

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

SACRAMENTO

FOOTBALL OFFICIATING MECHANICS Revised April 2006

Modifications for 4 Person Crews

For use in games involving the rules of the
NATIONAL FEDERATION ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

All the information concerning five-person crew mechanics is the basis for the four-person crew. The mechanics of the five-person crew should be studied first before reading the modifications for four person crews.

Prepared by
NCOA Sacramento – Mechanics 2006 Committee
Joel Miller – Group Leader
William Stannard- Mechanics Committee Chairman
Steve Casagrande
Jay Nelson
Jim Waldman
Dennis Ward

Rev. April 2006

Four-Person Crew Officiating

GENERAL: All Mechanics in the "Five-Person Crew" officiating manual will apply unless modifications are specifically identified in this section of four-person crew mechanics. Off or On mechanics will be used. The entire crew share duties that are normally given the back judge in a five-person crew.

THE DUTIES OF THE LINE JUDGE, LINESMAN, UMPIRE AND REFEREE ARE THE SAME AS THOSE FOUND FOR A FIVE PERSON CREW EXCEPT FOR THE MODIFICATIONS NOTED BELOW.

Chapter 1: Pre-Game Duties In The Dressing Room	-----3
Chapter 2: Pre-Game Duties On The Field	-----4
Chapter 3: Timeing	-----4
Chapter 4: Measurements For First Down	-----5
Chapter 5: Kick-off - Diamond Mechanics	-----5
Chapter 6: Shifting Responsibilities On Kickoff Returns	-----7
Chapter 7: Scrimmage Plays - Positioning of Officials	-----8
Chapter 8: Scrimmage Plays-After The Snap	-----8
Chapter 9: Scrimmage Kicks	-----8
Chapter 10: Goal Line Plays	-----9
Chapter 11: Field Goal and Try Coverage	-----9

Chapter 1: Pre-Game Duties In The Dressing Room

ALL

1. Arrive one (1) hour before the game or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. Have proper and complete uniform.

R

1. Conduct a pre-game conference with all officials using a prepared written outline.
2. Review pertinent rules and interpretations. Invite questions from fellow officials.
3. Discuss timing and counting of players.
4. Review and discuss the following mechanics:
 - a. Retrieving and handling ball on incomplete passes and out of bounds plays as well as marking punts going out on the fly.
 - b. Methods of spotting the ball and instructing ball boys.
 - c. Handling fumbles.
 - d. Coordinate use of whistle at the end of quarter between official charged with timing and the Referee.
 - e. Position and coverage on:
 1. Kick-off
 2. Time outs
 3. Running plays
 4. Passing plays
 5. Punts and run backs
 6. Man-in-motion
 7. Goal line plays
 8. Reverse goal line
 9. Sideline plays
 10. Out-of-bounds plays
5. Discuss procedures in calling fouls and enforcing penalties.
6. Review the following signals:
 - a. Touchdown, Prior to Kick.
 - b. Dead ball, Inbounds, Out of Bounds, Double Stakes.
 - c. First down.
 - d. Fouls.
 - e. Progress.
 - f. Time-outs, especially on punts out of bounds.
7. Responsibility for counting eleven players on each team.
8. Sideline control.
9. Review momentum rule
10. Method of re-checking each other on decisions.
11. Mandatory communications between officials and key words to be used:
 - a. "Close, close".
 - b. "Dead ball, dead ball".
 - c. Foul during loose ball play.
 - d. Foul during a running play.
 - e. One-half distance penalty inside the 10 and inside the 30.
 - f. Umpire – signal that he has the ball in the end zone.
 - g. Linesman and Line Judge should discuss hand signals and overall line of scrimmage communication and coverage

12. If the referee is late for the pre-game, than the next senior official will conduct the pre-game conference.

13. If, for any reason, the official assigned to Referee the game is unable to start that game, the next senior official (by years of service in the NCOA – Sacramento) will assume the duties of the crew chief. The next senior official will then assign the game officials to work the position he/she determines to be in the best interest of that game and the participating teams.
14. Leave the dressing room together so as to arrive on the field together 30 minutes before game time.

The purpose of a pre-game conference is to prepare the crew mentally. It is important to solidfy the thinking of officials in regard to procedures, rules interpretation and enforcement. Referees will vary their approach to a pre-game conference but the value of organizing and unifying techniques to be employed in a game cannot be overemphasized. The pre-game conference should take a minimum 25 minutes to complete. No unauthorized visitors shall be allowed in this important session.

CHAPTER 2: PRE-GAME DUTIES ON FIELD

(Ref: Position Diagram 2-1, 2-2, 2-3)

UMP

1. Umpire checks pads on the goal posts.
2. The Umpire has the ball of the team on the Linesman sideline for the toss.

L

1. Operate the chains and down box six (6) feet outside the sideline opposite the press box. (Mandatory effective 2006 as result of rule change)

LJ

1. Instruct the game clock operator on his duties. Instruct him as to when the clock should be started stopped, and the horn sounded ONLY when the play ends and not during the play.
3. Review time-out and starting the clock signals.
4. Receive legal game balls from Referee.

CHAPTER 3: TIMING

(Ref: Position Diagram 3-1)

TIMING

R

1. 1. Make eye contact with the Line Judge and be ready to receive his communication that 10 seconds remain in the time-out period.
2. In the event of a game clock malfunction keep the 25 second count.

LJ

1. Take over all timing duties of the 5 person crew Back Judge, including the 25 second clock.
2. Instruct the clock operator in pre-game duties on the field 15 minutes before kickoff.
3. Stand clear of the ball and time a 60-second time out interval. Remain visible to the Referee at all times.
4. Notify the Referee when 10 seconds remain in the time-out period and again when the 60-second interval expires.
5. Time all charged time-outs, the one minute intermission at the close of the 1st and 3rd quarters, and time the halftime intermission. Know the elapsed game time. It may be required in a commissioner's report.
6. In the event of a game clock malfunction keep the game time on the field.

