

# Rule 15 Officials: Jurisdiction and Duties

## Section 1 Officials

### OFFICIALS' MANUAL

**Article 1** By League action, the officials' manual is an integral part of the Official rules, especially in regard to the specific duties, mechanics and procedures for each official during any play situations. For that reason, many such specific items are omitted in Sections 1 to 8 to avoid needless repetition, and only the primary duties of each official are stated. Some of the technical terms used hereafter are defined only in the manual.

*Note: The terms "On Ball" or "Cover" imply that an official is nearest or in close proximity to a loose ball or runner and is in position to declare the ball dead when the down ends by rule. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1-3.*

### GAME OFFICIALS

**Article 2** The game Officials are: Referee, Umpire, Head Linesman, Line Judge, Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge.

*Note: In the absence of seven officials, the crew is to be rearranged, on the most feasible basis, according to the other members of crew.*

**Article 3** All officials are to wear uniforms prescribed by the League (including a black cap with visor and piping for all except the Referee, who will wear a white cap). All officials will carry a whistle and a weighted bright gold flag.

### BLOW WHISTLE

**Article 4** An official is to blow his whistle:

- (a) for any foul for which ball remains dead or is dead immediately;
- (b) to signal timeout at end of a down, during which he has indicated a foul, by means of dropping his flag and provided no other official signaled timeout at end of down;
- (c) to indicate dead ball when he is covering a runner. See 7-2-1.
- (d) at any other time, when he is nearest to ball, when a down ends. See 15-8-3.

*Note: The flag is to be used to indicate a foul.*

### CREW MEETING

**Article 5** Members of the crew are required to meet in their dressing quarters at least 2 hours and 15 minutes before game time.

### OFFICIALS' DRESSING ROOM

*Note: By order of the Commissioner, from the time any official first enters the dressing room, and until all officials have left it at the end of the game, no person other than clubhouse attendants or those invited by the Referee shall be allowed to enter it. This prohibition includes coaches, players, owners, and other management personnel.*

### OFFICIALS' RESPONSIBILITY AND CREW CONFERENCE

**Article 6** All officials are responsible for any decision involving the application of a rule, its interpretation or an enforcement. If an official errs in his interpretation of a rule, the other officials must check him before play is resumed, otherwise they are equally responsible. In the event of a disagreement, the crew should draw aside for a conference.

*Note: If because of injury, the officials' vote is tied, Referee's decision will be the deciding factor. Any dissenting opinion is to be reported to the supervisor.*

**Article 7** All officials have concurrent jurisdiction over any foul, and there is no fixed territorial division in this respect. When an official signals a foul, he must report it to the Referee, informing him of its nature, position of ball at time of foul, the offender (when known), the penalty and spot of enforcement.

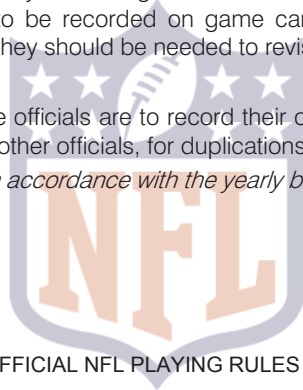
### RECORDING FOULS

**Article 8** Each official is to record every foul he signals and the total number of officials signaling the same foul. During the game, these are to be recorded on game cards provided by league. They are to be preserved after each game in case they should be needed to revise an official's final game card.

### LEAGUE GAME REPORTS

**Article 9** At the end of the game the officials are to record their own fouls on game cards provided by the league, and are to check them with other officials, for duplications, before leaving the dressing room.

*Note: Game cards are to be made out in accordance with the yearly bulletin issued for that purpose.*



## CREW ERRORS

**Article 10** All members of a crew are equally responsible for any errors in Officiating Mechanics as prescribed by the Manual, and are required to call the attention of this fact to an official who had been remiss.

