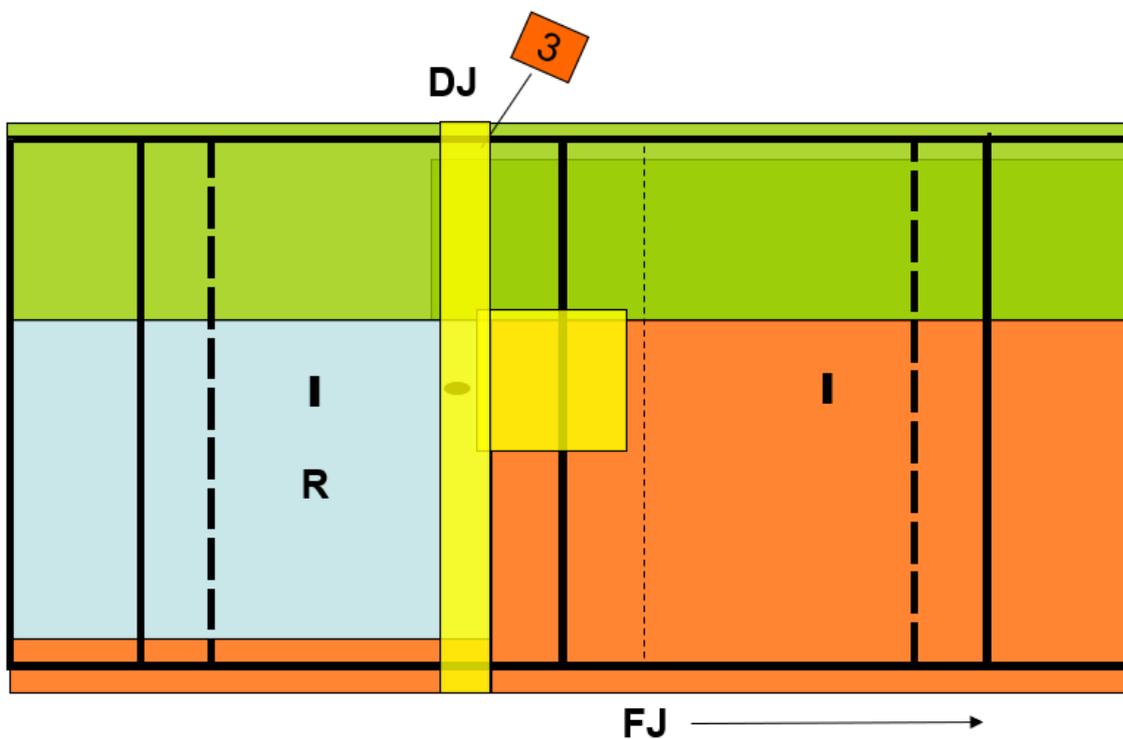
If the ball is snapped less 3 yards to the A GL, DJ must take both lines, Line of scrimmage and GL making sup47 to R.

# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.7.7 Normal play in A area



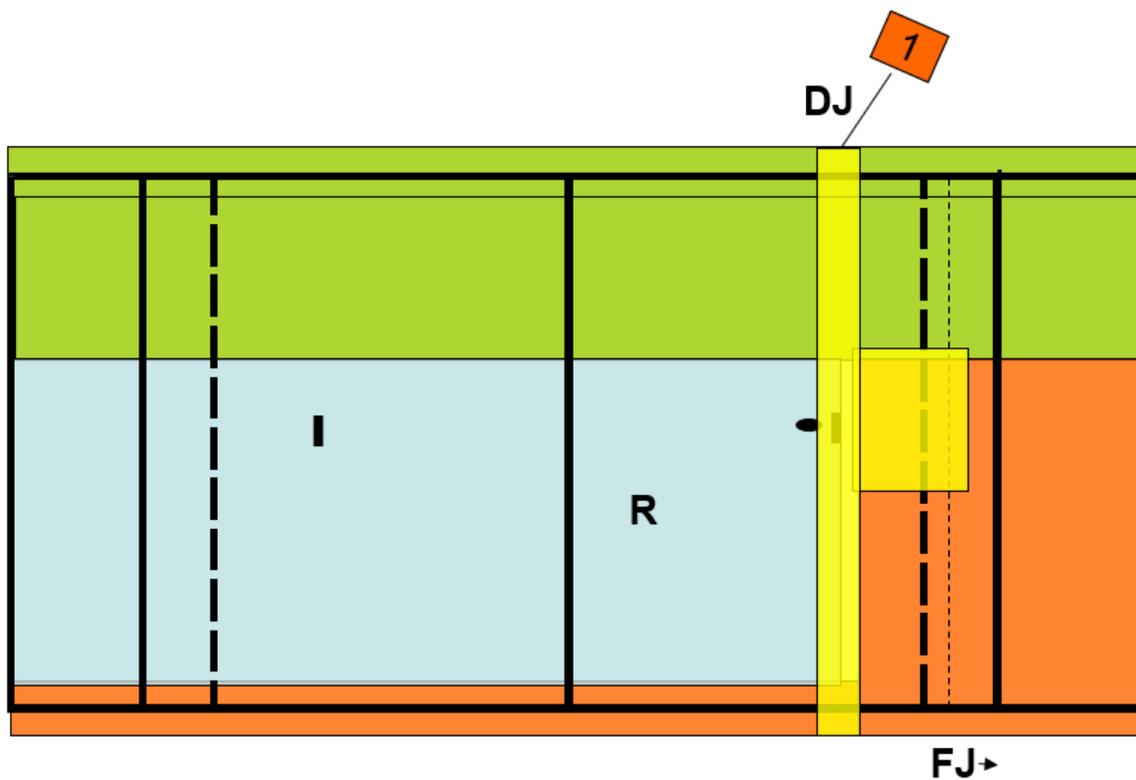
## 7.7.8 Near Mid-field



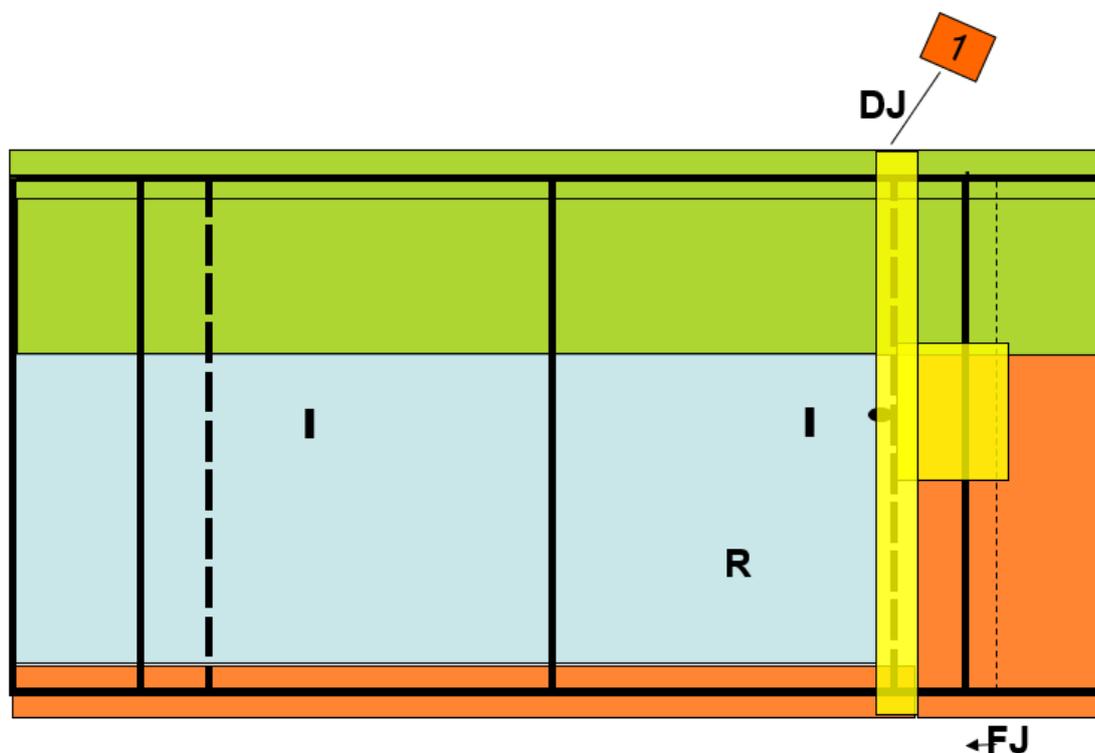
If the ball is snapped 3 yards or less to midfield, DJ must take both lines, Line of scrimmage and midline making sup47 to FJ. R could help in case of a running play.

# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.7.9 2-point conversion or long distance

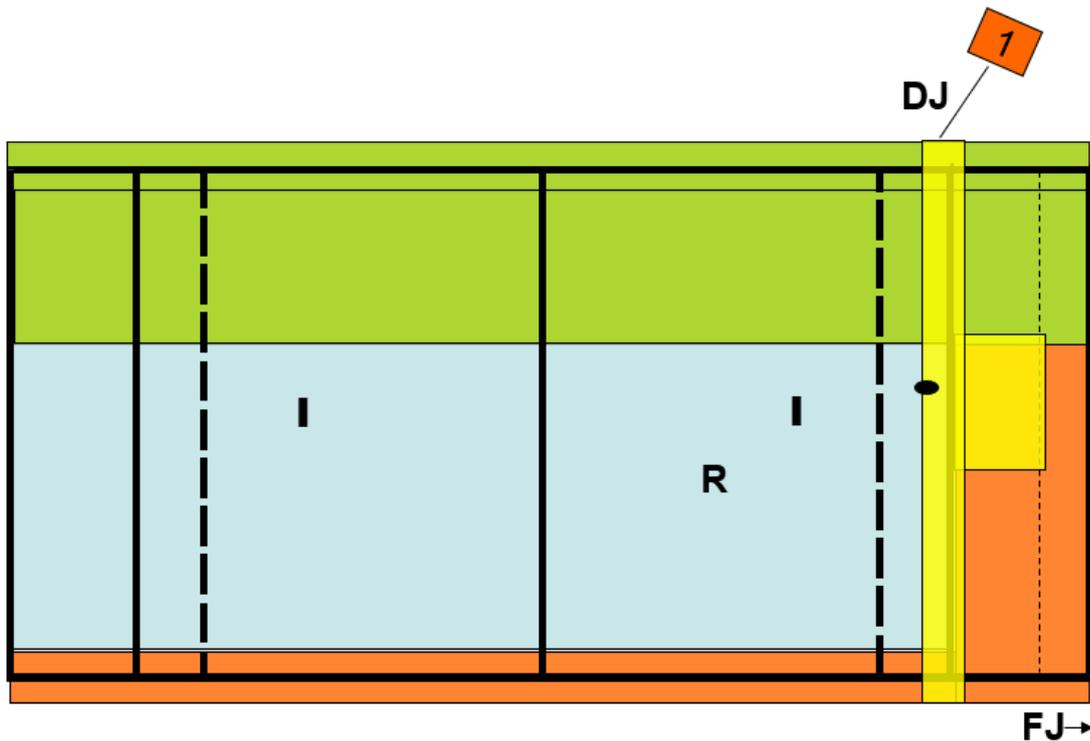


## 7.7.10 1-point conversion



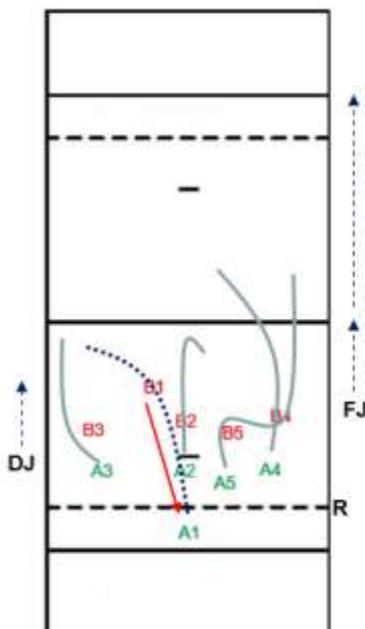
# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.7.11 Short distance

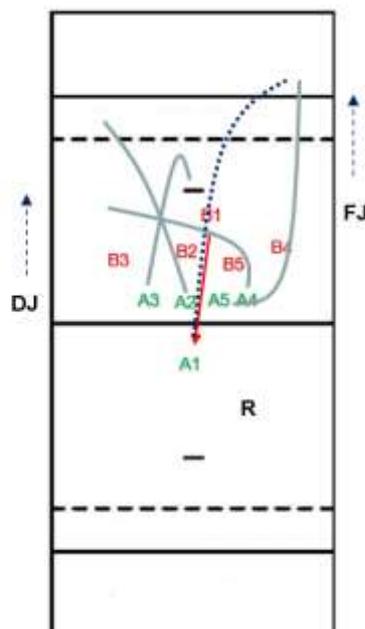


If the ball is snapped less than 3 yards to B GL, DJ must take both lines, Line of scrimmage and GL making sup47 to FJ. FJ will take the end-line. R stays in the middle of the field to gate a better view of the blitzer.

## 7.7.12 Some situations for 3-official mechanics

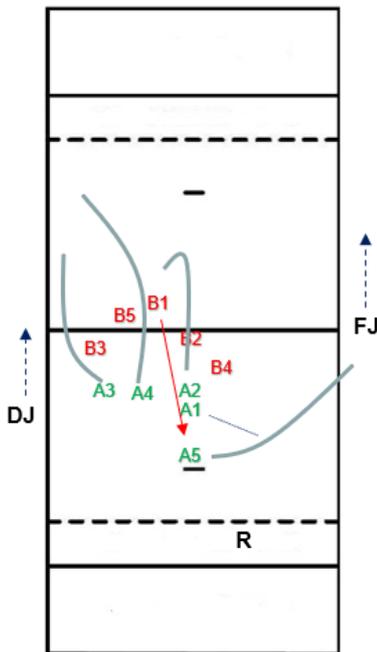


**Situation : Pass on the WR of the weak side.**  
**R :** Blitz B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). As soon as the pass is thrown, verify QB A1 is not threatened anymore and follow the play.  
**DJ :** Check any illegal contact on short routes or within the first 5 yards of the LOS. After the pass is thrown, follow A3 and check the flag pull or the feet out of bond.  
**FJ :** move back, when the pass is caught, be on the GL before A3.

