

TRAINING MANUAL



FLAG FOOTBALL OFFICIALS

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INTRODUCTION

Flag football appeared in Quebec with the famous Ben-Butch Tournament, in the 1970s in the Trois-Rivières area. Flag football expanded in many areas of the province. It started in the Haut-Richelieu area in 1979. With 28 teams, St. Jean's league is currently the largest mixed flag football circuit in Quebec.

The need arose to write a rule book and people in Trois-Rivières edited the original version, with St. Jean rewriting it in 1988. The *Commission de flag-football du Québec* re-edited a common version to establish standard rules across the province. It also wrote the first training guide for touch football officials. This guide was adapted to standardize officiating and certification across Quebec. It could also serve as a founding document with IFAF, the international organization in charge of developing flag football.

This training guide is also an essential tool to train and develop flag football officials. Flag football is constantly growing in Quebec, Canada and in many nations, and we must take a leadership role in its development. The expertise we acquired since the beginning will make us valued resources for all involved in this wonderful sport. Thanks to all who have contributed in the past to develop tools which helped to come up with this manual.

André Dion
President
Flag Football Commission

PART 1

A GOOD OFFICIAL

INTRODUCTION

Welcome in the officials' brotherhood! You are starting a demanding but very enriching career. If you love sport and if physical efforts stimulate you, you have entered a path that will bring you enormous personal satisfaction once you learn to master it.

Flag football's sustained growth has caused a great demand for skilled officials. Possibilities are almost endless for those who have the required qualities and a desire to learn.

The player, the coach and the official are in constant interaction.

The challenge the official must face is to perfect his/her mastery of the tasks, in order to be up to it no matter how difficult it is.

WORK OBJECTIVES

Every official must ensure a flow of the game within rules. The skilled official must not only sanction rule violations but also prevent them from happening.

You can impose yourself in two ways:

- ✓ By always standing at the right place in order to call the play.
- ✓ By reacting immediately every time an offence is committed, especially at the beginning of a game.

► **Make your presence known but try to keep from being heard too much**

Preventive work

By his/her positioning and remarks, the official can often prevent players from infringing with the play. It will allow the play to flow and avoid useless offences. For instance, the linesman can warn a player that he/she is slightly stepping into the neutral zone.

BASIC ELEMENTS

1. APPLY RULES INTELLIGENTLY

Out of respect for players and for the game, the official must know the rules and apply them. Rules enforcement requires great judgement qualities. The skilled official first thinks about preserving the spirit of the match, by applying rules with nuance.

- **The rules' philosophy is to penalize any player who puts an opponent in a disadvantaged position with forbidden gestures.**

This principle is basically sound since it enables to set for the spirit of the match, when used intelligently, which is way better than a bland application of the rule.

Blow your whistle loud and clear, to avoid the multiplication of offences.

In conclusion, the main objective of every good official is to let the play flow by intervening as little as possible.

2. GREAT INTEGRITY

A skilled official only wants one thing: that the game might go on normally without any distortion caused by biases or inconsistencies. Despite the pressures he/she might face, he/she must not be influenced by the score, by the time left to play, by the reaction of players, coaches or fans, nor by any previous calls he/she might have made.

- ▶ Be a source of trust, not of distrust

3. SOUND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship with other officials

Officials are left on their own for most parts of the game. They never stop helping each other and work as a team so tensions might appear in great number.

On the other hand, you must appreciate the help and support of others, rather than seeing it as an intrusion in your area of responsibility.

Relationship with players

Officials must not be too friendly or too strict with players. They are expecting the official to do his/her job correctly.

Players hold much respect for officials who are eager and enthusiastic.

When unsportsmanlike conduct occurs, these actions must be penalized immediately and as calmly as possible.

Officials must penalize accurately and justly, with trust and poise, without expressing anger or a spirit of revenge.

Relationship with coaches

Just as it is the case in the rules of most sports, the link between coaches and officials must be friendly, respectful but limited working relationships. If you explain decisions on a professional tone without being unfriendly, things will generally be back in order.

- ▶ **Be affable, but firm and inflexible.**

Relationship with fans

The official must not ignore the presence of fans. The end-result of a game can be distorted by the fans' abnormally violent reactions.

4. OFFICIAL'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PLAYER

- ✓ Looks to avoid injuries.
- ✓ Desire to encourage respect of a sportsmanlike conduct on the field.
- ✓ Accepts that questions are asked on rules.

- ▶ **Sports were created for athletes, not for officials.**

THE 12 QUALITIES OF A GOOD OFFICIAL

1. SPEED OF REACTION

The official who reacts slowly is bound to be criticized. The one whose time of reaction is really short can frequently take a decision a few fractions of a second after the offence. He/she can quickly, firmly and discreetly make his/her presence known in the game.

- ▶ **React quickly.**

2. SELF-CONFIDENCE (Balance)

Officials can't act on other people's emotions, but they must control their own emotions and display assurance and balance whatever the circumstances.

Sporting events must flow at the rhythm of the athletes' skills and within rules; they must come free of the emotions expressed. A calm official is sometimes the only individual on the field that has the possibility and the authority to bring people back in order and to have them listen to reason.

Make firm calls, without aggressiveness or any particular emotion. Do not give players the impression you're trying to catch them wrong.

- ▶ **Always be calm and balanced.**

3. CONSISTENCY

Coaches and players expect rules to be applied equally, whoever committed the offence.

Good judgement and a correct interpretation of rules are the very gauge of constant decision making. The official who understands rules and knows how to interpret them correctly will gain a reputation of consistency.

- ▶ **Be consistent. Those who hesitate lose control of the game.**

4. JUDGEMENT

Judgement is born out of a deep knowledge and a true understanding of rules.

Experience as a player or as a coach in a given sport greatly helps a rookie official to acquire the judgement he/she needs, but this experience is far than sufficient in itself.

When an official is able to make good decisions, one after the other, his control of the game is naturally affirmed.

- ▶ **Good judgement comes with practice.**

5. PROMPTNESS

Promptness is to **be vigilant, to give out the maximum physical effort, to show interest and enthusiasm.**

A prompt official will have good mechanics and will see everything that happens and will love his/her job.

- ▶ **Gain the others' respect with your enthusiasm.**

6. SPIRIT OF DECISION

The official who demonstrates a spirit of decision is able to make others accept touchy decisions that would have been otherwise subjected to controversy.

Since he/she must take a decision at one point, a skilled official must take it without hesitation.

- ▶ **Take quick decisions, without appeal.**

7. COURAGE

You must have courage to wear the black and white stripes and officiate a game.

The highly skilled official calls everything he/she sees at the best of his/her abilities, since he/she has the courage of his/her calls.

He/she knows that nothing is worse than:

- ✓ Refrain from taking a decision when that decision needs to be taken.
- ✓ Make a decision simply because players, coaches or fans require it from you.

- ▶ **Do not walk away from tough calls.**

8. OBJECTIVITY

Officials are human beings and can be influenced. Yet, contrary to most people, officials are supposed to stiffen against external pressures. Officials should mentally make a pledge before each game.

The recommendation for officials is to make decisions based on what he/she sees during each phase of play.

- ▶ **Call what you see.**

9. GOOD RELATIONS

The official must not neglect the human aspect of his/her work while consciously completing his/her numerous tasks. A good official can certainly be courteous and be friendly without putting his/her authority on the line.

Any good official must establish good and sound relationships with other officials, players, coaches and fans: the way he/she will achieve this will reflect his/her own personality.

- ▶ **Be approachable.**

10. PRECISE KNOWLEDGE OF RULES

Skilled officials take on regularly reading the rule book from cover to cover on the eve of a game. After the game, officials should write a critique of his/her behaviour and that of the officials' team.

Rules can be enforced wisely only if officials know the different interpretation based on situations.

- ▶ **You must perfectly know the rules: don't play guessing games.**

11. TASKS AND MECHANICS

Mechanics are habits the officials must acquire while performing their tasks. Position, signal and teamwork mechanics are all very important.

When officials have good mechanics, the game flows without confusion or useless delays. Good mechanics are not hard to catch on if officials develop good habits from the start.

The first two duties of a rookie official is to learn the rules and acquire good mechanics.

- ▶ **Be at the right place. Look the part.**

12. CONDITIONING AND APPEARANCE

Your officiating can suffer from bad conditioning. A tired official certainly can't complete his/her tasks.

It's impossible to stay alert and do a good job if you're not in the best shape.

- ▶ **Get in shape and stay that way.**

Your job as an official requires you to take clear decisions: and requires a neat appearance. Most officials associations have a dress code for officials.

- ▶ Be clean and neat.

REVIEW

If you look quickly at the 12 qualities stated, you will realize it's impossible to become a perfect official. Your performance and your pleasure to officiate will depend in great part on your progress.

PICTURE OF THE PERFECT OFFICIAL

- ✓ Impeccable appearance and conditioning
- ✓ Knowledge of rules
- ✓ Intelligent teamwork
- ✓ Knowledge of approved mechanics
- ✓ Sees everything without being seen
- ✓ Attentive and courteous
- ✓ At the right place at the right time
- ✓ Do not walk away from tough calls
- ✓ Is consistent in his/her decisions
- ✓ Demonstrates good judgement
- ✓ Penalizes roughness and unnecessary roughness
- ✓ Use good sense and his/her judgement instead of applying the rule as it is written in cases calling for interpretation
- ✓ Demonstrates a calm and assured attitude
- ✓ Takes clear decisions
- ✓ « Manage » players
- ✓ Demonstrate great integrity

RESPONSABILITIES

According to the moment and timing of the game, the official must play different roles. He/she might have to be an educator or a psychologist, based on circumstances. A skilled official knows which role to play according to circumstances.

Educator He/she briefly explains the rule and its correct interpretation.

Psychologist Understands the players, coaches and fans' feelings for which he/she will show respect, which will also cause them to respect him/her.

1. WORK SUMMARY

Officials should ultimately aim at allowing the game to flow normally with as little interruption as possible. The essential elements of good officiating are:

- ✓ Intelligent application of rules
- ✓ Absolute integrity
- ✓ Good human relationships
- ✓ Particular attention to players' protection

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

You must have a global view of the game.

The official must have a global view of the game, in order to take fair decisions. In cases of pass interference, the official must have seen the complete action before taking a decision.

Anticipation

Officials can't judge actions before they're completed; they must not anticipate events.

Take decisions on what you see. Wherever the offence is committed!

He/she should not hesitate to take a decision, whatever the situation, if the offence catches their attention and requires their intervention.

Don't play guessing games. Follow the whole action.

3. CODE OF ETHICS

- a. I will study the rules
- b. I will honour my commitments.
- c. I will dress properly and will take care of my appearance.
- d. I will prepare for the game.

- e. I will control my character.
- f. I will not forget that my responsibility extends to other officials and that I must work with a team.
- g. I will keep in mind that my first duty is to see to the security and general welfare of those who depend of my officiating.
- h. I will take fair and unbiased decisions, without considering the score or the fans' opinion.

4. TEAMWORK

Cooperation

Officials must trust in one another and harmony must reign between them. If a testy official do not accept that decisions from other officials infringe on his/her area of responsibility, enormous tensions can build within the team. Any official should welcome support from colleagues with open arms.

When such situations occur, every effort must be made to bring things back into order.

Physical condition and appearance

An official who shows up at the field of play in a badly-kept or dirty uniform or if he/she is in bad physical condition, does not win the trust of players, coaches or other officials.

Integrity

Be honest in your relationships with other officials. You can demonstrate your integrity by refusing certain officiating tasks. You should not work at a game between two teams involving a relative or a close friend: that could embarrass the whole team of officials.

Never assume in an attempt to explain decisions taken by another official. The referee will do all the explaining to the captain with the help of the official who took the decision. If you're the linesman and someone asks you a question on a penalty, you should not give any explanation on the way the foul was committed.

Placement mechanics

Placement mechanics must be accepted and respected by all officials. It's one of the official's duties to know exactly where they must stand, what they should look for and how they can help other officials in each situation.

The lively official:

- ✓ Know the other officials' main responsibilities and move right away to cover for them if they are not well positioned on a play.
- ✓ Know the number of downs and the amount of yards to go on each play.

Constructive criticism

Officials must discuss the plays or controversial decisions after the game. This type of meeting must happen in a private setting, away from the game's other actors. Nothing must come out of these meetings.

The most experienced officials must help younger officials by giving out their comments before and after games, but rarely in the course of action.

Never criticize the work of an official in the presence of coaches, players, team supporters or other officials. It would cause you wrong, as well as to the officials' association.

- ▶ **Good officials are proud of their way of officiating and are ready to help those who are less experienced.**

5. WHAT AN OFFICIAL MUST DO

1. Be in good physical condition.
2. Do not criticize other officials.
3. Know the rules
4. Communicate with other officials. Help the rookies.
5. Cooperate with others.
6. Stay calm in all circumstances.
7. Take care of your appearance.
8. Adopt a blameless behaviour (v. gambling, alcohol, etc.).
9. Do not be too sensitive to criticism.
10. Have the courage of your convictions.
11. Be courteous but firm.
12. Be consistent with your decisions.
13. Never threaten a player or a coach, just warn them.
14. Use your good judgement.
15. Do not wash your hands of others' mistakes.
16. Position yourself and work on reading match situations.
17. Do not warn after roughness or reprehensible conduct.

