

2025  
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# FB Mechanics Considerations, Emphasis, and Differences Primarily - NFL 7- person mechanics



# WHY UMPIRE POSITION IN BACKFIELD AND WHY FOCUS ON STATEWIDE CONSISTENCY?

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Always looking to  
provide better  
coverage

Fewer opportunities  
for missed safety  
fouls

Higher accuracy on  
Offensive/Defensive  
Holding



# Basic Thoughts

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- ▶ All -
  - ▶ All 7-person games will use the same mechanics with no local alterations
  - ▶ The NFL mechanics will be the guide as the starting point
  - ▶ The R and U will both be in the offensive backfield except on PAT and FG



# Scrimmage plays

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- ▶ Referees -
  - ▶ Count players before Team A breaks the huddle or as early as possible without a huddle
  - ▶ Positioned to the right of the QB at least as wide as the Tight End
  - ▶ 13-15 yards deep
  - ▶ Guard and Tackle on the right side are your initial keys (area of responsibility) as well as backs in your vision
  - ▶ All officials are to be in place before it is considered to be ready and premature snap at that point is against the offense.
  - ▶ Help manage the hurry-up as needed



# Scrimmage plays

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- ▶ Umpires -
  - ▶ Count players before Team A breaks the huddle or as early as possible without a huddle
  - ▶ Positioned in offense backfield to the left of the QB at the left foot of the left tackle
  - ▶ At least 12 yards deep, but not on same yard line as Referee
  - ▶ Should be in advance of Referee
  - ▶ Center as well Guard and Tackle on the left side are your initial keys (area of responsibility) as well as backs in your vision
  - ▶ Use voice as needed, the “gain” of being in the backfield is emphasis on blocking, but may need strong voice to manage players.
  - ▶ Manage “hurry-up” situations, including positional changes if absolutely necessary, but make them absolutely necessary and game timing related decisions!



# Scrimmage plays

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- ▶ Wings -
  - ▶ Count players if possible
  - ▶ Positioned one yard outside the sideline at a minimum
  - ▶ Watch for obvious movement of restricted linemen, particularly the tackle on your side
  - ▶ Rule on legality of formations
    - ▶ Warn zone
    - ▶ Obvious Fouls



# Scrimmage plays

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- ▶ Deep Wings and BJ -
  - ▶ Count Team B players - Illegal substitution is a live ball foul
  - ▶ Field/Side positioned 20-24 yards deep; Back Judge -23-27 yards unless the ball is inside the 30
  - ▶ Watch for obvious movement of restricted linemen, particularly the tackle on your side
  - ▶ High emphasis on clock awareness (crew)
    - ▶ SJ - Game Clock
    - ▶ BJ - Play Clock



# Scrimmage plays - Running Play

- ▶ Referees -
  - ▶ Observe action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone with a focus on the right side of the line
  - ▶ If you read run to the right or up the middle, focus on the blocks at the Point of Attack
  - ▶ If you read run to the left, focus on the blocks on the backside and QB
  - ▶ Stick with the QB wherever they go, sideline to sideline



# Scrimmage plays - running play

- ▶ Umpires -
  - ▶ Observe action at the line and threatened runners with a focus on the left side of the line
  - ▶ If you read run to the left or up the middle, focus on the blocks at the Point of Attack
  - ▶ If you read run to the right, focus on the blocks on the backside
  - ▶ Allow the QB to pass you if they scramble to the side zone, maintain blocking focus
  - ▶ Make your way to the inbounds spot after clearing dead ball responsibilities

# Scrimmage plays - running play

- ▶ Wings -
  - ▶ Observe the initial action by or to the offensive player who is your key, especially if pressed
  - ▶ If you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at the Point of Attack
  - ▶ Determine forward progress when you have a clear view of the ball
  - ▶ For plays that go away from you, clean up backside

