

# NORTHERN CALIFORNIA OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

## SACRAMENTO

### FOOTBALL OFFICIATING MECHANICS

Revised July 2004

### 3 Person Crews

For use in games involving the rules of the  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

**This is the official Mechanic manual for our association**

All the information concerning 5-person crew mechanics is the basis for the three person crew. The mechanics of the five person crew should be studied first before reading the sections on three person crews.

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Material provided in this manual has come from the following sources:

National Federation Officials Manual

California Football Officials Association

Collegiate Officials Association 5 man mechanics

Referee Magazine's Football Officials Guidebook

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## Chapter 1: Three Person Officiating Crew

ALL

1. In the 3 person mechanic illustration (see appendix) , the LJ, has the sideline opposite the HL on all plays throughout the game. They can either play on the line as in position (A) or off as in position (B). The referee is never responsible for the sideline.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

2. The biggest adjustment that has to be made in 3 person mechanics is the position of the line judge. The line judge can play on or off the line on any down but is responsible for the sideline opposite the headlines on every play, regardless of whether they are on or off the line, the referee is not responsible for the sideline on runs.
3. In a 3-Person Crew there is no umpire. The Line Judge has the option of playing On or Off the line, just as he would do in a 4 or 5 person crew. They will have sideline responsibility opposite the Head linesman throughout the game.
4. The referee no longer will be responsible for the sideline on runs to that side.
5. The LJ is the "guardian of his sideline" on all plays, therefore he has to be initially wide to stay on the outside of all receivers to keep them boxed in. From this wide position he can keep a good check on the line play and of ineligible pass receivers downfield.
6. The Referee can aid in watching the holding.
7. The Line Judge is not afforded the luxury of the middle of the field coverage. On running plays away from him, and pass plays and scrimmage kicks, the LJ literally does a lot of running. He must be mobile to do the job correctly.
8. The "boxed in" formation for a 3-Person Crew forms a triangle.
9. Three-Person Crew officiating will follow the same pattern duties and responsibilities for 4-Person Crew with these exceptions listed here.

## Chapter 2: Before The Game

LJ

1. LJ instructs the game clock operator.
2. Introduces the captain of the team who is on the sideline opposite the HL to the referee.

R,LJ

1. Ask the same basic questions as you do in five man mechanics. Line judge replaces the umpire in this role of pre-game duties.

HL

1. Secure and check down-marker and chains.
2. Before the game, the Linesman should put a piece of tape in the middle of the chains. This will be 5 yards from each end.
3. Operate the chains and down box six (6) feet outside the sideline opposite the press box.
4. Provide the clip man with chain clip(s). Show him how to mark it on the sideline, move chains back 6 feet from sideline, then remove other clip.
5. Organize and instruct assistants in their duties:
  - A. To set rods and down marker as directed and to move them only on direction of Linesman.
  - B. To refrain from making remarks to players or expressing of opinions concerning any ruling.
  - C. Box man to hold point of last down, previous down showing, until signaled to move to next down spot.
  - D. Marker is not to be changed until arriving at the new spot. "Old spot, old down; new spot, new down."
  - E. Box man to hold marker 6 feet back from sideline, even with forward point of the ball.
  - F. On all measurements, if there is a penalty flag showing, leave the down box with the previous down showing at the previous spot. If not a penalty, direct the down box man to the forward rod with the previous down showing.
  - G. To remove themselves and all equipment several yards outside the sideline on all free kicks. If runner comes towards the sideline, drop chain equipment and get back out of the way.
  - H. When the line to gain is in the field of play, both rods are always to be maintained and upright, six feet from the sideline at the start of every play. When the line to gain is the goal line, remove the chains safely from the sideline with just the down box being used.
  - I. In instructing the chain crew, tell them give the next down number, just the down box man moves, and when you wind your arm fully, everyone moves. If there is a flag on the ground, no one moves, regardless of signal.
  - J. The Linesman will go to the sideline and personally mark the spot for the chains to set to on each new 1st down. There is no exception to this mechanic.