Chapter 4: Measurement For First Down

(Ref: Position Diagram 4-1)

R

1. Ensure that the ball is not moved during measurement procedure.

Chapter 5: Kickoff - Diamond Mechanics

(Ref: Position Diagram 5-1)

Because the Umpire and Referee and two flank officials form a diamond these mechanics are referred to as diamond kickoff mechanics.

R

1. Take position in the middle of the field at the 5 yard line.
2. Count the players of the receiving team. Verify you have eleven players with the Linesman by "punching" out.
3. Cover receiver either way, and box in the runner between himself and either the Linesman or the Line Judge, depending on whose side the return run is.
4. Primarily responsible for any piling on of the runner.

U

1. Take a position 2 or 3 yards behind the ball with the kicker, in the middle of the field.
2. Count the players of the kicking team. Verify you have eleven players with the Line Judge by "punching" out. Raise your arm to indicate you are ready.
3. Tell the kicker you will alert him when it is O.K. to kick off. Wait for the Referee to blow his whistle.
4. Check both the Linesman and Line Judge to see that their arms are raised, THEN, AND ONLY THEN, RAISE YOUR ARM IF READY and WAVE TO THE REFEREE.
5. Alert the kicker and step a yard or so to the side.

6. Observe action of the front five of the receivers if they come forward immediately attempting to block, otherwise move down the center of the field being alert for below the waist blocks from the side, clips or any other illegal play.
7. If kick goes out of bounds on a sideline, give hand and arm signals to covering official (if they need help) as to out of bounds spot. One arm above your head means he comes toward you, arm pointing at shoulder height means he backs up, and a chopping motion means stop.

L

1. Take a position on the sideline opposite the press box at the receiving teams restraining line.
2. Count the receiving team's players for 11. Verify you have eleven players with the Referee by "punching" out. Raise your arm to indicate you are ready.
3. After the kickoff, move down your sideline making sure to be guardian of your sideline at all times.
4. Be alert for blocking below the waist, fouls by the receivers, and the kicking team player attempting to break up a wedge.
5. If the runner is on your side of the field, you keep him boxed in with the Referee.
6. Be ready to give progress spot to the Umpire.
7. If the runner is on the opposite half of the field, You should go in the field, but never inside the hash marks, and observe action to the front and to the side of the runner.
8. If the ball is kicked out of bounds and the receiving team is on your sideline, ask the Head Coach which of the three options he chooses.

LJ

1. Take a position on the sideline at the kickers restraining line on the press box side of the field.
2. Count kicking team's players for 11. Verify you have eleven players with the Umpire by "punching" out. Raise your arm to indicate you are ready.
3. After the kickoff, move down your sideline making sure to be guardian of your sideline at all times.
4. Be alert for blocking below the waist, fouls by the receivers, and the kicking team player attempting to break up a wedge.
5. If the runner is on your side of the field, you keep him boxed in with the Referee.
6. Be ready to give progress spot to the Umpire.
7. If the runner is on the opposite half of the field, go in but never inside your "hash marks" while observing action around and in front of the runner.
8. If the ball is kicked out of bounds and the receiving team is on your sideline, ask the Head Coach which of the options he chooses.

On-side Kick Positioning

(Ref: Position Diagram 5-2)

In the event a short, or "on-side" kickoff is anticipated a modification of the diamond mechanics is recommended. IT IS CRITICAL TO BE ABLE TO DETERMINE IF THE BALL GOES BEYOND THE RECEIVERS RESTRAINING LINE. Therefore, two officials

are placed at the receivers restraining line to judge the ball's progress as well as touching by any player.

R

1. The referee is in the middle of the field at the 25-30 yard line. Adjust your position to keep all players in front of you.
2. Check with each official before declaring ball ready for play.

U

1. Initially have the ball with the kicker in the middle of the field.
2. Hand the ball to the kicker and tell the the kicker not to begin the kick until the Referee blows the whistle. Point out the Referee's position on the field.
3. Move to a position at the kickers restraining line on the same side of the field as the Line Judge.

L

1. Take a normal kickoff position on the sideline opposite the press box at the receiving teams restraining line.
2. Be ready to pinch in and rule on the ball going beyond the receivers restraining line, first touching, and who caught or recovered the kick.

LJ

1. Take an initial position at the receiving team's restraining line on the sideline opposite the Linesman.
2. Be ready to pinch in and rule on the ball going beyond the receivers restraining line, first touching, and who caught or recovered the kick.

Chapter 6: Shifting Responsibilities On Kickoff Return.

All

1. Cooperate and coordinate with fellow officials. Shift position and duties according to movement of the ball. Keep play and runner well boxed in and sidelines covered at all times.
2. On kickoff returns down the center of the field, the Referee should keep the runner and the play around the runner well boxed in between the umpire, with the Head Lines and Line Judge covering the sidelines.
3. If the runner shifts into either side zone, the three officials covering that side of the field will cover the play with the Line Judge or Linesman and the Referee and Umpire covering the inbounds line, depending on what side zone the runner is in. Keep the play surrounded by the "triangle".
 - Official closest to the runner will whistle and declare ball dead if and when the runner is tackled or downed.
 - Two officials will cover action in areas around the runner.
 - The third official will cover action away from the runner and clean up.

Chapter 7: Scrimmage Plays - Positioning Of Officials

"OFF" MECHANICS

(Ref: Position Diagram 7-1, 7-2)

R

1. Determine when off mechanics will be employed and which official will be in the off position
2. Adjust position to be on the same side of the field as the OFF official.

Chapter 8: Scrimmage Plays - After The Snap

FORWARD PASSES

LJ, L

1. **REMEMBER THAT WITHOUT A BACK JUDGE YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RULING ON PASSES AT THE ENDLINE. LINE JUDGE AND LINESMAN HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEEP RECEIVER ON YOUR SIDE OF THE FIELD AS WELL AS THE GOAL LINE AND END LINE AT ALL TIMES.**

Chapter 9: Scrimmage Kicks

(Ref: Position Diagram 9-1)

R

1. Line up on the same side of the field as the LJ.

U

1. On punt formation take position to the Line Judge side of the ball and deeper off the line (approximately 10 yards deep). Observe interior linemen and backs protecting for the kick on the kicker's strong side. Allow linemen to go by your position before turning to observe downfield play.

