



Football Pre-Game Topics

PRE-GAME DUTIES:

- Review pre-game responsibilities listed in the “Pre-Game” duties section in Chapter 9 of Mechanics Illustrated, including
 - Meeting with coaches....
 - Meeting with chain crew...
 - Meeting with ball persons
 - Meeting with clock operators
 - Field Inspection
 - Monitoring team warmups

Toss:

- Officials designated to get captains
- Time and procedure for toss
- Options marked on cards, signals by R
- Hustle to kick-off positions
- Review 2nd half procedure and options

FREE KICKS (SAFETY):

- Review basic positioning – short kick adjustments
- Instructions to teams
- Count players
- Clear sideline and endline
- Legality of tee, restraining lines, type of kick
- Ready signals – officials
- Starting the clock
- Watch for short kick legally or illegally touched - coverage
- Out of bounds kick – touching – foul signals
- Blocking below the waist
- Fair catch, interference, signals, dead ball
- Forward hand-off, reverses
- Coverage on returns
- Onside kick – illegal touching
- Free kick after safety – review basic positioning

SCRIMMAGE PLAYS:

- Positions
- Crew communication
- Substitutions – count players
- Legality of offensive line – wing officials signals
- Shifts – one second pause
- Player(s) in motion
- False starts
- Coverage on plays up the middle
- Coverage on sweeps and reverses – clean up behind (R/U – late hit on QB)
- Unusual formations – coverage
- Forward progress

- Coverage for out of bounds action
- Goal line and short yardage coverage – signals
- Retrieving and spotting ball on sweeps
- Movement of chains
- Fumbles

PASS PLAYS:

- Initial responsibility – lineman, ends, flankers
- Eligibility – rules governing
- Legality of pass – where thrown passer/pass behind/beyond line of scrimmage, forward/backward, pass/fumble
- Coverage deep pass, flat pass, behind line
- Simultaneous catch
- Interference rules – contact
- Intentional grounding – jurisdiction
- Ineligibles downfield
- Coverage on interceptions and runbacks

SCRIMMAGE KICKS:

- Officials' positions, coverage
- Legality of lineup – lineman used as backs, ends
- Coverage of kicker – running into/roughing
- Kicks out of bounds – mark spot
- Returns, reverses, hand-offs
- Illegal touching
- Kick catch interference
- Fair catch
- Blocked kicks

GOAL LINE PLAYS:

- Initial positions
- TD signals
- Prepare for try
- Penalties – during play, dead-ball

TRY – FIELD GOAL ATTEMPT:

- Initial positions of officials – swinging gate
- Coverage of kicker/holder – running into/roughing
- Signals
- Fakes
- Coverage when defense gains possession
- Retrieving the ball
- Fouls after TD, during try, or after try
- Spot of ball after missed FG

FOULS – PENALTY ENFORCEMENT:

- Reporting – who, what, where, when, status of ball
- Recording fouls
- Cover – discussion, foul spot, dead-ball spot

- Get number of player – report to coaches
- Options
- Signals
- Position of chains and box
- Down and distance after penalty

TIMEOUTS:

- Position of officials, ball
- Substitutions, sideline conference
- Timing
- Notice to captains to resume play

MEASUREMENTS:

- Signals
- U has forward stake, wing opposite the chains has spot on line
- Movement of ball and chains if in side-zone
- Review procedure for starting clock

PROGRESS:

- Square it off
- Pinch in hard for any close or goal line plays
- Hustle – show your presence
- Wing opposite the chains kill clock on any apparent 1st down

COMMUNICATION WITH COACHES AND SIDELINE CONTROL:

- Report all fouls to head coach
- Communicate any coaches' concerns to R and U (R will stop clock for conference if warranted)
- Give sideline warning signal – record warning
- Wings – toss flag for sideline warning

REVIEW MECHANICS IF CREWMEMBER IS INJURED DURING GAME

FINAL THOUGHTS:

- Each official must first take care of business, concentrating thoroughly on primary area(s) of basic responsibility
- The Four C's:
 - Concentration
 - Erase everything from your mind, but the task at hand
 - Take no mental breaks at all during the game
 - Know the situation, anticipate the play
 - Focus on the current play
 - Consistency
 - Common Sense
 - Rules understanding; not rules knowledge
 - Communication
 - Continually and effectively with players, coaches, each other
 - Be the best team on the field today
 - Get it right; no matter how ugly it may look
 - Enjoy the game – have some fun!