*Note: This applies to such errors, in mechanics or applications of rules, as tend to increase the length of the game (elapsed time) and particularly so to those which result in undue loss of playing time (Crew Time). In the latter case, if the Referee has clearly failed to signal a Referee's timeout as specified by rule, any official should do so. See 4-5-5 and 4-5-6.*

## COIN TOSS

**Article 11** Ten minutes before the opening kickoff, the entire crew is to appear on the field. Three minutes prior to the kickoff the Referee is to make the toss of the coin. He is to indicate which team is to receive and is to do the same when teams first appear on the field prior to the start of the second half. See 4-2-2.

*Note: All officials record results of coin toss and options chosen.*

## SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

- (1) During any running play (includes runbacks), or a loose ball, the nearest official is to cover and remain with the ball or runner, unless outdistanced until end of down. In such case any nearer official is to cover. See 15-2-9-Note, for Referee entering a side zone and 15-3-4 for Umpire.
- (2) When a ball is dead inbounds near a sideline, during time in, the official covering is to use the clock signal to indicate this fact.
- (3) Any officials not involved in an enforcement are to see that all players other than captains remain aside during any conference between Referee and captains. See 15-2-5.

## RECORDING TIMEOUTS

**Article 12** All officials must record charged team timeouts.

## Section 2 Referee

### REFEREE'S AUTHORITY

**Article 1** The Referee is to have general oversight and control of game. He is the final authority for the score, and the number of a down in case of a disagreement. His decisions upon all matters not specifically placed under the jurisdiction of other officials, either by rule or the officials' manual, are to be final. See 15-1-6-Note and 15-1-10.

**Article 2** Prior to the kickoff to start each half and after every time out, the Referee shall sound his whistle for play to start without asking captains if they are ready. In such cases where time is in with his whistle, he is to indicate it by use of clock signal.

### BALL PUT IN PLAY

**Article 3** He is to see that the ball is properly put in play and shall decide on all matters pertaining to its position and disposition at end of down. If any official sounds his whistle, the ball is dead (7-2-1). In case the Referee is informed or believes that ball was dead before such signal or down ends, he has the authority to make a retroactive ruling after consulting the crew or the official involved.

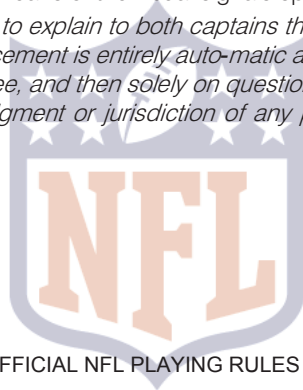
**Article 4** The Referee must notify the coach and field captain when his team has used its three charged time outs, signal both coaches when two minutes remain in a half, and positively inform the coach of any disqualified player. He may not delegate any such notifications to any other person. He will announce on the microphone when each period is ended.

### FOUL OPTIONS

**Article 5** After a foul, the Referee (in the presence of both captains) must announce the penalty and explain to the offended captain the decision and choice (if any) as well as number of next down and distance (usually approximate) to necessary line for any possible positions of ball. See 7-3-3. The Referee is to designate the offending player, when known. After an enforcement he shall signal to spectators the nature of penalty by means of the visual signals specifically provided for herein.

*Note: It is not necessary for the Referee to explain to both captains the decision and distance to the necessary line in such cases when: the enforcement is entirely auto-matic and/or when there is obviously no choice.*

*Field captains only may appeal to Referee, and then solely on questions of interpretation of the rules. They shall not be allowed to question the judgment or jurisdiction of any particular official in regard to a foul or in signaling dead ball.*



## REFEREE'S POSITION

**Article 6** Prior to the snap, the Referee shall assume such a stance that he is in the clear of and behind any backfield player. This is also to be construed as including the normal path of any player in motion behind the line as well as the line of vision between such a player and the maker of a pass (forward or backward). He shall also favor the right side (if the passer is right-handed). He will count offensive players.

## MEASUREMENT

**Article 7** At the end of any down, the Referee may (when in doubt or at the request of a captain unless obviously unnecessary) request the linesman and his assistants to bring the yardage chains on field to determine whether the ball has reached the necessary line. See 4-5-5-a.

**Article 8** Prior to each snap, the Referee is to positively check the number of the ensuing down and distance to be gained with the Linesman, signal the Back Judge when to start his watch for the timing of 25 seconds (when appropriate), and know the eligible pass receivers.

