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Football Officials Manual
For Chain Crews and Clock Operators



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Football Officials Manual For Chain Crews and Clock Operators

Texas Association of Sports Officials



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PURPOSE OF MANUAL

The manual of football officiating is designed to make available to each and every TASO official, detailed information regarding the officiating techniques which, through evaluation and studied development, have come to be recognized as accepted standards of officiating performance.

This manual is an authoritative guide to the best in football officiating, hopeful that it will assist all officials in maintaining their effectiveness and making ready use of their potentialities.

This manual is designed to provide the best possible officiating techniques for TASO officials working Texas High School Football. TASO officials are expected to use the mechanics specified in this manual and are not authorized to deviate in any manner.

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SUMMARY OF APPROVED 2022 MANUAL CHANGES

PLAY (25/40-SECOND) CLOCK CHART: Updated to reflect the UIL exception change to utilize a 25-second play clock after Touchdowns and Free Kick plays. (SECTION 3. – ARTICLE 2)

NEW SIGNAL: Added new signal #28 to use when signaling an illegal blindside block.
(Page 16)

SECTION 1. STANDARD UNIFORM

ARTICLE 1. CHAIN CREW TRADITIONAL UNIFORM:

It is essential that all TASO football officials dress in a consistent manner. All members of a chain crew must be similarly dressed. For all varsity games the uniform worn by all members of the chain crew shall include the following:

- A. **SHIRT** – A solid white, collared shirt shall be worn by all members of the chain crew. Long-sleeved shirts may be worn based on weather conditions, and it is recommended that all members of the chain crew wear either short or long-sleeved shirts. Shirts may include the approved TASO logo or logo of the local chapter.
- B. **PANTS** - The Pants shall be full length black pants. The pants must include a one and one-quarter inch white strip on the seam of the leg, must not be cuffed, and must continue to the shoe without a break.
- C. **SOCKS** – When wearing approved pants, officials will wear black socks
- D. **SHOES AND BELT** – Predominantly black shoes with black laces and appropriate soles or cleats. A black belt, a minimum of one and one-quarter inches and a maximum of two inches in width shall be worn.
- E. **CAP** - Brooklyn style solid black cap with traditional narrow white piping (without emblem or numbers, other than small manufacturer's logo) shall be worn by all members of the chain crew. The cap shall be oriented with the bill facing forward and squarely covering the forehead of the official. For state championship games only, the logo of a sanctioning body may appear on the front two panels.
- F. **CHAIN CLIP** – All members of the chain crew should be equipped with a chain clip, and it is recommended that all carry those clips onto the field. While the game's Head Line-Judge will often supply a clip to the crew, be prepared for any potential issue.
- G. **JACKETS** – Jackets are allowed in inclement weather. If worn, it is recommended jackets be black and should be free of team logos, especially those teams competing in that game.
- H. **UNDERSHIRTS** - All undershirts which show shall be white.
- I. **INCLEMENT WEATHER** – Cold weather attire, such as gloves or head coverings, shall be black.
- J. **VESTS** – Some venues will provide vests for the chain crew to wear during the game. Vests shall be worn at all times when the crew is on the field and shall be the outermost layer of clothing.
- K. **OTHER EQUIPMENT** – Members of the chain crew should consider carrying zip ties, white trainers tape and a bean bag onto the field. The Lines-person should have these but it is always good to be prepared for potential problems.

ARTICLE 2. SUMMER UNIFORM:

A "summer uniform" is approved in accordance with Chapter policy, but all in the chain crew must wear the same uniform. A "summer uniform" is a traditional uniform with black shorts with a 1 ¼ inch white stripe down the side. Black socks will be worn with the black shorts.

ARTICLE 3. UNIFORM CHECK:

Check your uniform and equipment before leaving home and again check each other's uniform prior to the game. Have shoes polished and entire uniform neat and clean.

ARTICLE 4. CLOCK OPERATOR UNIFORM:

Assigned clock operators shall dress in business casual attire. Shirts bearing the approved TASO or chapter logos are recommended. A lanyard with current TASO ID Card should also be worn.

ARTICLE 5. TASO-FOOTBALL APPROVAL:

All uniforms meeting the above specifications are approved by the TASO-Football Division board of directors.

