

MEETING #4:

A. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL OFFICIALS PRE-GAME MEETING FOR 5 OFFICIAL MECHANICS (Chapters using 6 or 7 official mechanics should review their mechanics manuals)

1. All officials should arrive at the game site at least 1½ hours before the scheduled game time.
2. Let the Athletic Director or Game Manager know that you have arrived. Check with them to confirm the starting time and if there are any special events prior to and/or during halftime of the game. If so, has the visiting team been advised?
 - a. Request that the Clock Operator(s) come to the officials' dressing room to meet and review the mechanics that will be used. Request that any automatic scoreboard horn be turned OFF and discuss any issues they might have with seeing portions of the field from the press box. Review clock operator's responsibilities for 35-point rule.

NOTE: See Addendum #6 for list of complete clock operator instructions.

- b. Check and review the responsibilities of the Chain Crew and request they be on the field no later than 10 minutes prior to game time to meet for a review with the linesman.
3. PRE-GAME OFFICIALS CONFERENCE

As the *NFHS Football Game Officials Manual – 2018 and 2019*, states: “Communications with other members of the crew is essential...A pregame conference shall be held before each game...The pregame conference should follow a set outline to be most effective” (pp. 10).

The PIAA encourages attention to the points of emphasis, principles and guidelines stated in the current edition of the *NFHS Manual* with few exceptions.

Having a Pre-Game Conference where all members of the crew actively participate is vital to being prepared to have a well-officiated game. Each crew has different styles and their own comfortable outline/approach, but all crews are encouraged to have a planned, focused time period without interruption; if possible, the Pre-Game Conference should be held prior to beginning Pre-Game Duties.

Suggested Topics for an Outline of a Pre-Game Conference include:

I. MAJOR CREW ASSIGNMENTS

REFEREE – Game Management and Administration
UMPIRE – Legality of Player Equipment and Uniforms
HEAD LINESMAN – Line to Gain Equipment and Chain Crew
LINE JUDGE – Game Balls and Secondary Timing
BACK JUDGE – All Play and Game Timing Situations

II. REVIEW POINTS FOR HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE

- a. Before the game, introduce yourself to the HEAD COACH. Let him know you will communicate with him throughout the game. Develop a GOOD RAPPORT. Use TACT when communicating with sideline. Introduce yourself to the "Get-Back Coach".
- b. Know where your sideline is.
- c. Have 120 yards of sideline coverage.
- d. Motion man coverage.
- e. Quick Pass coverage.
- f. Pass Coverage.
- g. Scrimmage Kick Coverage, [Punt - Field Goal - Extra point (Kick or Run)].
- h. Backwards pass out of bounds. [Punch and Mark].
- i. Crack back blocks.
- j. Defensive holding on pass play.
- k. Keep track of downs, check that the down marker is correct and signal to referee the next down. HEAD LINESMAN should ensure proper operation of chains and down markers at all times and that they are six (6) feet outside the sideline during play.
- l. Run out of bounds coverage.
- m. Know eligibles and help with ineligible receiver(s) downfield.
- n. Assist with 5 men on the line of scrimmage.
- o. Assist the Referee if you know the QB INTENTIONALLY grounded a pass or if there is help needed in determining eligible receivers in area.
- p. Maintain CLEAN sideline. Use Sideline Warning If Necessary.
- q. Help with getting the second ball into the Umpire under situations.
- r. LINE JUDGE: Count B players along with Back Judge.

III. REVIEW POINTS FOR UMPIRE

- a. Count the number players on the line of scrimmage and make sure you have 5 with the proper numbers (50-79) on the line during scrimmage plays and along with referee count A/K players.

NOTE: EXCEPTIONS - Kicks; Punts; Extra Points; Field Goals.

- b. Watch for holding.
- c. Watch for ineligibles downfield on passes.
- d. On passes move up toward the line of scrimmage to assist with making sure the passer does not go over the line of scrimmage when passing.
- e. Assist on pass coverage on the short pass over the middle.
(Turn & Look)
- f. Spot the ball after each play.
- g. Will mark off distance for all penalties.
- h. Will assist the Referee in handling the ball between quarters.
- i. Will keep track of the position of the ball on the field for each play.

