

2012-13 NFHS Football Officials Manual Changes

Second Half Choices:

- The second half choices will be done through communication with the head coaches.
- Captains are no longer brought to the center of the field
- The game official escorting the team with the second-half choice obtains from that team's head coach its second-half choice and communicates to the Referee
- The Referee then obtains the opposing team's response to the second-half choice from the official escorting that team.
- Should the game officials need to provide instruction/directions to each team based on first-half performances, these instructions/directions can be discussed with the head coaches before the start of the mandatory warm-up period or following the warm-up period causing little or no delay in the start of the second half.

Rationale:

- The mechanic change better facilitates the start of the second half. The mechanics of lining up the captains on the sidelines, following the mandatory 3:00 minute warm up at the conclusion of half-time, results in an additional delay of starting the second half by another 2 to 3 minutes.
- The meeting of the captains is a redundant function, as the choice of who is getting the ball is in almost every instance known following the results of the pre-game coin toss. The only real choice is which end of the field the team not having the choice is going to pick?
- The change will allow the game officials to actively confirm the choice of who is receiving the second half kickoff, and which end of the field the kicking team chooses to defend, in an efficient manner and the start of the second half occurs very shortly after the mandatory warm-up period.
- Should the game officials need to provide instruction/directions to each team based on first-half performances, these instructions/directions can be discussed with the head coaches before the start of the mandatory warm-up period or following the warm-up period causing little or no delay in the start of the second half.

If ball becomes dead near sideline (within 2 yards) and first down is gained:

- Covering official shall use normal coverage
- After determining ball is dead, stop clock with timeout signal (signal #3) twice
- DO NOT give the start clock signal (signal #2) twice and then timeout signal twice as the existing mechanic
- Additional "wind clock" signal to indicate the play ended inbounds and that clock should start with next ready signal has been eliminated

Rationale:

- Proper clock management is one of the officiating crew's primary responsibilities. The existing mechanic calls for the covering official to first give the winding motion, indicating the play ended inbounds, and then stop the clock. This allows the clock to run an additional 2-3 seconds, when by rule the clock should be stopped. This elapsed time could be critical at the end of the second or fourth quarter.
- With the new officials' mechanic, the official will simply stop the clock and communicate on the field to the referee that the ball was inbounds and the clock starts on the ready signal. The referee will need to communicate to the opposite sideline official that the clock will start on the ready-for-play signal so he can relay that information to the coach on his sideline. The clock operator only needs to know the clock should stop.

2014-15 NFHS Football Officials Manual Changes

The game official uniform: 1. Black-and-white vertically striped, long or short-sleeved knit shirt shall be worn. The shirts shall have either 1-inch stripes or a state adopted shirt with 2¼- inch stripes, a black knit cuff and Byron collar. **Rationale:** Several states have adopted newly designed game officials shirts with stripes larger than the traditional 1-inch. The game officials' shirts have not changed in more than 50 years and the adoption of the black game officials' pant has triggered a desire for a shirt that will complement the black pants as well as updating the uniform's appearance. Giving the option of wearing another shirt, with specific stripe width is a means to comply with uniformity.

Use of Microphone: Announce the number of the player who committed the foul. **Rationale:** If a school has taken to the expense of providing a microphone, the expectation of all involved is accountability. Stating the number of the player simply shows that the game officials made the judgment that the player fouled. If we don't want to announce the number, let's change all other NFHS playing rules to where we don't announce anything (like fouls in basketball, etc.). This change will also ensure that the coaches are firmly aware of exactly what happened (at least in the eyes of the game officials). We are not in the business of protecting people; we are in the business of communication.

Kickoff—Five Game Officials: Change the current coverage for kickoffs to the following: Revert to the coverage in the 2010-2011 Officials Manual, whereby the Referee is deep toward side of the chains. Umpire is on the 20 yard line, opposite of the Referee. The Linesman is on the 30 yard line on the same side as the chains and the Line Judge is on the 50 yard line on the opposite side. The Back Judge gives the ball to the kicker and stays on the 40 yard line. On all kickoffs, the BJ presents the ball to the kicker, making sure that at that time there are at least four members (three members in 9-man) of K on each side of the kicker with proper spacing. The BJ referees the 5 yard run-off and makes sure that no member of K is offside. The L and LJ referee the contact on any onside kick attempt, making sure that K does not contact R prior to the ball traveling 10 yards. Referee makes sure that K stays in proper Free Kick formation until the ball is kicked. Late in the game, when an onside kick is anticipated, the Umpire and the Referee can move up to be in better position to enforce the onside kick rules. **Rationale:** New requirements in Rule 6-1-3 for the kicking team. At least four members (three members in 9-man) of the kicking team must be on each side of the kicker. Other than the kicker, no member of the kicking team may be more than five yards behind the kicking team's free-kick line. Back Judge...this is your call. The timing of the foul in Rules 6-1-3 and 6-1-4 for not having at least four players (three players in 9-man) on both sides of the kicker has been changed to the time of the kick. The changes allow lateral movement by the kicking team within the 5-yard belt, but require game officials to ascertain whether or not the formation is legal when the ball is kicked (dead ball foul).

Back Judge—Free Kicks: After ball has gone downfield, move to the center of the field. Move downfield no more than 10-15 yards while maintaining inside-out coverage. Take responsibility for K's goal line. **Rationale:** On free kicks, after the kick is away and the ball has gone downfield, there are no longer encroachment or illegal block issues. Moving the Back Judge to the center of the field places him in a similar position to scrimmage plays and allows for inside-out coverage and bracketing of the ball carrier with the Linesman or Umpire on long returns. Giving the Back Judge responsibility for K's goal line removes that responsibility from the Umpire.

Back Judge: 20 to 25 yards beyond defensive line of scrimmage and always deeper than deepest defensive

back. **Rationale:** With the evolution of the passing game, more and more teams are throwing the ball with greater frequency. On the majority of pass plays, the back judge is the only game official that can cover the goal line. This change puts the Back Judge in a better position in order to not get beat deep.

Crew of Four Game Officials: Referee provide a visible count the last 5 seconds of 25 second play clock.

Rationale: A visible count the last 5 seconds of 25 second play clock allows head coaches to request a timeout if the play clock is about to expire and the snap is not imminent. Having the referee provide a visible count allows for the offensive team if desired to avoid a 5 yard penalty. In a 5 man crew the Back Judge provides the visible count for both the quarterback and the head coach which allows them the option of using a timeout. Having the Referee in a 4 man crew provide a visible count at the minimum allows the head coach the same opportunity that is provided for with a 5 man crew.