

# Guidance for Announcements and Usage of Stadium Microphone



## Background:

- As stadium microphone usage becomes more commonplace in our games, this guidance document is prepared to help referees who are newer to working with microphones. Many officials may be given the opportunity to use one even at the JV level with their crew.
- Microphone usage enhances the game experience, improves game tempo and allows us to communicate more effectively with coaches, players and fans
- Proper, professional microphone usage brings credibility to the R and crew
- Scripting and rehearsing announcements will help you with clear, concise, consistent announcements
- It's not as easy as it looks on TV, but those R's have spent countless time practicing their announcements
- This document provides a number of examples to cover most scenarios. Be yourself and develop your style.

## General Guidance:

- Penalty announcements should use a minimal amount of words possible to convey the penalty and enforcement
- Clear pauses should be used between each aspect (represented by a “-” in the examples)
- Generally, for single foul scenarios this will be the foul, the team, the yardage, and always end with the next down
- Typically, it's not necessary nor encouraged to discuss the enforcement location
- Don't face the press box until you are ready to announce, stand sideways or with your back to the press box. We hope to train PA announcers to avoid speaking and turning to the press box is the cue.
- Know how to turn on/off the mic without looking down

## Prior to your announcement:

- Ensure you have ALL the information you need (team, #, down, team option)
- Step into a clear area (this should only be a few steps) and face the press box
- Turn on mic and pause a second to account for any syncing delay
- Only use these team unit descriptors: Offense/Defense, Kicking Team/Receiving Team, Intercepting Team/Passing Team, Fumbling Team/Recovering Team
  - In kicking formations, remember teams are offense and defense until foot meets ball
- If you have multiple fouls and cant remember the numbers, have the BJ near you out of camera view to help. Don't guess on numbers.

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## Examples:

Simple single fouls.

“Canned” announcements are used for simple single fouls. These announcements are quick with little verbiage. Referees are expected to practice every foul as a “canned” announcement, not just those listed below.

- “False Start – Offense – Number 78 – 5 yard penalty – Second Down”
  - Note: it's not necessary to state dead ball or give the signal prior to announcement
- “Encroachment – Defense – Number 99 – 5 yard penalty – First down”
  - Note: it's not necessary to state dead ball or give the signal prior to announcement
- “Holding – Offense – Number 52 – 10 yard penalty – Third Down”
  - If declined: “Holding – Offense – Number 52 – The penalty is declined – Fourth Down”
- “Pass Interference – Defense – Number 11 – 15 yard penalty – First Down”

In some situations, it’s important to add details to clarify the reason for the foul, the enforcement, live ball vs dead ball, unusual enforcement and timing impacts. Common fouls where additional verbiage (in **bold**) is needed:

- When a defensive foul will make it a first down: “Encroachment – Defense – Number 99 – 5 yd penalty **results in a First Down**”
- “Free kick out of bounds – **the ball will be placed at the 35 yard line** – First Down”
- “Free kick out of bounds – 5 yard penalty – **Rekick**”
- “Roughing the Passer – Defense – Number 98 – 15 yard penalty – **Automatic First Down**” or  
“Roughing the Passer – Defense – Number 98 – 15 yards **added to the end of the run** – **Automatic First Down**”
- “Illegal formation – **More than 4 players in the backfield** – 5 yard penalty – Second down”
- “Illegal Shift – **Numbers 2 and 12 were moving and did not set** – 5 yard penalty – Second down”
  - Get both numbers or state “two players”
- “Chop block – Offense – **Numbers 64 and 58** – 15 yard penalty – Second Down”
  - Get both numbers
- Half distance to goal penalties:
  - “Holding – Offense – Number 52 – **Half the distance to the goal** – Third Down”
  - “Personal foul – Facemask – Defense – Number 55 – **Half the distance to the goal from the end of the run** – First Down”
- “**After the play** – Personal foul – Defense – Number 34 – 15 yard penalty – First Down”
  - Note: when using “After the play”, use the dead ball signal as well
- “**Prior to the pass** – Holding – Defense – Number 21 – 10 yard penalty – First Down”
- “**Sideline warning** – [Enter Team Name] – **their first of the game** – Third Down”
- “**Sideline interference** – [Enter Team Name] – 15 yard penalty – Second Down”