## Chapter 3: Kickoff Positioning

R

1. Referee is in center of the field on 10 yard line.
2. Covers receiver either way and boxes in the runner between himself and either the Linesman or LJ, depending on whose side the run is on.

HL, LJ

1. Take position on the sideline of the field prior to kickoff.
2. LJ is on the free kick line of the kicking team, on the same side as the press box.
3. HL stands on the 50 and motions receiving team players and cautions them not to touch the 50. They then goes to the 50 on the sideline opposite the Line Judge.
4. Both officials count to see if they have eleven players on their respective teams.
5. Raise arms above head when on the sidelines and be ready to observe play.
6. You should watch for short free kicks, touching of short free kicks, point of touching, etc.

## Chapter 4: Field Goal Attempts and Trys

R

1. Take a position in the offensive backfield opposite the chains.
2. Before the snap, observe any illegal movement of ball.
3. After the snap, shift your observation to the holder and kicker.
4. Know whether the holder's knee was down when he received the snap.
5. Call any roughing of the holder or kicker.

HL

1. You are watching the entire line for encroachment.
2. If the kick is blocked you alone are responsible for determining if the kick crossed the neutral zone.
3. If a fake field goal, move quickly at the goal line and the whole plane is your responsibility from sideline to sideline.
4. If a pass you are solely responsible for any ineligible linemen down field and for determining if the pass crossed the neutral zone.

LJ

1. Take a position 6 feet or less beyond the end line.
2. You alone will rule on the success or failure of the kick.
3. In case of a broken play or a fake field goal attempt, the Linesman is the guardian of his sideline and the Referee is the guardian of his sideline.
4. The NCOA mechanics committee believe that whenever you have only 3 officials, that having 2 men under the cross bar, leaves you only one official on the field to officiate 22 players. Therefore a sacrifice has to be made and that is having just one official under the cross bar. When it is not a kick, we do the best we can with lots of hustle.

## Chapter 5: Goal Line Plays (On or inside the 5 yard line)

LJ

1. Take a position before snap on the scrimmage line opposite the Head Linesman and be no closer than your near hash mark.
2. Mark runner's progress from your position on the line.
3. If a pass develops stay wide and cover the pass.
4. Give the touchdown signal if you see a T.D. scored.
5. You may change to goal line mechanics outside the five yard line by moving onto the line before the snap if you think the situation warrants it. A good example would be if it was 4th and 1, and a team comes out of the huddle in a running situation.

## Chapter 6: Scrimmage Play Positioning

### R

1. On all scrimmage kicks, ALWAYS TAKE A POSITION DEEPER THAN THE OFFENSIVE BACKFIELD ON THE SIDE OPPOSITE THE HEAD LINESMAN, AND FACING THE HEAD LINESMAN.
2. On running plays, the LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN are the "guardian of their sidelines".
3. Play wider and deeper to cover greater area.
4. Be inside and deeper than any flanker on your side.
5. ASSIST IN CALLING HOLDING ON THE LINEMAN.
6. Assist Head Linesman in counting the offense.
7. Spot ball at inbounds spot on running plays into sidezone of LJ and opposite Linesman.
8. Be the "relay man in passing the ball in from the linesman to the LJ at the inbounds spot on plays that went into the Linesman's sidezone. Hustle!
9. Cover the ball during timeouts.