## SPOTTING BALL

**Article 9** He is primarily responsible for spotting the ball at the inbounds spot on plays from scrimmage, and should not enter a side zone to cover a runner (other than the quarterback) when the Linesman or Line Judge is in position to do so. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1.

*Note: When the ball is dead near the sideline during time in, he is not to assist in a relay to the inbounds spot, unless the umpire has been remiss or delayed in doing so (15-1-10-Note and 15-3-4). In such a case, the Umpire is to spot. See Rule 2-2 in regard to using a new ball at the request of the offensive team's center in case of rain or a wet, muddy, or slippery field.*

## Section 3 Umpire

**Article 1** The Umpire has primary jurisdiction over the equipment and the conduct and actions of players on the scrimmage line.

### EQUIPMENT INSPECTION

**Article 2** Before the game, the Umpire with assistance of other officials shall inspect the equipment of players. He may order any changes he deems necessary to any proposed equipment which is considered dangerous or confusing (5-4). This authority extends throughout the game.

**Article 3** He shall assist in relaying the ball:

- (a) to the inbounds spot when it is dead near a sideline during time in when feasible (15-2-9-Note);
- (b) to the previous spot after an incompletion; and
- (c) to the spot of a free kick when indicated. See 15-1-11-S.N.

### UMPIRE'S DUTIES

**Article 4** The Umpire shall record:

- (a) all charged team timeouts during the game;
- (b) the winner of the toss; and
- (c) the score.

He is to assist the Referee on decisions involving possession of the ball in close proximity to the line, after a loose ball or runner has crossed it. He and the Line Judge are to determine whether ineligible linemen illegally cross the line prior to a pass, and he must wipe a wet ball in accordance with the proper timing. He should count the offensive players on the field at the snap.

## Section 4 Linesman

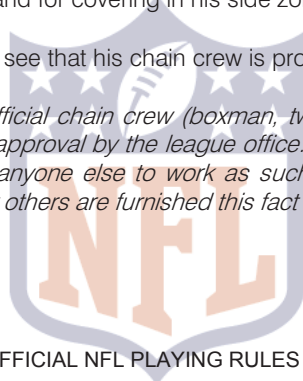
### LINESMAN'S POSITION

**Article 1** The Linesman operates on the side of field designated by the Referee during the first half and on opposite side during the second half unless ordered otherwise. See 1-4-Note for exception.

**Article 2** He is responsible for illegal motion, offside, encroaching, and any actions pertaining to scrimmage line prior to or at snap; and for covering in his side zone. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1; 15-2-9; and 15-3-4. He will count offensive players.

**Article 3** Prior to the game, he shall see that his chain crew is properly instructed as to their specific duties and mechanics.

*Note: Each home team appoints the official chain crew (boxman, two rodmen and alternate, drive start and forward stake indicator) subject to approval by the league office. Each member carries a working pass to that effect and it is prohibited for anyone else to work as such. The standardized yardage chains and downs box must be used and if any others are furnished this fact is to be reported to the Commissioner.*



**Article 4** The Linesman shall use a clamp on the chain when measuring for first down.

### MARKING AND CHAINS

**Article 5** The Linesman is to mark with his foot (when up with ball) the yard line touched by forward point of ball at end of each scrimmage down. At the start of each new series of downs, he and the rodmen set the yardage chains when the Referee so signals. He positively must check with the Referee as to the number of each down that is about to start.

*Note: It is mandatory for Linesman to personally see that rear rod is accurately set and also to see that the forward rodman and boxman have set the safety markers for the forward rod and the previous spot, during any series of downs, as prescribed by the officials' manual.*

### LINESMAN'S DUTIES

**Article 6** On his own side, he is to assist the Line Judge as to illegal motion or a shift and umpire in regard to holding or illegal use of hands on end of line (especially during kicks or passes), and know eligible pass receivers.

**Article 7** He is to mark out-of-bounds spot on his side of field when within his range and is to supervise substitutions made by team located on his side of field during either half.

