

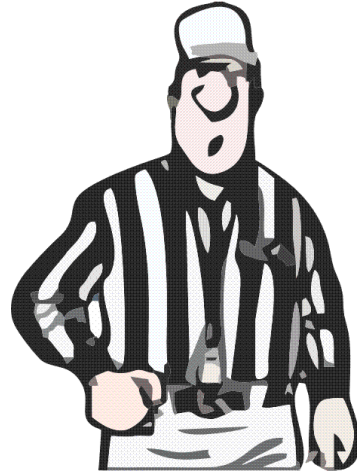
## BACK JUDGE (5-man Mechanics)

### Pre-game positions- Coin Toss

Opposite Press Box side with game balls

### Counting Players

- Kickoff or Safety Kick – Team K
- Fair Catch Kick – Team K
- Scrimmage Play or Punt – Team B/R
- Field Goal or Try – Team B/R



### Reverse Mechanics

Following a change of possession after a punt, or an interception or fumble recovery by Team B, the crew must be prepared to transition to reverse mechanics to properly cover the field.

- The Back Judge should follow behind the play, looking for blindside blocks, hits on defenseless players and physical altercations between opponents.

### Measurement Procedures

- After the Referee calls for a measurement, the Back Judge will move to the position of the covering official and assume responsibility of holding the ball with his back toward the defensive side of the field.
- The Back Judge will hold the ball steady and level to allow the Referee to make a ruling on whether the line-to-gain was reached.
- If the ball is measured short of the line-to-gain in the side zone, the Back Judge will remain with the ball until the chain and clip are moved inside the hash marks.

### Rotating Balls / Wet Ball Mechanics

#### *Incomplete Passes*

The covering official on the incomplete pass will retrieve the ball. If the Back Judge is the covering official, the new ball will be retrieved by the line of scrimmage official on the sideline of the offensive team. If the line of scrimmage official is the covering official on the play, it should be the Back Judge that retrieves the new ball from the sideline if more than eight yards downfield, and it should be the Referee if less than eight yards downfield.

#### *Completed Passes and Runs Outside the 9-Yard Marks*

The line of scrimmage official covering the play will mark forward progress. The Back Judge (more than eight yards downfield) or the Referee (less than eight yards downfield) retrieves the new ball from the sideline.

## **Timing**

Near the end of a period (i.e., last minute remaining), either the Referee or the Back Judge, whichever official is facing the clock – is responsible to pay close attention to the time remaining and determine whether the snap of a last-second play has started before the end of the quarter.

## **Play Clock Mechanics**

To maintain consistency between games with on-field play clocks, and those that do not, the Back Judge should signal the final seconds of the play clock in either case. He will do so by extending his arm high above his head to indicate that the play clock has 10 seconds remaining, and then visibly count off the last five seconds with the same arm. Before throwing his flag for delay of game, the Back Judge should first wait for the play clock to hit zeros, then look to see whether the ball has been snapped. If not, this is when he should blow his whistle and drop the flag.

## **Time outs**

a. During the timeout, it is the Back Judge to time the time outs. When the Back Judge sounds his whistle indicating 15 seconds remaining, the Referee will point to the appropriate sideline officials to indicate that the timeout is ending.

b. After the Back Judge sounds his whistle that the timeout has expired, or if both teams return to the field before time expires, the Referee will sound his whistle and signal the ready-for-play.

All officials should record any timeout with the team making the request, the quarter and time remaining. The calling official should also notate the player or coach that requested the timeout. Only the Back Judge is responsible for communicating the number of time outs left for each team (via radio)

## **Halftime**

The Back Judge will sync his watch with the halftime clock to ensure the crew is back on the field at least three minutes before the second-half kickoff.

## **End of 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> periods**

The Back Judge is responsible to time the interval between periods. If he sees that the ball has been repositioned and is ready for play, he will sound a preliminary whistle to indicate that 15 seconds remain, and then sound a second whistle (if both teams have not returned to the field) to indicate the expiration of the intermission.

## **Penalty Enforcement Responsibilities**

All officials have the responsibility to observe the penalty enforcement and ensure it is accurate. They should provide input if the final enforcement is not correct. No official should permit the next play to occur if the penalty has not been enforced properly.

