

Umpire Concentration Keys

Pre-Game

1. Visit each dressing room 1 hour 15 minutes before game time with Referee.
2. Verify with the head coach that all equipment is legal and that all players know what to do if their equipment becomes illegal. Talk with the trainer about anything unusual that needs to be looked at. Meet with the Trainer and record numbers of players with any special tape requirements, braces, cast's and if possible, check while in training room. Remind him that for 2006, all face shields must be clear. Sports goggles can be of any color.
3. Arrive on the field 60 minutes before game time to spot check player equipment. Instruct Kicker for each team on the kick mechanics that will be used and the 1" kicking tee requirement. Meet with the Special Teams Coach to get down lineman numbers on punts.
4. Prior to the teams leaving the field, conduct equipment checks and address any equipment issues.
5. Be at the 50 yard line opposite the press box 4 minutes before game time. At 3 minutes, move to the middle of the field with the Referee for the coin toss.
6. Remain with the Referee for the toss and record the result by standing between the referee and vesting team lead captain. While R finishes us with the captains, retrieve the coin to give it back when the captains return to their bench area.

Kicks

1. Free Kicks

- A. Confer with the Referee on penalty assessments.
- B. Move up the press box side of the field at the numbers to the kicker's 35 yard line. Position will be on the sideline until the Red Hat has 30 seconds remaining on TV timeout.
- C. Count kickers, acknowledge with the Back Judge and remind kicker to have 4 players on each side of the ball when he kicks. 2 players from each team can wear white towels 4X12 – side or front only. Make sure the kicking tee is legal – 1".
- D. Think short free kick. If so, move to opposite press box side of the field and remain on the 35-yard line, K's restraining line.
- E. Know blocking rules.
- F. Observe action on the kicker and with an on-side kick, did the ball touch the ground prior to going beyond the receivers restraining line.
- G. Flow down field to the 50 yard line on the inbounds line opposite the press box observing blocks in front of runner. If the ball was kicked deep, continue to flow to the 45 – 40 yard line.
- H. Don't get too close, stay on the inbounds line and box in the action.
- I. Don't be in a hurry to retrieve the ball. Let the action dissolve. Verify the new ball is correct.
- J. When B is award a 1st down, stay over the ball until R releases us to take initial position.

2. Punts

- A. Count offensive players. Signal to the Referee.
- B. Know the ineligible.
- C. See snapper's hands on the ball and watch snapper's head for improper movement.
- D. Watch action by nose guard on snapper. Look for 1 second foul.
- E. Line up to the wide side 5 yards deep. After the snap move up slowly to LOS.
- F. When punt is away, be aware of holding. Make sure play has disintegrated on the LOS before turning and drifting down field.
- G. Be aware of blocks in front of runner and blocks on defenseless players.
- H. React to muffed/fumbled snap, especially if a pass is thrown. (Get to the line of scrimmage.) Know if ineligible are down field.
- I. Look at the BIG PICTURE!
- J. After the punt with the ball airborne, try to make any penalty PSK. (More than 3 yards beyond LOS).

3. Field Goals and PATs

- A. Count offensive players. Signal to the Referee.
- B. Know the ineligible.
- C. Line up 5 yards deep out of the line of the field goal kicker on the press box side of the field.
- D. Move to the press box side of the field on obvious PATs with toes on the Goal Line.
- E. See the snapper's hands on the ball and watch snapper's head for improper movement.
- F. Watch action by nose guard on snapper. Look for 1 second foul.
- G. Watch for interlocked legs on linemen other than center and two guards.
- H. React to muffed/fumbled snap, especially if a pass is thrown. (Get to the line of scrimmage.) Know if ineligible are down field.
- I. Be alert for defensive lineman pulling offensive lineman out of the way for defense to shoot gap.
- J. Leverage. Know what is legal and illegal.
- K. On swinging gate formation, the side judge will remain in this normal position.
- L. No D player may leap and land on any player.