SECTION 2. CHAIN CREW PROCEDURES

NOTE: *In this manual, the term “Lines-person” refers to the line of scrimmage official that is working the sideline with the chains, opposite the press box. That official will normally be the Head Line-Judge. For games using a crew of 7 officials, it refers to either the Head Line-Judge or the Line Judge that is working that sideline.*

ARTICLE 1. BEFORE THE GAME:

Prior to Game Day

No later than two days before game day, The Head Line-Judge of the crew working the game should contact each member of the chain crew to confirm their attendance and discuss travel arrangements, if needed. If the game officials are assigned from your chapter, the crew will often invite the chain crew to arrive early, dress and attend the crew’s pregame conference. If not contacted by the officials, members of the chain crew should contact the Head Line-Judge or Referee and confirm their attendance and arrival plans.

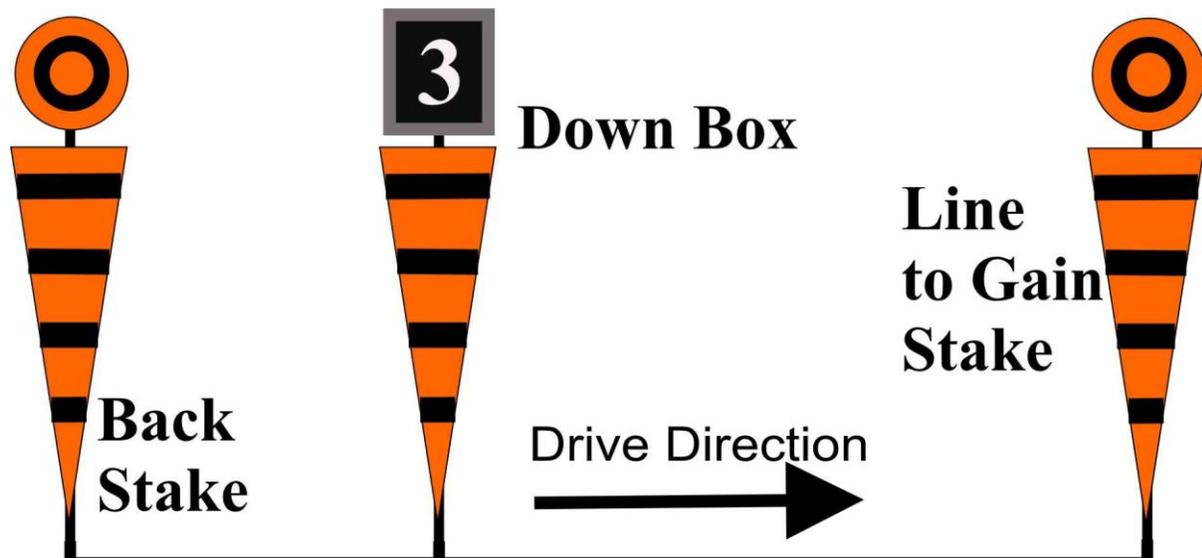
Arriving at the Game Site

The chain crew is an extension of the officiating crew and your arrival at the stadium will create an impression not just of you but of the entire crew. If dressing at the stadium, proper attire is business casual. Shorts, t-shirts, sweat pants, etc. are not appropriate dress for arrival or departure after the game. The chain crew should be dressed and ready to take the field 30 minutes prior to kickoff, so plan your arrival accordingly.

Before the Game

The entire chain crew should enter and leave the field together, along with the game officials, before the game, at intermission and after the game. Locate the chain equipment, which should be on the sideline opposite the press box, and inspect all pieces to ensure they are in good condition and working order. Ensure the chain is free of kinks and pay close attention to its connection to the markers. If there are any indications that problems may develop, address them before the game. The Head Line-Judge (along with the Line Judge for a Crew of 7) will meet with the crew on the sideline and will assist with equipment inspection. During this time the Lines-person will review procedures and expectations as well as measurements, penalty enforcements and other game situations. The down box operator will inspect the down box to ensure it works properly. After inspection ensure the chains are the proper length. Place one stake on the back side (closest to the nearest goal) of one of the 5-yard lines and stretch the chains. Once fully extended, the other marker should be on the back side of the line 10 yards away (15 yards for six player games). The chain measurement should be completed using two different sets of five-yard lines to compensate for a poorly marked field. After confirming the correct length, check that the chain is taped at its midpoint. Place the two markers together then pull the chains to find its midpoint. If tape is already on the chain, ensure it is in the proper location. If not, remove the old tape and place new tape around the chain at the correct spot. The tape is important to determine if a five-yard penalty will result in a first down. If the down box is behind the tape (between the back stake and the tape) the five-yard penalty will not result in a first down. That is important information for the officials and the teams when determining whether to accept or decline a penalty. Move the down box through a progression of downs to ensure it works properly.