LJ

1. The Line Judge is the only flank official that will be off the line in obvious kick situations.
2. Initially align yourself 3 to 5 yards behind and 7 to 10 yards outside the receiver so you may correctly rule on possession, fumble, muff, or touching of the kick by the receiver.
3. Adjust your positioning in relation to the receiver as the play develops so that you may correctly rule on any possession, fumble, muff, or touching of the kick by the receiver.
4. Never allow yourself to be directly behind any receiver. You cannot rule on possession, fumble, muff, or touching from behind a receiver.
5. Have a beanbag in your hand to mark touching of the ball by the receiver.
6. Know the difference between a fumble and a muff. Be prepared to correctly and decisively rule on this call.
7. If the receivers do not touch the ball, you must continue to observe what happens to the ball.
8. You determine if the fair catch signal was legal or not.
9. **BE AWARE OF ACTION NEAR AND ON THE FAIR CATCH SIGNALER.**
10. Be prepared to rule on fair catch or kick catching interference.
11. If ball is first touched by the kicking team, mark spot of first touching (illegal touching) with your beanbag and continue to observe play until the ball is dead. **KEEP WHISTLE OUT OF YOUR MOUTH.**
12. **BE PREPARED TO JUDGE DECISIVELY WHETHER KICK CROSSED GOAL LINE OR NOT.** Signal appropriately when the kick ends in a touchback.
13. Cover the receiver all the way on a punt return. Split the field in half with the Linesman when determining the coverage of the ball carrier and the blockers in front of the ball carrier.
14. When you do not have a spot on a kick that goes out of bounds, look to the Referee to see if he is giving you a signal to move forward or backward. Stop when the Referee chops his/her arm, face the middle of the field, and signal team possession. This will be the yard line that begins the next series of downs.
15. Mark the spot where the kick ends with a beanbag. (This may be the spot of PSK enforcement.)
16. **HAVE TWO BEAN BAGS TO MARK SPOT OF FIRST TOUCHING OR END OF KICK, KEEP WHISTLE OUT OF YOUR MOUTH.**

Chapter 10: Goal Line Plays

L, LJ

1. **YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOTH THE GOAL LINE AND END LINE AT ALL TIMES.**

Chapter 11: Field Goal and Try Coverage

(Ref: Position Diagram 11-1)

R

1. In the event of a fake kick or broken play (run or pass) be ready to assist in covering the sideline on your side of the field from end line to end line.