18. Be sure of the ball placement when you call for a stoppage of play.
19. Do not hesitate when you call penalties.
20. Always mark where the ball is when you call a penalty.
21. Call infractions from the start.
22. Never walk away from tough calls.
23. Do not forget the acronym (CINS) when you describe a penalty to the referee.
 - C** Colour of jersey (or “T” for Team)
 - I** Infraction
 - N** Number of the player
 - S** Stay close to the referee to give him/her any additional information:
 - ✓ Where the ball was at the time of the infraction
 - ✓ Where the infraction occurred
24. Do not take any decision if you did not see or could not see the whole action.
25. Do not anticipate: wait for things to happen before calling fouls or whistling.
26. Try to see the whole picture on a play, not only the conclusion.
27. Do not refrain due to another penalty call, even if it is different from yours.
28. Do not walk to the referee when you called a penalty. You must keep on following the action until the play has stopped.
29. Be on time.
30. Do not indicate the penalty, only the infraction. For instance, say: “unnecessary roughness” and not “he’s ejected”.
31. Do not meet on the field near players or coaches.

PART 2

INJURY ASSISTANCE

The protection of players is a sacred principle who should not suffer from any exception since injured players must receive the officials' immediate attention. In most cases, the person closest to an injured player is one of the game's officials. Any official who notices a player stretched out on the ground must call a "time out" and bring in the trainer, immediately at the end of the play.

First you want to determine how serious the injury is. Kneel near the injured player and speak reassuring words to make him/her understand that help is on the way. Do not forget that in certain cases it might take many seconds before being able to come to his/her help.

You can help the trainer by keeping the injured player's team mates away from the scene.

The players' condition must remain your top priority. In such case ask the injured player if he/she can leave the field on his/her own and if that's the case, ask him/her to do so. This will keep from delaying the game exaggeratedly.

If he/she complains from a back injury, you must absolutely keep the person from moving or being moved.

PART 3

OFFICIATING MECHANICS (GENERALITIES)

As an introduction to mechanics and tasks for every official, it is good to remember the following points:

- ✓ Every officials share the same rights when comes the time to call penalties.
- ✓ Only the blow of the whistle can stop a play.
- ✓ Make sure to see both the ball and flags.
- ✓ Penalties that occur during the course of play (signalled with a flag) do not stop the play.

1. ASSIGNATIONS

- ✓ Review your manual prior to each game with the eyes of the position you'll be holding.
- ✓ Verify your equipment:
 - Clean shoes and laces
 - Clean clothes
 - Whistle
 - Penalty flag
 - Score sheet and pen
 - Stopwatch
 - Sand bags
- ✓ Take part in the officials' pre-game meeting.
 - Be at the stadium at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. Be dressed.
 - Be ready to discuss the coverage, the field conditions and other delicate elements related to the game with your team of officials.

2. COUNT OF DOWNS

Here's the way to move the distance chain or the sand bags.

Referee

After each play, the referee must signal the number of the following down and make sure the downsbox indicates the right number.

If he/she is using sand bags, he/she must verify if they are well placed:

- ✓ One bag for the line of scrimmage
- ✓ A second bag for the rusher (5 yards away from the first bag and of the same colour)
- ✓ The third bag, which signals the first down line, is placed 10 yards away from the first bag and is of a different colour from the two other bags)

Furthermore with the sand bags system, the referee must keep count of the downs

Here are several ways to do that:

- ✓ An elastic band he/she moves from finger to finger to represent the down
- ✓ A mechanical down counter just like what baseball umpires use to count balls and strikes.
- ✓ Exaggerated manual signals to the intention of the team of officials

Linesman

Following each play, the linesman must repeat the signal by which the referee indicates the number of the following down, verify that the downsbox is at the right place with the exact number, or that the sand bags are in the right place and that the down is the right one. If the linesman do not agree with the number of down signalled, he/she must immediately find the referee to settle the misunderstanding before the ball is put back into play.

3. USE OF THE WHISTLE

- ✓ The whistle serves to stop the play. You must whistle with authority (a sharp and clear blow)
- ✓ Never blow the whistle assuming or anticipating a flag to be taken away. Call it if you see it.

4. DETERMINING WHERE TO PLACE THE BALL

Once the play has stopped and that you know exactly where the ball is, tell other officials that you have determined the ball's placement.

To conveniently determine the ball's placement, place your foot parallel to the sideline and use the tip of your foot to represent the front of the ball. Meanwhile, turn your body to put your back to the ball's direction and to the team with the possession.

If you have a penalty to signal to the referee, ask another official to indicate the ball's placement. In certain cases, if the play is too far on the field, use your cap or a flag to mark the spot and go talk to the referee about the penalty. You will contribute to reduce loss of time since there are no time stoppages in flag football.

If another official holds on to the ball's placement and has to signal a penalty, take that official's place to enable him to report to the referee.

5. INFRACTION CALLS

As soon as you see an infraction, call it immediately by throwing your flag but do not blow your whistle until the ball is dead.

By throwing the flag:

- ✓ If it's necessary to mark the spot for the ball, try to send the flag where the ball is at the time of the infraction. Also, take a mental note of the in case the flag gets moved.
- ✓ If it's useless to mark the spot, just throw your flag in the air so that everybody can see it.

Do all in your power to note the number (or the position) of the player who committed the infraction and try to know if the ball was in possession of one team or the other. In the case of a punt, you must know if one team was in possession or if the ball was in the air.

When you or another official finally declares the ball dead:

- ✓ Make sure the sand bags or the distance chain are not moved.
- ✓ Make sure an official stays there to mark the spot where the ball was declared dead.
- ✓ The ball must remain where it was declared dead until the referee calls for it.
- ✓ Make your report immediately to the referee on what happened; signal the infraction when you come near to him.
- ✓ Stay calm and indicate the following points:
 - “C” Colour of jersey of the team that committed the infraction
 - “I” Name of the infraction
 - “N” Number of the player who committed the infraction
 - “R” Stay with the referee to give him/her the following information at his/her request:
 - Point of infraction
 - Spot the ball at the time of infraction
 - Which team was in possession of the ball?

Examples: Red, defensive pass interference in the passing zone, number 28 on the red team’s 45-yard line.

6. BALL RECUPERATION

The ball is recuperated by the team who has possession. The offensive team is in charge of its ball.

7. TIME OUTS

A time out can be requested by any player on the field when the play is declared dead.

Give the full 30 seconds, unless both teams agree to restart the play earlier. When there’s 10 seconds left before the end of a time out, the referee announces it and whistles. All the officials must return to their position at that moment.

The referee must announce the number of the down and the amount of yards to gain, signal with a blow of his/her whistle that the ball is ready and the countdown begins.

Injury time outs

If a player is injured, the referee stops his/her stopwatch and starts is again once he/she has signalled and whistled the restart.

Between quarters

The referee announces the number of the down and the amount of yards to gain. The linesman verifies the number of the down and the distance with the referee.

With the help of the back judge, the referee situates the ball placement with the lines and field limits.

The referee uses the closest line on the field to determine the line of scrimmage with the help of sand bags. The back judge then picks up the bags and places them appropriately using the closest line as a reference. Once the referee made sure the bags are in place, the number of downs and the yards to gain are exact. He/she then begins the following quarter.

8. HALF TIME

As soon as the referee signals the end of half time, start the stopwatch, confirm the score and go to the dressing room or leave the field. Distance yourself from the teams.

Discuss the work completed in the first half and bring wanted corrections in the placement, play coverage, the score, etc.

The referee and the officials meet the captains in the middle of the field, settle any problems, confirm the score and obtain the captains' choice.

9. END OF THE GAME

As soon as the referee signals the end of the game, recuperate the sand bags and go to the scoring table to sign the game sheet.

If the referee or the most experienced official has to complete the evaluation of other officials, this evaluation must be discussed individually with the official under evaluation.

Complaints

For any reason, if you find it necessary to file a complaint against a player, a coach, a team official or indicate that game conditions were not satisfying, please file your complaint **in written form** to the president of your officials' association. If you're not able to write down the complaint, it's a sign it's not worth the effort.

10. GENERAL REVIEW TOPICS

Always review your positioning and tasks before each game.

As such, each team official has the responsibility to count players. For instance, the referee and the linesman count players on the offensive team while the back judge counts players on the defensive team.

Do not forget that you might have to use the following signals in the course of a game:

- ✓ Time out
- ✓ Incomplete pass

- ✓ Complete pass (only after the whistle is blown)
- ✓ Ball direction (on a change of possession)
- ✓ Onside or offside pass signal (used by the referee behind the line of scrimmage on passes to running backs)
- ✓ Make your signals so that the referee can see them.
- ✓ Penalty

Use of sand bags

You must not move the first down bag, whatever its position. Based on the closest hash marks, the referee uses one of the following methods to measure the distance between the ball and the bag with the line of reference, by order of reliability:

- ✓ Measuring tape: measure by putting one foot ahead of the other; measuring by counting your walking steps.

Five play warning

The referee blows his/her whistle three times and the official closest to the team benches must warn the coaches of both teams that the five play rule is valid. The referee warns both captains.

REFEREE'S PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

The referee is leading the officials and show the way in terms of teamwork.

The team of officials meets at least 20 minutes prior to the game and the referee goes over the following points:

- A. Field conditions and alternative field markers
- B. Review positioning and tasks in the following cases:
 - ✓ Kick-off
 - ✓ Punts
 - ✓ Running transformation attempts
- C. Infraction review:
 - ✓ Major fouls
 - ✓ Offside
 - ✓ Obstruction
 - ✓ Infraction against the five-yard restraining zone
- D. Mechanics and signal review in the following cases:
 - ✓ Mark the original point of an offside pass
 - ✓ Lateral passes behind the line of scrimmage
 - ✓ Warning to all team members to refrain from blowing their whistle too quickly or to underline the decisions

- ✓ Report in cases of penalties (directives to follow)
- ✓ Tasks and responsibilities during time outs and breaks between the quarters
- ✓ Reminder of the professional conduct definition: stay courteous with coaches and players, without becoming too friendly.

E. Ask officials to tell both captains concerning the draw

F. Verify the players' equipment

1. PRE-GAME MEETING WITH CAPTAINS

- A. Meet with all the officials in the middle of the field, five minutes before the start of a game for the captains' choices.
- B. Introduce yourself and the other officials to the captains. Note the number and the name of each captain on the score sheet.
- C. Review with the captains any particular agreements, field rule or unusual setting around the field.
- D. Ask team members if they need any explanations on the rules or if they have general questions. Take time to answer every question.
- E. Determine if the teams use their own ball or if you'll be using a game ball.
- F. According to the methods adopted by the league, proceed to the choice, draw or both.
- G. Draw methods:
- a. If none of the teams is the host, decide which of the two picks the side of the coin.
 - b. If a team has many captains, ask for the one who's to chose and ask him/her to state his/her choice aloud when the coin is in the air.
 - c. The captain who wins the draw must first decide which team will be the host and which will be the visiting team.
 - d. The captain who wins the draw must chose between:
 - ✓ Kicking off
 - ✓ Receive the kick-off
 - ✓ Defend one side of the field
 - ✓ Wait for the second half before choosing
 - e. Once the first captain makes his/her mind, the other captain must choose one of the remaining possibilities.
 - f. Signal the captains' choice by standing on the side of the captain whose team will receive the kick-off and simulate the reception of a kick-off.
 - g. Wish both captains a good game and good luck.

h. Meet with other officials in the kick-off positions

▶ **Start the game in time.**

PART 4

TASKS AND POSITIONING**7 V 7****3 OFFICIALS****1. TASKS AND POSITIONING OF THE REFEREE****Relationships with coaches, captains and players**

Have the same respect for the captains and coaches you expect them to have towards you. Be courteous but keep your expressions brief, correct and clear.

When you speak to captains, call them “captain” and when you do so with coaches, call them “coach” or “sir”.

In any case, the referee should not tolerate intimidation attempts against a game official by players, captains, coaches, or by team officials or fans.

Do not forget to treat players with courtesy.

Kick-off

1. Once the ball is placed at the point of kick-off, remind the kicker to wait for the sound of your whistle.
2. Verify the amount of players on the kicking team. Position yourself on the kick-off line on the 45-yard line (40 metres) of the kicking team. Do not allow the kick-off to occur if there are over or fewer than seven players in one team or the other (avoid useless penalties). Stand on the players’ bench side.
3. Raise an arm; verify the “ready” signal with all the other officials. Keep your arm in direction of the open field to indicate to the kicker that he/she can kick the ball. You look at officials and they lower their arm when you point them with your arm.
4. Apply penalties if necessary:
 - ✓ Out of bounds kick, in the field or in the end zones
 - ✓ Kick-off which do not cross the 20 yards/metres required.
 - ✓ The ball hits the upright or gets out of bound in the end zone.

Snap

1. Signal at every down, which down is now performed via verbal communication and hand signals.
2. Make sure that substitutions are completed quickly and according to the rules.
3. Blow your whistle for the snap.
4. Position yourself slightly behind and to the diagonal of the quarterback. If a running back is present on the field, give him space in reverse play situations.

5. Verify the rusher's position. He/she must position 1 or 2 yards behind the bag to make certain of his/her rights.
6. Immediately after the snap, look if the centre or the rusher commits any infraction.
7. Once the rusher crosses the centre, you can look at all the action from behind the quarterback for any infraction committed in the centre of the short defensive zone.
8. As the rusher gets closer to the quarterback, position yourself in order not to hamper. Do not let the quarterback away from your sight until the play is over.
9. Look if the rusher and the quarterback commit infractions (roughness, obstruction, etc.) once the ball is thrown.
10. If the quarterback passes the ball to a running back, walk up to the line where the ball was thrown in order to judge if the ball went forth or back.
11. Once the play is over, you must first verify if the other officials have thrown flags down. You must not move the sand bags until the verification is completed.
12. If no flags were thrown, meet at the point of possession. If a few yards were gained, make sure that the necessary yardage for a first down has been covered as well as the amount of completed passes
13. Start the following play.