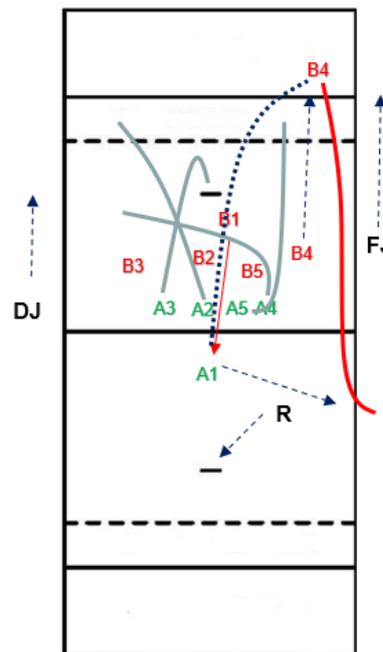


**Situation : Pass on the Slot of the strong side.**  
**R :** Blitz B1 is on the strong side (check the moves of A2 and A5). Follow the play.  
**DJ :** Check any illegal contact on short routes or within the first 5 yards of the LOS and follow the play.  
**FJ :** go directly to GL and when the pass is thrown and watch A5 catching (or not) the ball.

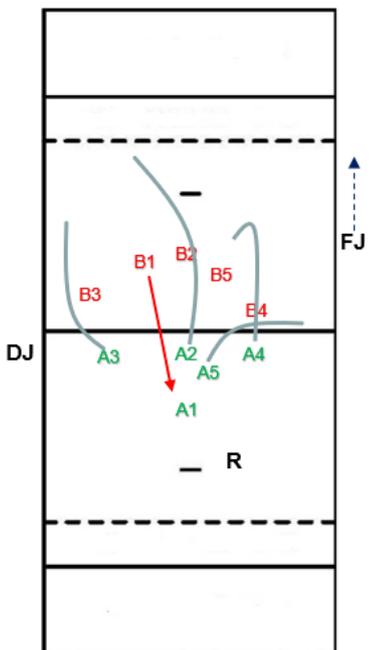
# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS



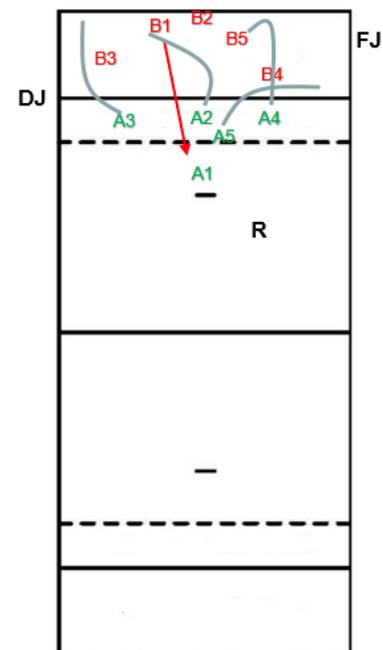
**Situation : Run on the weak side.**  
**R :** Blitzer B1 is on the strong side (check the pattern of A2). Follow the pitch from A1 to A5 and check any illegal flag pull  
**DJ :** as soon as you see the pitch, stay on LoS to see any illegal forward pass and follow the runner from this spot  
**FJ :** go to midfield and stay, watch where A5 goes out of bound



**Situation : Interception.**  
**R :** after the interception, watch the A players and go inside the field.  
**DJ :** after the snap, watch the receivers on your side  
**FJ :** move back and go on the GL. After the interception by B4, follow him and watch when he goes out of bound

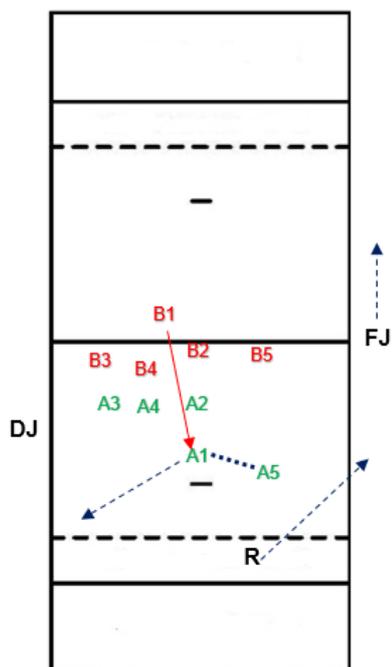


**Situation : short pass for the first down.**  
**R :** Blitzer B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). Check short pattern and contact between A's and B's  
**DJ :** stay on LoS and move to midfield to help FJ (easy if A1 is in shtogun position)  
**FJ :** move back and watch short patterns, seek for help if 1st down



**Situation : short pass for the TD.**  
**R :** Blitzer B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). Check short pattern and contact between A's and B's on your side  
**DJ :** already on GL, check short pattern and contact between A's and B's on your side  
**FJ :** move back and watch deep patterns

# Chapter 7 - 3-OFFICIAL MECHANICS



**Situation : Multiple QB.**

**R** : Blitzzer B1 is on the strong side (check the pattern of A2). As soon as A1 pitch to A5, go to the sideline and check if there is more than one forward pass. Stay on the ball carrier

**DJ** : as soon as you see the pitch, stay on LoS and check downfield

**FJ** : go to midfield and stay. If there is a long passe, follow the ball to see the possible targets and stay on them

# Chapter 7 - 4-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

## 7.8 4-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

### 7.8.1 Pre-snap

- Referee
  - Whistle to start the 25s clock.
  - Normal positioning should be in the offensive backfield on the opposite side of the DJ. If there is a lot of contact between the QB and the blitz, you can move on the arm side of the QB. Be aware to move back opposite the DJ on goal line situations and multiple QB situations. You must be at least 5 yards deeper than the deepest back and no closer than 10 yards to the line of scrimmage. You should be able to see all the players from this position.
  - When the ball is snapped on Team A's 5 yard line and back, be positioned on the same sideline as the field judge, at the goal line pylon.
  - Check the status of the game clock.
  - Counts the offense with the down judge.
  - Checks the number of legal blitzers with the field judge and try to draw a direct line between the blitz(s) and the QB.
  - Watch the side judge for signals regarding the status of the play clock.
  - Watch for any pre-snap fouls.
  
- Down judge
  - On the Line of Scrimmage with the down marker on visiting team side.
  - Clear the sideline.
  - Count the offense with the referee.
  - Check whether the QB is in shotgun or below the snapper - A QB below the snapper is more likely to step over the line of scrimmage before passing.
  - Communicate with the field judge as to who will be responsible for which line.
  - Watch for any pre-snap fouls.
  
- Field Judge
  - 7 yards from the Line of Scrimmage, opposite the down judge.
  - Clear the sideline.
  - Count the defense with the side judge.
  - Check the number of blitzers with the referee.
  - Check the status of the game clock and be prepared to start it when necessary.
  - Check that any blitzers requesting right of way is at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage - Attempt to get them in the correct position if possible. Kill the play and throw your foul marker if you cannot get them to move back.
  - Communicate with the down judge and side judge as to who will be responsible for which line.
  
