

Hodge Podge of Material for Officiating Football

By Scott Reilly

Hodge Podge Definition

- A motley assortment of things
- Mixed Stew
- A number of things mixed together without any particular order or reason.

The C's of Officiating

- Concentration
- Consistency
- Communication
- Common Sense
- Courage
- Comportment (Your demeanor is **your outward behavior**. It includes the way you stand, the way you talk, your facial expressions.)
- Confidence

Officiating Psychology

- We are all just football officials. We are in this together. We need to learn from others
- Be patient and stay positive. Natural progression up the ladder is best
- Manage your own emotions. You are going to make mistakes, it is how you recover that's important.
- Let go of a wrong call. Don't let one play ruin a great game or an entire career
- Attitude -No ego, be humble. Learn from the game

Officiating Basics

- If you think it's a foul – It's Not
- If you know it's a foul – It Is
- Focused – Mentally alert/must concentrate one play at a time for the full game. Get involved, either physically or mentally, in every play.
- Be prepared – for each game: mentally, physically and emotionally. All games are important. Work every game with the same intensity.
- Be professional at all times. If you want to be treated like a professional, you must act & look like a professional, both on and off the field.
- Strong Communicator – Be Approachable. Good Listener. You think before you speak. Fair, but firm. Talking too much can get you into trouble
- Team Player – Tries to make each member of the crew better. Willing to sacrifice for the good of the crew.

Officiating Basics

- Don't be so hard on yourself. Know it is not the end of the world if you make a mistake or you didn't get a big assignment or decent schedule.
- Pay attention to timelines
- Don't be picky or over-technical
- Never guess what may have happened
- If it involves the safety of a player, call it.

Officiating Basics

- Have fun. It's hard work to become a good official, but that doesn't mean you can't have fun in the process. It shouldn't be difficult to find pleasure in the officiating experience. A fondness of working in certain stadiums. An assignment that takes you to a new area, take in the scenery along the way. The opportunity to renew friendships and share new experiences. The satisfaction that comes doing a good job are all things that make officiating fun.

Officiating Basics

- Never show annoyance, irritation or anger when enforcing a penalty
- It's an accepted fact that great coaches "out-prepare" the competition. (So Do Great Officials). You need to be prepared. You should want to be prepared. How can you act correctly, if you're not prepared.
- The best officials always seem to be in the best position to see things. When you watch a great official, you'll always see great mechanics.

Officiating Basics

- Preventative officiating is your best weapon towards maintaining game control
- A word of warning at the right time goes a long way
- Know what to look for and where to look is a requirement of every official on every play. The great ones always know.
- Interpersonal skills – look coaches in the eye.

Officiating Axioms

- Be a “Great” Dead Ball Official. View all players until they are back with their teammates.
- Always see the ball before you blow your whistle.
- You may miss one, don’t look back. We must always be ready to officiate the next play.
- Concentration. Give everything you have on every play for 60 minutes (extra periods if required).
- Display integrity, courage and poise.
 - o Integrity: the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness
 - o Courage: the ability to do something that frightens one.
 - o Poise: graceful and elegant bearing in a person. (balance, control, presence)

When is Question Rules: know them

- When in question as to whether an action is a false start or illegal motion, it is a false start.
- When in question if a wide receiver is covering up an originally ineligible receiver, they are not covered up.
- When in question if movement by the defense into the NZ causes the offense to move, a player is moving forward toward the offensive player.
- When in question if a player lines up tight to the LOS and jumps forward and the offense that is threatened moves, shut the play down and penalize the defense.

When is Question Rules: know them

- When in question, if the defensive player shoots the gap and you aren't sure if contact was made, shut the play down to avoid a free shot at the QB.
- When in question, the runner fumbled and was not down.
- When in question, regarding whether the quarterback passed or fumbled, it will be ruled a fumble.
- When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender attempts to punish
- When in question as to whether the passer is or has been outside the tackle box, they are outside the tackle box.

New Editorial Changes-Offense

- Any movement by one or more players that simulates action at the snap is a FST. This includes:
 - o QB making quick jerky movements that simulates the start of a play
 - o The snapper flexing, jerking their head or dipping their shoulders or simulating a snap
 - o Abrupt coordinated shifts or player movement
 - o Clap or signal to start a play with abrupt or coordinated movements
 - o Any Team A movements that simulates action at the snap is a foul

New Editorial Changes-Offense

- If an ineligible lineman's helmet is breaking a line drawn through the waistline of the snapper, he is legally on the LOS. If an ineligible lineman's helmet is anywhere between the waistline of the snapper and his read end, a warning should be given but a foul will be called if multiple warnings have been given. Treat formation warnings separately on scrimmage downs, punts and field goal/PAT. You are constantly working to get things legal. Work hard in the first 5 minutes letting coach and players know then the rest of the first quarter, if you need to flag it, get this done all in the 1st quarter. Do not wait until the 4th quarter to call fouls like this.