## KICKOFFS

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will start in the middle of the field with the kicker. He will then hand the ball to the kicker and give him instructions to raise his hand when he is ready and look to the Referee for the ready-for-play whistle and signal.
- b. From his position in the middle of the field, the Back Judge will count the Team K players and then move to his position off the field on the opposite of press box sideline straddling the extended Team K restraining line (usually the 40-yard line) while holding his bean bag. After reaching his position, the Back Judge will raise his hand to indicate to the Referee that he is ready.
- c. The Back Judge has the responsibility of Team K's restraining line, including whether any Team K player has encroached the line before the ball has been kicked. He has the shared responsibility to determine whether the kicker made a pop-up kick and must be aware if players from either team block before the ball has reached Team R's restraining line. He should also be alert as to whether the kicker is blocked before he advances five yards downfield.

### Play Coverage

- a. After the kick occurs without foul, the Back Judge will direct his attention on the initial blocks made by/on the second and third-inside blockers nearest Team R's restraining line on his side of the field.
- b. Once the Team K players have moved downfield, the Back Judge will move into the field of play, approximately 8-10 yards downfield and at the near-side hash marks.
- c. As the ball is being returned, the Back Judge will observe action in the middle of the field in front of the runner. He should be especially alert to Team R players moving back toward their own goal line.
- d. The Back Judge should remain at least 20 yards in advance of the ball carrier as the play advances. He has the primary responsibility for coverage at the goal line and should be straddling the goal line in advance of the runner crossing it.
- e. If the play ends at the goal line, the Back Judge will rule on forward progress.
- f. When the play ends prior to reaching the goal line, the Back Judge may assist with retrieving the proper ball to be put in play for the new series or try.

## Obvious on-side kick

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will assume the same position and responsibilities as for a regular kickoff.
- b. He should be especially attentive to whether the kicker drives the ball into the ground for a pop-up kick and whether any Team K players encroach before the ball is kicked.

### Play Coverage

- a. If the kick is onside as expected, the Back Judge will turn and focus on the area surrounding the ball, watching especially for which team initiates blocks inside the neutral zone. He should also wind the clock if/when it is first touched by a Team R player.
- b. If the kick is not onside, the Back Judge will move into the field as he would on a regular kickoff.

## Fair Catch Kick

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will start in the middle of the field with the kicker. He will then hand the ball to the kicker and give him instructions to raise his hand when he is ready and then look to the Referee for the ready-for-play whistle and signal.
- b. From his position in the middle of the field, the Back Judge will count the Team K players and then move to his position off the field on the press box sideline, straddling the extended Team K restraining line while holding his bean bag. After reaching his position, the Back Judge will raise his hand to indicate to the Referee that he is ready.
- c. The Back Judge has the responsibility of Team K's restraining line, including whether any Team K player has encroached the line before the ball has been kicked. He has the shared responsibility to determine whether the kicker made a pop-up kick and must be aware if players from either team block before the ball has reached Team R's restraining line. He should also be alert as to whether the kicker is blocked before he advances five yards downfield.

### Play Coverage

- a. After the kick occurs without foul, the Back Judge will direct his attention on the initial blocks made by/on the second and third-inside blockers nearest Team R's restraining line on his side of the field.
- b. Once Team K has moved downfield, the Back Judge will move into the field of play, approximately 8-10 yards downfield and at the near-side hash marks.
- c. If the ball is short of the goal line and is returned by Team R, the Back Judge will observe action in the middle of the field in front of the runner. He should be especially alert to Team R players moving back toward their own goal line.
- d. The Back Judge should remain at least 20 yards in advance of the ball carrier as the play advances. He has the primary responsibility for coverage at the goal line and should be straddling the goal line in advance of the runner crossing it.
- e. When the play ends at the goal line, the Back Judge will rule on whether the runner scored or was short.
- f. When the play ends prior to reaching the goal line, the Back Judge may assist with retrieving the proper ball to be put in play for the new series or try.

### Scrimmage Formation KEYS

Keys apply anytime the offense is in a scrimmage formation (i.e., scrimmage play or scrimmage kick). Officials need to know which players are eligible and whose responsibility they are on apparent punts, field goals and tries as well.