Goal line plays

1. Confirm responsibilities with other officials.
2. Verify if infractions were committed before signalling a touchdown.

Conversion

1. Ask the captain of the offensive team what type of conversion will be attempted (1 or 2 points) and at which place should the snap be (center of field or hash marks).
2. Warn the captain of the defensive team and the team benches, verbally and with hand signals.

Safety

1. Immediately signal when a safety is scored.
2. Explain the directives for the following play to both team captains.

Kick from scrimmage

1. Position yourself in a diagonal with the kicker.
2. Look if the rusher or if the centre commit obstruction.
3. Look for infractions after such as contact with the kicker.
4. If possible, give a hand with sand bags.
5. Be in charge of blocked or missed kicks, or any free balls.

Penalties

1. Look for flags after each play.
2. If a flag was thrown, wait for the official to report the infraction(s) to you.
3. Make sure to know all the facts related to an infraction. It will be too late, at another point in the game to obtain information.
4. Make sure there are no flags left and confirm with all the officials who threw flags down. **Do not assume** they have all signalled the same infraction.
5. Once you know all the facts, tell the team captain of the infraction committed against his/her team and what are the available choices for his/her team.
6. Enforce the team's decision.
7. The referee who signals must do it at the right time and in a place where his/her message will be understood by all. Signals are made away from teams and repeated for each side of the field.

2. TASKS AND POSITIONING OF THE BACK JUDGE

Before the game

1. In cooperation with the linesman, inspect the field and write down any unusual hazards or undulation on the field. Any problems related to hazards, obstacles or other, must be signalled to the referee.
2. The back judge is in charge of sand bags, should the case arise. He/she must always know where the bags are and must never allow a player to move them.

Kick-off

1. Stand behind the last receiver, in the center of the field.
2. Verify the amount of players on the field for the receiving team.

3. Raise one arm to signal to the referee that you're ready. Keep your arm in the air until the referee whistles for the snap.
4. Once the ball has been kicked, move behind the receiver and follow the play by going up the field. Do not come too close or you could hinder the receiver and prevent lateral passes.
5. If the ball hits the goalposts, you must signal a stoppage of play.
6. Always be attentive to flags and be ready to mark the place where the ball was.
7. Make sure the ball is taken and place the sand bags. The first bag must be where the ball was declared dead. The second bag must be placed five yards away and the third bag another five yards away (10 yards from the first bag).

Snap

Prior to the snap

1. Stand behind the last defender and close to the hash marks on the opposite side from the linesman.
2. Check the bags' position from time to time.
3. Count the amount of players on the field for the defensive team.
4. Know at which down you're at and how many yards are necessary to complete a first down.

After the snap

5. Look for obstruction between receivers and defensive players in the zone you're observing. Look at players and not for the ball.
6. Look for players who run out of bound and return on the field.
7. As soon as the ball is thrown, go to the nearest passing zone as quickly as possible. Be ready to take decisions on lateral passes that could follow.
8. Give a hand as much as you can when the ball is thrown outside of your zone on a passing play. Another official's view might be blocked.
9. Signal a pass completion after the stoppage of play, in order for the referee to see it. You must quickly move the sand bags.
10. Signal clearly if the pass is incomplete.
11. If it's a running play and that the ball carrier is going towards the sideline, you must first look for the sideline, and then be attentive to flags.

12. If the pass is intercepted, indicate the direction and run up the field with the receiver.
13. If the place you're spotting the ball is near the point of a first down, do not move the ball. Let the referee take the decision.
14. If necessary, move the bags at the right place.
15. Check the number of the down and prepare for the next play.

Goal lines

1. Position yourself in the end zone near the sideline on the opposite side from the linesman. Don't forget that the linesman is in charge of the goal line.
2. If the end zone is shallow, stand on the end line. If the receiver catches the ball close to the end line, check if his/her feet are inbound and make sure that he/she controls the ball inbound.
3. In situations of plays near the goal line, do not signal a touchdown until the linesman has made his/her signal. Be ready to make your decision known if the linesman's view was obstructed.
4. You must vigorously signal when a player catches a ball out of bounds.

First down

1. When you mark the first down point, do not consider the position of the bag indicating the first down.
2. If it's a short pass, be ready to turn to the linesman to determine where the ball has been declared dead. Observe the linesman to check if he/she has decided of the place before signalling the place that you think appropriate.

Safety

1. You must be certain that the player's flag has been taken inside the end zone.

Kicks

1. Position yourself parallel to the intended receiver and about 5-10 yards from the side.
2. Be attentive to lateral passes.
3. Be ready to run up the field quickly if there are no kicks.
4. Look for players going for the kick receiver and be ready to signal a penalty against the five yard restraining zone. In case of an infraction, remember the place where the kick receiver first held the ball.

5. Once the play has stopped, mark the spot and then measure the yards by counting your steps and place the bags there.

Single

1. The back judge must know where the ball is when the flag is taken from the player.
2. Look if the ball hits the goalposts.

Kick-off return from the end zone

1. Stay in the end zone with the receiver.
2. Look for the five yards/meters restraining zone.

General observations

1. Do not follow the ball carrier too closely. Avoid being “trapped” or “stuck” in the middle of the play, especially on kick returns.
2. You must quickly go to the passing zone when a pass is attempted. Look out for lateral passes or tosses.
3. You must never turn your back to the play.
4. Study the rules on pass interference. Be certain when you voice a decision.
5. During the match, communicate with the linesman and the referee on downs and possible situation that could occur.
6. Know at what down you’re at and what the distance to go for a first down is.
7. Count players. When an official whistles to declare a dead ball, the officials standing away from the zone must look if infractions are committed during the stoppage of play.

3. TASKS AND POSITIONING OF THE LINESMAN

Before the game

1. The linesman must help other officials to inspect the field of play to look for hazards such as rocks, unpadded goalposts, etc.
2. Inspect the boundaries to make sure the field is well lined. You must also check the end zones to determine their dimension.
3. Make sure both team benches are on the same side of the field and that only players and team personnel are standing in that area.

4. When the referee is ready for the pre-game conference with the captains, go to one of the team benches and tell the captains to go meet with the referee.

On the kick-off

1. You're in charge of the sideline. If the kick is long, run up the field by staying on the outside of the widest player. Stand parallel to the ball carrier and follow the play in the backfield.
2. If you stayed parallel with the ball carrier that's running the return, you're probably in the best position to spot the ball after a flag.
3. If the ball is kicked out of bound without any player on the receiving team touching it, you're responsible to mark the spot where the ball left the field of play. Stay at that place until the referee determines if the receiving team takes the ball from that point or if the kick-off has to be taken over.

On the snap at the line of scrimmage

1. Before the snap on the line of scrimmage, place your feet on both sides of the line of scrimmage right by the sideline where the team benches are located. When players on Team A leave the huddle and position themselves, you can settle your own position by walking to the middle of the field. Still, you must always stay on the outside of the widest receiver and never come closer than the hash marks near the team benches sideline.
2. Count players on Team A on the field for each play.
3. When Team A ends its huddle, raise your arms at shoulder's height to signal that substitutions are over. Keep your arms raised until the centre stands above the ball.
4. Verify the position of Team B players near the line of scrimmage. It's important to remember who can be a rusher.
5. If Team A has a player lined up as a running back in the backfield, you must look for any player on Team B who can rush the running back. This player on Team B must leave from a position five yards away from the line of scrimmage, or else he/she must wait for the rusher to cross the line of scrimmage first. The rule to remember is that the first player on Team B to cross the line of scrimmage must have left from a position that is five yards away from the line of scrimmage.
6. When the ball is snapped, look for offside from Team A or Team B. If there are none, follow receivers on Team A in your designated area and look for pass interference. If a player is offside, signal the infraction and take charge of your receivers.
7. During the course of play, it's important for you to look at players and not at the ball. If the ball is thrown across the line of scrimmage, run along. You must ensure that the forward pass is completed before across the line of scrimmage if this has an incidence on the play (completed pass).
8. When you mark the ball position, do it with the tip of the foot and mark the spot until the back judge or the referee come to place the ball.

9. After each play, you must repeat the referee's signal for the number of the following down.

Plays near the goal line

1. Your main responsibility becomes the goal line. Take the normal position, with your feet on both sides of the line of scrimmage, then go to the goal line after you determined if there was an offside or not. Keep that position on the goal line and look for obstruction in your area.
2. If the pass is thrown near the goal line or if the ball carrier is running for the end zone, you must determine if the forward part of the ball touches the end zone area, meaning that there is a touchdown.
3. If it's a deep pass in the end zone near your sideline, keep on working with the back judge. The back judge will look for pass interference while you will look at the sideline to determine if the player has caught the ball within the field of play.
4. These directives also apply on conversion attempts.

Scrimmage punts (kicks)

1. Stay at the line of scrimmage until you're certain that the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage in flight.
2. If the ball touches the ground behind the line of scrimmage, you must stop the play. This applies also when the ball is blocked.
3. On a short kick, you could be responsible of signalling a penalty against the five yards/meters restraining zone.

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Do not follow the ball carrier too closely. Avoid being trapped in the middle of traffic.
2. Make sure that you've seen the flag being taken away from a player before blowing your whistle. Keep from whistling to confirm the referee's whistling.

TASKS AND POSITIONING**5 V. 5****2 OFFICIALS****1. TASKS AND POSITIONING OF THE REFEREE****Relationships with coaches, captains and players**

Have the same respect for the captains and coaches you expect them to have towards you. Be courteous but keep your expressions brief, correct and clear.

When you speak to captains, call them “captain” and when you do so with coaches, call them “coach” or “sir”.

In any case, the referee should not tolerate intimidation attempts against a game official by players, captains, coaches, or by team officials or fans.

Do not forget to treat players with courtesy.

Snap

1. Signal at every down, which down is now performed via verbal communication and hand signals.
2. Make sure that substitutions are completed quickly and according to the rules.
3. Blow your whistle for the snap.
4. Position yourself in a line with the centre. If a running back is present on the field, give him space in reverse play situations.
5. Verify the rusher’s position. He/she must position 1 or 2 yards behind the bag to make certain of his/her rights.
6. Immediately after the snap, look if the centre or the rusher commits any infraction.
7. Once the rusher crosses the centre, you can look at all the action from behind the quarterback for any infraction committed in the centre of the short defensive zone.
8. As the rusher gets closer to the quarterback, position yourself in order not to hamper. Do not let the quarterback away from your sight until the play is over.
9. Look if the rusher and the quarterback commit infractions (roughness, obstruction, etc.) once the ball is thrown.
10. If the quarterback passes the ball to a running back, walk up to the line where the ball was thrown in order to judge if the ball went forth or back.

11. Once the play is over, you must first verify if the other officials have thrown flags down. You must not move the sand bags until the verification is completed.
12. If no flags were thrown, meet at the point of possession. If a few yards were gained, make sure that the necessary yardage for a first down has been covered as well as the amount of completed passes
13. Do not forget to tell the teams that there will be no running plays if the ball is located less than five yards from the middle of the field or from the end zone.
14. Start the following play.

Goal line plays

1. You're in charge of the goal line to determine if there is a touchdown or not.
2. Verify if infractions were committed before signalling a touchdown.

Conversion

1. Ask the captain of the offensive team what type of conversion will be attempted (1 or 2 points) and at which place should the snap be (center of field or hash marks).
2. Warn the captain of the defensive team and the team benches, verbally and with hand signals.

Safety

1. Immediately signal when a safety is scored.
2. The ball will be placed at the 5-yard line of the team that scored the two points.

Penalties

1. Look for flags after each play.
2. If a flag was thrown, wait for the official to report the infraction(s) to you.
3. Make sure to know all the facts related to an infraction. It will be too late, at another point in the game to obtain information.
4. Make sure there are no flags left and confirm with all the officials who threw flags down. **Do not assume** they have all signalled the same infraction.
5. Once you know all the facts, tell the team captain of the infraction committed against his/her team and what are the available choices for his/her team.
6. Enforce the team's decision.

7. The referee who signals must do it at the right time and in a place where his/her message will be understood by all. Signals are made away from teams and repeated for each side of the field.

2. TASKS AND POSITIONING OF THE LINESMAN

Before the game

1. The linesman must help other officials to inspect the field of play to look for hazards such as rocks, unpadded goalposts, etc.
2. Inspect the boundaries to make sure the field is well lined. You must also check the end zones to determine their dimension.
3. Make sure both team benches are on the same side of the field and that only players and team personnel are standing in that area.
4. When the referee is ready for the pre-game conference with the captains, go to one of the team benches and tell the captains to go meet with the referee.

On the snap at the line of scrimmage

1. Before the snap on the line of scrimmage, place your feet on both sides of the line of scrimmage right by the sideline where the team benches are located. You must always stay on the outside of the widest receiver and never come closer than the hash marks near the team benches sideline.
2. Count players on Team A on the field for each play.
3. When Team A ends its huddle, raise your arms at shoulder's height to signal that substitutions are over. Keep your arms raised until the centre stands above the ball.
4. Verify the position of Team B players near the line of scrimmage. It's important to remember who can be a rusher. You must position yourself parallel with the rusher.
5. If Team A has a player lined up as a running back in the backfield, you must look for any player on Team B who can rush the running back. This player on Team B must leave from a position seven yards away from the line of scrimmage, or else he/she must wait for the rusher to cross the line of scrimmage first. The rule to remember is that the first player on Team B to cross the line of scrimmage must have left from a position that is seven yards away from the line of scrimmage.
6. When the ball is snapped, look for offside from Team A or Team B. If there are none, follow receivers on Team A in your designated area and look for pass interference. If a player is offside, signal the infraction and take charge of your receivers. At the snap, you must move to the end zone.

