

PIAA Football Officials

updated
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Lancaster Chapter

LINESMAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Be at the game site 1 ½ hours before game time. During this time you can decompress from the day's activities and mentally prepare to focus on the game.

Pre-game Meeting: During the meeting be prepared to discuss your responsibilities on run, pass and kicks coverage along with and signals to be used to communicate with the Line Judge, Umpire and the Referee i.e., unbalanced formation, backward pass, blocked view of runner crossing goal line, etc. Also discuss with the back judge coverage on pass plays (especially near the sideline and into the end zone) i.e., who will watch the ball vs. the feet being in bounds. All officials should discuss the mechanics when a runner or play goes out of bounds - who will follow the ball carrier out of bounds? Confirm with Referee position for a try or field goal.

Arriving on the field: Meet the Chain Crew on the sideline 15 min prior to KO. The first pre-game responsibility for the Linesman, is to examine the chain equipment and meet with the Chain Crew. They could range in experience from 30 year veterans to the walking wounded of the Jr. High team. Regardless of their experience, after introducing yourself and checking the chains, review with the crew:

- Their duties and safety precautions (see enclosed Chain Crew Checklist).
- Inform them you will mark every first down as well as the forward progress of each play with the heel of your downfield foot.
- Inform them not to move the chains until you beckon them.
- During the game always verify that the down number is correct on the box.
- Discuss with Box person on crew how you would like to communicate with them during game i.e., location of tape, down and distance, line to gain yard line.
- It is a good idea to give the clip man a bean bag anytime the ball is inside the ten yard line and instruct him to place it on the ground at the box as a second point of reference.

An important function of the Linesman is to communicate with the team on his sideline. When the team arrives on the field, introduce yourself to the head coach and:

- Let him know you will address his concerns or answer any questions that may develop during the game at appropriate times (will try to obtain number of player who commits a foul).
- Confirm he will call timeouts and importance of getting one of the officials attention
- Review sideline restrictions, restricted area and reminder that at the snap, no one is allowed in the restricted area.
- Confirm restraining line for team box.
- Confirm if there is a "get-back" coach. If yes, introduce yourself to the get back coach and review restrictions and the important role he needs to play during the game.

- Confirm if there are “ball boys”. If yes, meet with them and review the procedures you want them to follow during the game i.e., bring in a new ball, chasing a long pass, etc. Be sure to point out the Umpire who will receive the ball they run in.

Coin Toss: Remain on your sideline with your team until the coin toss is completed. When the players begin to return to their team go to the center of the field. If the National Anthem is to be played at this time remove hat only for it and not the school song. At Referee’s signal, move to kick-off position.

Kickoff: Position yourself on R’s 30-yard line opposite the press box side of the field (same sideline as the chains). Count R players. Once you are in position signal the referee that you are ready by raising your arm (or other signal discussed during pre-game conference). Be sure to hold bean bag to mark first touching spot. When the Referee acknowledges you then lower your arm. If the ball’s flight is toward your sideline then you need to position yourself to make a ruling should the ball go out of bounds and who touched it last; otherwise, focus on the action of the players on the field. If K kicks ball out of bounds throw penalty flag and mark spot with flag or bean bag.

Before the snap: Position yourself on or just behind the sideline. Check alignment of receivers on your side. Do not ask them where they are supposed to be aligned. Assist them if they ask you about their positioning. Tell them they are on the line or they are back, not “you’re good!” You are also responsible for making sure A is in a legal formation i.e., at least five players on the LOS and no more than four in the backfield. The referee will hold out a fist to inform you he has eleven on offense. You must also be aware of an unbalanced line and give the visible signal to the LJ (discussed during pre-game). Always look over to the line judge and communicate via confirmed pre-game signals. Be alert for covered receivers in these situations. Then direct your attention in to the line to observe penalties occurring before the snap. If the penalty such as a false start causes the ball to become dead blow the whistle immediately. Many bad things can occur if you allow the play to continue.

At the snap: Your initial key is the tackle on your side. He will help you determine if it is a running play or a passing play.