All Plays

1. Always know the down and distance.
2. Always know field position of the ball (on or between the inbounds lines.)
3. Count the offensive players. Signal to the Referee.
4. Look to make sure that only 1 offensive back has a 4" X 12" white towel - front or side. 1 offensive lineman, white with no restrictions.
5. Vary your position between the offensive guards and away from the tight-end when possible.
6. Think false start.
7. See snapper's hands on the ball before the snap.
8. Key on the center and 2 guards. Be able to explain their actions after the play.
9. As the ball moves down field, maintain inside-out triangle with flank officials. Pursue to the numbers. If the ball is inside the numbers to side-line, move 5 - 7 yards downfield at the numbers to receive new ball for play.
10. Know the clock status.
11. Watch for offensive false starts, encroachment, and defensive contact in the neutral zone.
12. Listen for disconcerting signals by the defense. (Talk to the captain.)
13. Be ready to rule on fumbles. Bean bag fumbles only if you see the ball come loose.
14. Help on 4th down fumbles and be prepared to rule on:
 - A. Who fumbled?
 - B. Who recovered?
 - C. Direction of the fumble.
 - D. Clock status.

Running plays

1. Position
 - A. Between offensive guards, 5 yards off the ball.
 - B. Vary alignment.
 - C. Do not be shoulder to shoulder with linebackers. If linebackers are in a tight formation, stand upright behind them.
2. See snapper's hands on the ball.
3. See center, guards, and tackle on LJ side.
4. Key on the guards. They will take you to the point of attack. (Don't watch the QB.) Key more on man on man blocks –vs- double team.
5. On short yardage plays, key on the center/nose guard action.
6. Do not focus on the ball carrier.
7. Watch for illegal action at or in front of the point of attack. May have to clean up.

8. Flow with the play. Be aware of chop block.
9. When play is over, be in position to spot or retrieve ball. Don't be in a rush. WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!

Passing Plays

1. Position:
 - A. Between guard to guard and 5 yards off the ball.
 - B. Opposite the tight end. (Do not make this a habit in obvious passing situations.)
 - C. You might cheat up a yard.
 - D. Do not be shoulder to shoulder with linebackers.
2. See snapper's hands on the ball.
3. When pass play shows, move to the line quickly with 2 quick steps then glide to the LOS. Move towards the tackles position to better observe the action on offensive lineman and rushing defensive players.
 - A. Be sure no linemen are down field illegally. If so, has the ball left the QB hand? Make it be there!
 - B. If possible, be aware of linebacker action on back through the line.
4. Important: Must turn on passes. With low trajectory passes to the side zone, make eye contact with fellow official on the play, and sell the call by running to the dead ball spot.
5. Screen passes – make sure the receiver caught the ball behind the LOS, if not, there's a strong chance of lineman down field.
6. Shotgun offense – be aware of shuffle pass behind the line of scrimmage and linemen down field.
7. On drop-back action, attempt to get an angle. Make sure hold affects play.
8. Be aware of illegal touching by linemen.
9. Be aware of tipped pass. Use tip signal.
10. When QB runs to the HL side, be able to rule on the QB beyond the LOS.

Hurry Up and No Huddle

1. Hurry up
 - A. Spot the ball. If the ball is located outside the inbounds line, use off-field mechanics to spot the ball. Do not change the ball unless absolutely necessary.
 - B. Know the game clock status and communicate it to the Referee.
 - C. While standing over the ball until released by Referee, tell the center not to snap the ball until the Referee has given the ready for play signal – listen for his whistle.
2. No Huddle
 - A. Same as a huddle offense, only stay over ball longer or until Referee releases you.

Goal Line Situations

1. Communicate with flank officials about the proximity of the goal line going in. Also, the flanks and the Referee when the offense is backed-up against its end zone.
2. Do not signal touchdown. If flanks come running in looking for help and you see the ball in, indicate to them by touching the bill of your cap.
3. Watch for interlocking legs of offensive lineman.
4. From the 5 yard line going in, the Umpire has complete responsibility for the LOS.