7. During the course of play, it's important for you to look at players and not at the ball. If the ball is thrown across the line of scrimmage, run along. You must ensure that the forward pass is completed before across the line of scrimmage if this has an incidence on the play (completed pass). There must never be a player behind you.
8. When you mark the ball position, do it with the tip of the foot and mark the spot until the back judge or the referee comes to place the ball.
9. After each play, you must repeat the referee's signal for the number of the following down.

Plays near the goal line

1. Your main responsibility becomes the end line. Take the normal position parallel to the rusher after determining if there was an offside or not. Keep that position on the end line and look for obstruction in your zone.
5. If the pass is thrown near the goal line or if the ball carrier is running for the end zone, you must determine if the forward part of the ball touches the end zone area, meaning that there is a touchdown.
2. If it's a deep pass in the end zone near your sideline, you're responsible to award (or not) the touchdown.
3. These directives also apply on conversion attempts.

COMMENTAIRES GÉNÉRAUX

1. Do not follow the ball carrier too closely. Avoid being trapped in the middle of traffic.
2. Make sure that you've seen the flag being taken away from a player before blowing your whistle. Keep from whistling to confirm the referee's whistling.

TASKS AND POSITIONING**5 V. 5****1 OFFICIAL****1. TASKS AND POSITIONING OF THE REFEREE****Relationships with coaches, captains and players**

Have the same respect for the captains and coaches you expect them to have towards you. Be courteous but keep your expressions brief, correct and clear.

When you speak to captains, call them “captain” and when you do so with coaches, call them “coach” or “sir”.

In any case, the referee should not tolerate intimidation attempts against a game official by players, captains, coaches, or by team officials or fans.

Do not forget to treat players with courtesy.

1. Position yourself behind Team B’s safety.
2. You look for offensive offside or those committed by the rusher.
3. On a snap, you must follow the rusher and the QB until the pass is made.
4. When the play crosses the line of scrimmage, you can run to follow the play.
5. On a pass attempt, look at the target zone for a better follow-up on the play.
6. When the ball moves, the rusher must bring the sand bags along to accelerate the play.
7. On a penalty, keep the dead ball point to call the captain of the team that has been faulted against.

PART 5

DRESS CODE

Any official working in a provincial flag football tournament must respect the following dress code:

Caps

Referees must wear a white baseball-like cap, black peak, black piping. All the other officials must wear black baseball-like caps, black peak, white piping.

Shirts

They must be white and black vertical stripes and worn inside the pants. Short or long sleeves are accepted.

Pants

Golf pants (knickers) or shorts are permitted. Knickers must be white with a black belt. Black shorts or a long black tracksuit are accepted.

Shoes

You need black football shoes

Warm-up jacket

Black or white. Turtlenecks are allowed.

► **REMARK: Even when choice is allowed (knickers or shorts for instance), teams of officials must be dressed identically the same.**

Accessories

- ✓ Whistle (finger-grip, Lanyard)
- ✓ Flag (red or orange, 16 x 16 inches and weighted)
- ✓ Pen or pencil
- ✓ Watch (preferably a stopwatch)

HAVE A GREAT START

The first plays you will have to judge could be critical for your future as an official.

The following practical tips will help you to have success as a beginner.

1. PRELIMINARY TRAINING

- ✓ Look attentively at as much plays as you can with the eyes of an official, not as a fan.
- ✓ Be present for a game or watch it on television and think like you were in the shoes of the officials.
- ✓ Take an active part in officials' meetings.

Highly skilled sporting officials take much pride out of their work and gladly accept to help less experienced officials. They even desire to do so.

- ✓ Make sure to have the appropriate equipment.

Until you've gained the reputation of a qualified official, at least look the part.

- ✓ Do not use a cheap whistle.

2. PRE-GAME PREPARATION

- ✓ Plan to arrive early at the game.

Do not accept an assignment if you can't be at the field of play, ready and dressed to work, at least 30 minutes before kick-off time.

- ✓ Be rested and alert.
- ✓ Expect the worst.

Never expect an easy game.

3. ONCE THE GAME STARTS

Each official acquires its own personality and particular habits. Until these show up and after they dominate and are perfected, the inexperienced official needs directives to avoid discomfort.

You're expected to keep your distance with players, coaches and supporters.

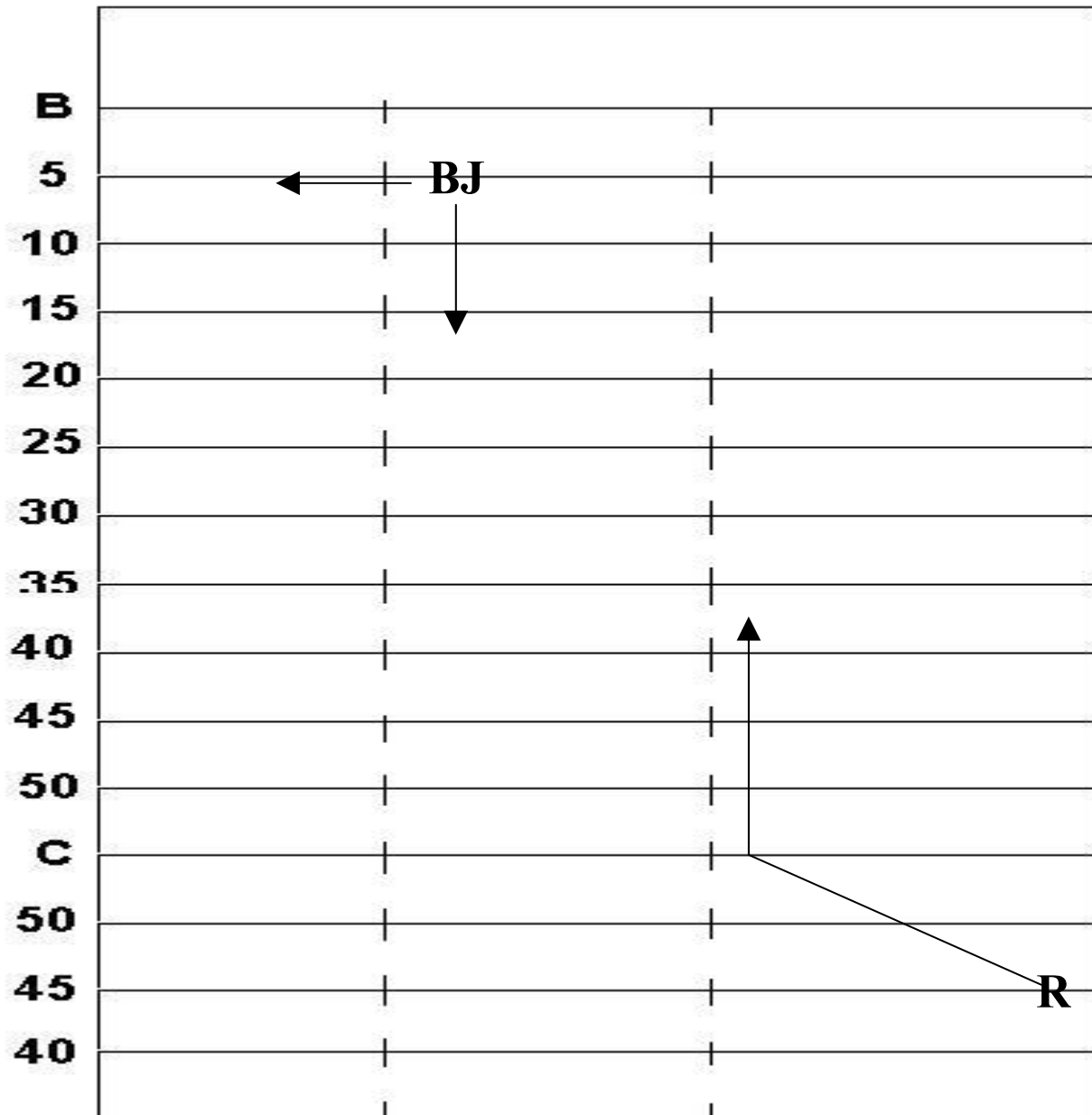
Make every effort to avoid the mistakes that inexperienced officials usually commit.

Anticipating – You can't announce anything that has not happened. Better it is to take a decision a fraction of a second too late than to rule on something that has not happened or that has no repercussion on the play.

Excessive reaction to complains – Even if you know that you have taken a fair decision, react calmly but firmly. What's toughest for a new official is to work with a coach that has developed a habit of harassing officials. If that coach feels you're vulnerable, you're in big trouble. Try to think only about the game and the players, not about you or the coach.

PART 6

KICKOFF



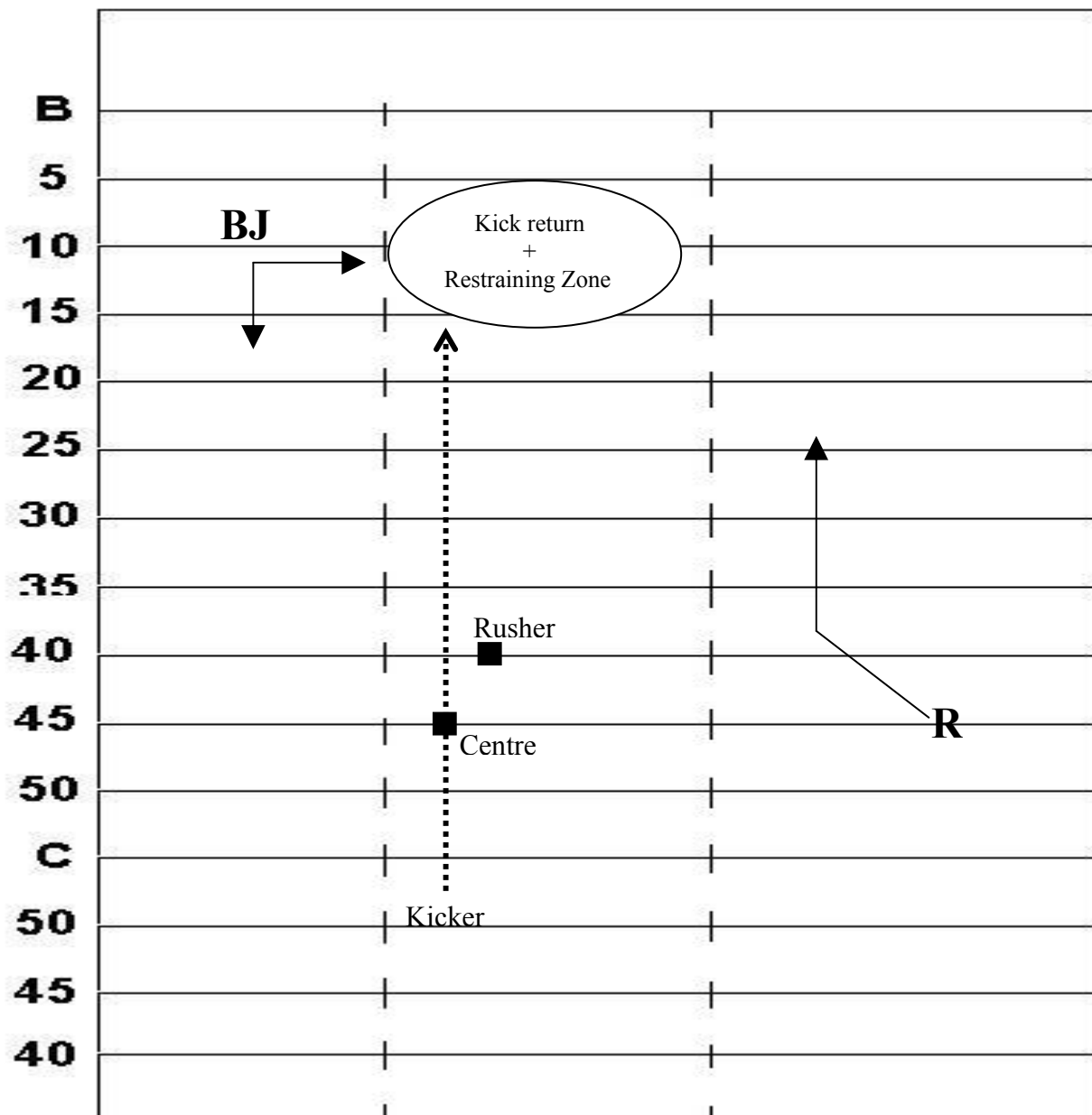
REFEREE

1. Stand at the 45 yard line (40 metre) of the kicking team, on the outside of the play.
2. Once the ball is kicked, move to the hash marks on your side of the field and run down the field towards the receiving team.

BACK JUDGE

1. Stand as far as the last receiver. If there are 2 receivers, stand between them.
2. As soon as the ball is kicked, move to a position behind the eventual ball carrier
3. Stay on your side of the field.