Running Plays: The referee will tell you during the pre-game conference if he is going to take the ball carrier sideline to sideline or to the hash marks. Then find the ball and observe blocking ahead of the ball. After that the ball carrier becomes your responsibility if the play comes to your side. If the play is away from you move in to observe action behind the play and be vigilant in case the play comes back toward you.

Passing plays: Once you read pass focus on your receiver while occasionally glancing into the backfield to get a read on the quarterback. Maintain a wide field of vision whenever possible so that you see the whole play develop. Your focus will be on contact between the players, possession of the ball and in cases near the sideline ruling on in or out of bounds. If A is in an unbalanced formation, look for “covered” player on your side to make sure not illegally down field (illegal participation if player catches or touched pass).

Plays out of bounds: It’s important that an official follow the ball carrier when a play goes out of bounds – don’t worry about the spot. Look for late hits out of bounds. Rest of crew will help in determining the spot. Mechanics should be discussed during pre-game.

Punt: Remain on the line of scrimmage until the ball passes the line then move deliberately down the field observing the action downfield until the runner reaches your area.

Field-goal Attempt or Try: During pre-game, Referee will confirm position for field goal or try. When on the line, after checking for legal formation, you may want to keep your whistle in your mouth in order to immediately kill the play if R is off sides (spit it out when ball is snapped).

Time Out: Your responsibility is to monitor the team on your sideline whether they remain on the field or move to the sideline. Take a position between the team and the sideline within view of the back judge. When the back judge signals that 45 seconds have elapsed notify the coach and trainers that play is about to resume.

Line to Gain and Measurements: Be aware of the line to gain. Ask the Box person on chain crew to remind you each play of the line to gain. If you feel the forward progress is near the line to gain communicate to the referee that "It's close!" You may want to keep your eyes on the players on the field and have the other officials check the position of the ball in relation to the front stick. If the referee wants a measurement return to the chains and move the box to the front post - the line to gain. Then confirm with the clip man the location of the clip. Pick up the chain at the clip with both hands securing/holding the clip and chain together (they have known to fall off as you run on to the field). Place the clip on the proper line in line with the ball (as marked by the Line Judge) and inform the umpire you are now ready for him to stretch the chain. If first down, let chain crew take chains over by themselves (BJ will have marked the spot for first down for the Box). If short, pick up the clip and chain holding them together and return to the sideline and mark the clip at appropriate yard line. Signal Referee when you are ready.

Last but not least: Communicate with the referee on clock status and down. Understand and apply forward progress correctly. Keep your whistle out of your mouth. **SEE THE BALL!**

CHAIN CREW PREGAME CHECKLIST

This checklist may serve as a good tool to make sure you cover all the details of the chain crew's responsibilities with them prior to the game (may want to keep it in your shirt pocket).

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INTRODUCTIONS & EXPERIENCE 2. CHECK CHAINS AND TAPE 3. INDICATE PLACEMENT OF CHAINS – ON RESTRAINING LINE? 4. MARK SPOT OF FIRST DOWN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SET BOX IN FRONT OF ROD 5. CLIP – BACK EDGE OF YD LINE CLOSEST TO BACK ROD (GIVE BACK 6.) 7. CHANGE DOWN MARKER ON REFEREES OR MY SIGNAL 8. ENCOURAGE BOX PERSON TO TALK EACH PLAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LINE TO GAIN • LOCATION OF TAPE 9. DROP AND RUN 10. POSSIBLE 1st DOWN – DON'T MOVE UNTIL SIGNALLED 11. LONG PLAY – BOX PERSON MUST HUSSLE (40 SEC CLOCK) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. MEASUREMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOWN MARKER AT FRONT ROD • KEEP SAME DOWN 13. INSIDE 10 YD LINE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REMOVE CHAINS • MARK SPOT OF DOWN MARKER - BEAN BAG 14. EXTRA POINT – SET DOWN MARKER ON 3 YD LINE 15. PUNTS/FOURTH DOWN: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>WAIT FOR SIGNAL TO MOVE</u> • LOOK FOR FLAGS – SEE ONE DON'T MOVE 16. END OF PERIOD: WAIT TO MOVE WITH ME 17. LET ME KNOW IF PROBLEMS 18. PART OF OFFICIATING CREW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SON PLAYING ON TEAM? • NO COMMENTS • NO YELLING • HAVE FUN
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