

UMPIRE

Prior to the snap

1. Have a routine: Set of things you do every play
Example: Down and distance, clock status, communicate with the referee prior to ready, signal down to wings and BJ
2. Count the offense: Give count early to wings if possible
3. Check the numbers of the players on LOS, as the QB begins count focus on the snapper and guards

At the snap

(My position just behind linebackers away from TE, never the same position two plays in a row)

1. Read snap – was it legal?
2. Key the guards
3. Read run or pass
4. Watch initial blocks in the free blocking zone

Running Play

1. Read the play and watch players at the “point of attack” *
2. Stay on the blocks at point of attack while stepping up and moving right or left, giving you an angle to see any illegal chop blocks, clips, or block in back fouls (free blocking zone) *
3. If it is a sweep play, slide down the line – watch blocking inside leading the runner. The idea here is to try and form a triangle with the wing official and the R. As runner turns up field, try to maintain triangle with wing and R while working from inside
4. As play ends, observe action around runner for any dead ball violations.
5. It is not necessary to go more than a few yards outside the hash when a play ends in the side zone. BJ, Wing, and R will handle ball relay to you *
6. Run ending inside hash, the umpire should briskly close on pile to retrieve ball
“TALK TO PLAYERS ALL THE WAY IN AFTER PLAY!!!!”
7. The wings should have forward progress and the whistle on the majority of plays *

Passing Plays

1. Read play, #1 key being drop back by lineman
2. Read pass, immediately step up to LOS while watching blocking by lineman
3. Try to put yourself in the best position possible to watch the action of the lineman and at the same time be able to see the ball release by the passer.
Long ball releases * the umpire does not turn to observe the attempted catch
On short ball releases * turn to rule on catch/no catch if it is toward you
 - If clean catch and an easy call for the wing or BJ – turn your attention back the lineman/passers while rotating around behind to follow them downfield

- If incomplete – turn back to watch deadball action and TALK TO PLAYERS as you move into them and wait for the ball to be relayed to you. Previous spot location *
 - If it is a questionable catch or trap on the ground – begin to move toward that receiver before giving any signal, glance at the covering wing official for any indication from him – Umpire makes this incomplete pass call “ONLY IF HE’S 100%” and then if you do, be sure that you sell this call
 - * If you believe the receiver made the catch, then just a “head nod” or some other predetermined signal to the covering wing *
4. Help R with spot of the pass release (was passer legally behind the line)
 5. Know where lineman are (ineligible receiver downfield) *
 6. Screen passes– move laterally away from direction of play while watching point of attack- know where and who touched the pass first *
 7. Draw plays - Look out! Try to move laterally as quickly as possible while observing blocking. Be aware that the runner will many times try to use you as another blocker.

5 yard line and in – Observe action as any other play from scrimmage * (umpire control)

1. Quick dives into line and wings obviously can’t locate ball. (If possible, with pre-determined signal, indicate if ball is in endzone or not. DO NOT SIGNAL TD *

Punt Plays – (line up diagonally from the referee)

1. Count offense, know the exception numbers on your side and point at them as indication to R
2. TALK TO DEFENSE regarding contact on the snapper
3. Clear the snap maintaining observation of initial contact on the snapper
4. Step up to the LOS while continuing to observe the action between players.
5. When kick has cleared, go deeper than blockers and opposite R
6. Any lineman still bumping each other TALK TO – “kick’s over”, “kick’s over”, “it’s gone”, “keep it clean”. Let them know you’re there
7. Move downfield slowly to spot of end of play or adjust to runner coming your direction or R’s

Field Goal & Try

1. All pre-snap routine as usual
2. Verbalize to defense to stay off the center’s head, “don’t go heads up on the center”, “remember the snapper rule”
3. Remember that the center is also protected on some shotgun formations
4. If the snap is muffed and the play is broken “think lineman downfield” as someone may attempt a pass
5. On field goal attempts on other than 4th down umpire needs to be talking to all about the clock and live ball *

Successful Kick or Try

1. Move into area of lineman – speaking to them as you move through them to let them know you're there. * Continue officiating until all players separate and go to their sideline

Unsuccessful Field Goal

1. Step up through blockers and turn to follow play maintaining eye contact with lineman still blocking
2. Handle as punt if not a touchback

UMPIRE CONTROLS:

Communication with players and coaches

On field communication with players

Communication with crew – every down – don't hesitate to rattle their chains – the umpire is involved in every play and handles the ball every down – don't let any of your crew lose concentration

CLOCK - CLOCK - CLOCK

OFFICIALS SEE ONLY WHAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO SEE!

EVERY OFFICIAL WILL PROBABLY BE A "POOR OFFICIAL" FOR ABOUT ONE MINUTE DURING A FOOTBALL GAME. THE KEY IS NOT TO EXCEED YOUR LIMIT!!