PUNT

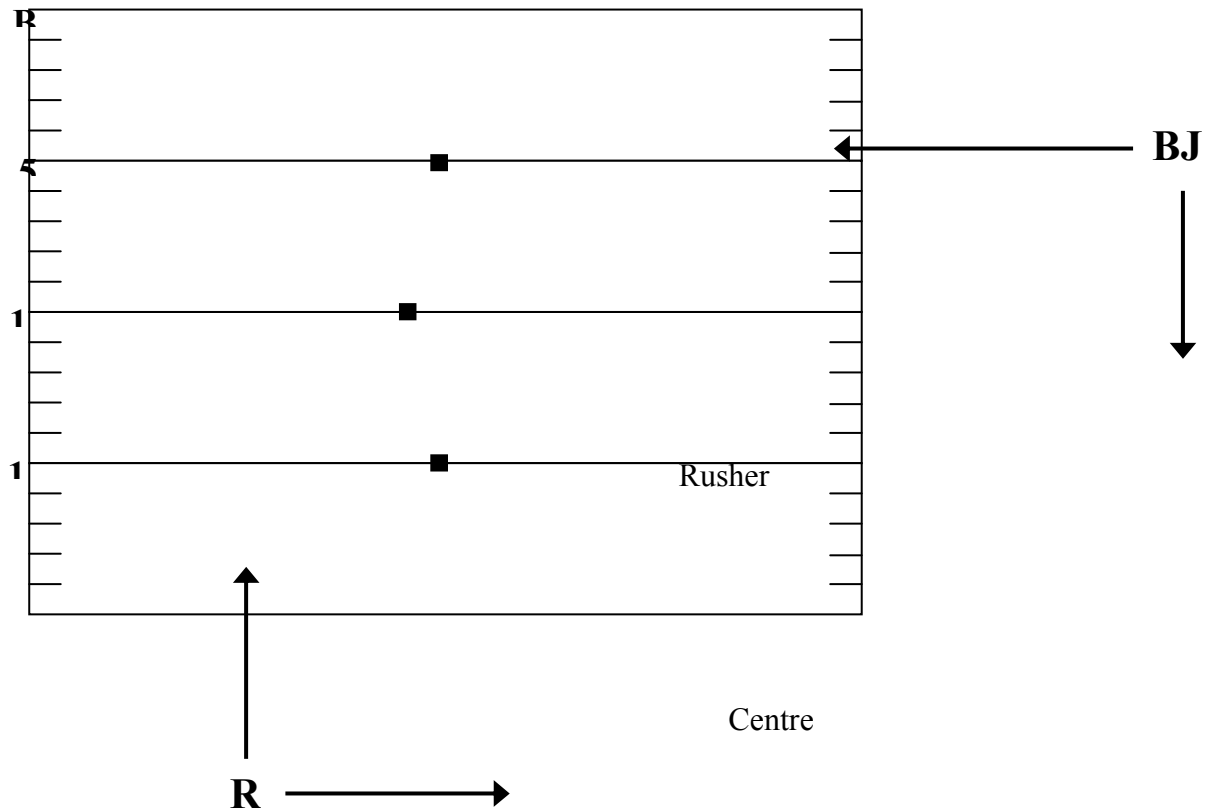


Referee

1. Stand on the line of scrimmage on the short side.
2. Look for roughness against the kicker.
3. If it's a short kick, follow it to see if there are enough gained yards for a first down. Stay as close as possible.

Back judge

1. Stay 5-10 yards behind the last receiver.
2. Run up the field behind the kick receiver.
3. Be ready to call penalties for infringing on the restraining zone.

SNAP**Referee**

1. Always stand on the short side between the centre and the QB.
2. Look at the centre and rusher.
3. You're in charge of the rusher on the play.

Back judge

1. Stand on the opposite side to the referee, as deep as the last receiver.
2. Be ready to move at the moment the players leave their passing runs.

1. RULES FOR A TWO-OFFICIAL SYSTEM - 7 v. 7

(REFEREE AND BACK JUDGE)

Before the game

1. Arrive dressed to the stadium, 30 minutes before kick-off.
2. Inspect the field of play and the end zones to look for hazards such as rocks, big holes or digs, or even unpadded goalposts.
3. Ensure the field is well lined and check the end zones to determine their dimension.
4. Go meet coaches to discuss special plays.
5. Call team captains on the field, at least 10 minutes before kick-off and explain:
 - ✓ Any trouble with the field and solutions adopted.
 - ✓ That if they pick up the ball and bring it the officials, they will gain time to play
 - ✓ The procedure you'll use to apply penalties.

Kick-off

Referee

1. Stand on the team benches' side.
2. Check out the amount of players on the kicking team and the amount of yards between the front row players on both teams (restraining zone).
3. The back judge will raise his/her arm to signal he/she is ready. You will blow your whistle to put the ball in play and start a 20 seconds countdown.
4. At the time of kick-off, check if offsides are committed. Look if the ball goes across the necessary 20 yards/meters. Be attentive for loose ball kicks and lateral passes. Be ready to signal that a flag has been taken.
5. If the ball volleyed out of bound, ask the back judge to go where the ball has left the field of play.
6. Once the play stopped, be attentive to any foul committed and help to spot the ball, and then prepare for the first snap.

Back judge

1. Stand behind the last receiver. On the opposite side from the referee and outside of the ball receiver. Check out the amount of players on the receiving team. Signal to the referee that you are ready by raising one arm.

2. Once the ball is kicked, check if it hits the goalposts or goes out of bound. If the ball is volleyed out of bound, move to the point of exit and signal to the referee with your hand to determine where to mark the play.
3. If the ball is caught you must move parallel to the ball carrier et look for lateral passes or if the player's flag is taken.
4. Once the play has stopped, spot the ball for the next snap.

Kicks

Referee

1. Know how many yards are necessary to complete a first down and signals the back judge what is the number of the down.
2. Make sure the players are well lined up on the line of scrimmage and count the players on the kicking team.
3. Once the ball is in play, make sure players on both teams are within limits and that the rusher has a direct access to the kicker.
4. Check if the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage and any obstruction committed against the players running to the open field.
5. If the rusher hits the ball, notice if the ball goes toward the kicker's end line (blocked kick) or the opponent's end line (good kick).
6. Be on the look for any roughness against the kicker, whether or not the ball has been blocked or deflected.
7. Help the back judge to spot the ball and prepare for the next play.

Back judge

1. Stand 10 yards/meters from the eventual receiver and count the players on the receiving team.
2. If the ball is volleyed out of bounds, run up the field and look for the referee's signal to determine where to place the ball.
3. If the receiver catches the ball, you must look for the opponents who come up to judge if they are infringing on the five yards/meters restraining zone.
4. Look at the opponents who are moving, not at the ball.
5. Move parallel to the ball carrier et take decisions on lateral passes, flags taken or any foul committed after the stoppage of play.
6. Spot the ball and position yourself for the next play.

Snap

Referee

Before the snap:

1. Signal the down, whistle for the snap and start a 20 seconds countdown.
2. Stand on the short side, outside the QB.
3. Count the offensive players.
4. Take note of the amount of necessary yards for a first down completion.
5. Check out the rusher's position to the ball and the centre.
6. Look at how the centre handles the ball before the snap.

After the snap:

7. Look for offsides.
8. Look for obstruction between the centre and the rusher.
9. Look if the quarterback's flag is taken. Look if the rusher or the quarterback commit fouls after the ball has been thrown.
10. Be ready to signal the direction of a lateral pass to the running back. Move towards the running back once the lateral pass is executed.
11. Once the play is stopped, pick up the bags or spot the ball for the following down.

Back judge

Before the snap:

1. Verify at which down you're at.
2. Count the defensive players.
3. Take note of the amount of players on defence who could act as a rusher.
4. Stand on the opposite side from the referee and about 10 to 15 yards/meters from the line of scrimmage.

After the snap:

5. Look for offsides committed by the rusher.
6. Move with the players as they start going in the open field.

7. Look for any obstruction between receivers and defenders.
Look at players, not at the ball.
8. If a pass is made, move to the passing zone.
9. Be ready to signal when a flag is taken and correctly mark the place on the field. Look for lateral passes.
10. Once the play is stopped, pick up the bags or spot the ball for the following down.

Goal line

Referee

Before the snap:

1. Same functions than for a regular snap.

After the snap:

2. Be ready to help the back judge to decide on a touchdown, if there's a short pass or a running play.

Back judge

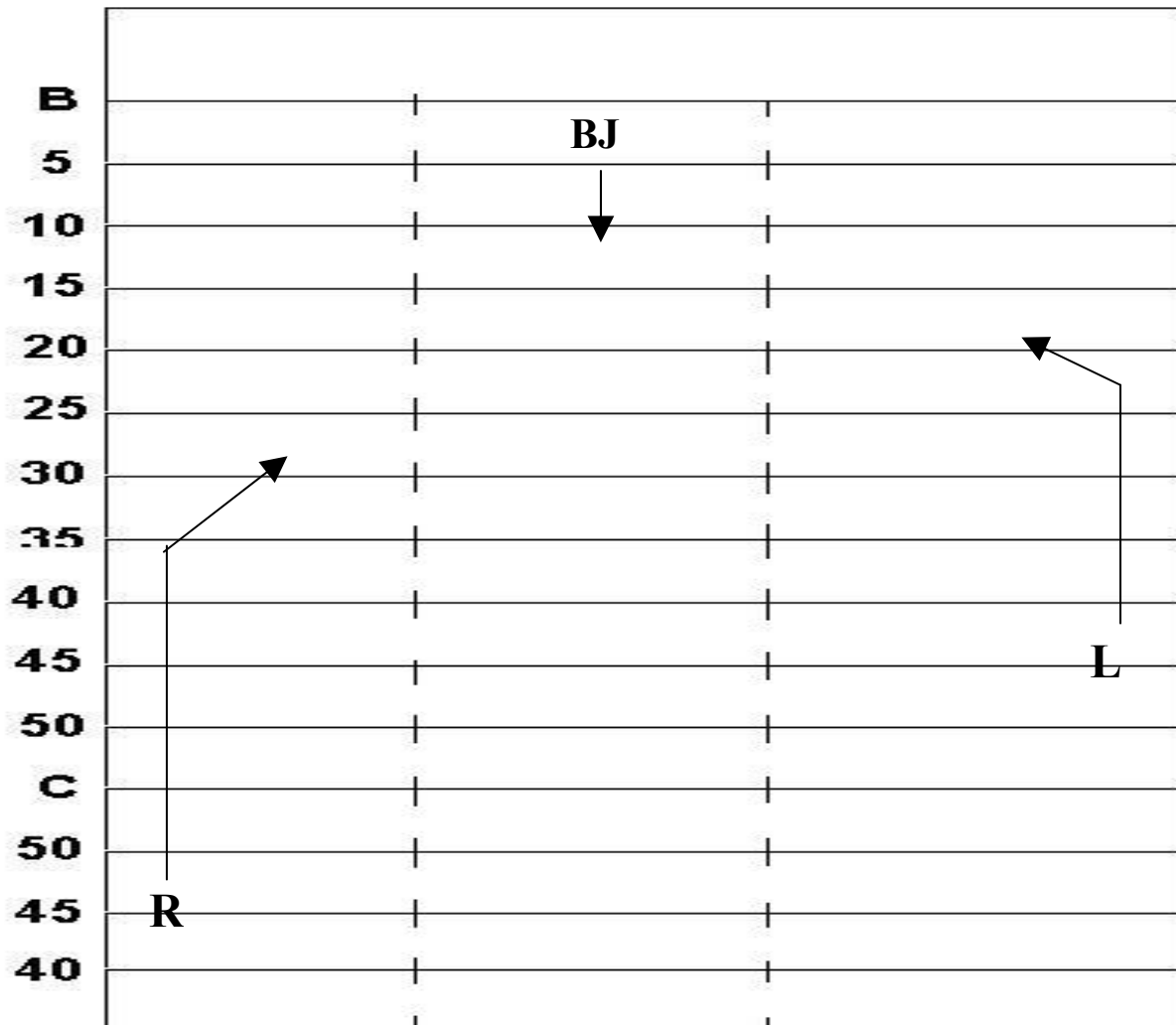
Before the snap:

1. Stand on the side of the field opposite to the referee. Come near to the sideline.
2. Stay close to the goal line and be ready to signal a touchdown. You're in charge of the end line in the end zone but your first responsibility is to determine if the ball carrier has crossed the goal line.

After the snap:

3. Look for any obstruction between receivers and defenders.
4. Look for players who grab the goalpost to change direction.
5. Look if fouls are committed after a score.

KICKOFF



REFEREE

1. Stand on the kicking team's kick-off line (45 yards line) on the benches' side.
2. Run up the field with the offensive players.
3. Take over the responsibility to cover the ball carrier if the play is made on your side of the field.
4. If the play develops on the opposite side, stand between the hash marks and the sideline.

5. Do not let any receiver ahead.

BACK JUDGE

1. Stand behind the last receiver.
2. Run up the field with the play and stay between the hash marks.
3. Do not forget to spot the forward pass point.