# Scrimmage plays - running play

- ▶ Deep Wings and BJ-
  - ▶ Observe the initial action by or to the offensive player who is your key, especially if pressed
  - ▶ Pause, read and react. Do not bail
  - ▶ Field/Side - If you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at the Point of Attack
  - ▶ Field/Side - Be ready for crackback blocks
  - ▶ If a one-on-one play goes out of bounds on your side, focus on the field of play
  - ▶ Field/Side - Forward progress inside the two
  - ▶ Field/Side - Do not get another football until you clear the dead ball responsibilities
  - ▶ Back - Help with second level blocks up the middle and fouls in the area of the pile



# Scrimmage plays - passing Play

- ▶ Referees -
  - ▶ Observe action behind the line with a focus on the right side of the line
  - ▶ When the QB is a threat to be fouled, adjust your vision to the QB
  - ▶ Be aware of the free blocking zone (at the snap) as this helps with exception for throwing the ball away to conserve yardage
  - ▶ R will be the primary judge on legality of contact with the quarterback



# Scrimmage plays - passing play

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- ▶ Umpires -
  - ▶ Observe action behind the line with a focus on the left side of the line
  - ▶ When the QB is a threat to be fouled, adjust your vision to the area around the QB
  - ▶ Be aware of the free blocking zone (at the snap)
  - ▶ If the quarterback leaves the pocket, maintain your vision on blocks
  - ▶ U will be secondary on legality of contact with the quarterback, but if it is there, get it
  - ▶ Allow the QB to pass you if they scramble to the side zone
  - ▶ Make your way to the inbounds spot after clearing dead ball responsibilities on most plays



# Scrimmage plays - passing play

- ▶ Wings -
  - ▶ Observe the initial action by or to the offensive player who is your key, especially if pressed
  - ▶ If you read pass, your initial key has priority, but move to the tackle if your receiver is not threatened
  - ▶ Limit movement at the time of the pass
  - ▶ Primary for Ineligible Receive Downfield, with the weak side LOS having the best view
  - ▶ For plays that go away from you, clean up backside



# Scrimmage plays - passing play

- ▶ Deep Wings and BJ-
  - ▶ Observe the initial action by or to the offensive player who is your key, especially if pressed
  - ▶ Pause, read and react. Do not bail
  - ▶ Field/Side - If you read pass, move to zone coverage quickly (except red zone) and all eyes to the ball on a pass
  - ▶ Field/Side - Forward progress inside the two
  - ▶ Field/Side - Do not get another football until you clear the dead ball responsibilities
  - ▶ BJ - Help with second level blocks and fouls in the area of the pile

# Scrimmage plays - spotting the ball & pace

- ▶ Referees -
  - ▶ If a running play ends in your side zone, prepare to triangle the ball into the umpire
  - ▶ If a running play ends in the umpire's side zone, prepare to help spot the ball
  - ▶ When the umpire has the ball in their hands, start the game clock if required
  - ▶ Scan the field for flags/subs, indicate a first down when needed





# Scrimmage plays - spotting the ball & pace

## ▶ Umpires -

- ▶ Running play or completed pass in the middle third, you are responsible for retrieving the ball and spotting
- ▶ On a run or completed pass to your side zone, prepare to triangle the ball to the referee for spotting
- ▶ On a run or completed pass to the referee's side zone, prepare to spot the ball at the inbounds spot
- ▶ Keep a similar pace for the whole game (unless under 2:00 in the 2nd/4th quarter and time is a factor)
- ▶ Our goal is to get the ball on the ground between :28 and :32
- ▶ Maybe more time needed on a long pass play, but do not put the ball down early as that is the expected pace for the remainder of the game
  - ▶ If we go too fast, we make mistakes as do the players
  - ▶ Going too fast can lead to injuries
- ▶ Keep the lateral position on a down indicator (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or LH, LM, M, RM, RH)
- ▶ Place the ball on a spot that you can consistently enforce penalties from

# Scrimmage plays - spotting the ball & pace

- ▶ Wings -
  - ▶ Mark forward progress - Don't be too finite
  - ▶ Officiate players, do not worry about the exact blade of grass that a spot is on
  - ▶ Place the ball at your feet if the play ends in your side zone
  - ▶ Pinch hard on critical spots - in the field of play if you are not sure on a TD/safety
  - ▶ Ask for the ball and place it exactly when the LTG is threatened
  - ▶ Officiate players, do not worry about the exact blade of grass that a spot is on