ARTICLE 2. CREW SIZE AND DUTIES:



Crews of 3

One member will hold the Back Stake, one will hold the Line to Gain stake and the third will hold the Down Box. The official on the down box will also be responsible for placement of the chain clip after each first down when the chains are reset.

When placing the clip with a Crew of 3, the down box will mark the spot of the ball when a first down is gained. The back stake will then be placed immediately behind the down box and the line to gain stake will then stretch the chains to their full length. Once the chains are set, the back stake holder will hold the down box and the box holder will then set the chain clip.

Crews of 4

Two officials will work the chains, one on the back stake and one on the line to gain stake. One will work the down box with the fourth official responsible for the clip.

Crews of 5

Same responsibilities as a Crew of 4, with the fifth official responsible for the Auxiliary Box, which is located on the press box sideline.

ARTICLE 3. DURING THE GAME:

The chain crew will observe the Lines-person, alert for signals that a first down was gained and that the chains should be moved. The down box should always be placed first, at the spot indicated by the Lines-person. That spot is the forward most point of the ball. Once the down box is set, the back stake will be placed immediately behind the down box. The line to gain stake holder will then pull the chain taught, ensuring there are no kinks, and place that stake. It is recommended the back stake holder place a foot on the chain before it is pulled taught to avoid the back stake being pulled out of place when the chain is stretched. Once the chains are set the chain clip will then be connected to the chain at the appropriate five yard marking.

When setting the chains after a touchback, the line to gain stake holder should set that stake at the back side of the line to gain, usually the 30- or 35-yard line, followed by the spot stake holder stretching the chain backward. This action clearly sets the line to gain on the back side of the appropriate yard line and reduces the chance for measurements. Once the chains are set, the down box will be placed immediately in front of the spot stake.

After each down, the chains and down box will remain in place until instructed to move by the Lines-person. The chain crew shall be attentive and observant and communicate with each other when instructed to move by the Lines-person. If any member of the chain crew observes a penalty flag or change of possession during a down, communicate with the other members of the chain crew and remain in place until instructed to move by the Lines-person. If the Lines-person is not aware of a penalty flag and instructs the chain crew to move, the crew should inform the Lines-person of the flag and wait for further instruction.

When the chain crew is instructed to move, the down box should be the first to mark the succeeding spot, with the rest of the crew setting up based on the proper placement of the down box. At the end of a down, the down box holder will move to the succeeding spot when instructed by the Lines-person. After the down box is set to the new spot, the down box holder will then change the box to the proper down. Consistently changing the down only after reaching the new spot will help reduce any confusion among game officials and reduce the possibility of lost downs. It is recommended the down box holder confirm with the Lines-person that the box is correct (e.g. "third down" or "three on the box", allowing that official to maintain focus on the field of play).

Scrimmage Downs Without the Chains

When the line to gain is the goal line, the chains are not needed and shall be moved away from the sideline and placed on the ground. The stake holders will remain far off the sideline while assisting the down box holder, noting his position should action cause him to move during the down, losing his spot. Only the down box will be used during try downs and the chains will remain on the ground.

Free Kick Downs

For free kick downs the down box and chains are not required and should be placed on the ground, far from the sideline, usually between the receiving team's 20-30-yard lines. The chain crew shall position themselves well off the sideline and be alert to the end of the down, prepared to collect the chains and down box and hustle to the succeeding spot, quickly setting the down box and chains.

End of the First and Third Periods

When the first and third periods end, the down box will be set to the succeeding spot after the final down of the period. The game officials will record the down, distance, position of the ball and placement of the chain clip. The Lines-person should place a second clip on the chain to mark the position of the down box. The Lines-person will then grab the chain at the five-yard clip and instruct the stake holders to rotate positions and then move quickly to the opposite end of the field. The Lines-person will place the clip on the appropriate five-yard line and instruct the stake holders to extend the chain. The down box holder will wait for the game officials to place the ball at its new position and set the down box at the forward most point of the ball, confirming that placement is consistent with the clip that was placed by the Lines-person to mark the position before the down box and chains were moved.