Penalty Enforcement

1. Know the rules and penalty enforcement!
2. When reporting fouls, you should know:
 - A. Description of the foul.
 - B. Location of the foul.
 - C. Whether it is the offense or defense.
 - D. Number of the players.
 - E. Live or dead ball.
3. Make sure a ball is on the ground at the dead ball spot.
4. Check to make sure that all flags are covered.
5. Get the captain of the offended team.
6. Stay with the Referee and listen to options.
7. Know the enforcement spot and distance.
8. If penalty is to be enforced, signal to Head Linesman yardage & enforcement spot, walk off the yardage, make eye contact with the Head Linesman, nod, and spot the ball. Line Judge stays at enforcement spot until verified.
9. All spot fouls in the side zones are walked off from the spot of the foul. Any penalty that is over 5 yards, jog to the new spot, then cut at a 90 degree turn to the inbounds line and spot like normal.
10. Always know where the previous spot was for penalty enforcement that may need it.

Holding

1. To be a foul, there must be a visible restriction, visible advantage gained, or a defender put at a disadvantage.
2. Priority 1 must calls: Take downs, tackles, safety fouls (clips, chop blocks, slugs, head shots)
3. Priority 2 sometime calls: Stretched shirts, out of frame grasp, hands to the mask.
4. Priority 3 rarely calls: Face to face dancing, double team, superior legs, no advantage.
5. It must have some effect on the play or it is not a foul.
6. Quickest flags often result in the worst holding calls. Look at it! Wait long enough to be positive that it really is a foul.
7. Twisting, Turning, Hooking, Pulling, Take Down, Un-natural Movement "POINT OF ATTACK"

Point of Attack

1. Points of attack:
 - A. At and behind the line of scrimmage.
 - B. In the intermediate zone (behind the linebackers).
2. Observe actions by offensive linemen as they engage defenders (key on the snapper and 2 guards).
3. Recognize and respond to action at the point of attack.
4. Anticipate illegalities or rules infractions that impact the point of attack.
5. Be aware of the down, distance, line to gain, and field position. This will help to anticipate the play and focus on the point of attack.
6. If you think it's a foul, it isn't! If you know it's a foul, it is! Keep officiating after you call a foul.

Communication

1. Communicate to the Referee the clock status after an injury timeout.
2. Communicating with the Referee on passes to the side zone on the status of the ball. Let him know if the ball is dead out of bounds or ball is live in bounds.
3. Make flank officials aware of problem players so they can communicate to the Head Coach.
4. Make eye and/or verbal contact with flanks when taking progress spots. Relieve Linesman as quickly as possible.

5. Talk to the players. Make them aware that you are there. Practice preventive officiating.

Miscellaneous

1. Don't warn players about fouls. It may come back to haunt you.
2. Never react emotionally to players or coaches.
3. The best officials always seem to have the best mechanics.
4. When you are in the right position, you are apt to make the right call.
5. Make your calls be "Big Time" and have an impact.
6. Coaches can understand when an official doesn't see something. They will never understand an official calling a foul that wasn't there.
7. Concentration is knowing your responsibilities and mentally reviewing them before each down.

Game Possibilities

1. Every runner is a potential fumbler.
2. Most fumbles have the potential for being intercepted and advanced.
3. Every forward pass has the potential for being intercepted and advanced.
4. Every place kick formation has the potential for being a "fake" kick and a run or pass.
5. Every punt has the possibility of being returned "all the way."
6. Every kick off has the possibility of being returned "all the way."
7. Every backward pass gives the defense a chance to intercept the ball and advance it.
8. Every punt or place kick might be blocked.
9. The good, alert official respects the possibilities listed in the above plays and is ready to adjust his coverage to meet changing game conditions.
10. You must be alert. You must concentrate. You must prepare.

Direction to Excellence

1. What did you see?
2. When did you see it?
3. Were you watching the right action?
4. Call what you see! See what you call! Understand Impact of your calls!
5. Be people watchers rather than ball watchers.
6. Officiate in our area of responsibility for all kick returns.
7. Recognize misdirection plays and be a key reader.
8. Be excellent at Dead Ball officiating.
9. Keep officiating after you call a foul.
10. Do not move too fast. Let the play come to you.
11. Umpires must be the hardest working official on the field.
12. Image is everything.
13. Advantage –vs- Disadvantage

Rule Changes for 2006

- Only clear eye shields.
- Kicking tee's – only 1" elevation.
- 20 Minute half-times – can be adjusted with both teams agreeing prior to game.
- Clock to start on ready when Team B is awarded 1st down.
- Wind on kicks when kickers toe touches the ball.

Goals for this game

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Post game notes