*Note: See 15-1-11-S.N. 1; 15-2-9; and 15-3-4.*

## Section 5 Line Judge

### LINE JUDGE'S DUTIES

**Article 1** The Line Judge is to operate on side of field opposite the Linesman.

**Article 2** He is responsible for the timing of game. He also is responsible for illegal motion, illegal shift, and for covering in his side zone. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1 and 15-2-9. He will count offensive players.

**Article 3** He is responsible for supervision of the timing and in case the game clock becomes inoperative, or for any other reason is not being operated correctly, he shall take over the official timing on the field.

**Article 4** He is to time each period and (4-1-3, 4), signal the Referee when two minutes remain in a half and leave in ample time with the Field Judge to notify their respective teams of five minutes before the start of the second half.

**Article 5** He shall advise the Referee when time has expired at end of a period.

**Article 6** He must notify both captains, through the Referee, of the time remaining for play not more than 10 or less than five minutes before the end of each half and must signal Referee when two minutes remain in each half. In the event that the stadium clock is inoperable, he must notify both captains, through the Referee, of the time remaining for play not more than 10 or less than 5 minutes before the end of each half and must signal Referee when two minutes remain in each half.

*Note: Upon inquiry of a field captain, he may state the approximate time remaining for play at any time during the game, provided he does not comply with such request more than three times during the last five minutes of either half, and provided it will not affect playing time near the end of a half (4-7-1).*

**Article 7** On his own side, he is to:

- (a) assist the Linesman as to offside or encroaching;
- (b) assist the Umpire as to holding or illegal use of hands on the end of the line (especially during kicks or passes);
- (c) assist the Referee as to whether a pass is forward or backward behind the line and false starts; and
- (d) be responsible for knowing the eligible pass receivers.

**Article 8** He is to:

- (a) mark the out-of-bounds spot of all plays on his side, when within his range (See 15-1-11-S.N. 1-3 and 15-2-9);
- (b) supervise substitutions made by the team seated on his side of the field during either half (see 5-2-2);

### NOTIFY HOME TEAM COACH

- (c) notify the home team head coach with the Field Judge five minutes before the start of the second half.

## Section 6 Field Judge

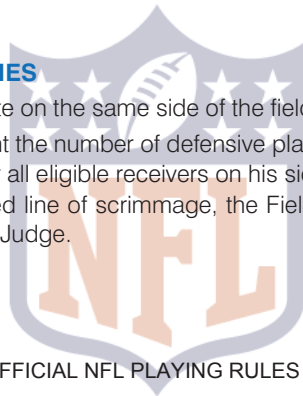
### FIELD JUDGE'S POSITION AND DUTIES

**Article 1** The Field Judge will operate on the same side of the field as Line Judge, 20 yards deep.

**Article 2** The Field Judge shall count the number of defensive players on the field at the snap.

**Article 3** He shall be responsible for all eligible receivers on his side of the field.

**Article 4** After receivers have cleared line of scrimmage, the Field Judge will concentrate on action in the area between the Umpire and Back Judge.



**Article 5** In addition to the specified use of the whistle by all officials (15-1-4), the Field Judge is also to use his whistle when upon his positive knowledge he knows:

- (a) that ball is dead;
- (b) that time is out;
- (c) that time is out at the end of a down, during which a foul was signaled by a marker, no whistle has sounded in such cases; and
- (d) that even in the presence of a whistle up or down field, he is to sound his whistle when players are some distance from such signal. This will help prevent dead ball fouls.

**Article 6** The Field Judge will assist Referee in decisions involving any catching, recovery, out of bounds spot, or illegal touching, of a loose ball, after it has crossed scrimmage line and particularly so for such actions that are out of the range of the Line Judge and Umpire. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1.

#### **POSITION ON FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT AND TRY**

**Article 7** On field-goal attempts or Try-kick attempts, the Field Judge will station himself on the end line and cover the upright opposite the Back Judge. He, along with the Back Judge, is responsible for indication to the Referee whether the kick is high enough and through the uprights.

## **Section 7 Side Judge**

### **SIDE JUDGE'S POSITION AND DUTIES**

**Article 1** The Side Judge will operate on the same side of the field as the Head Linesman, 20 yards deep.

**Article 2** The Side Judge shall count the number of defensive players on the field at the snap.

**Article 3** He shall be responsible for all eligible receivers on his side of the field.

**Article 4** After receivers have cleared line of scrimmage, the Side Judge will concentrate on action in the area between the Umpire and Back Judge.