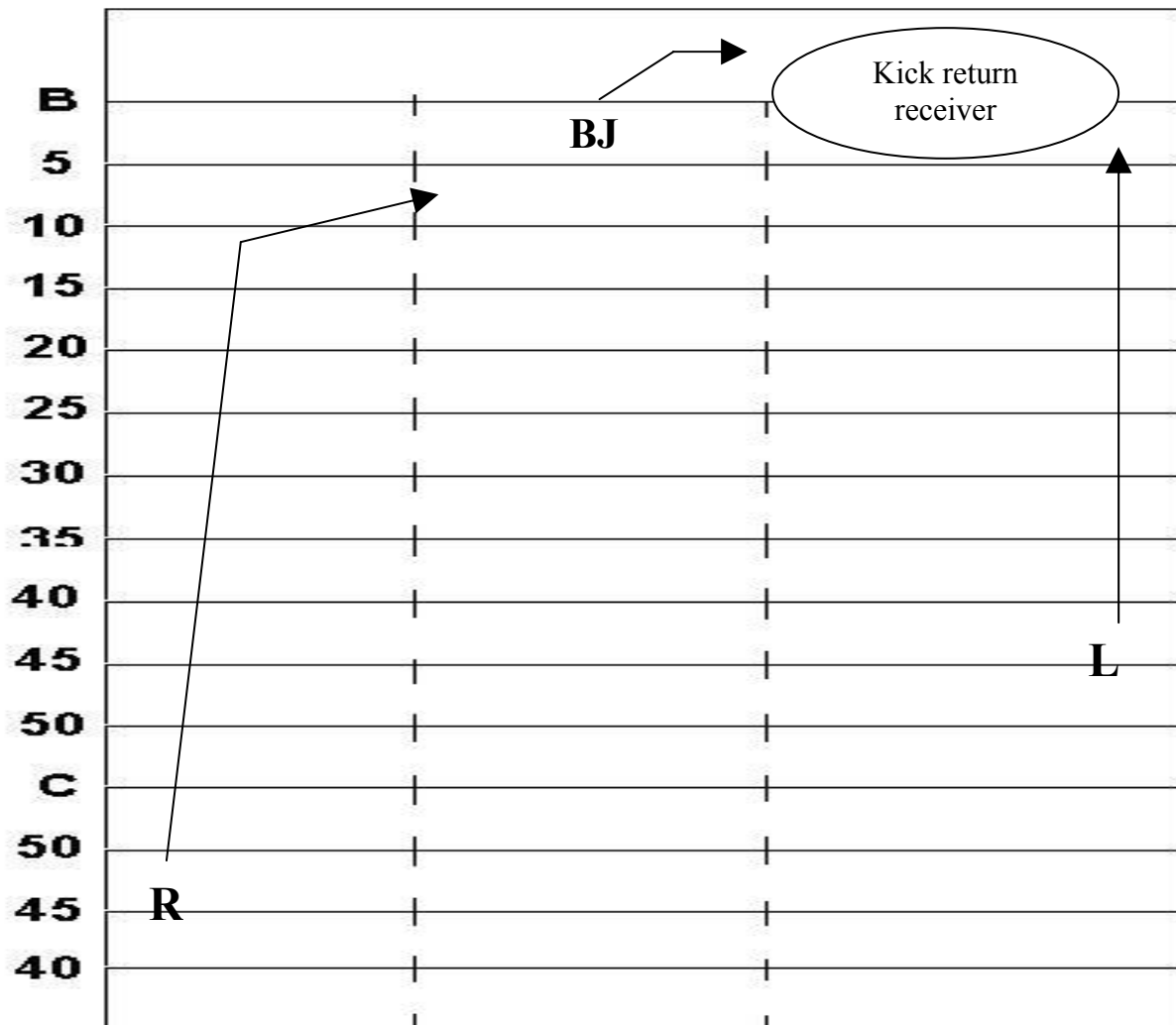
LINESMAN

1. Stand at the 45 yard line of the receiving team or 20

yards from the kicker on the opposite side from the referee.

2. Move along the sideline and be ready to change direction according to how the play develops.
3. Your objective is to keep a parallel position to the ball carrier to determine the touches and the lateral passes.
4. Never cross the middle of the field.

DEEP KICKOFF



REFEREE

1. Stand on the kicking team's kick-off line (45 yards line) on the benches' side.
2. Be ready to change direction according to how the play develops.
3. Be ready to cover the sideline
4. Look for penalties.

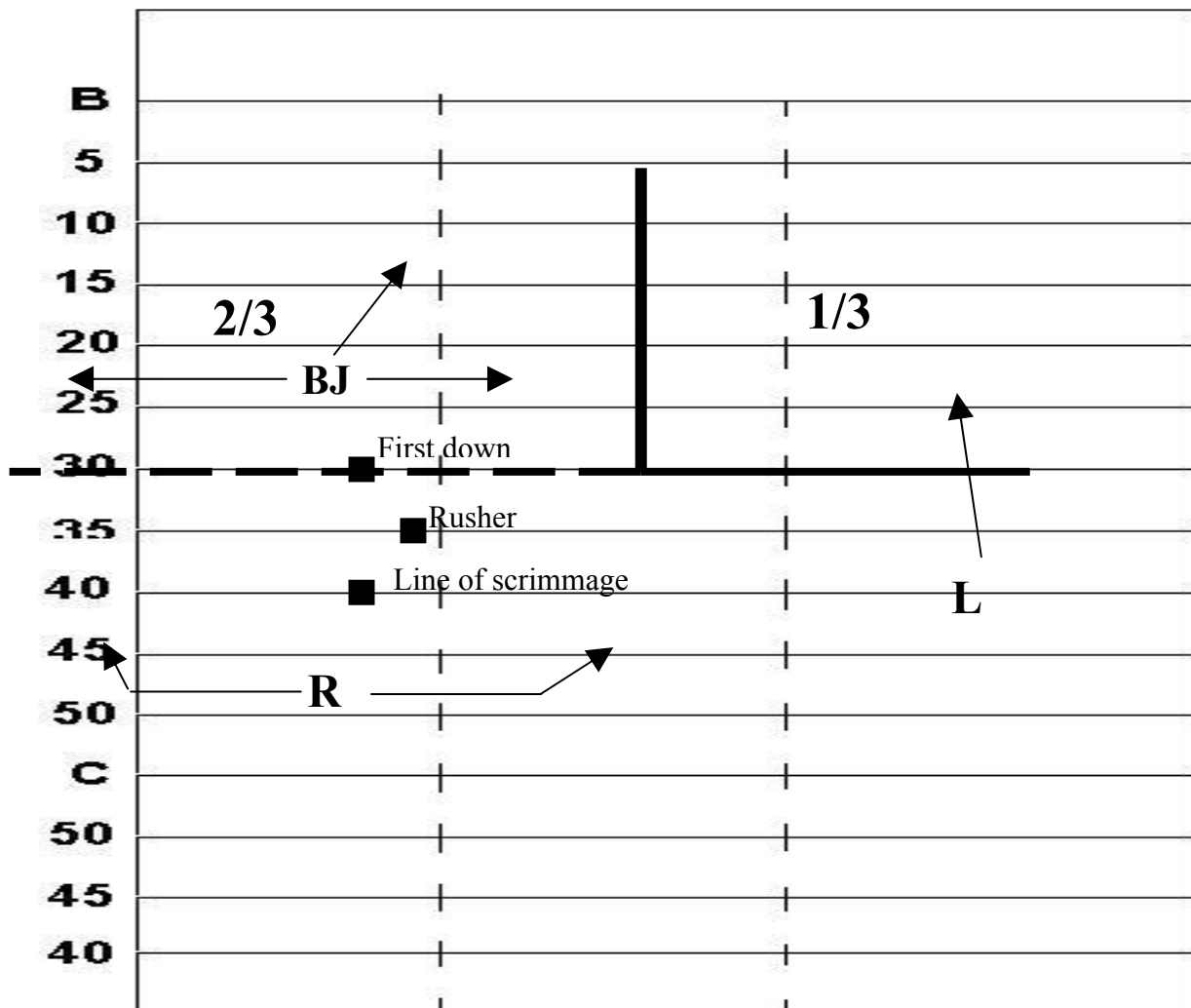
BACK JUDGE

1. Stand behind the last receiver.
2. Move in the end zone to cover the return.
3. Stay behind the ball carrier to see the touch.
4. You're responsible for the end line in the end zone.
5. Make sure of the receiver's entry point in possession. (single or safety)

LINESMAN

1. Go from the receiving team's 45 yard line to the goal line to see if the ball carrier leaves the end zone.
2. You're responsible for the end zone's sideline and your sideline.
3. If the play develops on the other side of the field, you must run your half of the field.

SNAP



ARBITRE

1. Stand seven yards behind and two yards outside the QB.
2. You're in charge of the rusher and the center.
3. Look for back passes to the running back.
4. Protect the QB from tackles.
5. Count offensive players.

BACK JUDGE

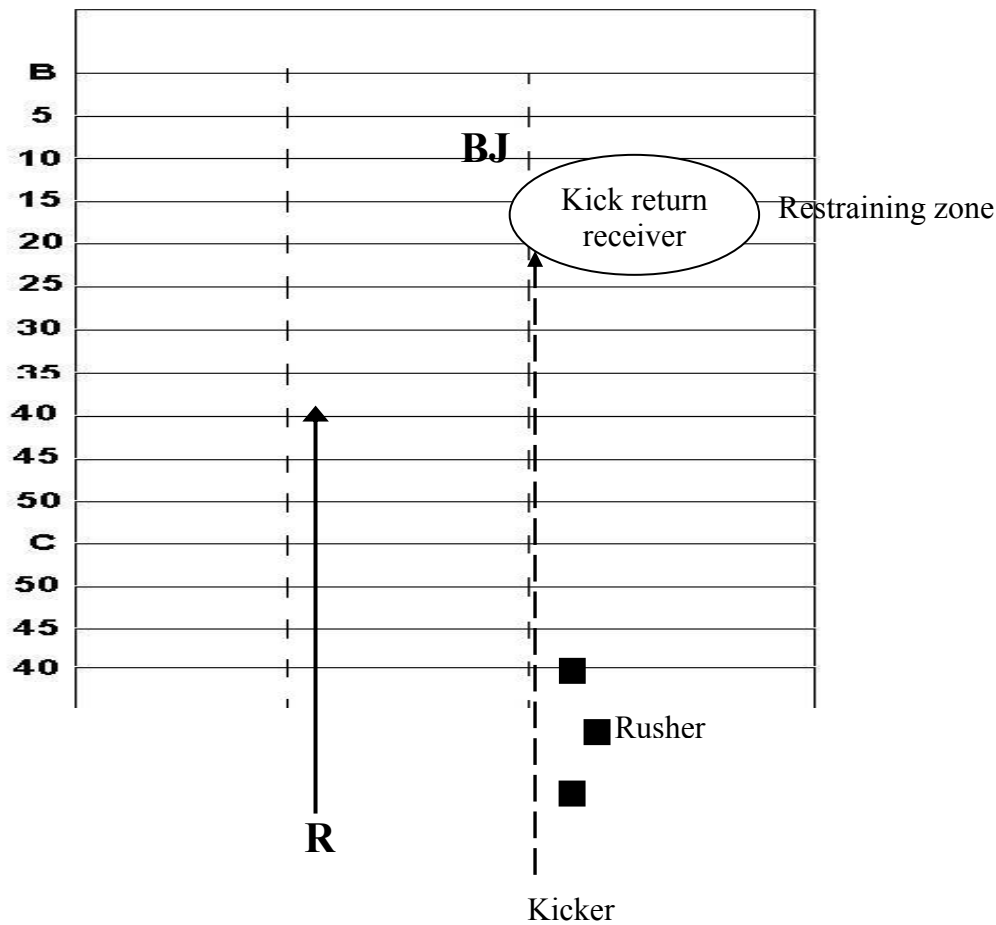
1. Stand on the side of the head referee.
2. Look for offsides committed by the rusher.
3. Count defensive players.
4. You're responsible for passes in the 2/3 zone of the field.

LINESMAN

1. Stay on the line of scrimmage until the pass is made and the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage.

2. Make sure the forward pass is completed across the line of scrimmage.
3. You have the responsibility to cover the wide side's sideline.
4. You're responsible for passes in your third of the field. Look for offsides and illegal procedures.

PUNT



Referee

1. Stand by the kicker on the short side of the field.
2. Cover the sideline.
3. Look for roughness against the kicker.
4. If the kicker runs, follow him/her to verify if he/she gains enough yards for a first down. Stay as close as possible.

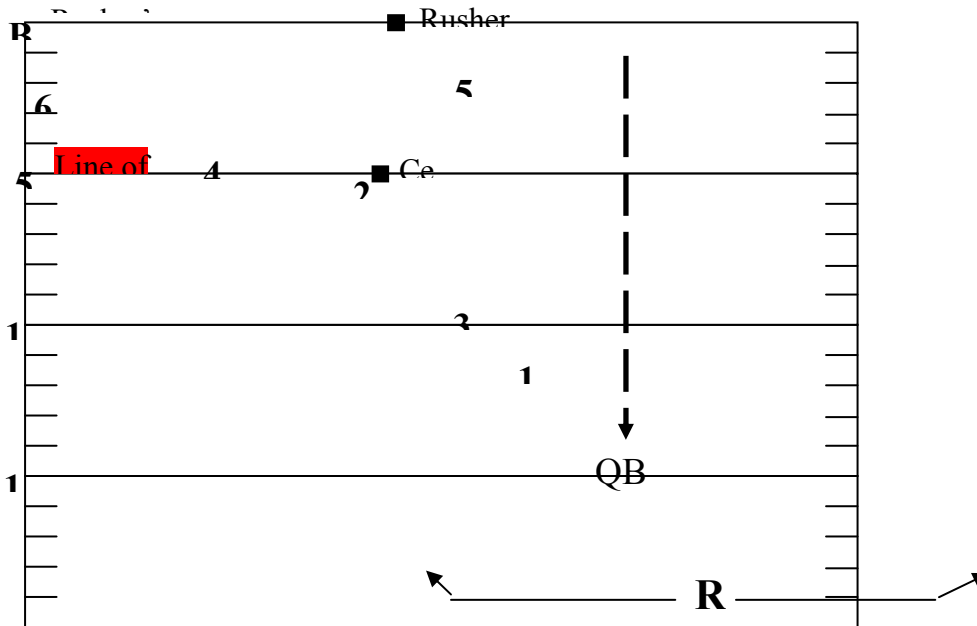
Back judge

1. Position yourself 5 yards behind the player doing the kick return.
2. Look for infractions against the 5 yard restraining zone.
3. Run up the field behind the kick receiver and follow the play.