If the final down of the period results in a first down, and at the discretion of the game officials, the chains and down box may be set after the ball has been positioned at the opposite end of the field. The crew shall set the down box first and then set the chains, following the same procedure as for any first down.

Measurements

When game officials announce a measurement, the down box holder will move to a position immediately behind the line to gain stake and advance the box to the next down. The Lines-person will grab the chain at the clip and instruct the chain crew to move onto the field toward the position of the ball. The line to gain stake holder will then hand the stake to the Umpire and the Lines-person will place the clip at the spot indicated by the Line Judge. The Lines-person will then announce he is ready and both stakes will extend the chain to its full length.

If the measurement confirms the line to gain was achieved and the Referee signals first down for Team A, the stake holders will move the chain back to the sideline. The Lines-person will indicate the position of the ball, the down box will be set to that position and the chain will be set as for other first downs.

If the measurement occurs after first, second or third down, and the line to gain was not achieved, the Lines-person will grab the chain at the clip and move with the stake holders back to the sideline. The Lines-person will then place the clip at the appropriate five-yard line and instruct the stake holders to extend the chain. The Lines-person will then indicate the spot of the ball and the down box will move to that position.

If the measurement occurs after fourth down and the line to gain was not achieved, the stake holders will move the chain back to the sideline. The Lines-person will indicate the correct spot of the ball and the down box will move to that position and change the box to indicate first down. The line to gain stake will now become the spot stake and will be placed immediately behind the down box.

Chain Clips

The chain clip is an important tool for the proper use of the chain and its use throughout the entire game is never an option. The clip ensures the chains can be reset in situations when they are moved incorrectly or because game action is approaching and the stakes are moved for safety reasons. The Lines-person should provide a clip for use by the chain crew during the game, but it is recommended that members of the chain crew also carry a clip onto the field. This provides for instances when the clip becomes damaged or inoperable during the game. It also provides additional equipment for the use of two clips, which is preferable to the use of one.

Placing the Chain Clip

The chains and down box shall be relocated to a new position when a new series of downs is awarded. Once the chains are set, the clip will be placed on the chain before the ball is next snapped. The chain clip is placed at the spot marking the back side (closest to Team A's goal line) of the nearest five-yard line in advance of the back stake. For example, if a new series of downs begins on Team A's 22-yard line, the



clip will be placed at the back side of Team A's 25-yard line. If a new series of downs begins on Team B's 38-yard line the clip will be placed on the back side (nearest Team A's goal line) of Team B's 35-yard line. When the clip is set, confirm that the indicator on the clip is set to the correct yard line. Ideally, crews will set the chain clip while the chains are on the sideline so the clip can be placed at the exact spot of the five-yard line. Once the clip is set, the down box and chains will be moved two yards off the sideline. The clip should not be set with the chain off the sideline as placement of the clip would not be accurate. After initial setup for each new series, the chains and down box will always be held two yards off the sideline. If the game is being played on an artificial surface, some provide square markings two yards off the sideline at the major five-yard lines. If working on such a field it is acceptable to use these markings to set the chain clip.

Using Two Chain Clips

The use of two chain clips should be standard practice for every game. This method adds a level of protection for times when the chains are moved but developments require they be returned to the previous location.

When a new series of downs is awarded, the clip is set using the method described above. The clip that is attached to the chain from the previous series of downs will remain on the chain and a second clip, not currently in use, is attached to the chain at the appropriate spot. After the ball is snapped for the next down, the clip used from for the previous series of downs will be removed from the chain. The down box holder (Chain Crew of 3) or the Clip Operator will place the removed clip in a pocket for use on the next series of downs. This rotation of chain clips will continue throughout the game.

Auxiliary Box

Some stadiums provide an Auxiliary box for use during the game. The auxiliary box is operated on the press box side, 2 yards off the sideline, opposite the chain and down box. The auxiliary box will hold the previous line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped for the succeeding down. When the ball is snapped, the auxiliary box holder will hustle to the current line of scrimmage and set the auxiliary box in line with the down box. That position will be held until the next snap, when the auxiliary box holder will hustle to the current line of scrimmage and spot the marker. This sequence will continue for every down throughout the game, including try and free kick downs.