- a. The Back Judge has key responsibilities for the inside-most eligible receiver(s) on the strong side of the formation.

### Scrimmage Plays

- a. The Back Judge will take a position between the hash marks, approximately 20-25 yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage. His location between the hash marks is determined by the formation: If a balanced formation, the Back Judge should be positioned toward the wide side of the field. If one side of the formation is stronger than the other, the Back Judge should be positioned toward the strong side of the field.
- b. The Back Judge will give any preliminary signals to the crew, including the number of the upcoming down, "double sticks" to indicate more than 10 yards is needed for a first down or "crossed wrists" on fourth down to indicate that the game clock will be stopped regardless of the results of the next play.

c. After counting players, the Back Judge will give the proper signal to corresponding officials.

### **Runs**

a. At the snap, the Back Judge will pick up the action of his key(s), being especially alert to holds and illegal blocks.

b. The Back Judge should never move forward from his position during the play, attempt to remain at least 20 yards in front of the ball carrier and should be in position at the goal line before the runner reaches it.

c. While staying inside the hash marks, the Back Judge will rotate to the opposite side of the field from the play, and he is responsible for blocking action in front of the ball carrier.

d. On long runs that end near the goal line or in the end zone, the Back Judge may rule touchdown or forward progress. If a runner crosses the goal line near the pylon, the Back Judge should first confirm with the appropriate sideline official that the runner remained in bounds.

e. On run plays where the Back Judge has no forward progress responsibilities, he should be alert to dead ball fouls that occur away from the play.

f. If the run ends outside of the 9-yard marks and more than eight yards downfield from the line of scrimmage, the Back Judge will assist with retrieving the ball and getting it to the Umpire.

### **Forward Passes**

a. At the snap, the Back Judge will immediately observe his key(s), looking especially for holds at the line of scrimmage or designed pick plays by the receivers – then move into zone coverage.

b. The Back Judge will remain stationary until a receiver moves downfield. At that point, he will backpedal to always remain ahead of the deepest receiver.

c. When the pass is thrown, the Back Judge will identify the intended receiver and move into a position to best observe the play. The ideal position is inside the hash marks with the intended receiver between his position and the line of scrimmage official covering the play.

d. Once the ball is in the air, the Back Judge will focus his attention to the action on/by the receiver and the primary defender. He should be especially alert to contact on the backside of the play that causes interference. For passes made outside of his primary coverage area, the Back Judge should look for action by a second or third defender and any illegal contact on a defenseless receiver.

e. If the pass is complete and the play continues, the Back Judge will continue in advance of the play. He is responsible for ruling touchdown or forward progress at the goal line. If the player crosses the goal line near the pylon, the Back Judge should first confirm with the appropriate sideline official that the runner remained in bounds.

f. If the pass is completed and the runner ends up down outside of the 9-yard marks and more than eight yards downfield from the line of scrimmage, the Back Judge should assist with retrieving the ball and getting it to the Umpire.

g. On plays where the Back Judge has no forward progress responsibilities, he should be alert to dead ball fouls that occur away from the play.

h. If a deep incomplete pass remains on the field, the Back Judge should ask a player to retrieve it. As a last resort, if the ball is in his immediate vicinity, he may retrieve the ball himself.

## Goal Line Coverage

Goal line coverage mechanics apply to scrimmage plays whenever the offensive team will snap the ball within (and including) the opposing team's 20-yard line, and reverse goal line mechanics apply when the offensive team will snap the ball inside (and including) their own 5-yard line. The officials' initial positioning and subsequent mechanics will be determined by where the ball will be snapped.

## B20-B15

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will take a position on the goal line between the hash marks, or deeper than the deepest defender if he is positioned in the end zone. His location between the hash marks is determined by the formation: If a balanced formation, the Back Judge will be positioned toward the wide side of the field. If one side of the formation is stronger than the other, the Back Judge will be positioned toward the strong side of the field.

### Play Coverage

- a. The Back Judge has all the same play coverages as any other scrimmage play. If a receiver runs a route into the endzone, the Back Judge will remain deeper than the deepest receiver and be prepared to rule on passes at the end line. Otherwise, he will hold his position to rule on progress at the goal line.

