

PIAA Football Officials Lancaster Chapter

REFEREE RESPONSIBILITIES

Get to the game 1½ hours before game time. You are responsible for conducting a thorough pre-game for the entire crew. This is especially important at the beginning of the season and when new members are assigned to work with the crew. TAKE THIS SERIOUS! Try to come up with topics during the year that will keep the crew focused.

Before the Game: shortly after you arrive for the game, you and the umpire will proceed to meet both coaches. You will go to the home teams coach first. During this brief meeting, you will ascertain the numbers of the captains, if there are any cast/shields/splints, etc. The purpose of asking about cast/splints/shields is for the umpire to confirm the legality prior to the game. You will also verify times regarding before the game and half time. This is an opportunity for the coaches to ask any rules questions and to advise the referee if the crew should pay special attention to certain plays. After meeting with both coaches, return to the locker room and advise the crew what you had learned and then continue with the pre-game conference.

You are responsible for the coin toss. This should be done around 20 minutes prior to kickoff at a location agreed to by both coaches. Read the PIAA Sportsmanship Message to coaches and players. Ask the visiting teams speaking captain to call heads or tail before the coin is tossed. After the toss, explain his options.

Inspect the field. You will inspect 1 end zone and the umpire will inspect the other. Position yourself on the press box side of the field. Proceed to the middle of the field with the captains where you will meet the umpire with the other team captains for the mock coin toss. After the mock coin toss, all officials are to meet in the middle of the field for national anthem. Shortly thereafter, sound the whistle and report to your kickoff position.

Your main responsibility is the administration of the game. Be prepared to rule on any rule interpretation.

During a time out, take a position where you can see the back judge.

Kickoff: you are positioned near the goal line favoring the head linesman's side of the field and should be standing near the numbers. Count "R" players. Acknowledge all members, except the back judge, by pointing to them so they can lower their arms. During the pre-game, you should have instructed the back judge to raise his hand as soon as the kicker raises his. This is your signal that everyone is ready and you should blow the whistle and signal to the kicker that he can kick and start the game. Be ready to rule if the ball has crossed the goal line. Remember, it is where the ball is and not the player. Signal the clock to start when the ball is touched by R.

Punt: take a position on kicking leg of the punter. You will be responsible for determining whether there is a roughing/running in to the kicker foul. Stay with the punter until you are sure he has returned to a position where he is able to defend himself. Be ready to “chop” in the sideline official on punts that go out of bounds in the air. On long returns, be ready for reverse mechanics. You may need to be standing at the goal line on a TD return.

Runs: take a position on the side of the passing arm of the quarterback. You will be somewhere around 12-15 yards behind the line of scrimmage and will be in the area outside of the tight end. If it is an option play, stay with the QB to make sure there are no cheap shots after he has made the pitch. On regular plays, follow the play and help with the sideline. If the linesman/line judge goes out of bounds with the play, watch for any action on/near the sideline.

Pass: you will be on the side of the passing arm of the QB. You will be responsible for roughing the passer and intentional grounding calls. Stay with the QB to make sure there is no extracurricular activity after the pass. The crew will let you know what happened during the play.

Penalties: get with the calling official to determine the foul. Give a preliminary signal to the press box. Briefly talk with the umpire to make sure you agree with the associated penalties. Discuss the options with the captain of the offended team. After the captain makes his decision, signal to the press box again and indicate whether the penalty was declined. If it was not declined the umpire will mark off the penalty.

First downs: if there is a doubt as to whether there is a first down, stop the clock and call for a measurement. Take a position with the umpire at the front stake. Be ready to rule whether it is a first down or not. If it is, signal first down and the crew will set the chains. If not, depending on where the ball is on the field you may need to assist with placing the ball for the next play.

Between Quarters: the umpire, head linesman and you will be meeting to make sure everyone records the down, distance and yard line of the ball. After everyone agrees, the HL will return to the chain crew to reset the chains. The umpire and you will mark where the ball is and then proceed to the other side of the field and place the ball.

Field Goals/Trys: you are in a position where you are looking at the holder. Be ready to rule on roughing the kicker/holder fouls. Stay with these players to make sure there are no cheap penalties. After you are sure there are no problems, look under the posts for the signals given by the officials. Then signal to the press box whether the try is good or not good.