

**2009
SCCFOA
Umpire Concentration Keys**

Pre-Game

1. Be prepared to participate in pregame and obtain information you need as it relates to you (ball mechanics, penalty enforcement, etc.)
2. Visit each dressing room with Referee. Verify with the head coach that all equipment is legal and that all players know what to do if their equipment becomes illegal.
3. Meet with the trainer and record numbers of players with any special tape requirements, braces, and cast's.
4. Proceed to the field with crew before game time: meet with special-teams coaches and record numbers of interior line and ends (share this information with the flank officials), spot check player equipment (make a list and present it to the equipment manager if necessary). Prior to the teams leaving the field, conduct equipment checks and address any equipment issues.
5. You will have discussed with the referee his preferences relating to your participation in the coin toss. Be prepared to retrieve referee's coin and record result of coin toss.

Kicks

1. Free Kicks

- A. Move up toward the kickers restraining line opposite the press box. Be prepared to coordinate with SJ to get huddling kicking team or receiving team players ready to take the field. Ensure that sideline is clear – players and coaches in the appropriate boxes.
- B. As kicking team takes field, proceed onto field and remind players on your side of the kicker to remain onside until kick is made. In onside situations, remind kicker to have four players on each side of the ball when he kicks. Count kickers, acknowledge across field with the BJ.
- C. Position 5-6 feet out of bounds. Think short free kick – mentally run through blocking rules if ball into ground or if ball “pooch” kicked.
- D. Know blocking rules for your keys, players 5 – 4 – 3 (from kicker out) and how the receivers may block them.
- E. Review and be confident in philosophy for offside kickers.
- F. After kick, quickly move at angle into field somewhere between numbers and hash to about the 50 – or somewhere comfortable where you can be stationary and stay with your keys, shifting those keys to the point of attack if runner proceeds up your side, or to the backside of the play if the runner proceeds opposite.
- G. During run, watch for ‘suspects’ in your area who may be in ‘chase mode’ which is where many blocks-in-the-back occur.
- H. After the play, don't be in a hurry to retrieve the ball. Let the action dissolve. Verify the new ball is correct.
- I. When B is award a 1st down, stay over the ball until substitutions are made and ‘R’ releases you to take initial position.

2. Punts

- A. Count offensive players. Signal to the Referee.
- B. Before retreating to position, warn middle defensive players to “stay off the center”.
- C. Verify ineligible players by position and verify numbers with your game card – always know snappers number.
- D. Initial position approximately 10 yards either in middle or favoring wide side – must have clear window to the ball. Stationary through down with keys being snapper and two guards. May stand upright through down if comfortable.

- E. See snapper's hands on the ball and watch snapper's head for improper movement.
- F. At snap, watch action by nose guard on snapper -look for 1 second foul – then shift to watch both offensive **and defensive** holding at the line of scrimmage.
- G. When sufficient action clears your position and it is safe to turn, turn quickly and pick up action at point of attack – again picking up “suspects” for blocks-in-the-back. Watch for blocks on defenseless players or other personal fouls.
- H. If muffed/fumbled snap, react by getting toward the line of scrimmage if necessary to assist if a pass is thrown. This will be a time you – and the crew - will be happy you know your ineligibles.
- I. Assist with penalty enforcement – providing necessary information to properly enforce PSK fouls and accurate placement of flags by calling officials.

3. Field Goals and PATs

- A. Count offensive players. Signal to the Referee.
- B. Verify ineligible players by position and verify numbers with your game card – always know snappers number.
- C. Ensure that SJ is moving in to double umpire position and assist them by verifying keys and ineligible numbers inside. Take position opposite SJ approximately 5 yards deep. Ensure you have a window to the ball and snapper which can mean at times you may have to vary your lateral positioning.
- D. Warn middle defensive lineman to “stay off the center”. Know leaping rules and warn potential leapers.
- E. See snapper's hands on the ball and watch snapper's head for improper movement.
- F. At snap, watch action by nose guard on snapper - look for 1 second foul – then shift to watch both offensive **and defensive** holding (pull and shoot?) at the line of scrimmage, leapers and leverage (know what is and what is not a foul here).
- G. If muffed/fumbled snap, react by getting toward the line of scrimmage if necessary to assist if a pass is thrown. This will be a time you – and the crew - will be happy you know your ineligibles.
- H. Clean up is very important after FG/PAT. Stay with players and ensure they are peacefully headed toward their sideline after the play.