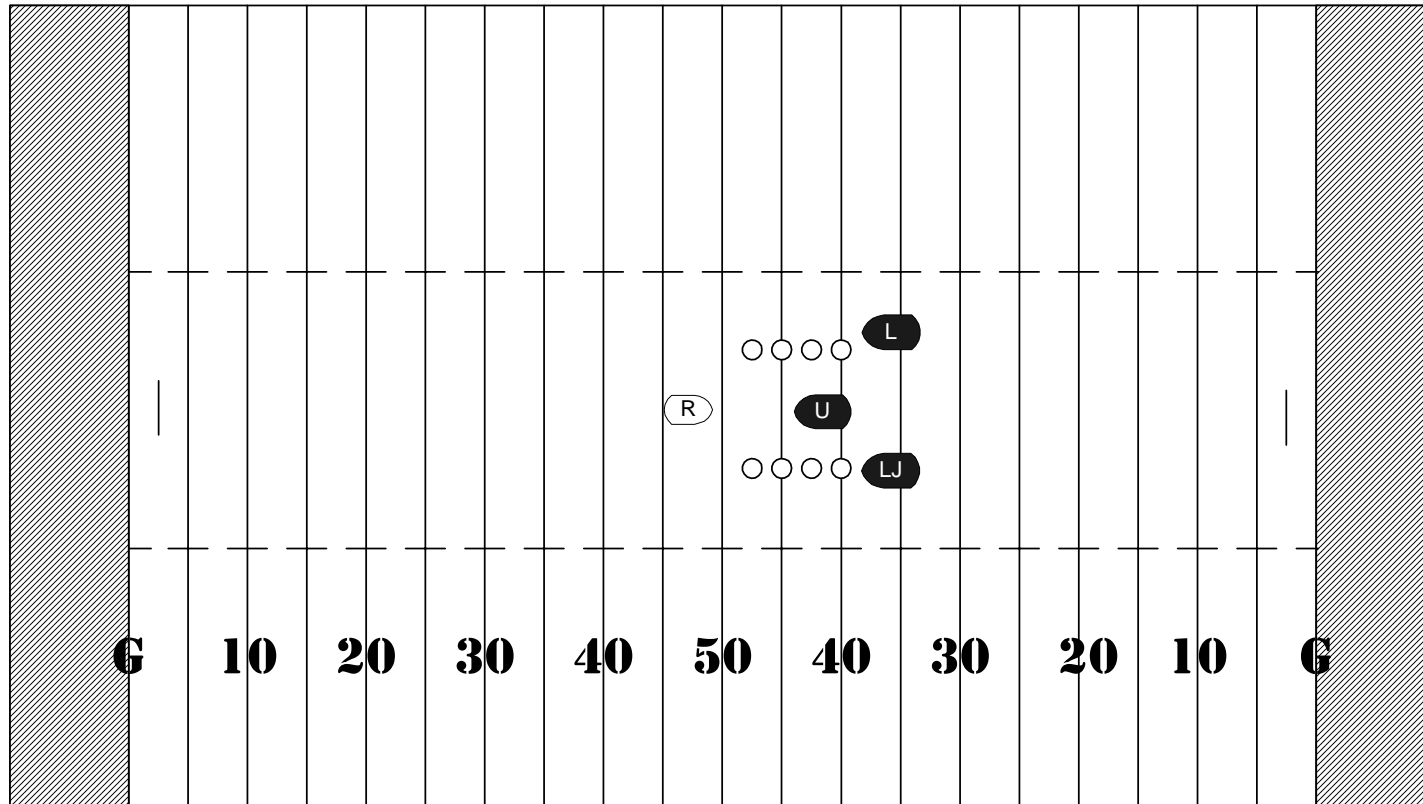
U, LJ

1. Take a position 3-6 ft or less beyond end line where you can line up the upright with the ball holder.
2. LJ is behind the goal post farthest from the HL.
3. The Umpire should still be able watch the snapper and protect him.
4. Orally communicate with each other as to who are eligible receivers if it is a fake try or field goal.
5. Orally communicate with each other as to success or failure of the kick.
6. Both withhold any signal but immediately step to the end line where you both simultaneously give the signal ruling on the kick.
7. If it was unsuccessful, only the official on that side need follow up with arms pointing the direction of the kick that was wide. This follows the incomplete signal.
8. Both officials are responsible to whistle the ball dead as soon as the try is over, and to continue to observe all players for any dead ball personal fouls.
9. If the ball strikes the crossbar, the Line Judge is responsible for the ruling.
10. On fake field goal attempts, be ready to cover passes or runs as usual. The Umpire comes to the goal line and officiates from inside out. The Line Judge covers the end line.
11. Be alert for illegal batting in the end zone.
12. After giving signal, move in and continue officiating, watching the line play for any late hits after the whistle.
13. On a field goal from the 20 yard line and out, the umpire will take his normal position as in a five person crew. The Line Judge is the only official behind the goal post ruling on the kick.

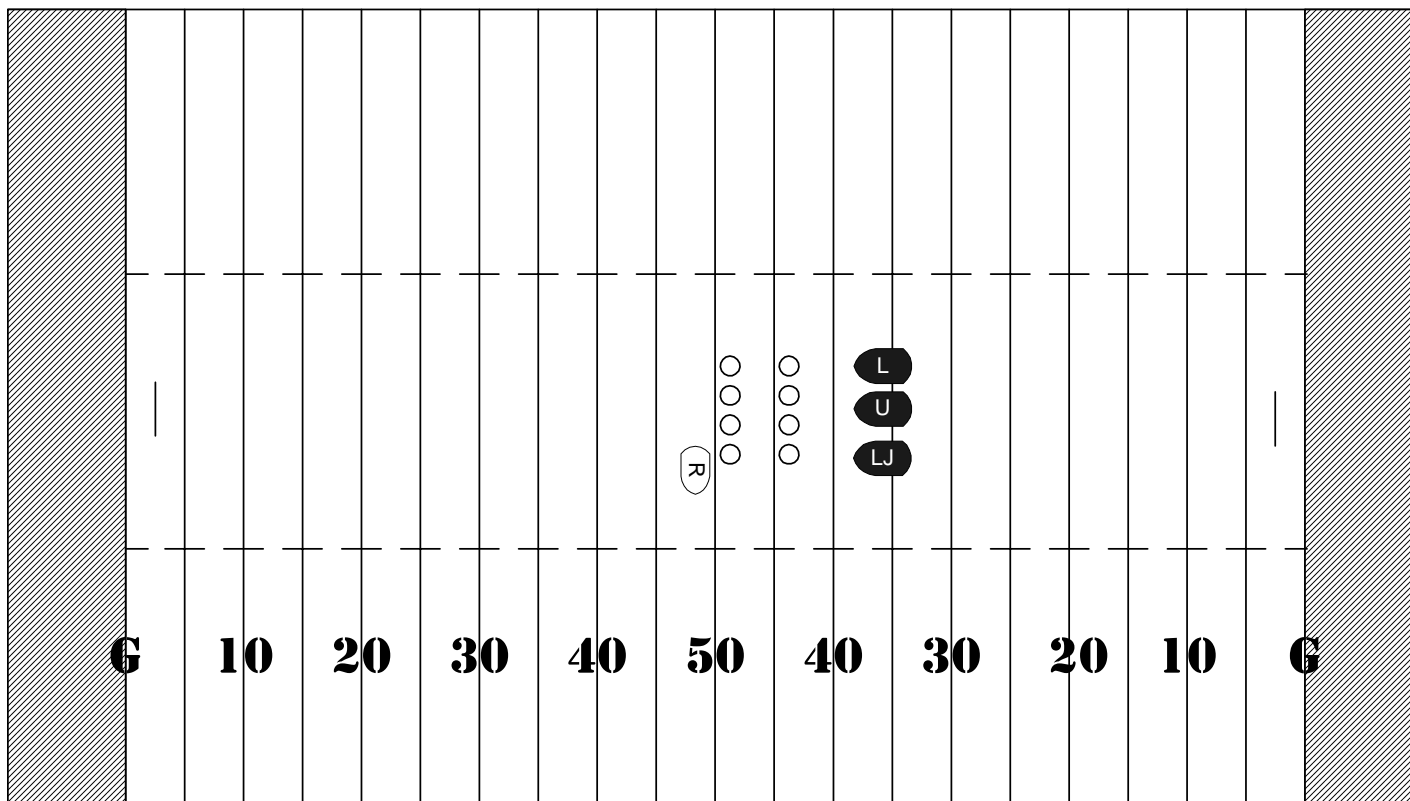
L

1. Take your normal position on the line and observe the entire neutral zone from sideline to sideline.
2. If it is not a kick, and the fake kick or broken play is from the goal line to the 20 yard line, you are responsible for the original line of scrimmage
3. If a pass, observe any ineligible linemen downfield.
4. If the kick is blocked (Not a try in Fed.) you are responsible to determine if the kick crossed the line.
5. If it is a fake kick or broken play from beyond the 20 yard line, you are responsible for the goal line as the Umpire is now behind the defensive line.

