

PIAA Football officials

Lancaster-Lebanon Chapter

Head Line Judge RESPONSIBILITIES

Arrive to the facility minimum of 90 minutes before the game.

Before the Game:

During your crews pregame be prepared to discuss your responsibilities on run, pass and kick coverages along with what signals are used to communicate with LJ, Umpire and Referee for unbalanced formations, backward pass and tight goal line plays. Also discuss with the BJ, coverage for pass plays on the sideline and back of the end zone for who has feet and who has hands. The crew should discuss the mechanics when a runner or play goes out of bounds- who will follow the ball carrier out of bounds?

Depending on the length of time to walk to the field, the crew should leave to go out to conduct field inspection and team inspection at 6:00. This is the opportunity to catch any illegal equipment: like tinted shields, wrist bands, players missing pads ect..

An important function of the HL is to communicate with the team on his sideline. The BJ brings out the HL team but once they are on the field you should introduce yourself to the head coach and cover the following points with him.

- Let him know you will address his concerns or answer any questions that may develop during the game at appropriate times (ex: number of player who committed foul).
- Confirm he will call timeouts and will make decision on penalties.
- Review sideline restrictions including restricted area and who is allowed in there. It is important to make sure the team knows that this is the officials area to move up and down the field. Ask the coach for who is the get-back coach so if there is issues you know who to talk to.
- Finally talk to your ball boys. There are all different levels of ball boys but if you get to meet them try to get their names and remember them if possible. Let them know what you are expecting and when they can and can't go on the field. Let them know who the umpire is so that if they are running balls on to the field they know who to hand the ball to.

During the coin toss remain on your sideline and make sure the team stays in the team box. After the toss proceed to the center of the field to meet briefly with the crew before breaking to your kickoff positions.

Kickoff:

On kickoffs, the HL is on the goal line with the chains and responsible for counting team "R" players. LJ and HL may move off the goal line but must be on same yard line and behind the deepest receiver. During the kickoff watch for illegal blocks.

If the result of the kick ends with the ball going out of bounds throw a flag if it wasn't touched by R and mark with your bean bag the spot of where the ball went out of bounds if last touched by R.

If the kick is being returned on the opposite side of the field. Stay focused and watch the blocks and clean up behind the play. Don't watch the ball carrier.

Punt:

On a punt the HL is responsible for the line of scrimmage. Once the ball crosses the line the HL should release down the field and watch blocks around the kick returner as the BJ is focused primarily on the kick returner and not the action around the kick returner. If the punt is kicked out of bounds be prepared to mark the spot if it is low to the ground.

If a punt is blocked the HL is responsible for their sideline and assisting with following the return to the goal line with the Referee.

Basic Position and duties:

The HL is positioned off the field on the line of scrimmage. The LJ and HL should signal what down it is to each other to make sure that their on the same page. The HL is responsible to make sure the guard and tackle on their side of the center is on the line of scrimmage and also if any of their receivers on their side of the field are on the line or not. The offense must always have at least 7 players on the line, if the offense is unbalanced make sure to use the correct signal to communicate to the LJ that you have an unbalanced formation. The HL has is responsible for their sideline and should follow any plays that go out of bounds.

Running Plays:

To determine if a running play or pass play watch the initial action of the guard and tackle on your side of the field. If you determine it is a running play watch the blocking in front of the runner and pick up the runner once they reach the line of scrimmage. If the runner is going outside the tackles it is important to make sure they get the edge cleanly. Be prepared to mark forward progress spot of the runner and for any fouls against the runner.

If run is to opposite side of field give a soft spot based off the LJ spot of the end of the run. On 3rd or 4th downplays or plays near the goal line be prepared to pinch toward the ball to mark the spot of the end of the run. If the play is at the goal line signal TD only if you see the ball break the goal line.

Passing Plays:

To determine if a running play or pass play watch the initial action of the guard and tackle on your side of the field. Once you determine it is a pass play, focus on your receiver key which is usually the widest receiver on your side of the field. Watch the initial action on your receiver key but also go into zone watching action of the receivers in your zone while keeping an eye on the status of the ball. Be prepared to rule if a receiver was held but once the ball is in the air it is pass interference. If the ball is thrown into your zone watch the action and follow the action once the catch is made. If ball thrown to opposite zone than watch action behind the play.

Reverse Mechanics:

In regards to reverse mechanics the HL is still responsible for their sideline and to getting to the goal line.

First down Measurements:

On measurements the HL is responsible to pick up the chains at the clip and bring out the chains with the chain crew. The LJ will give you the spot to lay the chains down with their foot. Once you have a firm grip on the clip and have the chains set you can let the Referee know that you're ready for the stick to be stretched.

Penalty Administration:

If you are the official who throws the flag, continue to officiate to the play is dead. After the play is dead then report the foul to the referee.

Field Goals/Trys:

During field goals and try's the HL is positioned on the line like normal scrimmage play if not under the post. HL is under the post with the BJ when looking at the Referee's back on a FG/try.

Timeouts:

During timeouts, the HL is responsible for the team on their sideline. Know how many coaches are in the huddle and if they are using the iPad to show information or not. If the huddle is outside the numbers then numbers they can use and iPad and have multiple coaches in the huddle. If the huddle is inside the numbers they can't use technology and only have 1 coach. Also let the coach know how many timeouts he has remaining and when the timeout is over.