

2009 SCCFOA UMPIRE SYMPOSIUM

working in the middle of the field

Doug Wilson
with special guest Frank Villar

working in the middle of the field

the umpire gains control of a football game with effective communication...

our success starts with our ability to communicate what we need with the crew and continues with what we expect from the players...

The Pregame

Pregame is the time to gather information you need to administer the football game

Your leadership in pregame will let the crew know you are going to control the flow of the game

The Pregame

What do you want to know from the Referee?

- Plan for the coin toss
- Signal for counting players
- Ball Mechanics
- Penalty enforcement
 - 5 yard fouls – can 1 go?
 - 15 yard fouls – timing and communication
 - Spot fouls - communication
 - Half distance fouls – communication
- Substitutions – 4th down
- Hurry up with clock stopped – point off or whistle?

The Pregame

What do you want to talk to the other guys about?

- Ball Mechanics
 - Change of possession LJ/FJ
 - Incomplete passes HL/LJ
 - Spotting of ball close to LTG
- Penalty Enforcement
 - HL, LJ participation
 - Flags for spot fouls
- FG/Try Downs
 - SJ coverage – who does he have? Leap warnings

The Coaches Meeting

Referee leads conversation with coach

- Eye contact – firm handshake
- Are players legally equipped?
- Inform coach you will meet with trainers, ask where training room is if needed
- Ask name of special teams coach

On Field – One Hour till Kickoff

- Meet with special teams coaches
- Observe players and handle uniform issues - contact and provide equipment personnel list of violations if necessary
- Professional interaction with players, coaches and game personnel
- Body language and actions of officials at this time speaks volumes to everyone involved
- Control the middle as it relates to team boundaries

Kickoff

- Know status of media after a score – either U or SJ to get team on the field
- Emphasize clear sideline
- Talk to kick players on your side of ball to prevent offside kickoff
- Signal 11 across to the BJ
- After kick – get to any “close to offside” player or any player that had issues during the down

Scrimmage Plays

- Own the middle of the field – the players
 - Be confident but not overbearing
 - Develop relationships
 - Make your words count
 - Know your limits and make them known
- Hurry up offense with clock stopped – talk to center firmly
- Be ready to help LOS officials with tackles alignment

Scrimmage Plays

- Own the middle of the field – penalties
 - Get into position to hear foul explanation
 - Be ready to offer R pertinent information
 - If spot foul – “is your flag at the right spot?”
 - On DPI know and communicate to R whether spot foul or 15 yards

The Coaches - all fired up!

- Calm, confident and professional
- Diffuse heated discussions quickly
- Eye contact
- No touching!
- Creating problems: “that’s not my call”... “yeah, he missed it”... guessing at the rules...
- You are representing the entire crew when addressing coaches

Punts

- 4th down, over the ball until subs are made
- Talk to down lineman while over ball – “stay off center”
- After play, clean up and talk to any player with issues during the down

FG/Try Downs

- Hold center until subs are made (FG) and hold center until R whistle (Try)
- Talk to down lineman about staying off center
- Look for potential leapers by position and verbally warn them
- A lot of verbal communication and good cleanup is typically needed after these plays

Postgame

- Identify at least one thing a crewmate of yours did to help you manage the game and thank them for it
- Identify areas where you could have communicated better or where communication broke down with your crew or with coaches