IV. REVIEW POINTS FOR BACK JUDGE

- a. Know your keys.
- b. Pass coverage. Never let anyone get behind you.
- c. Know eligible receivers.
- d. Run coverage.
- e. Assist on crack back blocks.
- f. Assist on run out of bounds coverage.
- g. Assist coverage on restricted sideline.
- h. Scrimmage Kick Coverage [Punt, Field Goal, & Extra Point (Kick or Run)].
- i. Keep end line responsibility throughout the game.
- j. Assist in getting ball (extra) onto the field between plays and have the extra ball ready for the Referee following all measurements.
- k. You will time all 25 or 40 seconds and timeouts. Also observe the game clock to be assured it is starting, stopping and generally functioning properly.
- l. Count the defensive players the entire game and communicate via signal to the Line Judge that you have 11 players on the field.
- m. Begin 25 or 40-second timing on Referee's ready for play signal. With 10 seconds remaining, raise arm in air, at 5 seconds remaining, count down using swiping arm

motion.

V. REVIEW POINTS FOR REFEREE

- a. Be on passing arm side of QB, approx. 10-12 yards from the LOS and five yards wide of huddle or TE (depending upon formation)
- b. Protect QB at ALL TIMES. Be there on running plays ending OB.
- c. Know eligible/ineligible receivers in backfield.
- d. Key off the far side tackle and backs.
- e. Watch for Illegal Shifts and False Starts.
- f. Run coverage.
- g. Pass coverage. Rule on Intentional Grounding; Late Hits on QB.
- h. Scrimmage Kick Coverage [Punt, Field Goal, & Extra Point (Kick or Run)].
- i. A/K's goal line responsibility throughout the game.
- j. Make sure that the Ready For Play is signaled only when all officials are in position and correct down and distance are ensured.
- k. Count the offensive players the entire game and communicate via signal to the Umpire that you have 11 players on the field.
- l. Ensure that A/K has five men on the line of scrimmage at the snap for all downs.

VI. KEY GENERAL CREW REVIEW POINTS

- a. Review "momentum" rule as it applies inside the 5-yard line on kicks and interceptions.
- b. Goal line plays and tries (Variation of positions near goal line.)
- c. Substitution Rule
- d. Starting and Stopping the Clock
- e. Procedures during measurement.
- f. Duties during time-outs and intermission between periods.
- g. Penalizing personal and unsportsmanlike fouls.
- h. Penalty administration. (See Addendum for suggested notes.)

- i. Overtime procedure, if applicable.
- j. Note: Only the Referee talks with anyone (if appropriate) before or after the game about game-related situations (NO EXCEPTIONS).

4. PRE-GAME DUTIES

REFEREE and UMPIRE should visit each team's head coach at least 45 minutes before kickoff and prior to the official coin toss. Review with the head coach the following:

- a. Team Captains - Four (4) Maximum - get names and numbers.
- b. The Referee will confirm the game officials assigned and starting time with the coach and review any unusual game situations, etc.
- c. The Umpire, when requested by the Head Coach, will inspect any player equipment to confirm legality.
- d. Synchronize Time and Confirm location of official coin toss to be held 30 minutes prior to kickoff. Remind the Head Coach that officials will get their team in the locker room to escort the team to the field to have the team on the field FIVE (5) MINUTES before the scheduled game time and ready for the ceremonial coin toss three (3) minutes before game time.
- e. According to the PIAA, the Official Coin Toss should be held prior to the ceremonial coin toss. The Official Coin Toss should be held at midfield or the most convenient end zone where the teams depart the field after pre-game warmups to return to their locker rooms.
 - 1. The Head Coach and Team Captains should participate in the official coin toss. Prior to the toss the Referee shall read the Sportsmanship Message verbatim and each Head Coach must answer "YES" to confirm that players are properly uniformed and equipped. NO EXCEPTIONS. It should be witnessed by the Umpire.
 - 2. The Visiting Team shall have the choice of Heads or Tails for the Coin Toss. Note: Confirm the Choice before tossing the Coin. Write down details of the Coin Toss Choice, Winner and Direction of Kick.
 - 3. Following the Coin Toss, the Referee and Umpire return to the Locker Room to Report Coin Toss Result and any other important pregame notes to the rest of the crew.