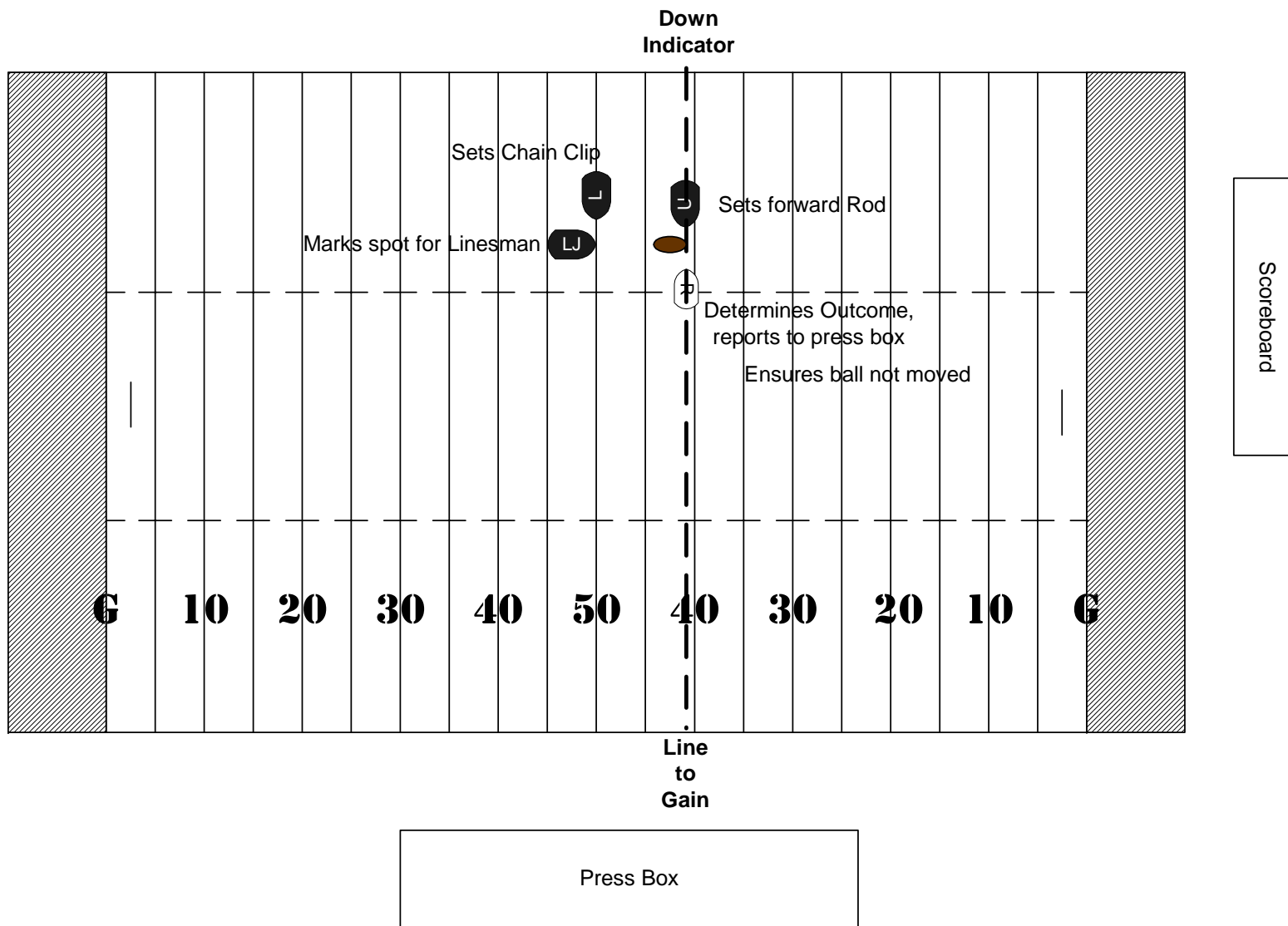
Position Diagram 2-2 Coin Toss



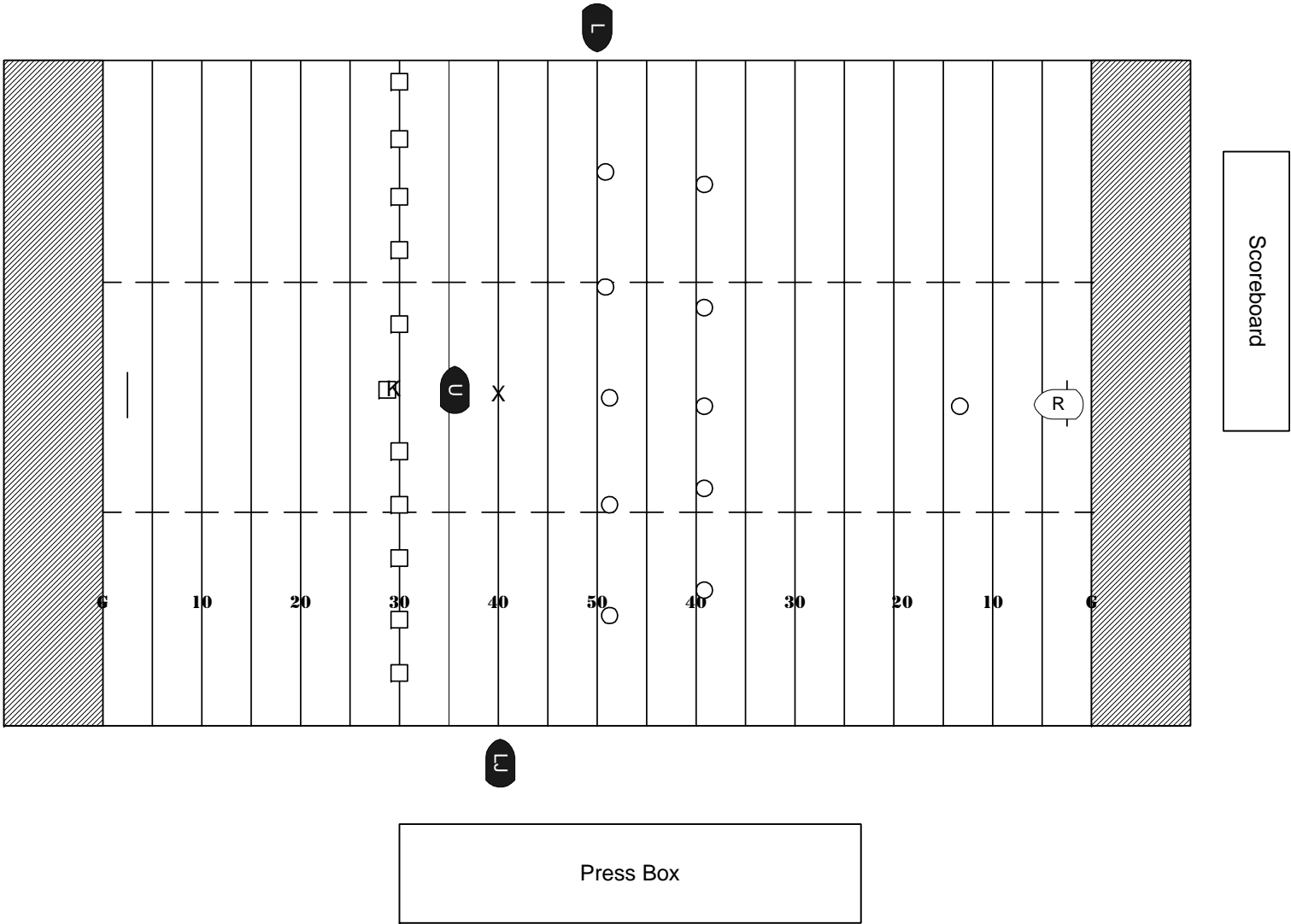
Position Diagram 2-3 Indicate Winner of Toss



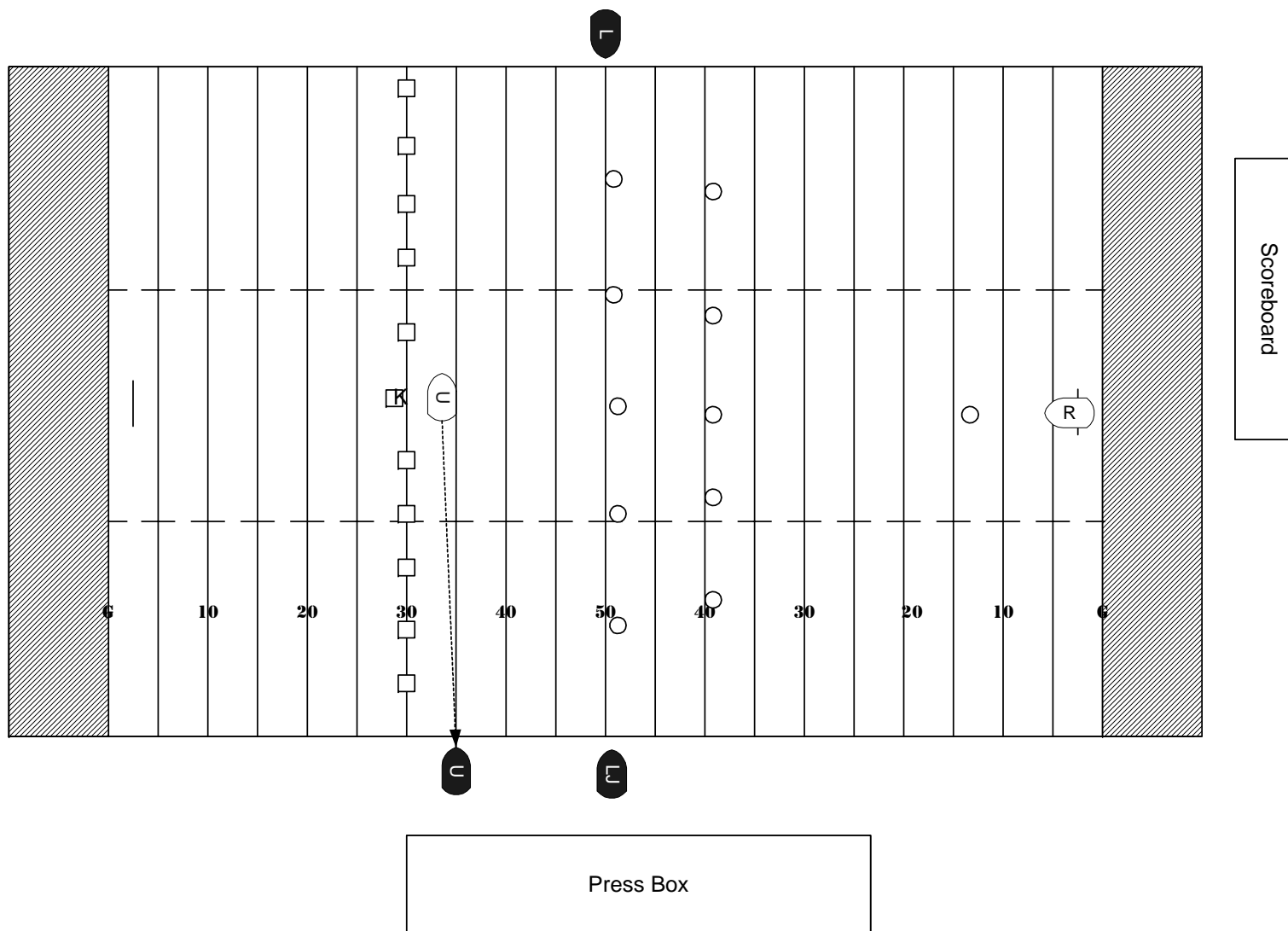
Position Diagram 4-1 Measurement For First Down