At the start of each half, the auxiliary box will be set at the free kick yard line. The chains and down box on the opposite sideline will not be used. When the ball is snapped for the succeeding down (or is kicked if there was a penalty and the free kick is replayed) the auxiliary box is moved quickly to the current line of scrimmage and set in line with the down box across the field. On downs that end in a score, the auxiliary box will hold the spot until the ball is snapped for the try (or free kick if the score was a successful field goal or a safety). When snapped for a try, the auxiliary box is quickly moved to the spot of the snap. After the try down, the auxiliary box holder will hold that spot while making note of the position of the free kick, and then move quickly to that position when the ball is kicked. Unlike the chains and down box, the auxiliary box is active for every down of the game and is never placed on the ground between plays.

Sideline Presence

The chain crew is an important part of the officiating crew and a professional presence on the sideline is required at all times. While on the field, members of the chain crew shall remain impartial with a focus on the action on the field. The crew should hustle when moving to new positions and will not comment, cheer or discuss calls or actions by the game officials or discuss rules or calls with coaches or players. Cell phones should be left in the locker room and should

not be visible during the game. Cell phones cause distractions and the chain crew must remain alert and aware of game situations to avoid errors and injuries to players, coaches, officials and themselves. If action is approaching your sideline, move the stakes away from the sideline and drop them to the ground while moving yourself away from the action. When moving up and down the sideline, a simple announcement that the chains are coming through will usually clear the way. If having trouble with teams allowing room for proper placement and movement of the equipment, inform the Lines-person, who will then communicate with the team and address the problem.

During the game, stakes should be held straight and parallel to the sideline. They should continue to be held during time outs or delays in the action. The chain crew should remain on their feet while on the field, presenting a professional appearance throughout the game. Kneeling or sitting during breaks in play are not acceptable.

SECTION 3. CLOCK OPERATOR PROCEDURES

Consistent and correct clock operation is essential to proper game management. Clock operators must maintain focus on the game and be aware of situations that require clocks to start, stop, reset or continue running. Clock operators should reduce distractions during the game, such as conversations, cell phones or other activities that direct attention away from the field. As impartial members of the officiating crew, clock operators should not comment, cheer, or discuss rules or calls on the field with others while in the press box.

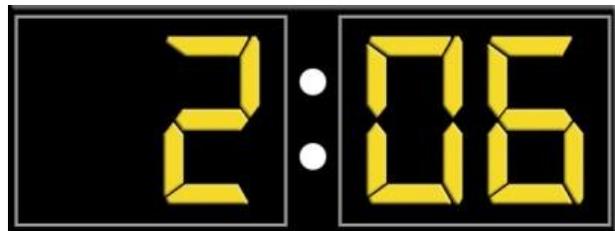
Arriving at the Game Site

Game and play clock operators should arrive no later than one hour before kickoff. Both clock operators will report to the official's dressing room together, one hour prior to kickoff. That discussion should include general timing procedures for both the game and play clocks, communication between the game officials and clock operators if adjustments are required or equipment becomes inoperable and expected signals by the Referee and other game officials. A review of the 10-second subtraction rules, relevant signals and communication with the game clock operator should also be included.

ARTICLE 1. THE GAME CLOCK

Prior to the game

After meeting with the game officials one hour prior to kickoff, report directly to the press box and locate the game clock. Review the clock controls and practice setting the time (12:00 and 28:00). Identify the number of clocks visible from the field and test the start/stop control to ensure it is working properly. Inquire with game administrators if there have been recent issues with the clock and identify the process and contact person in case there is a malfunction during the game. If the clock is equipped with a horn, turn it off, if possible. If the clock displays tenths of a second, turn that feature off, if possible. Inquire if the clock displays a countdown during charged team time outs and turn that function off, if possible. If the Referee is equipped with a stadium microphone, can you hear it in the press box? If not, or if the microphone fails, how will the game officials communicate with the clock operator? It is recommended that game clock operators have binoculars available for occasions the Referee is signaling time to set on the game clock. Be aware of the correct time of day and start the game clock countdown to kickoff as soon as testing is complete.