The HEAD LINESMAN, LINE JUDGE and BACK JUDGE should leave the Locker Room approximately five minutes after the Referee and Umpire and go to playing field to complete their pre-game duties, such as:

- a. Inspect the field and player equipment (record the number of any player who should be rechecked prior to kickoff).
- b. Head Linesman inspect the Chains and Sideline Area.
- c. Judges should secure game balls and instruct ball retrievers of their duties. Judges should also take note of Game and Play Clocks.
- d. After completing pre-game field duties, return to the Locker Room (there is no need to wait for the Referee and Umpire). Back in the Locker Room game balls should be inspected, tested and marked as approved.

5. LAST MINUTE REVIEW WITH ALL OFFICIALS IN LOCKER ROOM

- a. Make sure you see the ball and the play has ended before you "BLOW YOUR WHISTLE." A late whistle is better than an early whistle. (Let's NOT have any INADVERTENT WHISTLES)
- b. Talk with the players. Use preventative officiating.
- c. Make sure the penalty has a bearing on the play, unless it is a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct. Use common sense.
- d. Make sure the Referee keeps a coin for a toss in case of overtime.
- e. Make sure ALL officials have the following:

Flags - Bean Bags - Whistle(s) - Card & Pencil - Down Marker
Proper and Complete PIAA-Approved Uniforms for all Officials

Linesman has a clip(s) for the chains and other accessories.
Back Judge has necessary Watches for Timing Needs
Line Judge has necessary back-up Watches for Timing Needs.
- f. Be on your way to the field approx. 15 minutes before game time.

NOTE: Keep in mind the distance the field is away from the locker rooms, both officials and the teams. The Officials should be on the field prior to the teams arriving for final pre-game warmups.

- g. Take a minute and review a procedure should you need to revert to a four (4) official crew. Who will move to what position if the R, U, HL, LJ, BJ needs to be replaced.
- h. Anything else any would like to add?

- i. Let's hustle and give them the officiating they deserve!
Don't trouble – trouble until trouble – troubles you !!!

6. ENTRANCE ONTO THE PLAYING FIELD

- a. Umpire and Head Linesman will go together - to the side opposite the press box.
- b. Head Linesman to locate the Chain Crew (4) and review how he wants the crew to work.
- c. Referee should go to Press Box side of the field and continue to expect playing field and sideline areas for any concerns.
- d. Line Judge and Back Judge will accompany their respective teams to the field so that both teams are on the field no later than five minutes prior to kickoff.

7. PREGAME CEREMONIAL COIN TOSS

- a. The Umpire will locate the captains & introduce himself to them and prepare to take them to the center of the field for the coin toss. The Umpire will introduce the captains to the Referee. **DO NOT TAKE A BALL OUT ON THE FIELD DURING THE COIN TOSS.**
- b. The Referee will do the same as the Umpire in (A) above.
- c. The Linesman, Line Judge, & Back Judge will take a couple steps out on the field and STOP. The ball boy should be right behind you. Keep the teams in the team box. The Referee and Umpire will proceed to the center of the field with the captains for the coin toss.

NOTE: Have the talking captain positioned so he will be next to the Referee in the center of the field for the coin toss.

- d. The Referee will face the scoreboard and the Umpire will face the Referee. Captains will introduce themselves to each other and the Referee and Umpire will introduce themselves to the opposing captains.
- e. Referee: After brief instructions, review the official coin toss results and signal to the Press Box side of the field prior to releasing the captains to the sidelines.
- f. After the teams are on their respective sidelines, all officials will meet at the 50 yard line at the center of the field for any final instructions and then all officials will proceed to their positions at the same time - JOGGING.

8. KICKOFF POSITIONS

REFEREE Position yourself on the same side of the field as the linesman on R's goal line between the center of the field and the hash marks. You have primary goal line responsibility.

UMPIRE Position on R's 20-yard line on LJ/Press Box Side opposite the chains.

NOTE: Be prepared to move up for a possible onside kick.

