

2026

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



Basic Thoughts

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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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Adjusted

- ▶ 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

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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)

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- ▶ 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)

2026
Adjusted

- ▶ 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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