### LJ

1. Take a basic Position either 10 to 15 yards deep in the defensive backfield AND ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE FIELD AS THE REFEREE OPPOSITE THE HL OR ON THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE OPPOSITE THE HL
2. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SIDELINE ON ALL PLAYS.
3. THE REFEREE IS NO LONGER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SIDELINE, ON RUNS OPPOSITE THE HL, THE LJ IS RESPONSIBLE.
4. On forward pass plays the Referee sticks with the passer, YOU HAVE YOUR SIDE LINE ON ALL PASS PLAYS.
5. On completed forward passes the LJ becomes the Referee in covering the receiver and killing the play.
6. Time the 25 second count, time-outs, and intermission between quarters.
7. Count the defensive team for eleven players.
8. Cover the defensive team on all time-outs.
9. Be responsible for any movement by any flanker outside the Referee's position as he will be inside.
10. Cover man-in-motion going toward linesman if in ON mechanics. If in OFF mechanics the HL will have this responsibility.
11. Cover sideline on running plays away from linesman. stay outside of runner and cover him all the way.
12. Spot ball at inbounds, spot on running play into Linesman's sidezone.
13. Relay the ball to the Referee at inbounds spot on running plays into your sidezone. The Line Judge is responsible for sideline coverage opposite the HL on all running plays and passes.

## Chapter 6: Scrimmage Play Positioning

(Continued)

HL

1. Cover the man in motion to the opposite side of the field.
2. Cover runner when he enters your sidezone.
3. Never go out on the field more than your near inbounds hash mark.
4. Since Referee and LJ play wider and deeper, Lines man is in best position to mark forward progress spot as runner advances.
5. Count the offensive team for eleven players.
6. Cover the offensive team during time-outs.
7. Personally mark the spot on the sidelines when a new first down occurs.
8. Take charge of the chain crew and "clip your snap on the chains at a yard line before reversing the chains at the end of the 1st or 3rd quarters.
9. Watch the flanker on the Referee's side and all backs and linemen for illegal motion before the snap.

## Chapter 7: Measurement for First Down

All

1. Follow the same guidelines as 5 person officiating except the referee will mark this spot with a bean bag at the appropriate spot for HL LJ to stretch chain for Referee.

## Chapter 8: Scrimmage Kicks

R

1. Take a position opposite the Head Linesman 4 - 5 yards to the side of the kicker and one or two yards in front of him.
2. Observe the tight group of backs for any illegal movement before or at the snap.
3. Warn the potential kicker if he is on or outside the end line prior to snap.
4. At the snap, watch blocking and illegal action by players behind the snap. Observe action of (and against) the kicker. If no foul occurs, observe players while proceeding slowing downfield.
5. Line up the Linesman and Line Judge on any kick going out of bounds on a sideline between the goal lines.

HL

1. Take your regular position on the line of scrimmage and officiate as if a scrimmage play.
2. Hold in your area until the ball crosses the neutral zone.
3. You are responsible for knowing whether the kick crossed the line of scrimmage or not.
4. Watch the blocking of the near up offensive back with the on-rushing defensive lineman.
5. After the kick crosses the line, watching the play in front of the kick receiver. Be alert for any clips and blocking below the waist.
6. You are guardian of your sideline.
7. Be ready to cover around the runner if he comes your way.
8. Watch for short kicks, fair catch signals, and actions of man who signaled for a fair catch but didn't catch the ball.
9. Be ready to take the Referee's signal for the spot where a kick out of bounds crossed a sideline. One arm above his head means advance towards him, whereas an arm straight out pointing at you means to back up a chopping motion of the arm means to hold that spot. Move slowly.

LJ

1. You are really the equivalent of a L.J. in a 4-Person Crew in 3-Person mechanics on scrimmage kicks.
2. Take a position on the opposite side of the field from the linesman and at least 20 to 30 yards off the line of scrimmage.
3. Your position should be at least 5 yards wide of a potential receiver and 2 to 3 yards in behind of him where you can observe him throughout the kick.
4. Warn him before the kick to clearly indicate a fair catch signal by waving one are from side to side above his head.
5. 'Rule on validity of fair catch signal. You are responsible for following the ball if receiver fails to catch the kick.
6. Be in a position to rule on hand-offs.
7. Cover the runner until he goes into another official's zone.
8. You are guardian of your sideline and have end line responsibility as well.
9. Be alert to mark the sideline spot (with the Referee's help) on a kick that goes out of bounds on your sideline.