HEAD LINESMAN Position yourself approximately at the receiver's 30 yard line on the sideline that the line to gain equipment is located. Assist receiver's team in getting into position. **MAKE SURE YOUR SIDELINE IS CLEAN.**

LINE JUDGE Receivers line on the opposite side of the chains. **DO NOT GO TO THE CENTER OF THE FIELD.**

BACK JUDGE Secure possession of the ball. Hand the kicker the ball and instruct the kicker not to kick the ball until the Referee has sounded his whistle. Point out the position of the Referee. Count K's players. Move to the sideline that the linesman is positioned. **MAKE SURE YOUR SIDELINE IS CLEAN.**

NOTE: Should there be a penalty that dictates re-kicking, BJ will administer the penalty and signal the press box with the proper signal and repeat the procedure above.

9. HAVE A GREAT OPENING KICKOFF AND GAME!

ADDENDUM #1 REVIEW PROCEDURE WHEN YOU HAVE A PENALTY

- a. Immediately upon completion of the play report to the Referee, WHO, WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE. Stay with the Referee and Umpire while R is giving the options to the captain(s)/sideline.
 - b. Other Officials should:
 1. Cover the flag;
 2. Maintain the spot where the play ended;
 3. Go to the enforcement spot to assist when appropriate;
 4. Secure another ball and have ready to hand to the Umpire.
 - c. The Referee should give a preliminary signal to the press box, then have the team captain face his team's sideline and give him his options. Once he has made his choice and it is clear that the choice is appropriate and in agreement with his sideline, give the results to the Umpire so he may administer the penalty. Then give the signal again to the press box.
- NOTE: If the penalty is unusual, go to the sideline and explain it to the head coach and then go over to the opposing head coach and give him an explanation also.
- d. Make sure the Linesman or Line Judge know the details of the penalty so he may communicate it to the head coach on his sideline.
 - e. The official on the offending teams sideline should obtain the penalty, the number of who did it, and report it to the head coach.
 - f. Mark down all penalties, team, quarter, time, number and type of penalty. Be aware if they are to be reported to the conference, league commissioner or assignor following the game in a specific format or on a game report.

ADDENDUM #2 PROCEDURES AND POSITIONING ON AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES

- a. REFEREE - Free to roam. But normally stays with Umpire.
- UMPIRE - Responsible for the ball and observe ball.
- LINESMAN - Position between hash mark and team members to notify the coach that the ball will be MARKED READY-FOR-PLAY in 15 seconds.
- LINE JUDGE - His responsibility is the same as the Linesman for his sideline.
- BACK JUDGE - He will time the 45 seconds and 1 minute and advise the Referee.
- b. All Officials keep track of which team called time out and check with fellow officials on how many time outs each team has remaining.

ADDENDUM #3 PROCEDURES & POSITIONING BETWEEN PERIODS

a. When the First and Third Quarters end:

NOTE: Teams may go to the sidelines to confer with their coach(s). If so, the Linesman and Line Judge after completing their responsibilities listed below should position themselves near the team(s) huddle to advise them when the time out has expired and the teams should return to the field.

REFEREE - Record the yard line the ball is on, the down, the yards to gain and the position on the field. Also he notes from what yard line the Umpire stepped off the position of the ball. [Use Yard Line Markings to Assist]

UMPIRE - Steps off the ball. Give the Referee the following information so both can mark it down. Down - Yards to Go - Position on the Field. Also, indicate what yard line Umpire is using to determine the yard line that the ball is on. [Use Yard Line Markings to Assist]

LINESMAN - Record the down, yards to go, and what yard line for placing the chain clip on at opposite end of field. Make a mental (or written) note as to which stick is in what position. Verbally give the information to the Back Judge.

LINE JUDGE - Determine the yard line the ball is on and the position on the field and take both teams to the spot where the ball will be positioned to start the next quarter. Keep an eye on teams so they do not taunt each other.

BACK JUDGE - Record the yard line the linesman is picking the chain clip from as well as the down and yards to gain. Go to the spot that the chain clip will be placed and assist the Linesman to insure that everything is correct. Review the information to see that it is still the same. Return to your position to see that everything is OK and continue timing the timeout.

b. The Referee must review to see that everything remained the same as it was at the end of the previous quarter.