# Scrimmage plays - spotting the ball & pace

- ▶ Deep Wings and BJ-
  - ▶ Accordion in when the play is over
  - ▶ Field/Side - Do not get another football until you clear the dead ball responsibilities
  - ▶ BJ - Help with fouls in the area of the pile
  - ▶ Make sure that the R has clock status as necessary
  - ▶ Make sure that clocks are correct when needed

# Free kicks

- ▶ Same initial positioning two yards off the sideline
- ▶ Count players for K and R before putting the ball in play
- ▶ Same coverages and mechanics as in the past
  - ▶ Once the ball is kicked, U and BJ need to let K cross their face before coming onto the field
  - ▶ Wings - hold your position until the GL is no longer threatened
  - ▶ Zone coverage for all officials, but don't leave a threat
- ▶ Officials may adjust after assuming INITIAL position properly, especially if short kick is anticipated for any reason

# Scrimmage kicks - punts

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- ▶ Referees -
  - ▶ Initial position 8-10 yards wide of the ball and 3-4 yards behind the punter
  - ▶ Aware of numbering exceptions to the right side
  - ▶ When the punter is a threat to be fouled, adjust your vision to the punter
  - ▶ Be aware of the free blocking zone (at the snap) as this is your piece of ING/RRK
  - ▶ If the punter leaves the free blocking zone (at the snap), officiate inside-out
  - ▶ R will be the primary judge on legality of contact with the punter



# Scrimmage kicks - punts

- ▶ Umpires -
  - ▶ Normal Initial position normal TE position and 3-4 yards behind the punter.
  - ▶ Aware of numbering exceptions to the left side
  - ▶ When the punter is a threat to be fouled, adjust your vision to the area around the punter
  - ▶ Primary for leaping the shield
  - ▶ View the second wave blocks as K progresses downfield

# Scrimmage kicks - punts

- ▶ Wings -
  - ▶ Observe the initial action by or to the K players in your area of responsibility, especially if pressed
  - ▶ Legality of formation/FST
  - ▶ Wait for the ball to be kicked before vacating the line
  - ▶ View the second wave blocks as K progresses downfield
  - ▶ Get a new ball after clearing your dead ball responsibilities

# Scrimmage kicks - punts

- ▶ Deep Wings and BJ-
  - ▶ Observe the initial action by or to the kicking team player who is your key, especially if pressed
  - ▶ Line up evenly approximately 5 yards behind the deepest receiver
  - ▶ Start at the goal line if it can be reasonably threatened
  - ▶ Field/Side/Back - hold the dead ball spot until cleared by the U
  - ▶ Help with the first wave of blocks unless you have KCI responsibilities



# Scrimmage kicks - scoring tries (PAT/FG)

- ▶ Umpires -
  - ▶ Initial position alongside SJ just behind linebackers in defensive backfield, 7-10 yards off LOS, cover blocking and pivot to cover return in case of failed kick that is not otherwise dead by rule
  - ▶ Aware of numbering exceptions on your side
  - ▶ Primary for for illegal activity by players at the line of scrimmage attempting to block the kick
  - ▶ View the second wave blocks as K progresses downfield as needed (primarily FG)

# Scrimmage kicks - scoring tries (PAT/FG)

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- ▶ Deep Officials -
  - ▶ SJ alongside U behind linebackers in defensive backfield, 7-10 yards off LOS, cover blocking and pivot to cover return in case of failed kick that is not otherwise dead by rule
  - ▶ BJ / FJ under goal post for initial position but flexible if play breaks loose
  - ▶ Aware of numbering exceptions on your side
  - ▶ Secondary for illegal activity by players at the line of scrimmage attempting to block the kick
  - ▶ View the second wave blocks as K progresses downfield (primarily FG)



GOOD LUCK!

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