During the game

Ensure the game clock is set to 12:00 for the start of each period. Many game clock operators will also enter scoreboard information such as down, distance, yard line, etc. Entering this information is always secondary to clock operation and care must be given that this duty does not detract from the operators focus and attention to the field and game officials. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clock.

On all free kicks, start the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down. In this case, the clock will not start. The nearest official(s) will signal the legal touching of the ball (S2) by indicating that the clock should start. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the

receivers in the end zone. Usually, this will occur when a receiver carries the ball out of the end zone. It could occur on a muff or fumble, however. In any case, the officials positioned on the goal line will be indicating that the clock should start (S2).

Under NCAA football playing rules the official who declares the ball dead will be the first official to signal a time-out (S3) when the team in possession of the ball meets the requirements for first down. Key yourself on him as the clock will usually stop on long gainers. Any official may signal a team time-out (S3), so be alert to stop the clock. The clock is not to be stopped on plays near a boundary line unless an official so signals. Many times, the ball goes out of bounds after having been declared dead in the field of play and no time-out legally occurs. If a pass is touched or caught out of bounds, the incompleteness signal (S10) will stop the clock.

Game officials and clock operators are to be sure that a time-out is indicated and the clock is stopped under the following circumstances:

- Whenever a team or an official's time-out is charged.
- After any score.
- When a live ball goes out of bounds.
- On a penalty.
- When either team is awarded a first down.
- Following an incomplete pass.
- At the discretion of the Referee.

After the clock has been stopped, it will be started again on the Referee's "Start the Clock" (S2) signal, or if no such signal is given, the game clock will be started on the snap, or legal touching of a free kick. In case of a pile-up anywhere on the field, be alert, an official may stop the clock (S3) until the congestion is cleared. The Referee then may start the clock again before the ready for play signal. The game clock should not be stopped if the 25-second clock is started in error.

The intermission between halves is 28:00 and the clock should be set at the conclusion of play in the second period. The game officials will move to the end zone and when the field is clear the Referee will signal to start the clock (S2).

It is recommended that game clock operators keep a written record of each time the clock is stopped. If the clock is stopped, be alert that no time has run off the clock during a false start. If it did, the clock operator should be quick to correct the error, which does not require direction from the Referee, and the written record is an important tool for this process.

Be alert for the winding signal (S2) from the Back Judge at times the Referee fails to start the clock. If the line to gain is achieved and the clock is stopped only for the first down (play ends in bounds), be alert for the Referee's signal to start the game clock as soon as the Umpire spots the ball. The Referee will not wait for the chains to be set before starting the game clock.

Field goals should not take more than 5-seconds and clock operators should try not to stop the clock with one second or less at the end of the first half. Be alert in the final minute of each half for the potential for a 10-second subtraction. Clock operators should recognize situations when the subtraction may apply and be alert for signals from the Referee. The **R** extends both arms forward & slightly above shoulders with palms facing out and will flash all fingers on both hands towards the press box to signal a 10-second runoff is needed. This could be used when no

microphone or other communication is available with the clock operator. In the final two minutes of each half, a completed penalty by a team ahead in the score, or either team if the score is tied, the offended team will have the option to start the game clock at the snap.

If any period is extended for an untimed down, the clock will read 0:00 until a down is free of any occurrence that will cause the period to be extended. During extra periods, the game clock will read 0:00. For the first extra period the scoreboard quarter will read 5. For the second extra period the quarter will read 6, continuing that progression until the game is declared over.

ARTICLE 2. THE PLAY CLOCK

Prior to the Game

After meeting with the game officials one hour prior to kickoff, report directly to the press box and locate the play clock. Review the clock controls and practice setting the clock to both 40 and 25 seconds, with the clock both starting and remaining set with each change. Ensure that play clocks in each end zone are working properly. Inquire with game administrators if there have been recent issues with the clock and identify the process and contact person in case there is a malfunction during the game.



During the Game

Play clocks, when both are operable, are the official delay of game time piece and are under the direct supervision of the Back Judge. The play clock will be automatically set to 40 seconds at the end of each play, with the covering official's signal marking the end of the play and designating the start of the play clock. Those signals are stop the clock (S3), Dead ball (S7) and Incomplete pass (S10).