- Side Judge
  - Be positioned approximately 20 yards (or on the line you are primarily responsible for) downfield from the ball, on the same side as the down judge.
  - Clear the sideline.
  - Count the defense with the field judge.
  - Communicate with the field judge as to who will be responsible for which line.
  - Start the play clock when the referee blows the ready for play whistle. When approximately ten seconds remain, raise your arm in the air and shout "time" to notify the offense.

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## 7.8.2 Post-snap

- Referee
  - Start the 7 second count with your arm moving as per the process set out in 3.2.7.
  - From 5 seconds and onwards, also loudly audibilise your count.
- Down Judge
  - Hold position on the line of the scrimmage until the ball/ball-carrier crosses it before releasing downfield.
  - Focus primarily on the first 5 yards downfield of where the ball is snapped - This is where the majority of interactions between team A and Team B players will occur.
  - Wait until the ball/ball carrier crosses the LoS then move downfield.
- Field Judge
  - Move quickly to the first line to cover (the mid or goal line depending on field position) whilst maintaining a wide view of players.
  - If receivers continue to move downfield, be ready to cover the goal or end line, depending on which is threatened.
- Side Judge
  - Unless starting on the line you are responsible for, move quickly towards it.
  - When the goal line is your responsibility, also be prepared to follow receivers into the endzone and cover the endline if necessary.
  - Remember to keep all players in front of you and do not get beaten deep.

## 7.8.3 Passing plays

- Referee
  - Check the run of the blitzer(s) to the QB for blocks or illegal contact. Once the blitzer is no longer threatened, switch focus to the QB and watch the QB/Blitzer interaction for sacks and potential illegal contact fouls
    - Remember: If the blitzer changes their path, they loses their right of way.
  - After the pass has been released, start moving downfield while maintaining visibility on the QB for any potential fouls committed against/by him.
  - Be ready to rule on a potential safety if the QB drops back into the endzone.
- Down Judge
  - Monitor the line of scrimmage to ensure the QB does not cross it. This is especially true on plays that start below the snapper.
  - As soon the ball has been released, find the potential receivers and watch for fouls committed against/by them.
  - If the ball is caught, focus on the run and follow the play downfield.
  - If there is a close catch on your sideline, make sure you communicate with the side judge before signalling - You should look towards each other and nod if you believe you have a completed catch or shake your head if you believe it is incomplete. If there is any confusion, come together and discuss the play then signal.
- Field Judge
  - As soon the ball has been released, find the potential receivers and watch for fouls committed against/by them.
  - If the ball is caught, focus on the run and getting to the threatened line as quickly as possible.

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- Side Judge
  - As soon the ball has been released, find the potential receivers and watch for fouls committed against/by them.
  - If there is a close catch on your sideline, make sure you communicate with the down judge before signalling - You should look towards each other and nod if you believe you have a completed catch or shake your head if you believe it is incomplete. If there is any confusion, come together and discuss the play then signal.

## 7.8.4 Running plays

- Referee
  - Watch the area around the runner for any blocks by team A players.
  - Drift downfield following the run whilst maintaining a wide view of the action around and behind him.
  - Be ready to rule on a potential safety at the goal line.
- Down Judge
  - Hold the line of scrimmage until the runner passes you. Be aware of potential trick plays with the runner throwing a forward pass.
  - Depending on the position of the runner on the field, watch for illegal contact committed on or by them and other fouls such as diving or jumping.
- Field Judge
  - Move to the line to gain or goal line and wait to pick up the runner if they come towards you.
  - Watch the area around the runner for any blocks by team A players.
  - Depending on the position of the runner on the field, watch for illegal contact committed on or by them and other fouls such as diving or jumping.
- Side Judge
  - Move to or hold the goal line and let the play develop towards you.
  - Watch the area around the runner for any blocks by team A players.
  - Depending on the position of the runner on the field, watch for illegal contact committed on or by them and other fouls such as diving or jumping.

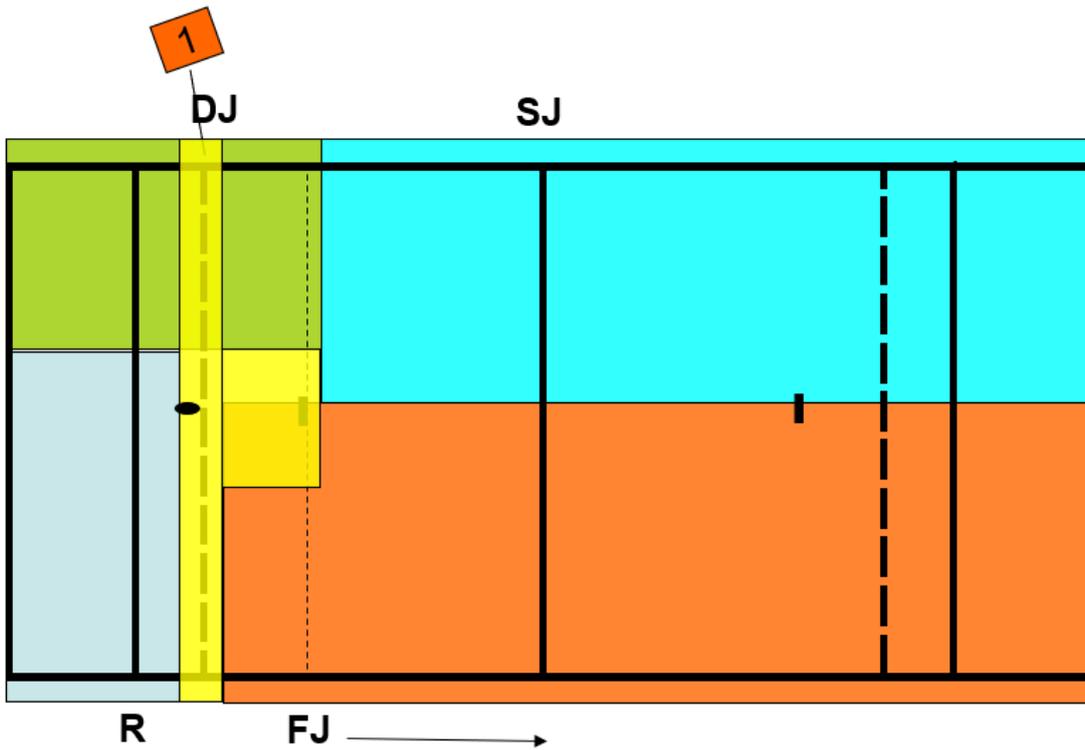
## 7.8.5 Multiple Quarterback Formations

You may encounter situations where teams look to utilise multiple quarterbacks on a play, involving multiple backwards passes between them before the ball is eventually thrown downfield.