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- **“Intentional Grounding – Offense – Number 7 – 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul – Loss of Down – Third Down”**
  - When needed, explain the specific aspect. Start with:
    - **“Although the QB was out of the pocket – the ball did not reach the line of scrimmage, intentional grounding ...”**
    - **“While the QB was in the pocket, there was no receiver in the area, intentional grounding ....”**
- **“Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Excessive Celebration – Offense – Number 17 – His first of the game – 15 yard penalty – First Down”**
  - Just state taunting or celebration, not the action e.g. “standing over him”, “pointed at the opponent”, “racial slur”, etc.
- **“Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Taunting – Defense – Number 3 – 15 yard penalty – first down. This is Number 3’s second unsportsmanlike conduct of the game – by rule, he is disqualified”**
- **If charged to head coach or bench, “Unsportsmanlike Conduct – charged to the [HC or team name bench] – 15 yard penalty – First Down”**
- **“Ineligible player downfield – Offense – Number 14 was covered up – 5 yard penalty – Second Down”**
  - Only used “covered up” when referring to an eligible number
- **“Illegal substitution – Defense – 12 players on the field at the snap – 5 yard penalty – First Down”**
- **“Illegal substitution – Offense – 12 players in formation – 5 yard penalty – Second Down”**
- **“Illegal Participation – Offense – Number 23 – Went out of bounds on his own and returned – 15 yard penalty – Second Down”**
- **“Illegal Participation – Defense – Number 97 – Continued participation after his helmet came off – 15 yards – Third Down”**
- **“Flagrant personal foul – Defense – Number 44 – 15 yard penalty – First Down – By rule, number 44 is disqualified”**
- **Under 2 min timing where clarifying clock status is important: “Holding – Offense – Number 52 – 10 yard penalty – Third Down – the game clock will start [on the snap or on my signal]”**

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When there is a change of possession, include when the foul occurs. Also, instead of using offense or defense, use team unit descriptions (passing team or intercepting team; kicking team or receiving team; fumbling team or recovering team).

- **“After the interception – Holding – Intercepting team – Number 38 – 10 yard penalty – First Down – [Enter INT team name]”**
- **“During the kick – Holding – Receiving team – Number 88 – 10 yard penalty from the end of the kick – First Down – [Enter REC team name]”**
- **“During the return – Holding – Receiving team – Number 41 – 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul – First Down – [Enter REC team name]”**

Sometimes the result of the play is important for understanding the enforcement. This should be stated concisely prior to the announcement.

- **“The ruling on the field is a completed pass – Pass Interference – Defense – Number 41 – Penalty is declined – First Down”**
  - This clarification explains why the penalty is declined, especially where it is unclear if the pass was caught or not
- **“The result of the play was a turnover on downs – After the play – Personal foul – Defense – Number 90 – 15 yard penalty – First and 10 – [Enter Def TeamName]”**
  - This explains why defense gets the ball despite fouling after a fourth down play comes up short. The team name adder will help clarify who gets the first down and that it's 1/10 not 1/25.
- **“The result of the play was an interception – Holding – Offense – Number 55 – Penalty is declined – First down – [Enter Def TeamName]”**
  - This explains why the foul is being declined, particularly if it was unclear if there was an interception

When a score is involved, this should be stated at the end of the announcement.

- **“Pass Interference – Defense – Number 28 – 15 yards will be enforced on the kickoff – The result of the play is a touchdown”**
- **“Holding – Offense – Number 55 – This foul occurred in the end zone and results in a safety”**



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More complex situations arise when there are double or multiple fouls on the play or when there are live ball and dead ball fouls. Some basic scripts for each include:

- **Multiple live ball fouls on the SAME team**
  - **“There are 2 fouls on the play, both on the [ENTER TEAM UNIT] – Holding – Number 62 – that penalty is declined – Illegal block in the back – Number 12 – that penalty is accepted – 10 yard penalty – Replay First Down**
  - Always announce the declined penalty first
  - No need to state “offense” after each foul as you’ve already said all are on that team, however, you should point when stating each number
- **Live ball fouls on BOTH teams which will offset**
  - **“There are fouls by both teams – Holding – Offense – Number 62 – Facemask – Defense – Number 99 – Those fouls offset – Replay second down”**
- **Live ball and dead ball fouls on the SAME team**
  - Always announce the live ball foul first
  - **“There are 2 fouls on the play, both the [ENTER TEAM UNIT] – Holding – Number 62 – After the play – personal foul, late hit – Number 12 – both penalties will be enforced – replay second down”**
  - Note: if live ball is declined, announce the down counts: **“There are 2 fouls on the play, both the [ENTER TEAM UNIT] – Holding – Number 62 – that penalty is declined – After the play – personal foul, late hit – Number 12 – that penalty will be enforced from the dead ball spot – the down counts – third down”**
- **Live ball and dead ball fouls on DIFFERENT teams**
  - Always announce the live ball foul first
  - **“There are fouls by both teams – Pass Interference – Defense – Number 30 – 15 yard penalty – Results in a first down – After the play – Personal Foul – Offense – Number 87 – 15 yard penalty – First and 10”**
    - Note: Explains how the live ball action resulted in a first down, but we’ll still enforce both and start 1/10, not 1/25
- **MULTIPLE dead ball fouls on BOTH teams**
  - **After the play, there are fouls by both teams – Personal foul – Offense – Number 72 – Personal foul – Defense – Number 11 – Penalties offset – the down counts – Third Down**
  - **After the play, there are fouls by both teams – Personal foul – Offense – Numbers 72 and 33 – Personal foul – Defense – Number 11 – One foul for each team will offset – 15 yard penalty will be enforced against the offense – the down counts – Third Down**

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Unpostured announcements (where you don't stop and square up to the pressbox) can help in atypical situations. Some common scripts that may be helpful are:

- "The ruling on the field is the runner was down prior to the fumble"
- "The ruling on the field is the runner's forward progress was stopped inbounds"
- "The ruling on the field is the runner's forward progress was stopped prior to the fumble"
- "The ruling on the field is an incomplete pass, [ENTER NEXT DOWN]"
- "The ruling on the field is the passer's arm was moving forward prior to losing the ball – incomplete pass, [ENTER NEXT DOWN]"
- (If there's concern or question) "There is no foul for intentional grounding as the passer was outside the tackle box and the pass was beyond the line scrimmage"
- (If there's concern or question) "There is no foul for intentional grounding [ENTER PLAYER #] was in the area"
- (If there's concern or question) "There is no foul for intentional grounding due to contact by the defense while the passer was throwing the ball"
- Clock operator, please reset the game clock to 5 minutes and 23 seconds, thank you
- Free kick: "The ball was first touched by the kicking team before going 10 yards, first down [ENTER TeamName]"
- Scrimmage kick: "The ball was first touched by the kicking team – first down [ENTER TeamName] at the spot of the touching"
- Momentum: "The ball will be returned to the spot of the momentum exception, first down [ENTER Team Name]"
- Correcting the player # for a foul "Correction, the foul was on number X"
- "Number X must leave the game for 1 play due to improper equipment"
- "Number X must leave the game for 1 play due to losing his helmet during the down"
- "That is the end of the first quarter" (this replaces holding the ball up)

## Postured Announcements (facing the press box)

- "Time out, [ENTER Team Name], their [First, Second, Third and Final] of the half"
- "Officials time out for a measurement"
- "Officials time out for an injured player"
- When there is a flag pickup due to on-field judgment/discussion
  - "There is no foul on the play, second down"
- When there is a flag pickup based solely on fact and the rules, announce why:
  - "There is no foul for ineligible player downfield as the pass did not cross the line of scrimmage, third down"
- "This is the one and only warning to the stadium PA announcer not to comment on the officiating. Further incidents will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul charged to the home team."
- "There was an inadvertent whistle during the play. [Team Name] has elected to replay the down"
- "After the fumble, there was an inadvertent whistle during the play. The ball is returned to the spot of the fumble, first down [Offense Team Name]"



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- "During the kick, there was an inadvertent whistle. The down will be replayed, 4th down"

## Avoidances

For nearly all situations, avoid using extraneous words or excessive detail on the enforcement. This can be more difficult to hear in some stadiums and adds to the length. Terms to avoid:

- Starting announcements with "We have", "We got", "After discussion", or "There was"
- Using jersey colors to designate a team (E.g. "Holding on blue")
- Using player position (E.g. Left Guard) instead of #
- Using "offside" as this is not a NFHS foul
- Words such as "on" and "on the" (E.g. "Holding on #77", or "Pass interference on the defense - Number 2")
- "Replay" or "Repeat" for a down is only necessary when there is an odd situation (E.g. double fouls)
- Avoid "remains" as remains belong in the ground
- Avoid "results in" or "it will be" before the down unless it's necessary
- Using "Prior to the snap" when a snap never occurred
- Don't use foul categories e.g. "take down" or "playing thru the back" – discuss that over O2O to get to the coach afterwards
- Just state the penalty is declined, not who is declining it