NOTE: **ALL OFFICIALS** are responsible to assist in making sure that the new period begins as it should. If something doesn't seem to be correct – DO NOT LET THE NEW PERIOD BEGIN. HALT PLAY!

ADDENDUM #4 PROCEDURES AND POSITIONING ON MEASUREMENTS

- a. REFEREE Advise the offense of the measurement and ask the QB and/or Captain to go up to the ball area to view measurement.
- UMPIRE Handle the ball until the sticks arrive and then handle the front stick.
- LINESMAN Make sure the clip is secure to the chain in the proper position and proceed onto the field to the position where the Line Judge is positioned.
- LINE JUDGE Take a position on the yard line where the Linesman has picked up the chains. Position a foot where you want the linesman to place the chain clip down for the measurement.
- BACK JUDGE Obtain another ball. Keep the teams back from the ball so there is no chance of anyone kicking the ball. Advise the defensive team captain he may observe the measurement.
- NOTE: If it seems that the ball may roll when the Umpire handles the front stick, BACK JUDGE should be prepared to hold the ball in place.

ADDENDUM #5 HALFTIME PROCEDURE

- a. At the conclusion of the first half and both teams have left the field, the Referee will signal to the Clock Operator to start the clock for halftime as the crew of officials leave the field together. The Back Judge will also start his clock to time halftime.

NOTE: Unless there is an extension for special circumstances, halftime shall be 15 minutes.

- b. All officials will go to the dressing room or assigned halftime area.
- c. Review any situations that occurred in the first half.
- d. When 10-12 minutes have elapsed, the Line Judge and Back Judge should go to their team's dressing room to prepare them to return to the field. When the band is leaving the field advise the head coach that we want them back on the field IMMEDIATELY. DO NOT LEAVE THE LOCKER ROOM AREA UNTIL THEY START TO RETURN TO THE FIELD. When 15 minutes have elapsed, the teams should be on the field for the required 3 minutes warm-up time.

NOTE: Take into consideration the distance from the locker room to the field and keep teams apart as much as possible.

- e. When both teams return to the field. The Referee will signal for the scoreboard clock operator to start the clock at 3 minutes for the mandatory warm-up period.
- f. The Linesman should make sure the chain crew has returned and all are ready for play.

NOTE: Confirm details for the kickoff to start the second half and make sure both teams are aware of the which end of the field they will defend in the third period. Officials should jog directly to their kickoff positions in time to begin the second half promptly at the conclusion of the 3-minute warm-up period.

ADDENDUM #6 INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLOCK OPERATOR

- a. Have you operated this clock before and are you familiar with the operations of it?

NOTE: If there is a Play Clock, share instructions in a similar fashion with that clock operator. It is recommended that a single individual does not operate both the game and play clocks at the same time.

- b. Do you run anything other than the time? Down, Yards to Go, Yard Line the ball is on, etc. If so, starting and stopping the clock(s) is your FIRST and FOREMOST PRIORITY, then the other functions.
- c. What do you have to do to reset the time should we need to do so?
- d. **Does it have a horn or siren on it? Is it automatic or manual? If the horn can be operated manually, SHUT IT OFF.**
- e. Has the clock malfunctioned before?
- f. Do you have access to a phone or headset that comes down to the field? If so, what sideline is it on?
- g. Time for the halftime is 15 Minutes. (PUT 15 MINUTES ON THE SCOREBOARD CLOCK).
- h. Once BOTH teams are back on the field after halftime, put 3 minutes on the scoreboard clock.
- i. Take your signals from the covering officials. The Referee and Back Judge will relay the signal if it's along the sideline.
- j. Review the ready for play - starting the clock - stopping the clock - if a penalty flag is thrown - if we start the clock in error - incomplete passes- first downs - injured players - scoring plays.
- k. Review the procedure for an UNTIMED down at the end of the quarter. Review the 35-POINT RULE for the second half.
- l. FIND US during halftime to see us IF THERE ARE ANY issues.
- m. Do you have any questions?

Note: for those chapters using 6 or 7 man mechanics – refer to the respective manuals on the PIAA website (www.piaa.org)