- Referee
  - Move to the sideline on the field judge's sideline, level with the deepest offensive player
  - Punch into the backfield (supplementary signal 5) for each backwards pass that is thrown
- Down Judge
  - Stays on the line of scrimmage
  - Should NOT look into the offensive backfield unless the offense is utilising three or more quarterbacks
- Field Judge
  - Reacts as the plays develops: pass or run
- Side Judge
  - Reacts as the plays develops: pass or run

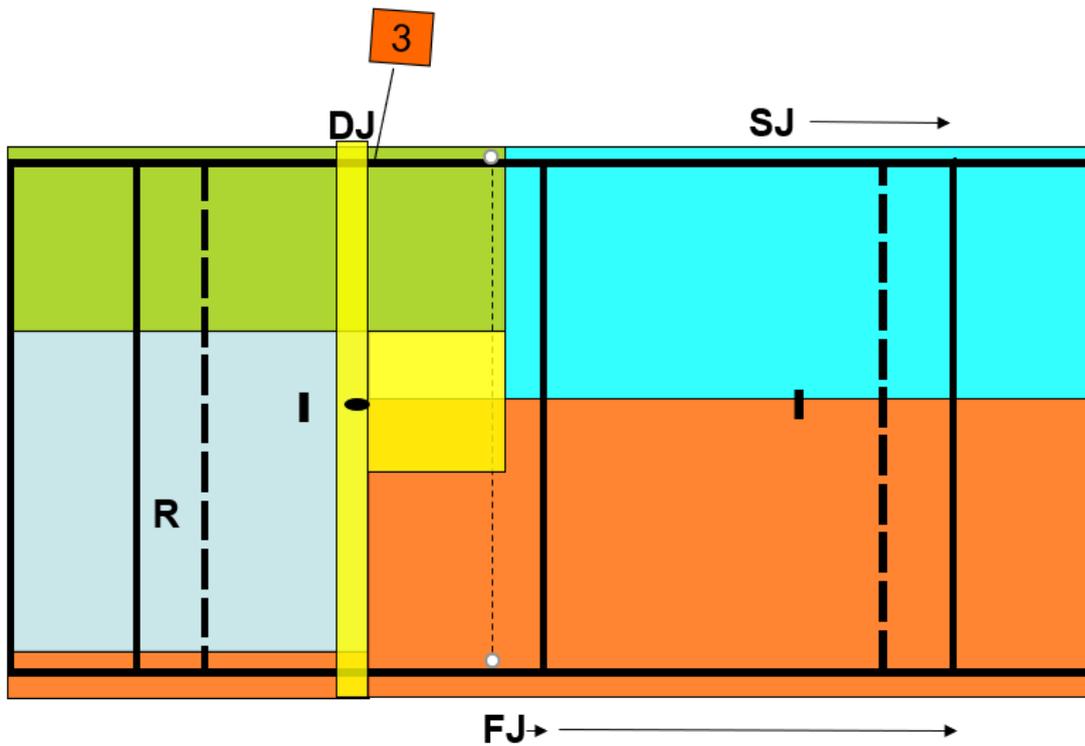
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## 7.8.6 A Goal Line



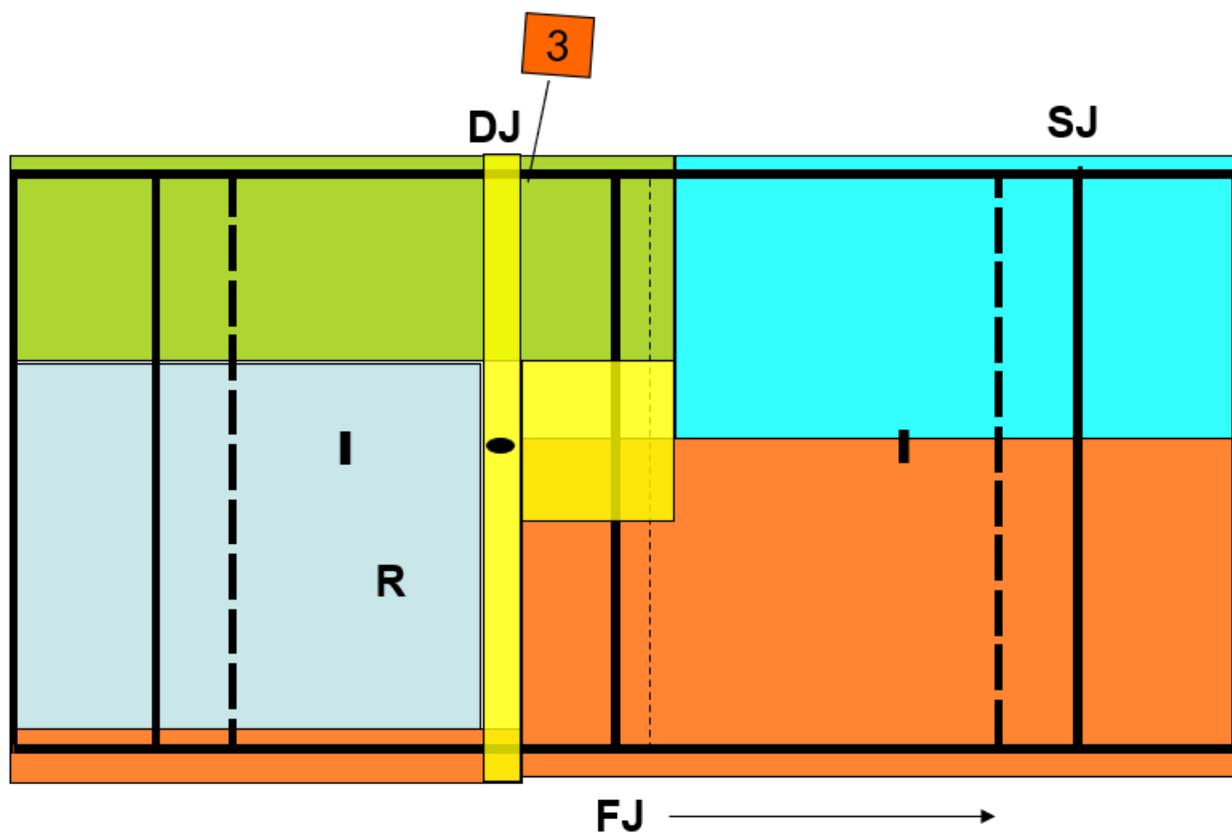
If the ball is snapped less than 3 yards to A GL, DJ must take both lines, Line of scrimmage and GL making sup47 to R.