## B15-B5

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will take a position on the end line between the hash marks. His location between the hash marks is determined by the formation: If a balanced formation, the Back Judge will be positioned toward the wide side of the field. If one side of the formation is stronger than the other, the Back Judge will be positioned toward the strong side of the field.

### Play Coverage

- a. The Back Judge has all the same play coverages as any other scrimmage play and is responsible to rule on all catches near the end line. b. In necessary on a pass short of the goal line or a clear run play, the Back Judge will attempt to move up to the goal line in the middle of the field to assist with progress at the goal line.

## B5 and in

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will take a position on the end line between the hash marks. His location between the hash marks is determined by the formation: If a balanced formation, the Back Judge will be positioned toward the wide side of the field. If one side of the formation is stronger than the other, the Back Judge will be positioned toward the strong side of the field.

### Play Coverage

- a. The Back Judge will hold his position and rule on catches near the end line.

## Scrimmage Kicks

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will take a position in the middle of the field, five yards deeper than the deepest Team R player and approximately five yards to the side of the receiver opposite of the Referee while holding his bean bag. If there are two receivers, he should position himself between them.
- b. The Back Judge will count Team R players and give the appropriate signal.

### Play Coverage

- a. Following a clean kick, the Back Judge will adjust his position inside the hash marks to see in front of the receiver to whom the ball is kicked.
- b. When the ball is in the air, the Back Judge will determine the direction of the kick and then concentrate on the receiver(s). He should be alert for a legal or illegal fair catch signal.
- c. As the kick begins to descend, the Back Judge will move his focus to the action immediately in front of the receiver – paying particular attention for blocks in the back, first touching and interference with the opportunity to make the catch.
- d. The Back Judge should use good timing before blowing the play dead on a fair catch. He should always anticipate the ball will be muffed and must make sure the ball is caught before sounding his whistle.
- e. If the Back Judge recognizes that the kick will land behind the receiver, he will retreat backwards to keep the ball in front of him. He must be at the goal line if the kick threatens it.
- f. The Back Judge will mark the end of the kick with his bean bag. He may also be required to rule on forward progress if the ball is downed before the line of scrimmage officials are in position downfield.
- g. If the kick is returned, the Back Judge will follow behind the ball carrier, keeping the ball between himself and the covering line of scrimmage official. He is responsible for blocks in front of the ball carrier between the hash marks.
- h. Following the conclusion of the play, the Back Judge will help clean up behind the end of the play and will assist with getting a new ball spotted if a change of possession occurs.

## Field Goal and Try

### Pre-Snap Positioning and Responsibilities

- a. The Back Judge will take a position on Team R's end line, just behind the upright located on the press box side of the field.
- b. The Back Judge will count the members of the defensive team and give the appropriate signal.

### Play Coverage (Field Goals and Tries)

- a. At the snap, the Back Judge will focus his attention on the action from offensive guard-to-guard, particularly looking for roughing the snapper, hurdling, defensive players using teammates to gain height through leverage and holding.

- b. If the ball is kicked cleanly, the Back Judge has the responsibility to rule whether the ball passes entirely within the upright on his side, and whether it clears the crossbar. He should only signal if the ball is adjudged narrowly within his upright, or when it is clearly good or clearly wide. The Back Judge should not signal at all if it is a close decision near the Umpire's upright.
- c. After judging the kick, the Back Judge will hold his signal long enough to allow the Referee to complete his responsibilities before looking to him for a ruling.
- d. When the play ends, the Back Judge will ensure all action between opposing linemen has ended.
- e. If a field goal attempt is successful, or following a try, the Back Judge will retrieve the ball that will be used for the succeeding kickoff.

#### **Play Coverage (Field Goal Only)**

- a. If a fake kick or broken play occurs, or the kick is blocked or short of the goal line, the Back Judge will hold his position on the end line and will officiate the play as normal. He should be prepared, as the only official at the goalpost, to rule on whether a kick scores during a subsequent play.
- b. If the kick is returned, the Back Judge will follow behind the play, looking for blocks away from the ball carrier.

#### **Play Coverage (Try Only)**

- a. If a fake kick or broken play occurs, the Back Judge will hold his position on the end line and will officiate the play as normal.