

Physical Coverage Referee Position

1. Position
 - A. Take a position in backfield 10 to 12 yards behind line of scrimmage
 1. Usually 3 to 4 yards deeper than deepest back
 2. Able to view tackle on far side and backs
 - B. On passing arm side of quarterback
 - C. Check following
 1. One-second count after huddle or shift
 2. Number of A players and eligible backs
 3. Snap irregularities and movement of linemen
 4. Be alert for illegal shift or player in motion
 - D. After Snap
 1. Key tackle on opposite side. If he blocks aggressively, read run. If pass blocks, read pass
 2. You get in trouble if you don't move your feet in the direction of the quarterback
 3. Delay moving immediately toward line of scrimmage to avoid hindering reverse or delayed play and to assure maximum vision of play
 4. Check action on quarterback after handoff—remain with him until action has cleared away
 - E. The referee's scrimmage kick position be adjusted to 3-5 yards outside the tight end and 2-3 yards behind the kicker, on kicking leg side (five person crew)
 - F. The referee's position changed to 2-3 yards to rear and 3-5 yards to side of potential kicker, facing holder to see holder receive the football on field goal attempts or tries
2. Counting Players and Signals
 - A. While the offense is in the huddle, will make visual contact with both the line judge and linesman to indicate his count
 1. Fist—11 offensive players
 2. Both hands open—10 offensive players
 3. Two fingers on each hand—12 offensive players
 4. Wings officials need to know offensive count to help them with illegal formation as they will count backfield players to determine if there are seven players on line of scrimmage
 5. WHAT IS BEST FOR YOUR CREW TO INDICATE COUNT
3. Observation Points
 1. Be responsible for the ball and the runner and action around it or him until the ball crosses the neutral zone. Mark the dead-ball spot if the quarterback is tackled or goes out of bounds behind the neutral zone. Don't blow your whistle when runner's back is toward you.
 2. Referee must be prepared to give the "ready for play". Best to do this as close to your regular position as possible (NOT over the ball).
 - a. The referee's normal starting position be moved to one that is visible to the clock operator, approximately 10-yards deep and 5-yards wide of the huddle when marking the ball ready-for-play
 3. If you are starting the clock with arm which is away from the press box side of the field, open up your signal to make it more visible to the press box people

4. Game pace—when the ball is dead inside the hash marks we should strive for 13-14 seconds when marking the ball ready for play. When Team B is awarded a first down strive for 18 to 20 seconds—do not let offensive team linger on sideline.
5. Avoid “walking through” penalty signals. Come to a complete stop before signaling. Have no facial expression; slowly give the signal and point to the offending team; avoid jabbing the arm when signaling; it is a sign you are angry or feel a sense of “gotcha” toward the offending team. Don’t walk through the end of your signals either. Come to a complete stop after signaling and hustle to your next task.
6. Referees need to jog out to clear themselves of players to give penalty signal—DO NOT walk to clear.
7. Must be alert for the quarterback “walking into the snap”. It is illegal for the quarterback to be moving toward the line of scrimmage as he takes the snap.
8. There needs to be coordination between the referee and the umpire when ball is dead in the side zone. Both should not be there. Dead ball coverage is important and if both the umpire and referee are watching the ball the crew will lose dead ball coverage. This is something that will need to be worked out crew by crew.
9. Hurry-up offense—referee must make the QB understand that he cannot snap the ball until referee has made the ball ready for play. This communication must be done verbally.
10. Penalty enforcement—if there is a question or concern about where the foul will be enforced—discuss with the crew. Make your decision and give choices to captain (tough decision-try to position yourself so the captain can look at his coach on the sideline without having to turn around)
11. Pass interception or a fumble recovery and a return—you now become the back judge—goal line has become the most important ruling you have—get there and stay there
12. Pass read—drop back at 45 degree angle as QB begins to fade back
13. Pick up legality of blocks linemen and backs (blocking below the waist)
14. Change complete concentration on QB as defenders approach—if your concentration is on QB as he drops back you are just officiating air
15. Primary responsible to rule on possible roughing action on passer—if ball comes loose—rule fumble or pass
16. Meeting the coaches—a great way to start a game and set a positive tone is to have a good pregame meeting with each head coach. Required meeting is a time to discern important information. The meeting can also be used to build rapport with each head coach. Even if you know the coach well, refer to him as “Coach”. Be professional but be brief. Get the game off to a good start.
17. When the ball becomes dead, observe for late hits and other illegal acts. It is particularly your responsibility to observe action close to the wing officials as they are concentrating on the forward progress spot.
18. On a sack or tackle behind the line of scrimmage, get to a position level with the runner. Use your bean bag to mark forward progress and then go with the runner if he is driven back.