New Editorial Changes-Offense

- Any wide receiver lined up more than one yard off the LOS is considered in the backfield. Need clear separation between wide receiver alignments. If deceiving the defense on alignment (especially on gadget plays) that's where the blade of grass standard comes in. On normal trips play, if little stagger, no deceit, this is OK and the blade of grass still applies. If you have trouble identifying four in the backfield, maybe that is a time to throw your flag. Clean it up, but don't go overboard.

New Editorial Changes-Offense

- The snapper may not be permitted to move the ball more than $\frac{1}{2}$ yard forward when taking his stance nor move over the line to gain or goal line. The play shall be shut down, the ball reset and the player and his coach warned. A foul for FST shall be considered after a warning. You can warn centers if move ball more than a $\frac{1}{2}$ yard on first and second down. If 3rd and 4th down move $\frac{1}{2}$ yard or cross the GL, don't let them snap the ball (never). More latitude on 1st and 2nd down. Try and handle it early.

New Editorial Changes-Offence

- Determining receiver “in the area”. Up to five yards between where a pass lands in bounds and the nearest eligible receiver may be used for determining “in the area”. This can increase on longer passes and when the receiver is running towards the spot where a pass lands in bounds. If the pass lands OB, if the receiver is between the top of the numbers and the sideline (or in the end zone), if pass is thrown over the vicinity of the receivers head he is considered “in the area”. If the pass is significantly thrown outside the playing enclosure, this is not in the area.

New Editorial Changes-Defense

- Any player within 1 yard (stationary or not) may not make quick, abrupt, or exaggerated actions that are not part of normal defensive player movement. You are judging a non-football act versus a normal stem.
 - o The defense will be held to the same standard as the offense – simulating action at the snap
 - o Coordinated defensive movement, including lateral and backward movement that includes amplified or unnecessary arm movement is a foul. Looking for exaggerated movement prior to the stem.
 - o Stopping, flinching or other non-football actions near the LOS is a foul.

New Editorial Changes-Defense

- No defender shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play
 - o No player may call defensive signals that simulate the sound or cadence or otherwise interfere with offensive starting signals
 - o This includes clapping or actions that create a clapping sound if the offense is using the clap as a part of their starting signal. Clapping from the SL is also illegal.

Things I learned at my Big XII Alliance Clinic

- When receivers go inside you really need to be there to see the contact that takes place. We need to officiate the belt.
- Don't squat at goal line when making a TD signal
- Officiate the threats. Really no more "keys", now "Initial Responsibility"
- Make sure the referee has every piece of the puzzle so he/she doesn't go down the wrong road.
- Is the defender trying to track the ball? We will allow contact but we don't want to bail him out.
- Don't get so focused on the ball carriers. Need to look at the blocks in front.

Things I learned at my Big XII Alliance Clinic

- 4th down with 2 yards or less, the H & L go to the line
- Officials meet in the middle on 2 minute Time Out. Review list of 2 minute rules. Tell coaches what their timeouts remaining are. Play clock at :25 seconds. Never at 40 seconds even if helmet off/injury prior to 2 minute TO. One ball mechanics. 10 second runoff applies.
- Gadget plays come up when the formation is unbalanced. Must meet formation requirements. These are advantage-disadvantage plays. These have the highest degree of scrutiny.
- Point of attack, see restriction, make your decision if it is big enough.
- We default into the belt when our RB goes to the other side if double doubles.
- Officiating is mainly common sense.

Things I learned at my Big XII Alliance Clinic

- Goal Line mechanics – officiate while you go the goal line.
- Is a guy running a route when you consider OPI. Receiver attacks main part of the body. This is not accidental. This is practiced, especially around the GL. At one yard from GL, you need to be as tight as possible as these are designed pick plays.
- Sometimes you can have a Big Ugly nothing.
- Coaches are teaching little guys against big guys to squat – looks like a low block but at the waist.

Things I learned at my Big XII Alliance Clinic

- Go ahead and document your warnings this year. When you call a foul for a bad lineup and they see you have been warning, this let's the grader know you have been trying.
- Tackle to tackle – a flinch is a flinch (just a good reminder)
- 5 minutes and under, team behind in score (or tied) gets a chance to decide on snap or running clock, even if decline a foul such as DOF because offense makes more yards. Decline foul but can ask to be on snap.
- Catch on sideline. Get feet but follow guy OB to ensure possession, then look to sideline partner.

Presnap Routine

- You officiate from the end of the last play. Presnap, subs, counting get ahead of the game. So many distractions, snap back if lose focus. Always have to be focused. Guys at the top do not have breakdowns on simple basic fouls – Presnap way before team breaks the huddle. Relaxed zone, things run in the background, check yourself, make this be automatic. Can't write a mechanics manual for everything, read the play.

Final Thoughts

- Live in the Moment (Be a positive person)
- Be Grateful. You are part of a great brotherhood. Opportunity to play in the arena.
- Be patient, have enthusiasm, be passionate
- Keep expectations real. Avoid that feeling of “not being ready”.
- Enjoy the Pressure – Pressure is a privilege
- Enjoy the stories and experiences