BASIC PREMISE: The play clock will **ALWAYS** start at 40 seconds unless there is an *administrative* stoppage.

REFER TO THE FOLLOWING TABLE FOR SITUATIONS WHEN THE PLAY CLOCK WILL BE SET AT 25 SECONDS:

SITUATION	PLAY CLOCK	REFEREE SIGNAL
Administration of a penalty	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
At the start of a period	25 seconds	Chop
Measurement	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Offensive (Team A) Helmet Off	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Offensive (Team A) Injury	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Defense (Team B) Awarded a First Down	25 seconds	Chop
After Any Kick down	25 seconds	Chop
After Any Score	25 seconds	Chop
Start of a Team's Possession in an Extra Period (OT)	25 seconds	Chop
Inadvertent Whistle	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Timeout by Either Team	25 seconds	Chop
Timeout by Official	25 seconds	Chop or Wind
Touchback (except on Free Kick Plays)	25 seconds	Chop

Try Down (PAT)	25 seconds	Chop
Period Extension	25 seconds	Chop

The play clock is set to 40 seconds and will start when the ball is declared dead in the field of play on a down from scrimmage (S7). The play clock starts even if the game clock is stopped for a first down. After an incomplete pass, the 40 second clock will start when the covering official signals incomplete pass (S10). When the ball is declared dead out of bounds on a play from scrimmage, the 40 second clock will start when the covering official signals to stop the clock (S3). In the event the 40 second clock is running and the ball is not ready to be snapped after 20 seconds into the count, the Referee shall declare a time out and signal that the play clock is set to 25 seconds. The Referee will then give the ready for play signal, starting the play clock.

If the Referee wants the play clock reset, regardless of whether or not it is running, he will signal the play clock operator to reset the play clock. For 40-seconds, the referee will signal with both palms open in an over-the-head pumping motion. For 25-seconds, the referee will signal with one open palm in an over-the-head pumping motion. There is usually no need to stop the game clock to reset the play clock unless the play clock operator does not reset upon the Referee's signal. The play clock should be reset to 25-seconds when, through no fault of the players, the ball is not ready for play and the play clock has run down below 25-seconds.

If the game clock is running with less than 40 seconds when the play clock would normally start, the play clock shall be turned off. If a penalty is enforced with less than 25 seconds remaining on the game clock, and the game clock will start on the ready for play signal, the play clock shall be turned off.

If the play clock does not start on time, it should be started as soon as the operator is aware of the error. If the play clock continues to malfunction, or if the operator continues to set, start and stop the play clock inaccurately, the Referee may direct that the clocks be turned off and the Back Judge will administer the clock on the field.

When the play clock reaches zero and there is a foul for delay of game, the play clock will remain at zero until the penalty is enforced, then set to 25 seconds and started on the Referee's ready for play signal. If the play clock is approaching zero at the snap or free kick, and there is no foul for delay of game, the play clock should be quickly set to 40 seconds and ready to start when the ball becomes dead.

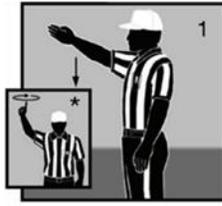
When the game clock is stopped for a player injury or a helmet coming off during play, the play clock operator should be aware which team caused the clock to stop. For these two situations the play clock will be set to 40 seconds and will start on the Referee's ready for play signal if the player was on defense. If the player was on offense the play clock will be set to 25 seconds and will start on the Referee's ready for play signal. If the team on defense takes a charged team time out after a helmet infraction to allow the player to remain in the game, the play clock will be set to 25 seconds as it is after every charged team time out.

While the game clock is not used during extra periods, the play clock will be used for each down.