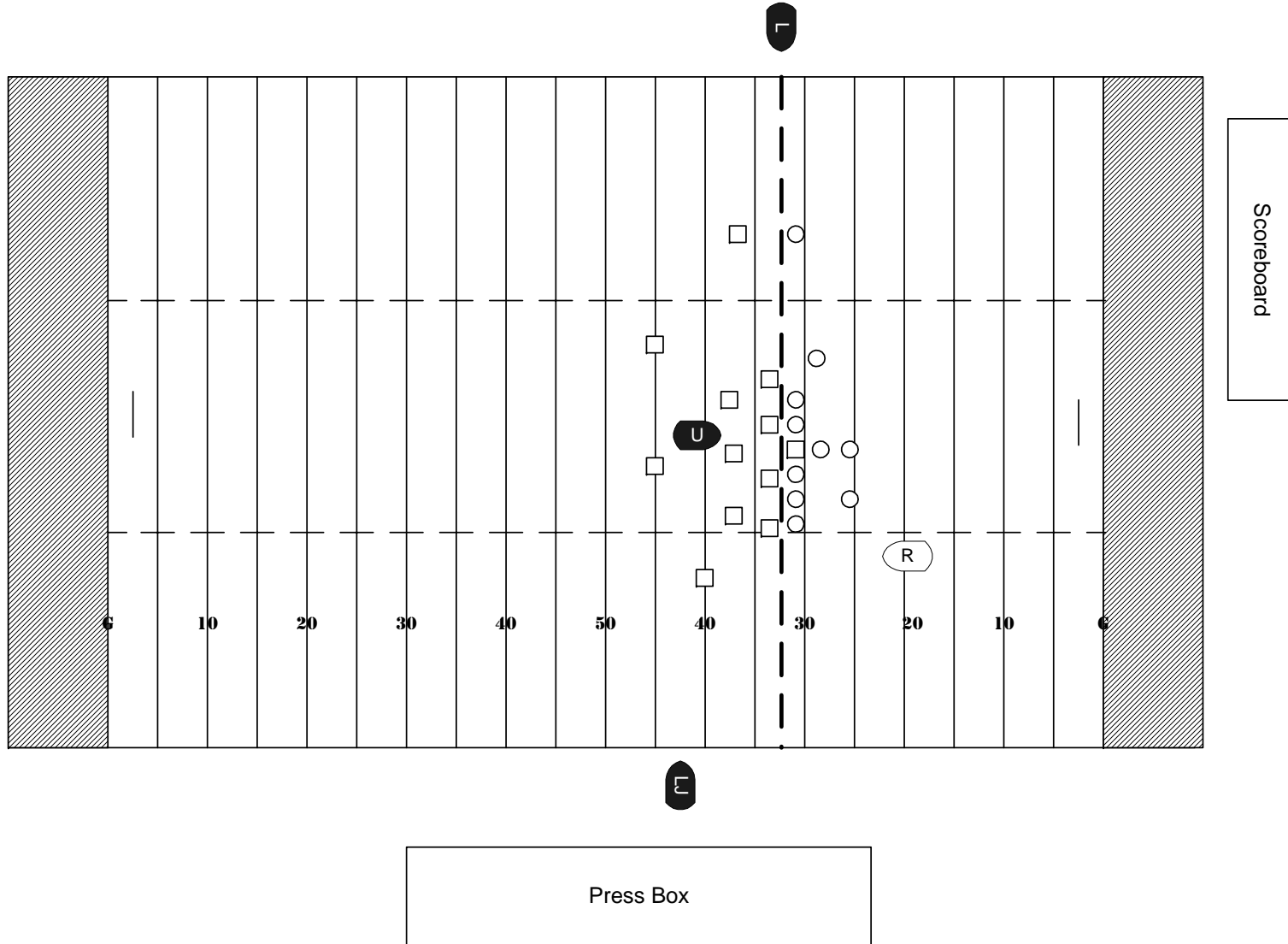
Position Diagram 5-1 Kickoff - Diamond Mechanics



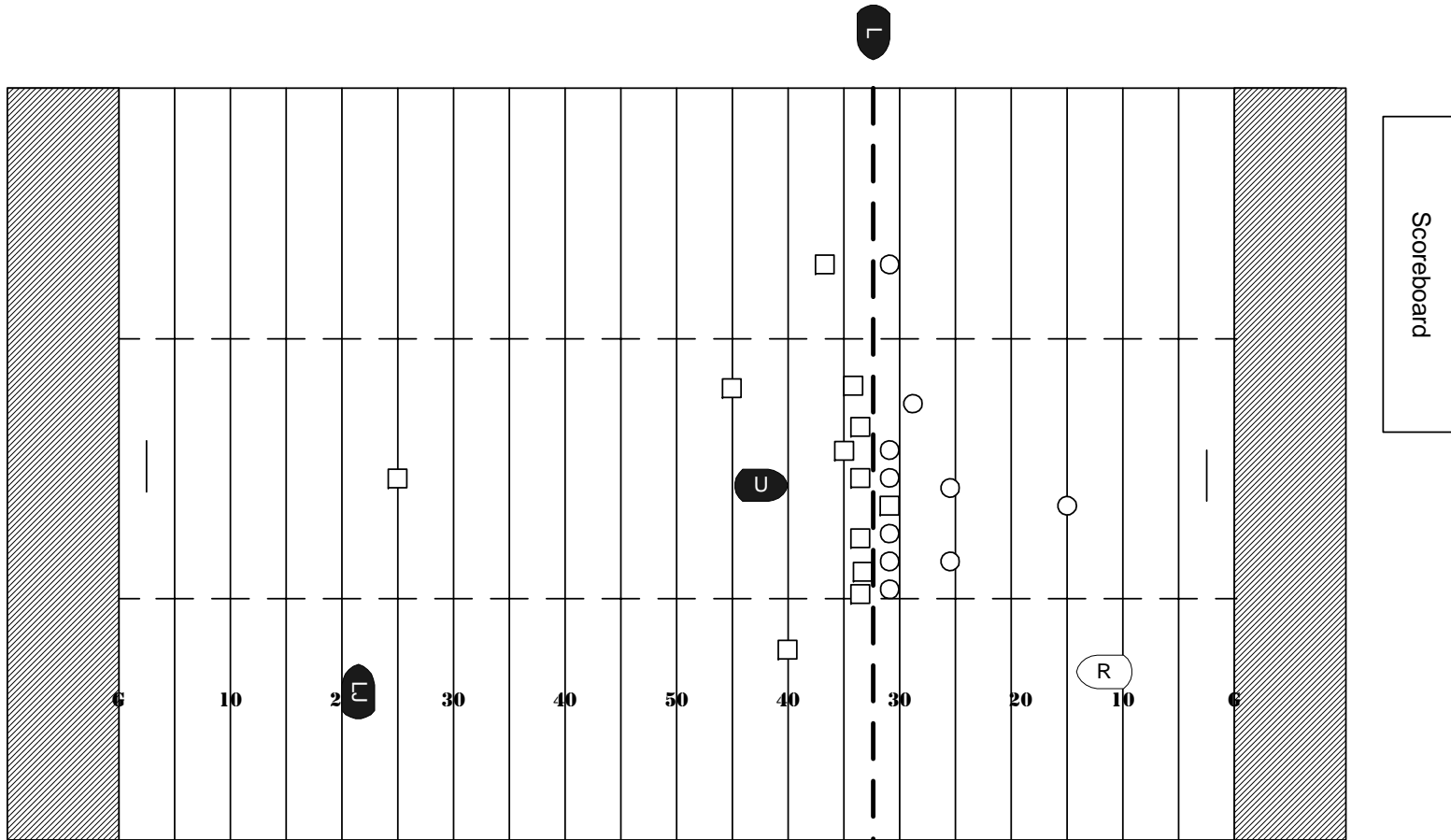
Position Diagram 5-2 On-side Kick Positioning