## 7.8.7 Normal play in A area

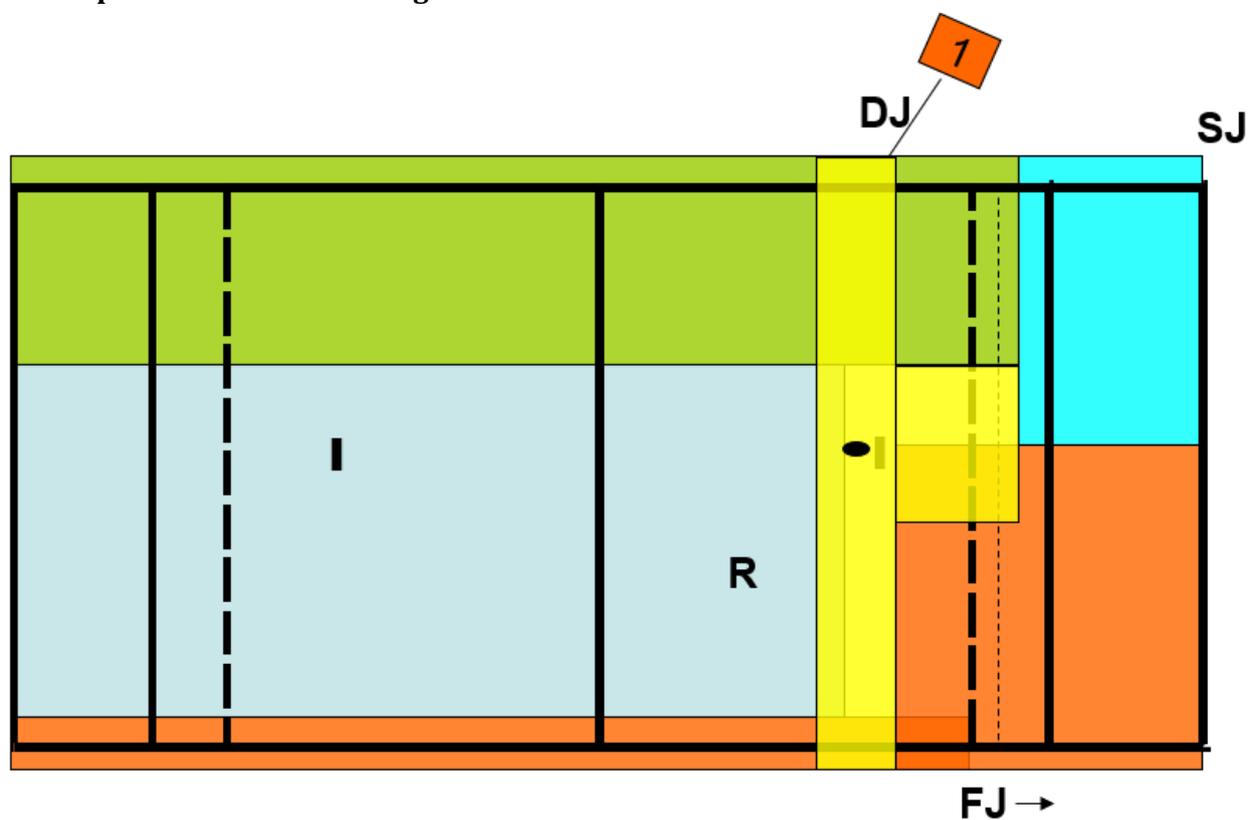


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## 7.8.8 Near Mid-field

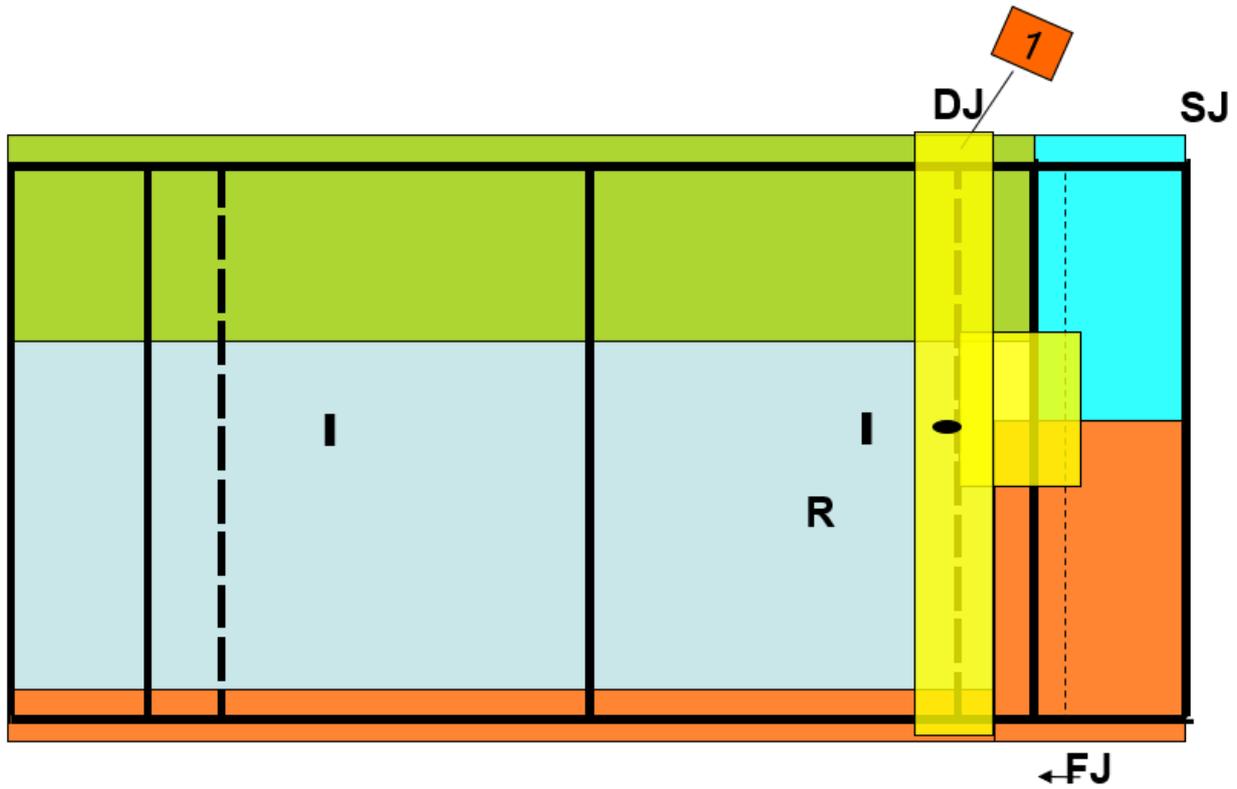


## 7.8.9 2-point conversion or long distance

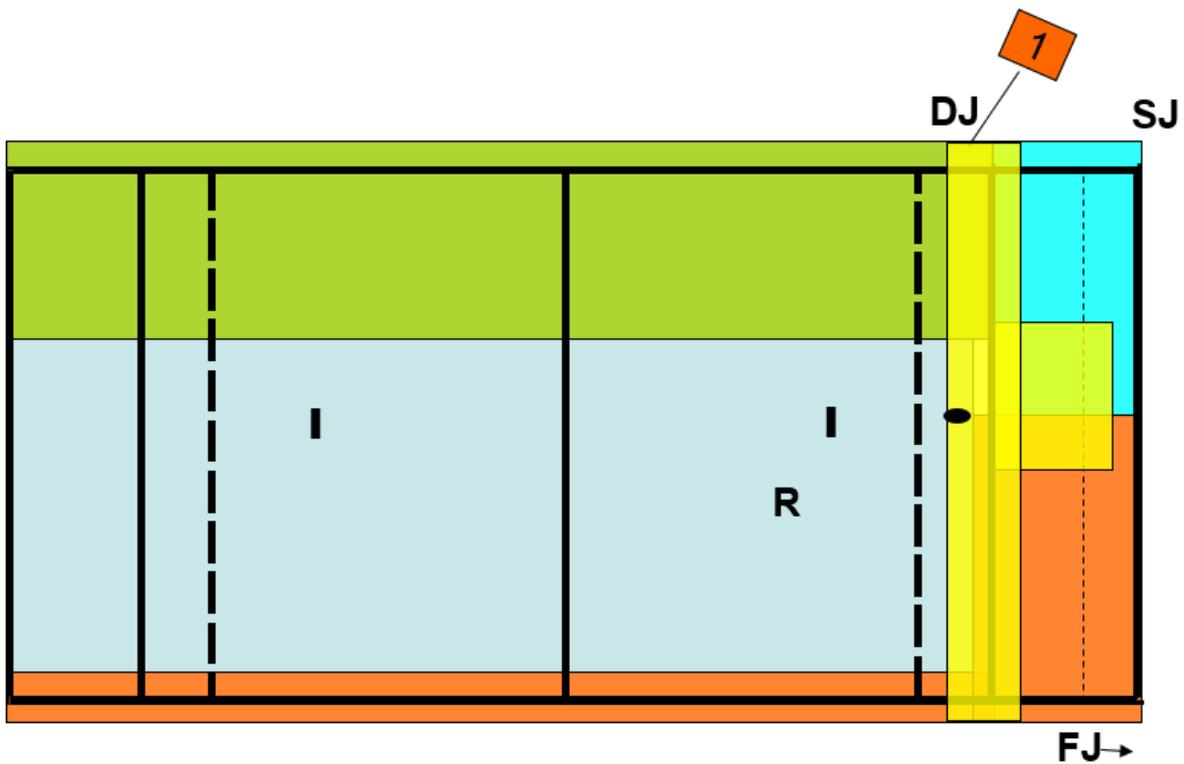


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## 7.8.10 1-point conversion



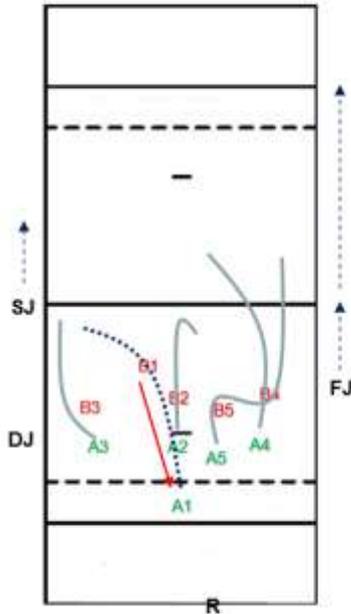
## 7.8.11 Short distance



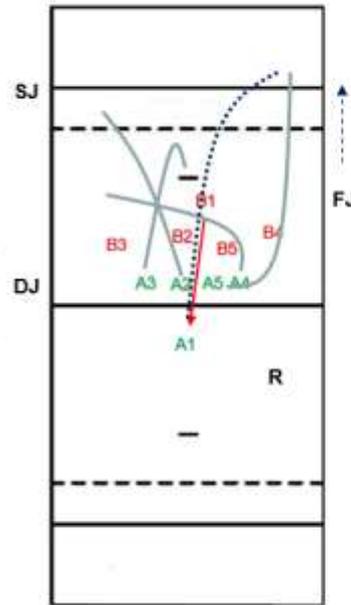
If the ball is snapped 3 yards or less to B GL, DJ must take both lines, Line of scrimmage and GL making sup47 to FJ. FJ will take end-line with SJ. R stays in the middle of the field to gate a better view of the blitzer.

# Chapter 7 - 4-OFFICIAL MECHANICS

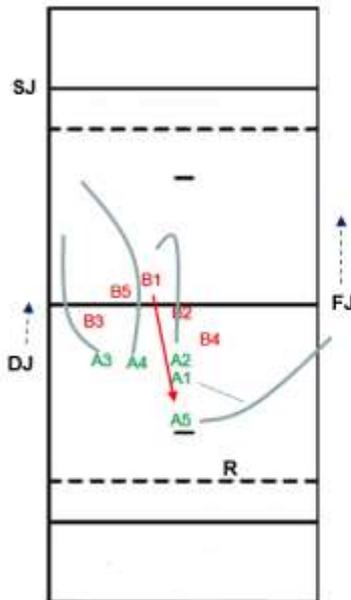
## 7.8.12 Some situations for 4-official mechanics



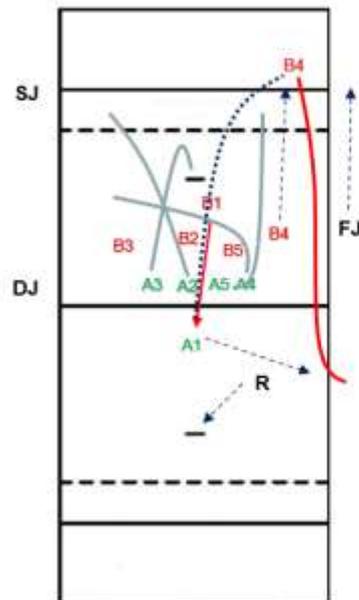