Linesman

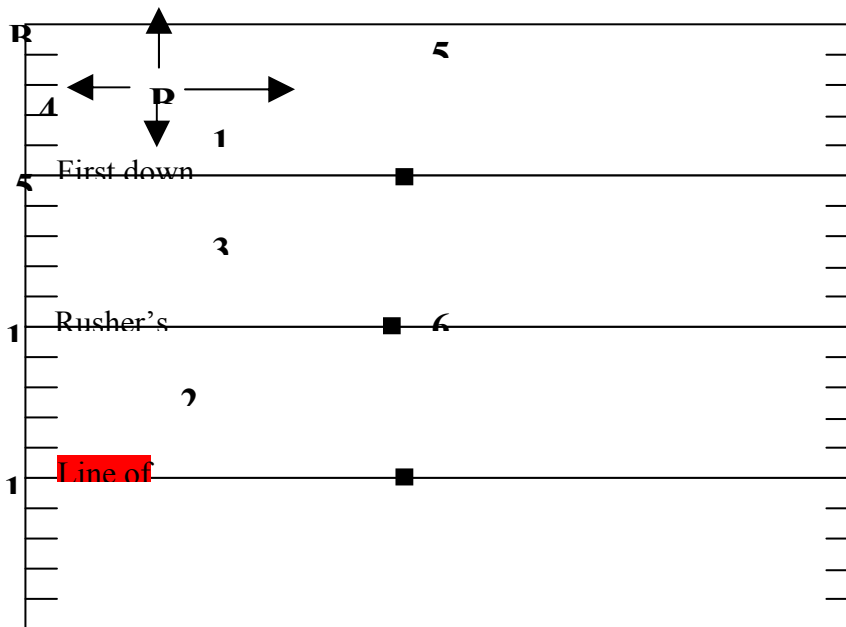
1. Stand on the line of scrimmage and move as soon as the ball is kicked.
2. Try to stay parallel to the ball carrier facing the play and turning your back to your sideline.
3. You must also help the back judge on infractions against the 5 yard restraining zone and lateral passes.

DETAILED DIAGRAM: HEAD REFEREE



1. Stand behind the QB in order to have a clear vision of the line between the rusher and the centre, on the field's short side.
2. Cover the zone between the rusher and the centre to look for obstruction.
3. Cover the QB zone to look for a touch or any roughness.
4. If it's a running play, the referee covers the line of scrimmage for a possible offside situation. The referee should cover this zone to support the linesman.
5. In the case of a short pass, the referee helps to cover this inside zone (1-5 yards).
6. If it's a running play or a passing play on the open side of the field, the referee must help the back judge to cover this sideline.
7. The referee must make sure there are no penalties before moving the sand bags.

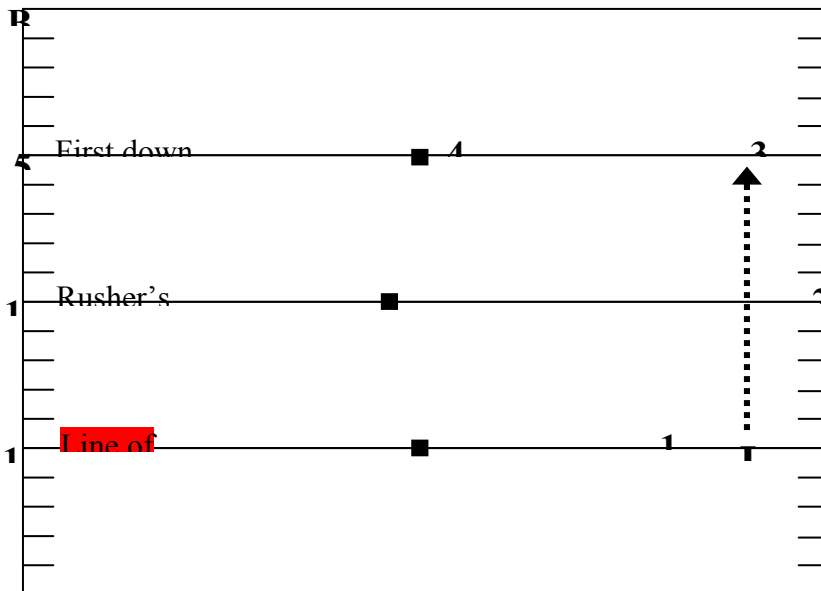
DETAILED DIAGRAM: BACK JUDGE



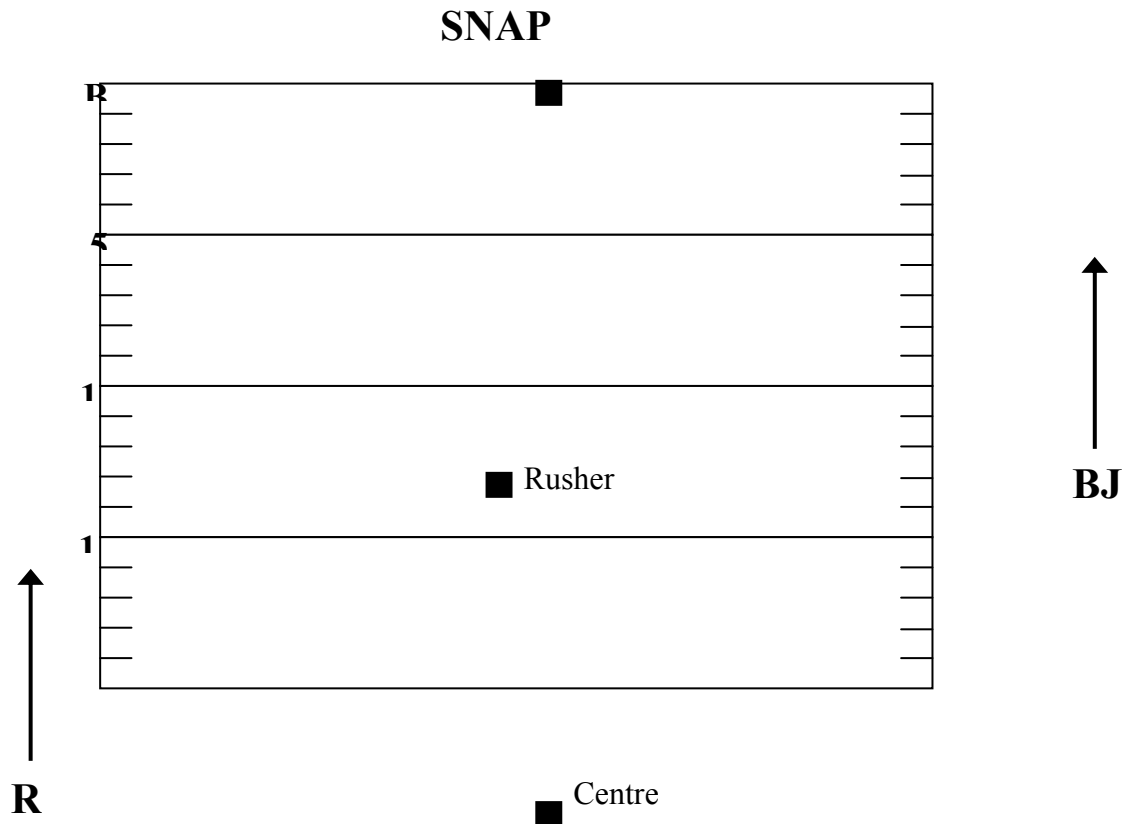
Ligne de mêlée

1. Stand deeper than the last defender (12-20 yards) depending on the player's position. Also, position yourself near the middle of the field, just past the hash marks to ensure an additional coverage on that side of the field.
2. As the play develops, look for receivers who run in the first passing zone in your area (1-5 yards).
3. Keep on following receivers in your area when they enter in the second zone (5-10 yards).
4. You're in charge of covering the field's open side sideline if the play develops on that flank.
5. In the case of a deep pass, you must draw back to cover the deepest receiver. Once the ball is thrown, you must react and cover the appropriate zone. Never let the deepest receiver go behind you.
6. Look for offsides committed by the rusher.

DETAILED DIAGRAM: LINESMAN



1. Stand on the line of scrimmage on the wide side. You should be five yards outside the widest receiver, but never beyond the hash marks (24 yards) if the ball is on the opposite side of the field. You're in charge of looking for offensive, defensive or passing offside. You must stay on the line of scrimmage until the pass is thrown or that the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is thrown, adopt a parallel position to the ball carrier. Cover the sideline if the play is close to that zone.
3. If the play continues to the end of the field, you must go down the field to help the back judge to determine the touch or the lateral passes.
4. In the position of linesman, you must never leave your half of the field, in cases of a turnover on your side.



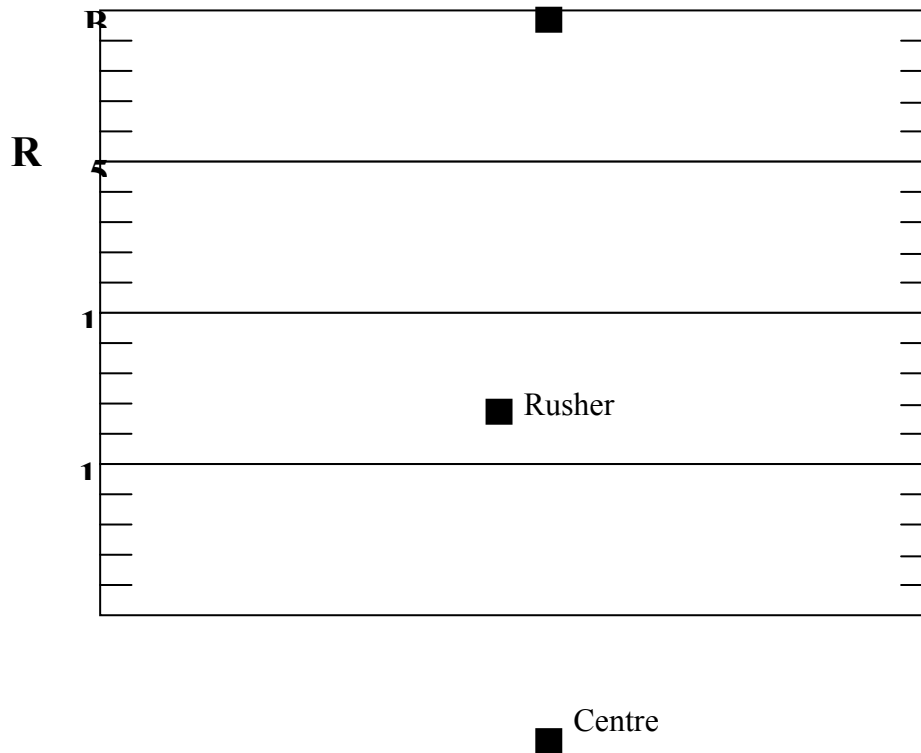
Referee

1. Always stand on the short side on the line of scrimmage.
2. Look at the centre and the rusher.
3. You're in charge of the rusher on the play.
4. Look for penalties during the play.
5. Count the downs.

Back judge

1. Stand on the opposite side to the referee and parallel to the rusher.
2. Look at pass receivers.
3. Be ready to move when players leave their passing runs.

SNAP



Referee

1. Always stand on the short side and behind the safety.
2. Look at the centre and the rusher.
3. You're responsible for the rusher during the play.
4. Look for penalties during the play.
5. Look for pass receivers.
6. Be ready to move in order to keep from hindering the play.
7. Count the downs.

PART 7

FLAG FOOTBALL OFFICIALS' CERTIFICATION PROCESS 7 v. 7

INTRODUCTION

The football officials' certification process is generally divided in two parts: a theory course and a practical evaluation.

At this stage of implementation of the Flag Football Officials' Certification Program in Quebec, local officials' associations are responsible for the practical evaluations.

Practical evaluations are not necessary to be certified Level I but provincial, regional and local officials' association do need an evaluation for Level II to V, before an official can be certified "provincial".

Assessors must have a perfect knowledge of all the issues discussed in the "training guide" to ensure an uniformity in the evaluation process and a certain similitude of the different skill levels within each certification levels.

Consequently, the following levels of flag football officials' certification in Quebec are determined only in relation to the theory part of the program.

1. OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Deliver guidelines to define de different levels and standards to implement in the flag football leagues.
- ✓ Ensure uniformity in the implementation of this program.
- ✓ Deliver the necessary information to ensure the best continuity within the associations.
- ✓ Encourage officials to benefit from their occasions by assigning them targets to reach.
- ✓ Impose a uniform evaluation method for the choice of officials assigned to provincial and national championships.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Some individuals and regional associations are responsible to improve the levels and standards and are in charge of putting together an "educative" program.
- ✓ This "educative" program includes practical exercises, on the field and written work. You obtain better result through information sessions on topics such as: theory, principles, skills, psychology, communications and the equipment, the dress code and conditioning.

3. POINTS TO STUDY AND APPLICATION

- ✓ Descriptive manuals for all levels.
- ✓ Instructor's manual for every level.
- ✓ Visual aids (films, videos, cassettes, etc.).
- ✓ Exams for every levels.
- ✓ Evaluation standards on the field.
- ✓ Administrative supplies (certification cards, certificates for the different levels).
- ✓ Administrative guidelines for the setting up of information sessions

4. CERTIFICATION LEVELS AND STANDARDS

Level 1

- ✓ Prepare the new official to his/her sideline tasks
- ✓ Use teaching techniques, different training aids and manuals to familiarize the new official with his/her tasks
- ✓ The Level I linesman works in Group C and D settings

Level 2

- ✓ Prepare the linesman for the back judge position
- ✓ Give a better understanding of the position of Level I linesman position
- ✓ The Level II back judge works in Group B and C settings → 50 games
- ✓ The Level II linesman works in Group B and C settings → 50 games

Level 3

- ✓ Prepare the back judge for the referee position.
- ✓ Give a better understanding of the position of back judge and linesman
- ✓ Prepare the back judge and the linesman to higher category tasks
- ✓ The Level III referee works in Group B and C settings → 100 games
- ✓ The Level III back judge works in Group *A, B, C and D settings → 100 games
- ✓ The Level III linesman works in Group *A, B, C and D settings → 100 games

Level 4

- ✓ Prepare back judges and linesman for their tasks in high level Group A games
- ✓ Prepare the referees for their tasks in Group A games, except for high level games
- ✓ The Level IV referee works in Group A, B and C settings → 100 games
- ✓ The Level IV back judge works in Group A, B and C settings → 100 games
- ✓ The Level IV linesman works in Group A, B and C settings → 100 games

Level 5

- ✓ Prepare referees for their tasks in high level Group A games
- ✓ Give a better understanding of the obligations of back judge and linesman
- ✓ The Level V referee works in Group A and B settings

PS To keep his/her level, the referee must successfully pass an exam every two year and officiate at least 30 games in these two years.