**Article 5** In addition to the specified use of the whistle by all officials (15-1-4), the Side Judge is also to use his whistle when upon his positive knowledge he knows:

- (a) that ball is dead;
- (b) that time is out;
- (c) that time is out at the end of a down, during which a foul was signaled by a marker, no whistle has sounded in such cases; and
- (d) that even in the presence of a whistle up or down field, he is to sound his whistle when players are some distance from such signal. This will help prevent dead ball fouls.

**Article 6** The Side Judge will assist Referee in decisions involving any catching, recovery, out of bounds spot, or illegal touching, of a loose ball, after it has crossed scrimmage line and particularly so for such actions that are out of the range of the Head Linesman and Umpire.

#### **POSITION ON FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT AND TRY**

**Article 7** The Side Judge will line up in a position laterally from the Umpire on field goals and Try-kick attempts.

## **Section 8 Back Judge**

### **BACK JUDGE'S DUTIES**

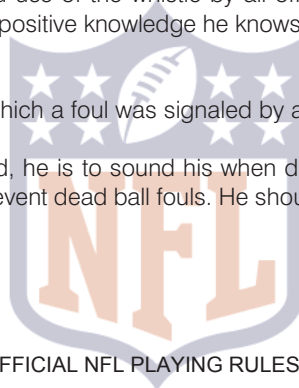
**Article 1** The Back Judge is primarily responsible in regard to: covering kicks from scrimmage (unless a Try-kick) or forward passes crossing the defensive goal line and all such loose balls, out of the range of Umpire, Field Judge, and Linesman, noting an illegal substitution or withdrawal during dead ball with time in (see 5-2-11), and a foul signaled by a flag or cap during down. He will count defensive team.

**Article 2** He is to time the intermission between the two periods of each half (4-1-2), the length of all team timeouts (4-5-1-Item 2), and the 40/25 seconds permitted Team A to put ball in play (4-6-1 and 4-6-2). He is to utilize the 40/25 second clock provided by the home team. If this clock is inoperative he should take over the official timing of the 40/25 seconds on the field.

**Article 3** In addition to the specified use of the whistle by all officials (15-1-4), the Back Judge is also to use his whistle, when upon his own positive knowledge he knows:

- (a) that ball is dead;
- (b) time is out; or
- (c) is out at end of down, during which a foul was signaled by a flag or cap, and no whistle has sounded in such cases.

Even in the presence of a whistle upfield, he is to sound his when downfield players are some distance away from such signal, and in order to prevent dead ball fouls. He should be particularly alert for item (c).



**Article 4** He shall assist the Referee in decisions involving any catching, recovery, out- of-bounds spot, or illegal touching, of a loose ball, after it has crossed scrimmage line and particularly so for such actions as are out of the range of the Field Judge, Linesman, and Umpire. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1. He should count the defensive players on the field at the snap.

**Article 5** The Back Judge has the absolute responsibility:

- (a) to instruct kicker and/or placekicker that “kickoff” must be made by placekick or dropkick.
- (b) that the height of the tee (artificial or natural) used for the kickoff conforms to the governing rules.

#### **NOTIFY VISITING TEAM COACH**

*Note: He is to notify the visiting team at least five minutes before the start of the second half.*

## **Section 9 Instant Replay**

### **INSTANT REPLAY**

The League will employ a system of Referee Replay Review to aid officiating for reviewable plays as defined below. Prior to the two-minute warning of each half, a Coaches’ Challenge System will be in effect **except for plays when the on-field ruling results in a score for either team**. After the two-minute warning of each half, throughout any overtime period, **and after all scoring plays**, a Referee Review will be initiated by a Replay **Official** from a Replay Booth comparable to the location of the coaches’ booth or Press Box. The following procedures will be used:

**Coaches’ Challenge.** In each game, a team will be permitted two challenges that will initiate Referee Replay reviews, **except for plays when the on-field ruling results in a score for either team, after the two-minute warning of each half, and throughout any overtime period**. Each challenge will require the use of a team timeout. If a challenge is upheld, the timeout will be restored to the challenging team. A challenge will only be restored if a team is successful on both of its challenges, in which case it shall be awarded a third challenge, but a fourth challenge will not be permitted under any circumstances. **A team may challenge an on-field ruling up until the next legal snap or kick. If there is a foul that prevents the next snap, the team committing that foul will no longer be able to challenge the previous ruling.** No challenges will be recognized from a team that has exhausted its time outs. A team that is out of time outs or has used all of its available challenges may not attempt to initiate an additional challenge.