**Situation : Pass on the WR of the weak side.**  
**R :** Blitz B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2).  
**DJ :** check any illegal contact on the LoS. Turn and watch A3  
**FJ :** go directly at midfield and watch the receivers in your zone  
**SJ :** move back and watch the receiver in your zone. Let midfield to the FJ and go to the GL



**Situation : Pass on the Slot of the strong side.**  
**R :** Blitz B1 is on the strong side (check the moves of A2 and A5). Follow the play  
**DJ :** check any illegal contact on the LoS and follow the play  
**FJ :** go gentle to the GL and when the pass is thrown, watch A5 catching (or not) the ball.  
**SJ :** from the GL, watch the receivers in your zone and when the ball is thrown, check with FJ for the reception

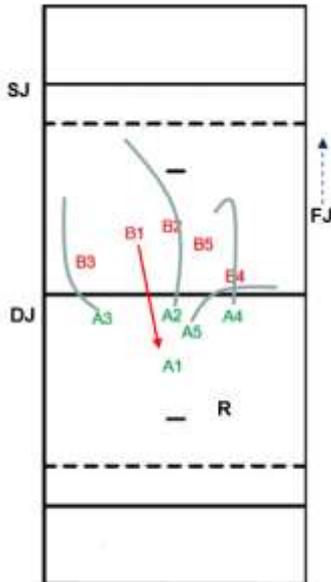


**Situation : Run on the weak side.**  
**R :** Blitz B1 is on the strong side (check the pattern of A2). Follow the pitch from A1 to A5 and check any illegal flag pull  
**DJ :** as soon as you see the pitch, go to midfield  
**FJ :** moves back, watch where A5 goes out of bound  
**SJ :** from the GL or less deeper, watch the play developing