APPROVED SIGNALS



Official Football Signals



1
Ready for play
*Untimed down



2
Start the clock



3
Stop the clock



4
TV/radio timeout



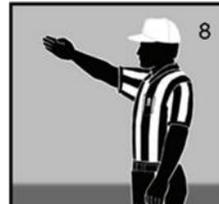
5
Touchdown
Field Goal



6
Safety



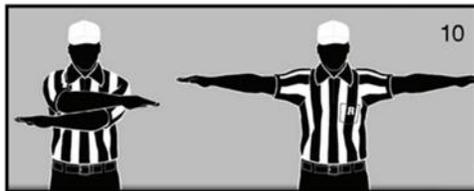
7
Dead-ball foul/
touchback
(move side to side)



8
First down



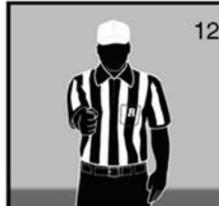
9
Loss of down



10
Incomplete pass/unsuccessful try or
field goal/penalty declined/
coin toss option deferred



11
Legal touching



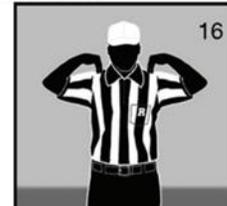
12
Inadvertent whistle



13
Disregard flag



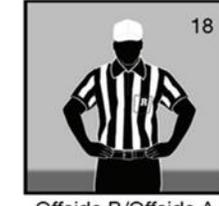
14
End of period



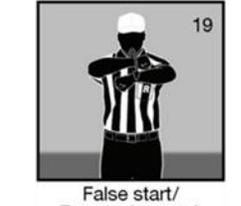
16
Illegal touching



17
Uncatchable pass



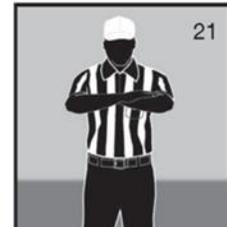
18
Offside B/Offside A
or B on kickoff



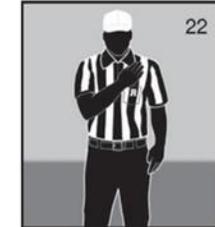
19
False start/
Encroachment A
Illegal formation



20
Illegal motion (1 hand)
Illegal shift (2 hands)



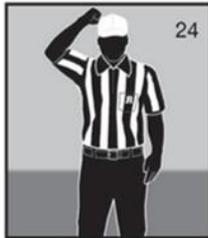
21
Delay of game



22
Substitution
infraction



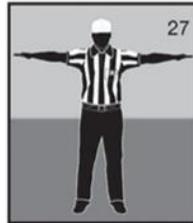
23
Equipment violation



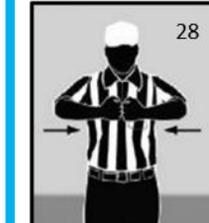
24
Targeting



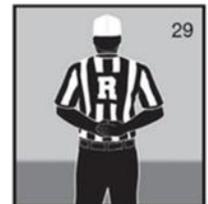
25
Horse-collar



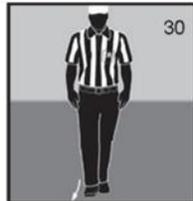
27
Unsportsmanlike
conduct



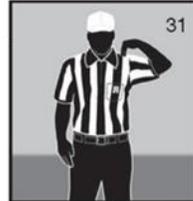
28
Illegal blindside block



29
Sideline interference
Note: Face press box
when giving signal.



30
Running into or
roughing the kicker
or holder



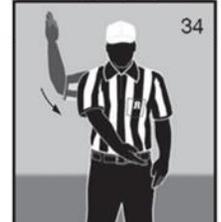
31
Illegal batting/kicking
(for illegal kicking, follow
with a point toward foot)



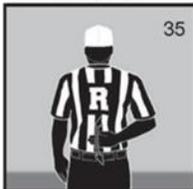
32
Illegal fair catch



33
Pass interference
Kick-catching
interference



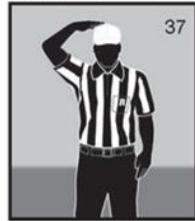
34
Roughing the passer



35
Illegal pass
Illegal forward handing
Note: Face press box
when giving signal.



36
Intentional grounding



37
Ineligible downfield
on pass



38
Personal foul



39
Clipping



40
Block below the waist
Illegal block



41
Chop block



42
Holding
Obstructing
Illegal use of the
hands or arms



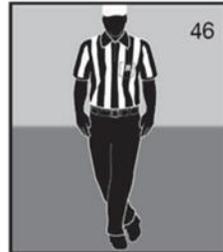
43
Illegal block
in the back



44
Helping the runner
Interlocked blocking



45
Grasping of
face mask or
helmet opening



46
Tripping



47
Disqualification