8. OFFICIALS' FUNCTIONS - 7 v. 7

R = head referee

BJ = back judge

L = Linesman

| | Elite (A) College Men's senior A Provincial National | Intermediate (B) Women's senior A Men's senior B School provincial | School (C) Juvenile Midget Women's senior B | Recreational (D) Bantam Elementary school |
|-----|---|--|---|--|
| IV | R | | | |
| III | R BJ L | R BJ | R BJ | |
| II | L | BJ L | R BJ | R |
| I | | | L | L |

TABLE DESCRIBING THE EVALUATION OF THE DIFFERENT FLAG FOOTBALL LEVELS - 7 v. 7

| LEVEL | REFEREE | BACK JUDGE | LINESMAN |
|-------|--|--|---|
| 5 | Experience: 5 years Teams: 4, 3, 2 and 1 men Rules: 90% of the exam Groups: A and B | | |
| 4 | Experience: 4 years Teams: 4, 3 and 2 Rules: 85% of the exam Groups: A, B and C | Experience: 4 years Teams: 4, 3 and 2 men Rules: 80% of the exam Groups: A, B and C | Experience: 4 years Position: all sideline Teams: 4 and 3 men Rules: 75% of the exam Groups: A, B and C |
| 3 | Experience: 5 years Teams: 3 men Rules: 80% of the exam Groups: A, B and C | Experience: 4 years Teams: 3 and 2 men Rules: 75% of the exam Groups: A, B and C | Experience: 3 years Teams: 3 men Rules: 70% of the exam Groups: A and B |
| 2 | Experience: 2 years Teams: 2 men Rules: 75% of the exam Groups: C and D | Experience: 2 years Teams: 3 men Rules: 70% of the exam Groups: B, C and D | Experience: 2 years Teams: 3 men Rules: 65% of the exam Groups: B, C and D |
| 1 | | Experience: 1 year Team: 3 men Group: C | Experience: 1 year Teams: 3 men Group: D |

9. CERTIFICATION LEVELS - GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- ✓ The levels were determined in order to enable the vertical progression in one position (e.g. linesman) as well as lateral progression to the other positions of back judge and referee.
- ✓ Once you have moved laterally from the linesman to the back judge position, or from the back judge to the referee position, you can be assigned to any inferior position in your level.
- ✓ For Level III to V officials, here are the determining factors:
 - Very good knowledge of rules

- Very good physical condition
 - Good mobility
 - Excellent judgement
 - High quality game control
 - Able to work under pressure and take charge of tough situations
 - Very good on field evaluation
- ✓ From now on, Level III is the minimum required to work as an official at the national championships.

8. EXAMS

There will be an exam for each of the five levels of officials' certification (5 exams total). The Level I exam is made for new officials and questions are all about the linesman position. To be certified at that level, the candidate must obtain a grade of 75 % or better.

The Level II exam will mainly look at the back judge position and functions. There will be a few tougher questions on the linesman position. To be a certified Level II back judge, the candidate must obtain a minimum grade of 70 %. With a grade of 75 % or more, he/she could occasionally hold the referee position. You need to officiate 50 games.

The Level III exam will be on most usual implementations of the rule that the referee must enforce. To be a certified Level III referee, the candidate must obtain the minimum grade of 80%; the minimum grade of 75% enables a candidate to be a certified Level III back judge. With a grade of 70%, the candidate can be a certified Level III linesman. You need to officiate 100 games.

The Level IV exam still focuses on the rules and their application and requires deeper knowledge. Candidates must examine certain particular cases and determine the correct rules application. To become a certified Level IV referee, you need the minimum grade of 85%. A grade of 80% enables the candidate to be a certified Level IV back judge, while a grade of 65% enables a candidate to be a certified Level IV linesman. You need to officiate 200 games.

The Level V exam is for experienced officials. It touches every rule application, including those rarely used. The Level V official must be able to apply rules with an absolute mastery. To be a certified Level V referee, the candidate must obtain the minimum grade of 90% in the Level V exam. The candidates who score 85 % in the exam will be certified Level V back judge. As for others, a mark of 80 % enables candidates to be certified Level V linesman.

9. PRACTICAL EVALUATION

It is essential to go through a practical evaluation of an official's on field work. Many officials are able to score high in courses or in the exam but they have a hard time when they have to face the tension and quick decision making situations imposed by the game conditions. Other officials who are at ease on the field, are doing just fine with game conditions but they have a hard time knowing the rules. Others still lack mobility due to a bad physical condition. Each association must establish a worthy on field evaluation system for its members. At least three evaluations have to be filed every year for each official.

To do so, you can ask to a good head referee or a good back judge to assess other members of his/her team. If possible, this referee or judge is then asked to stay with the members of that same team by assigning them to other tasks (maybe two other games), in order to have a good knowledge of these officials.

10. ADMINISTRATION

Each region must nominate a head referee to administrate the organisation and implementation of stages, exams, practical evaluations, rules interpretation and officials' registration with the provincial association.

11. OFFICIAL'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE FLAG FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS 7 v. 7

Please write legibly (print).

1. Name: _____

2. Address: _____

3. City/Town: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

4. Phone: (at work) _____ (at home) _____

5. Birth date: (dd/mm/yy) _____

6. E-mail: _____

7. Official's experience: Total: _____ years

8. Number of years as:

- head referee _____
- back judge _____
- linesman _____

9. Number of games officiated. Fill the following table:

| League | Current year | 2 previous years | | Position |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|-------|-----------|
| | _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| Senior | | | | R |
| | | | | BJ |
| | | | | L |
| Intermediate | | | | R |
| | | | | BJ |
| | | | | L |
| Other | | | | R |
| | | | | BJ |
| | | | | L |

FLAG FOOTBALL OFFICIALS' CERTIFICATION PROCESS 5 v. 5

INTRODUCTION

The football officials' certification process is generally divided in two parts: a theory course and a practical evaluation.

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Practical evaluations are not necessary to be certified Level I but provincial, regional and local officials' association do need an evaluation for Level II to V, before an official can be certified "provincial".

Assessors must have a perfect knowledge of all the issues discussed in the "training guide" to ensure an uniformity in the evaluation process and a certain similitude of the different skill levels within each certification levels.

Consequently, the following levels of flag football officials' certification in Quebec are determined only in relation to the theory part of the program.

1. OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Deliver guidelines to define de different levels and standards to implement in the flag football leagues.
- ✓ Ensure uniformity in the implementation of this program.
- ✓ Deliver the necessary information to ensure the best continuity within the associations.
- ✓ Encourage officials to benefit from their occasions by assigning them targets to reach.
- ✓ Impose a uniform evaluation method for the choice of officials assigned to provincial and national championships.

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- ✓ Some individuals and regional associations are responsible to improve the levels and standards and are in charge of putting together an "educative" program.
- ✓ This "educative" program includes practical exercises, on the field and written work. You obtain better result through information sessions on topics such as: theory, principles, skills, psychology, communications and the equipment, the dress code and conditioning.

3. POINTS TO STUDY AND APPLICATION

- ✓ Descriptive manuals for all levels.
- ✓ Instructor's manual for every level.
- ✓ Visual aids (films, videos, cassettes, etc.).
- ✓ Exams for every levels.
- ✓ Evaluation standards on the field.
- ✓ Administrative supplies (certification cards, certificates for the different levels).
- ✓ Administrative guidelines for the setting up of information sessions

4. CERTIFICATION LEVELS AND STANDARDS

Level 1

- ✓ Prepare the new official to his/her sideline tasks
- ✓ Use teaching techniques, different training aids and manuals to familiarize the new official with his/her tasks
- ✓ The Level I linesman works in Group B and C settings

Level 2

- ✓ Prepare the linesman for the tasks of the referee
- ✓ Help the Level I linesman
- ✓ The Level II referee works in Group A, B and C settings → 50 games
- ✓ The Level II linesman works in Group B and C settings → 50 games

Level 3

- ✓ Give a better understanding of the obligations of a back judge, to the referee's tasks.
- ✓ Give a better understanding of the obligations of back judge and linesman positions
- ✓ Prepare the referee to work within the Group A setting
- ✓ The Level III referee works in Group B and C settings → 100 games
- ✓ The Level III linesman works in Group B, C and D settings → 100 games

Level 4

- ✓ Prepare linesman for their tasks in high level Group A games
- ✓ Prepare the referees for their tasks in Group A games, except for high level games
- ✓ The Level IV referee works in Group A, B and C settings → 100 games
- ✓ The Level IV linesman works in Group A, B and C settings → 100 games

Level 5

- ✓ Prepare referees for their tasks in high level Group A games
- ✓ Give a better understanding of the obligations of back judge and linesman positions
- ✓ The Level V referee works in Group A and B settings

5. OFFICIALS' FUNCTIONS - 5 v. 5

R = Referee

L = Linesman

| | Elite (A) College Men's senior A Provincial National | Intermediate (B) Women's senior A Men's senior B School provincial | School (C) Juvenile Midget Women's senior B | Recreational (D) Bantam Elementary school |
|-----|---|--|---|--|
| III | R | | | |
| II | R | R L | R L | R L |
| I | | | L | L |

6. TABLE DESCRIBING THE EVALUATION OF THE DIFFERENT FLAG FOOTBALL LEVELS - 5 v. 5

| LEVEL | REFEREE | LINESMAN |
|-------|---|--|
| 3 | Experience: 4 years Teams: 2 men Rules: 75% of the exam | |
| 2 | Experience: 2 years Teams: 2 men Rules: 70% of the exam | Experience : 2 years Teams: 2 men Rules: 65% of the exam |
| 1 | | Experience: 1 year Teams: 2 men Rules: 60% of the exam |

7. CERTIFICATION LEVELS - GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- ✓ The levels were determined in order to enable the vertical progression in one position (e.g. linesman) as well as lateral progression to the other positions of back judge and referee.
- ✓ Once you have moved laterally from the linesman to the back judge position or from the back judge to the referee position, you can be assigned to any inferior position in your level.
- ✓ For Level III officials, here are the determining factors:
 - Very good physical condition
 - Good mobility
 - Excellent judgement
 - High quality game control
 - Able to work under pressure and take charge of tough situations
 - Very good on field evaluation
- ✓ From now on, to be an official at provincial or national championships, Level II will be the minimum required to be a linesman and Level III will be required to be a head referee.

8. EXAMS

There will be an exam for each of the three levels of officials' certification (5 exams total). The Level I exam is made for new officials and questions are all about the linesman position. To be certified at that level, the candidate must obtain a grade of 60 % or better.

9. PRACTICAL EVALUATION

It is essential to go through a practical evaluation of an official's on field work. Many officials are able to score high in courses or in the exam but they have a hard time when they have to face the tension and quick decision making situations imposed by the game conditions.

Other officials who are at ease on the field, are doing just fine with game conditions but they have a hard time knowing the rules. Others still lack mobility due to a bad physical condition. Each association must establish a worthy on field evaluation system for its members. At least two evaluations have to be filed every year for each official.

To do so, you can ask to a good head referee or a good back judge to assess other members of his/her team. If possible, this referee or judge is then asked to stay with the members of that same team by assigning them to other tasks (maybe two other games), in order to have a good knowledge of these officials.

10. ADMINISTRATION

Each region must nominate a head referee to administrate the organisation and implementation of stages, exams, practical evaluations, rules interpretation and officials' registration with the provincial association.

11. OFFICIAL'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE FLAG FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS 5 v. 5

Please write legibly (print).

1. Name: _____

2. Address: _____

3. City/Town: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

4. Phone: (at work) _____ (at home) _____

5. Birth date: (dd/mm/yy) _____

6. E-mail: _____

7. Official's experience: Total: _____ years

8. Number of years as: ▪ head referee _____
 ▪ linesman _____

9. Number of officiated games. Complete the following table:

| League | Current year | 2 previous years | | Position |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|--|----------|
| Senior | | | | R |
| | | | | L |
| Intermediate | | | | R |
| | | | | L |
| Other | | | | R |
| | | | | L |

10. List the playoffs and finals you've worked at during the two previous years. Please indicate the position.

| Games | Year | Position |
|-------|------|----------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

12. OFFICIALS EVALUATION GUIDELINES

THE PERFECT OFFICIAL

1. The official has a thorough knowledge of the rules (he/she knows what they mean).
2. He/she is at the right place, at the right time (choice of position).
3. He/she respects the game's pace.
4. He/she sees everything but is not seen.
5. He/she takes clear and fair decision, do not avoid tough calls.
6. Knows thoroughly the approved techniques and signals and accept them without restriction.
7. Demonstrates a consistency in his/her interventions.
8. He/she uses good judgement and sense instead of sticking to the letter of the law.
9. He/she demonstrates intelligence and cooperation in the teamwork.
10. He/she is in 100% physical condition with an impeccable appearance.
11. He/she personally demonstrates great honesty.