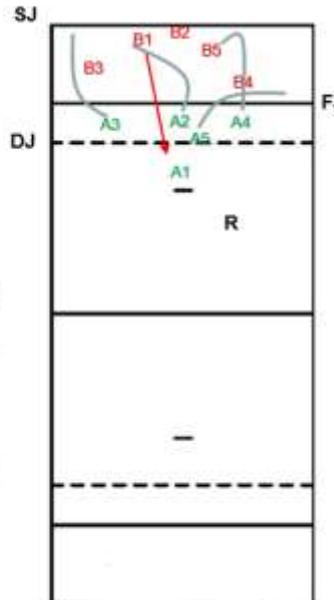


**Situation : Interception.**  
**R :** after the interception, watch the A players and go inside the field.  
**DJ :** after the snap, watch the receivers on your side  
**FJ :** moves back and go on the GL. After the interception by B4, follow him and watch when he goes out of bound  
**SJ :** from the GL or less deeper, watch the play developing

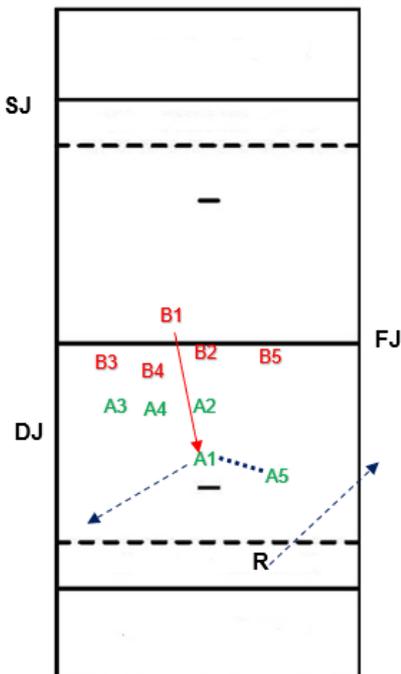
# Chapter 7 - 4-OFFICIAL MECHANICS



**Situation : short pass for the first down.**  
**R :** Blitz B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). Check short pattern and contact between A's and B's  
**DJ :** stay on LoS and move to midfield to help FJ (easy if A1 is in shotgun position, if not, R could be on LoS and LM moves directly at midfield at snap)  
**FJ :** move back and watch short patterns, seek for help if 1st down  
**SJ :** deeper than the FJ or already on the GL (if the receivers are fast or offense is not on 4th down)



**Situation : short pass for the TD.**  
**R :** Still behind the QB. Blitz B1 is on the weak side (check the pattern of A2). Check short pattern and contact between A's and B's on your side.  
**DJ :** Still on LOS, check short pattern and contact between A's and B's on your side  
**FJ :** move on GL, check short pattern and contact between A's and B's on your side and watch deep patterns to help SJ  
**SJ :** already on the corner of the sideline and the endline end line checking deep patterns



**Situation : Multiple QB.**  
**R :** Blitz B1 is on the strong side (check the pattern of A2). As soon as A1 pitch to A5, go to the sideline and check if there is more than one forward pass. Stay on the ball carrier  
**DJ :** as soon as you see the pitch, stay on LoS and check downfield  
**FJ :** go to midfield and stay. If there is a long pass, follow the ball to see the possible targets and stay on them  
**SJ :** drift to the GL or stay on it and watch the play developing

# Ch. 8 - TIMING AND THE END OF PERIODS

## 8 TIMING AND THE END OF PERIODS

### 8.1 OFFICIAL IN CHARGE

Crew	7s	25s	Game clock
2 officials	R	R	FJ
3 officials	R	R	FJ
4 officials	R	SJ	FJ

### 8.2 TWO-MINUTE WARNING

1). The clock will stop if 2 or less minutes are left and will interrupt the 25 sec. If a touchdown has been scored, the two-minute warning will be given after the try.

2). The Referee shall announce the two-minute warning and signal it to both sidelines using the timeout signal (S3). The Referee shall ensure that the captain and Head Coach of each team have been informed of **exactly** how much time remains in the half, not merely that it is the two-minute warning (see chapter 6-10 on running-clock Rule).

3). After the two-minute warning, the clock shall start on the snap.

4). The two-minute warning is not an extended time-out and the Referee should declare the ball ready for play immediately after announcing it, unless there is an injured player or some other appropriate reason. Otherwise, if a team wishes a longer delay at the two-minute warning, they must call and be charged with a timeout.

### 8.3 END OF PERIOD

1). Near the end of each half, the on-field timekeeper should ensure before the start of each play that all officials are kept informed of the time remaining. After the two-minute warning in each half, or on request, they must inform the captain and Head Coach of each team of the exact time remaining each time the clock is stopped.

2). The on-field timekeeper is solely responsible for determining when a period has ended and whether or not the ball was snapped before time expired.

3). When time expires, the on-field timekeeper shall sound their whistle if the ball is dead. Officials should assist in relaying a ball to the Referee, who shall signal the end of the period by giving (S14) and blowing their whistle.

### 8.4 HALF-TIME

During a tournament, the half-time interval will usually be minimal and last approximately two minutes. The Referee shall allow each team a reasonable amount of time to obtain refreshment before ordering the second half to begin.

### 8.5 END OF GAME

1). By rule, the game is ended, the score is final, and the officials' jurisdiction terminates when the Referee holds the ball up. No decision may be taken, retracted, or changed. All officials should be absolutely certain that the game may be ended before allowing the Referee to terminate it.

# Ch. 8 - TIMING AND THE END OF PERIODS

2). All officials should immediately assemble near the middle of the field and leave the field together at a leisurely and uniform pace. They should neither seek nor avoid coaches and players. If necessary, they should make sure that they have the game balls with them. If hassled by anyone, they should keep walking.

3). Any request for discussion regarding the officiating of the game must be directed towards the Referee. The Referee should be prepared to discuss any rules interpretation (not on the field and not immediately after the game), but should politely refuse to discuss judgment calls. A tournament representative may be nominated to handle such matters, in which case the officials shall redirect any request for discussion to him.

4). All officials should complete any administrative duties required of them. During a tournament, the Referee must immediately proceed to tournament management and report the final score, disqualifications and other particulars of the game.

5). If necessary, officials are responsible after the game to ensure that the balls are returned to game or tournament management.

# Chapter 9 - ANNEXES

## 9 ANNEXES

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### 9.1 GAME MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

At the earliest possible opportunity after arriving at the ground, the officials should check all **appropriate** items from the following list. To save time, it is better that all officials share the management of the items in this list or delegate if it is possible.

#### **With game or tournament management...**

- Adequacy of ground and field markings, removal of hazards, etc.
- The time the teams will enter the field, or the time the first game shall start
- Team announcements and the time they will begin and end
- Any VIP's or special arrangements for coin toss ceremony
- National Anthems
- If appropriate, half-time activities, length of the half-time interval and intervals between games, etc.
- Payment of game fee
- Down box operator
- The balls to be used and whether each team will supply its own football(s)
- Towels
- Medical facilities and personnel (see below)
- Changing room security
- If the officials can have a copy of any video
- Whether overtime will be played

#### **With the management or coach of each team...**

- Player equipment
- Roster form
- Coach's report card
- Names and numbers of captains
- Unusual plays or situations
- Rule queries
- Sideline control

#### **With medical personnel...**

- Location of medical personnel
- Signals to be used to summon medical help to the field