

# Back Judge Position

## What Back Judges Need To Do In Order To Be Effective

### Basic Position

1. At least 18-20 yards beyond defensive line of scrimmage and always deeper than deepest defensive back
2. Position no wider than near upright3. Movement at Snap
  - A. Retreat & Read—NOT Read & Retreat
  - B. At snap retreat a step or two as you read your keys
    1. THEN REACT
  - C. The retreat get you going in the proper direction if you have a deep route by eligible receiver
  - D. The read will give you indication of what type of play you have and where play is going
  - E. The reaction gets you in proper position if the play comes to your area
4. **Patience, Patience, Patience**
  - A. You DO NOT need to be near the ball when every play ends
  - B. Run plays or pass plays in side zone—stay between the hash marks

- C. Never get outside hash marks while ball is live
- D. **DO NOT CHASE PLAY**—”Happy Feet”
- E. Advantage of this is your set of eyes will be able to observe player action after the ball is dead
- F. When ball becomes dead—move inside zone to be a dead ball official

1. **Focus is inside out**
  - A. Works from middle of field on most formations
  - B. Inside looking out (from the field of play to the sidelines)
  - C. Keep the players boxed in so that a play is viewed from more than one angle
  - D. Back judge will see an infraction that a wing official may miss because of a different perspective
2. **Keep play in front of you**
  - A. As a back judge, except for some kick situations, you only want one viewpoint: coming towards you
  - B. You never want to get trapped in a position where you are trailing a runner or running behind a receiver
  - C. Get to the goalline or endline on plays involving the front or back of the end zones
    1. Don't ever give up the goalline—hold your position
    2. You may have to back off for safety or perspective but never give up goalline if there is possibility of it coming into play
  - D. Should a play end near the goalline or endline and you are behind the play, get to one of those spots before making a ruling
  - E. **DO NOT** give touchdown signal while running—get to the goalline stop, and give the touchdown signal

## Back Judge Position 2

3. **Patience, Patience, Patience**
  - A. You **DO NOT** need to be near the ball when every play ends—the advantage of this is your set of eyes will be able to observe player action after the ball is dead
  - B. Short-yardage plays—stay back and be a good dead official
  
4. **Scrimmage Plays**
  - A. After a down ends, check the clock to verify that it is properly stopped or running
  - B. All defensive players should be in front of you-count defensive players and verify your count with the wing officials
  - C. Read your key for the type of play that is most likely to occur
  - D. After snap, watch for action by and on that receiver—after receiver is clear, go to zone coverage for a pass play
  - E. For runs, watch action ahead of the runner
  
5. **Game Clock Awareness**
  - A. Look at clock when possible during dead-ball situations—is it running when it should be stopped or is it stopped when it should be running
  - B. If there is only one clock and you are not facing it—remind referee near the end of quarter that someone must monitor clock
  - C. If the clock needs to be reset, tell the clock operator what the time should be, and not specify a certain number of seconds to add or remove
  - D. By being precise in your clock correction, you show confidence in getting the time right..You appear to be guessing when you state a certain number of seconds
  
6. **Guardian of the Endline**
  - A. That part of the field is yours—you are usually alone at the back of the end zone
  - B. For plays near the endline, get there quickly to be in position to make a call
  - C. If the ball is snapped for a scrimmage play at or inside Team B's five yardline, your initial position should be standing on the endline

## Back Judge Position 3

### 7. Punts

- A. Anticipate what can happen between the time the kick is made and the down ends
- B. Remind yourself what to look for—a fair catch signal, first touching, kick catch interference, legal or illegal batting, when to drop a bean bag, touchback
- C. Back Judge's position changed to 10-12 yards wider than and 2-3 yards behind the deepest receiver on linesman's side of field
  - 1. Carry bean bag in hand during down to mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick
  - 2. The back judge shall carry two different color bean bags; one for marking the end of the kick and one for marking first touching
  - 3. You need to see if receiver touches punt—this is a big time call if you miss receiver touching punt—give tipped signal when receiver to indicate first touching—let everyone know what you have seen
  - 4. Be alert for handoff or reverse
- D. Be on lineman's side of field because the line judge usually goes down field at snap—keep the play between two officials
- E. Remind punt receiver each and every time that if he wants to make a fair catch, give a good signal—great habit to get into

### 8. Pregame Determinations

- A. Be prepared how you will interact with other officials during the game
- B. Tell wing officials when you give up the goalline to them
- C. Confer with wing officials so all agree to the coverage areas—who is observing which areas and which set of players

### 9. Presence

- A. Move toward all dead-ball spots in the side zone, helping on ball relay after gains of five or more yards and hustling to the area when a play ends out of bounds to police player action that moves across the sideline.
- B. When covering passes downfield the Back Judge must go to the ball (stay between hash marks) and not lay back. In some cases we have too much space between the HL and LJ on deep passes.
- C. Need to close down properly after each play. You are needed to control players after the ball becomes dead
- D. If you have spot—square off at dead ball spot—mark spot with downfield foot
- E. **Back Judge Needs To Be Involved In The Game**—as you are the hardest working official on field—ball control sideline to sideline

**Positioning and Anticipation Are Key Aspects For The Back Judge**