**Penalty: For initiating a challenge when all of a team’s time outs have been exhausted, when all of its available challenges have been used, after the two minute warning of either half, during an overtime period, after a scoring play, or after a foul that prevents the next snap: Loss of 15 yards.**

**Replay Official’s Request for Review.** After the two-minute warning of each half, throughout any overtime period, **and after all scoring plays**, any Referee Review will be initiated by a Replay **Official**. There is no limit to the number of Referee Reviews that may be initiated by the Replay **Official**. **He must initiate a review before the next legal snap or kick and cannot initiate a review of any ruling against a team that commits a foul to prevent the next snap.** His ability to initiate a review will be unrelated to the number of time outs that either team has remaining, and no time out will be charged for any review initiated by the Replay **Official**.

**Reviews by Referee.** All Replay Reviews will be conducted by the Referee on a field-level monitor after consultation with the other covering official(s), prior to review. A decision will be reversed only when the Referee has indisputable visual evidence available to him that warrants the change.

**Time Limit.** Each review will be a maximum of 60 seconds in length, timed from when the Referee begins his review of the replay at the field-level monitor.

**Reviewable Plays.** The Replay System will cover the following play situations only:

- (a) Plays governed by Sideline, Goal Line, End Zone, and End Line:
  - 1. Scoring plays, including a runner breaking the plane of the goal line.
  - 2. Pass complete/incomplete/intercepted at sideline, goal line, end zone, and end line.
  - 3. Runner/receiver in or out of bounds.
  - 4. Recovery of loose ball in or out of bounds.
- (b) Passing plays:
  - 1. Pass ruled complete/incomplete/intercepted in the field of play.
  - 2. Touching of a forward pass by an ineligible receiver.
  - 3. Touching of a forward pass by a defensive player.
  - 4. Quarterback (Passer) forward pass or fumble.
  - 5. Illegal forward pass beyond line of scrimmage.
  - 6. Illegal forward pass after change of possession.
  - 7. Forward or backward pass thrown from behind line of scrimmage.

(c) Other reviewable plays:

1. Runner ruled not down by defensive contact.
2. Runner ruled down by defensive contact when the recovery of a fumble by an opponent or a teammate occurs in the action that happens following the fumble.
3. Ruling of incomplete pass when the recovery of a passer's fumble by an opponent or a teammate occurs in the action following the fumble.
4. Ruling of a loose ball out of bounds when it is recovered in the field of play by an opponent or a teammate in the action after the ball hits the ground.

*Note 1: If the ruling of down by contact or incomplete pass is changed, the ball belongs to the recovering player at the spot of the recovery of the fumble, and any advance is nullified.*

*Note 2: If the Referee does not have indisputable visual evidence as to which player recovered the loose ball, the ruling on the field will stand.*

*Note 3: This does not apply to complete/incomplete passes, or the ruling of forward progress.*

5. Forward progress with respect to a first down.
6. Touching of a kick.
7. A field-goal or Try attempt that crosses below or above the crossbar, inside or outside the uprights when it is lower than the top of the uprights, or touches anything.
8. Number of players on the field at the snap.
9. Illegal forward handoff.

*Note: Non-reviewable plays include but are not limited to:*

1. Status of the clock
2. Proper down
3. Penalty administration
4. Runner ruled down by defensive contact (not involving fumbles)
5. Forward progress not relating to first down or goal line
6. Recovery of a loose ball that does not involve a boundary line or the end zone.
7. Field-goal or Try attempts that cross above either upright without touching anything.
8. Inadvertent Whistle

