

## Umpire Position Working The Middle

### Position

1. Usually will spot and remain over ball until referee gives ready-for-play signal
  - A. **Something to think about:**
    1. On 4<sup>th</sup> down plays and after penalties, umpire should stay over ball until waved off by the referee
    2. In all other situations umpire should place the ball and go to his position
    3. After ready for play—go around huddle opposite defense bench to avoid interfering with defensive signals
    4. **What's best for you???**
  - B. Usually 4 to 7 yards behind Team B's line and between B's ends
  - C. Weak side guard and center gap
    1. If you line up on strong side—play will be at you
    2. Getting hit—move closer to line of scrimmage
2. **It gets dark in the middle at times**
  - A. You can feel the pressure from the backside closing in
  - B. Linemen about to crush you
  - C. You can't be afraid or worry about getting hurt
  - D. You need to establish an attitude!!!
  - E. Mentally prepare yourself, sometimes starts on Thursday
  - F. Always be focused and ready to work
  - G. Sometimes you can't help but get knocked down, if you're doing your job
  - H. **Anyone can run and hide—at snap DO NOT retreat**
3. **Have a knowledge of the game and its language**
  - A. Formations-one back, full house
  - B. Motions—one step, long motion
  - C. Bubble screens—drag patterns
  - D. Post block—swinging gate
4. **Be able to communicate with players**
  - A. Be Positive
  - B. Be Tough
  - C. Be Fair
  - D. Answer their questions and concerns in a polite way

5. **Helpful hits in umpiring**
  - A. Mark yourself tall, be able to see—work in spot to observe best view
    1. **Need to see snappers arm—hand—ball at snap**
  - B. Work with LB's (ask them – “Where do you want me”)
    1. On given situations you might be in their drop zones
  - C. Offensive linemen—remind them of open hands, no head slaps
  - D. Manage the pile—roll off—don't push—verbal exchanges when they get up
  - E. Read your keys—run pass
  - F. Concentrate on linemen holding—tell them you're watching
  
6. **Running Plays—Check following**
  - A. Count offensive players—signal to referee
  - B. 5 players numbered 50-79
  - C. Interference with snap-false start-encroachment
  - D. Disconcerting signals by Team B
  - E. After the snap—spit whistle
    1. Key center and guards—(read run or pass)
    2. Understand and read point of attach
  
7. **When the play is wide**
  - A. Pivot and **DO NOT** chase play with “**Happy Feet**”
    1. Observe line play and action around the runner
    2. Move downfield parallel—**avoid angling towards ball**
    3. Square off to move to hash mark to take spot from wing official
    4. Officials never want to toss a ball to a wing official to place the ball for a measurement. The ball should be run over to the wing official and wing official will place ball at his feet for the measurement
  
8. **Hole opens in front of you**
  - A. React and adjust—possibly move up or laterally from hole
  - B. Action at point attack and around runner
  - C. Check for holds, chops, pull downs
    1. Don't stay with your tackle read to long—**you can survive missing a “hold” but you cannot survive missing a fumble**
  - D. Spotting ball—taking spots from the wings
  - E. Know the relay of ball status—(form triangle)
    1. **Umpire get to “open area” so the ball doesn't have to be thrown ‘over’ players**

9. **Pass Plays**
- A. Stay out of way of LB's
  - B. Number requirements and ineligible
  - C. After Snap—Pass Read
    - 1. Step to neutral zone—line of scrimmage
      - a. You get in trouble if you don't properly read pass and get to line of scrimmage
    - 2. Removes you from drag passes
    - 3. Better position for linemen downfield
    - 4. Action directly behind neutral zone
    - 5. **Rule on QB beyond neutral zone before pass—cannot miss his call—film will not**
  - D. Umpires often have the best look on catches and traps, particularly those in the middle of the field—need to pivot after ball crosses your head when a pass with low trajectory is thrown to rule on “catch/no catch”
  - E. Hurry-up offense—don't hurry (tell center to wait for whistle)
10. **Penalties**
- A. Know status of the ball (live or dead)
  - B. Know enforcement—walk off penalty
    - 1. Line men checking distance with you
  - C. After conferring with the referee use extreme care when marking off a penalty
    - 1. Look to linesman to get thumbs up before placing ball on ground
    - 2. Nothing makes a crew look worse than to have penalties marked off incorrectly
    - 3. Take your time and get it right
  - D. Always be aware of the lateral position of the ball on the field in case the ball must be returned to the previous spot—rubber band
11. **Goal Line Plays**
- A. Remind wings of goal line coming in or coming out
  - B. Get good spot—Help if it is a touchdown
    - 1. Adopt a means of letting the wings know what umpire has seen without actually signaling the touchdown
12. **Kick Situations**
- A. Action on center is your uppermost responsibility
  - B. Position yourself so that you can see the center and action by and upon him

**Work With A Good Tempo and Do Not Change**

**Make It Be There**

**Work Hard and Hustle Every Play**