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. See snapper's hands on the ball before the snap.
- 7. Think false start. Watch for disconcerting signals by defense, offensive false starts, defensive delay of game and defensive contact in the neutral zone.
- 8. Key on the center and 2 guards. Be able to explain their actions after the play.
- 9. As ball moves outside the tackles on a running play, stay with the backside blocks (ie. backside tackle clipping pursuing defender).
- 10. As the ball moves down field, maintain inside-out triangle with flank officials.
- 11. Know the clock status.
- 12. Be ready to rule on fumbles. Bean bag fumbles **only if you see the ball come loose.**
- 13. 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 – 7 yards off the ball, shoulders square to line of scrimmage.
 - B. Vary alignment; get into position where you create a “window” to be able to see the ball and your keys: center and guards.
 - C. Do not be shoulder to shoulder with linebackers. If linebackers are in a tight formation, be behind them, again creating a “window” so you can see your keys.
2. Key on center and guards as they will take you to the point of attack (POA). If POA is between tackles watch blocks at POA. If runner takes play outside tackles, stay on backside of play watching those blocks (area where backside tackle clips pursuing defender). Do not watch quarterback. Key more on man on man blocks –vs- double team, but be aware that offensive or defensive holding can occur in any block combination.
3. Do not focus on the ball carrier.
4. In short yardage situations, watch for illegal action at or in front of the point of attack. May have to clean up.
5. Be aware of chop block – no one can chop block – know definition.
6. 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 offensive guards, 5 – 7 yards off the ball, shoulders square to line of scrimmage.
 - b. Vary alignment; get into position where you create a “window” to be able to see the ball and your keys: center and guards.
 - c. Do not be shoulder to shoulder with linebackers. If linebackers are in a tight formation, be behind them, again creating a “window” so you can see your keys.
2. See snapper's hands on the ball.
3. When pass play shows, if play dictates move toward the line of scrimmage. If it is more comfortable to stay back due to traffic tight over the middle, that is okay too. Just be out of the way.
4. Be sure no linemen are down field illegally. If you see a lineman down field, make sure you have seen the ball leave the QB's hand. Make it be there!
5. **Important:** Must turn on passes. With low trajectory passes over the middle to the side zone, make eye contact with fellow official. If you are 110% positive the pass is incomplete, make eye and sell the call by running and signaling toward the dead ball spot.
6. Screen passes – make sure the receiver caught the ball behind the LOS – this is where lineman can inadvertently be down field. Make this big (pass must land well beyond LOS).
7. On drop-back action, get yourself into position to see the second level, deep in the backfield but as always, make sure hold affects play.
8. Be aware of illegal touching by lineman.
9. Be aware of tipped pass. Use tip signal.
10. When inside the 5 yard line going in, or coming out – you are responsible for QB pass beyond LOS.

Hurry Up

1. Hurry up
 - A. One ball - you spot the ball. If the ball is located outside the inbounds line, hustle to get the ball, run back toward hash and use cross-field spot – do not turn around to take spot behind you. Do not change the ball unless absolutely necessary or clock stopped (ie. incomplete pass, 1st down, etc.)
 - B. Know the game clock status and communicate it to the Referee.
 - C. If clock is stopped but will start with ready for play signal: while standing over the ball waiting to be 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 – confirm center understands this.

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 during a pileup at the goal line the flanks come running in looking for help and you see the ball in, you may verbally tell them where the ball is located in the pile. We are not ruling on the goal line or giving signals to the flank officials.

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).
 - C. Backside of play – when a running play goes outside of a tackle, stay with backside of play watching backside guard, tackle and even tight end as they engage defenders who are pursuing the play (ie. Backside clip)
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 to 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

Goals for this game

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

Post game notes