Position Diagram 7-2 "OFF" MECHANICS - Line Judge

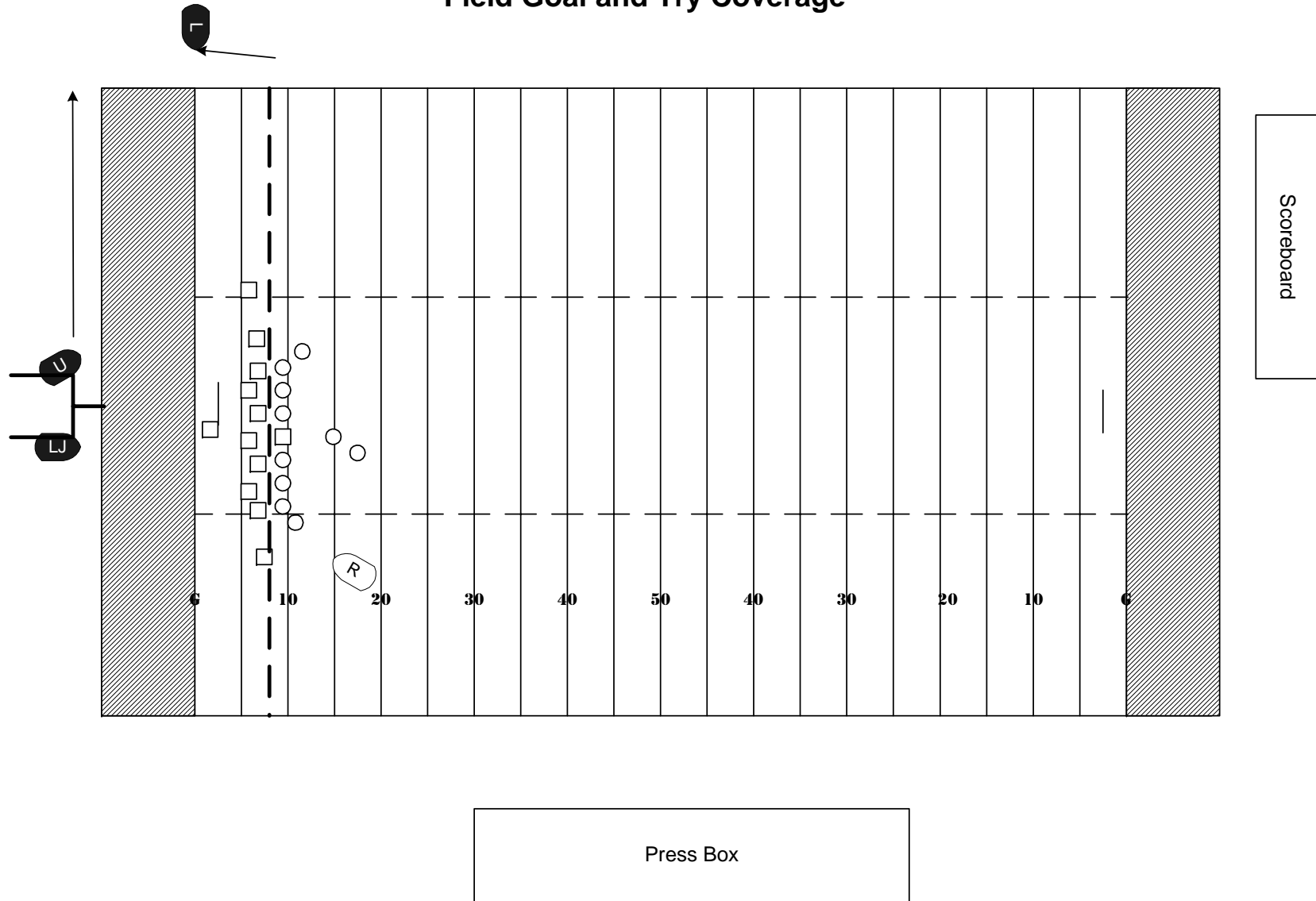


Position Diagram 9-1 Scrimmage Kicks



Press Box

Position Diagram 11-1 Field Goal and Try Coverage



Position Diagram 11-2 Field Goal and Try Coverage – Outside The 20

