

Free Kicks

Positioning and Zones

(Source: CCA Football Officiating Manual Page 102)

Referee: Starting position is in the middle of the field at team B's goal line. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is ready and once the back judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready signal. Be alert for a touchback or a kick beyond the endline. You are responsible for the endline and goal line. You are responsible for knowing if team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

Umpire: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the pressbox on team A's restraining line. You are responsible for your sideline to team A's endline.

Linesman: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the pressbox at team B's goal line. You are responsible for your sideline to team B's endline.

Side judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the pressbox on team B's restraining line.

Line judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the pressbox side at team B's goal line. You are responsible for your sideline to team B's endline.

Field judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the pressbox side at team B's restraining line.

Back judge: After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the pressbox side at team A's restraining line. You are responsible for team A's goal line on any long return.

Free Kick Coverage

Ball Kicked Outside the Hashes

(Source: CCA Football Officiating Manual Pages 104 & 105)

Once the ball is kicked, observing the players is job one. If you concentrate on the flight of the ball, you're likely to miss an illegal block or other actions (muffs, illegal touching, etc.) that may affect the play.

Referee: Wind 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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. Follow the play and observe action in front of the runner. Be alert for a handoff and a reverse.

Umpire and Back judge: Watch illegal action on the kicker. If kick is to your side of the field, move to a spot between the numbers and the hashmark. Move downfield no more than 10 to 15 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action. If kick is to opposite side, move to the hashmark. Move downfield no more than 10 to 15 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.

Linesman and line judge: Wind 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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. When a player who is attempting to catch the ball is between the nine-yard marks and your sideline, take a position ahead of the receiver if possible. The referee will take the runner between the nine-yard marks. When the runner is outside the nine-yard marks, the official on that side will be responsible for the runner. Watch for illegal blocks. When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe action in your area ahead of the runner. When the linesman or line judge retreats to the pylon to cover a deep kick threatening the sideline, the official on the opposite side of the field should go forward.

Side judge and Field judge: You must know if the ball was kicked into the ground before becoming airborne (surprise onside kick). Move no more than 10 to 15 yards toward team B's goal line. That action will give better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and receiving team.

Free Kick Philosophies

The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside. The same plane applies on normal kickoff, but officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.

Illegal block in the back can be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made, or the play results in a touchback and the contact is slight. (Note: Personal fouls should always be called.)

Blocks in the back that are personal fouls should be called regardless of their timing relative to a fair catch or the runner being tackled.

Free Kick Coverage

Ball Kicked to the Middle of the Field

(Source: CCA Football Officiating Manual Page 106)

Once the ball is kicked, observing the players is job one. If you concentrate on the flight of the ball, you're likely to miss an illegal block or other actions (muffs, illegal touching, etc.) that may affect the play.

Referee: Wind 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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. Follow the runner. Be alert for a hand off and a reverse.

Umpire and back judge: Watch illegal action on the kicker. Move to the hashmark on your side. Move downfield no more than 10 to 15 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.

Linesman and line judge: Wind 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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. Follow the runner. Watch for illegal blocks.

Side judge and field judge: You must know if the ball was kicked into the ground before becoming airborne (surprise onside kick). Move no more than 10 to 15 yards toward team B's goal line. That action will give better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and receiving team.

Free Kick Philosophies

The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside. The same plane applies on normal kickoff, but officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.

Illegal block in the back can be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made, or the play results in a touchback and the contact is slight. (Note: Personal fouls should always be called.)

Blocks in the back that are personal fouls should be called regardless of their timing relative to a fair catch or the runner being tackled.

Onside Kick

Positioning and Zones

(Source: CCA Football Officiating Manual Page108)

Referee: Starting position is in the middle of the field at team B's goal line. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is ready and once the back judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready signal.

Umpire: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the pressbox on team A's restraining line.

Linesman: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the pressbox, midway between the two restraining lines.

Side judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the pressbox on team B's restraining line.

Line judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the pressbox side, midway between the two restraining lines.

Field judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the pressbox side at team B's restraining line.

Back judge: After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the pressbox side at team A's restraining line.

Onside Kick Coverage

(Source: CCA Football Officiating Manual Page110)

Referee: Be prepared if team A kicks deep instead of onside.

Umpire and back judge: Treat team A's restraining line as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside. If the kick is to your side, you are responsible for touching by either team. If the kick is to the opposite side, you are responsible for blocking. Be prepared to cover the play if a team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

Linesman and line judge: You must know if the ball was kicked into the ground before becoming airborne. If the kick is to your side, you are responsible for touching by either team. If the kick is to the opposite side, you are responsible for blocking. Be prepared to cover the play if a team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

Side judge and field judge: You must know if the kick broke the plane of team B's restraining line. You are responsible for touching by either team. Be prepared to cover the play if a team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

Onside Kick Philosophy

The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside.