



## REFEREE MECHANICS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Announcements • Signals • Use of the Microphone*

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### GENERAL GUIDANCE

*Mechanics • Microphone use • Terminology*

#### MICROPHONE SETUP & CHECKS

- Watch announcements made by college and NFL Referees for ideas on how to make effective announcements for different foul situations.
- Check the primary and backup microphones (if available) no later than 1 hour prior to kickoff.
- During the pregame walkaround, check your microphone with the production team to make sure TV has your microphone properly gauged.
- It is wise to check your microphone before the start of the 2nd half.
- Always check that you turn off the microphone after you use it.

#### DELIVERY & COMPOSURE

- It is important that any time there is an unusual situation on the field, flag pickup, or a long conference that you make an announcement. That will help everyone understand what happened, including the announcers.
- The key to a good announcement is that your personality comes out.
- Don't speak too fast. Hold your signal for a beat or two.
- Try to spend the same amount of time with the umpire on routine calls so that the more difficult calls won't seem any different. Finish talking with the umpire before you turn to talk to TV. It can help if you tell your umpire what you are going to say on the microphone before you leave to begin your announcement. Having said it once makes it easier to say when you turn on your microphone and make the announcement.
- At least one of the on-field officials (preferably the Referee) may open their O2O when there is a discussion about the ruling on the field or a penalty administration. That will allow all officials to assist if necessary and begin their review of the ruling or penalty administration.
- After receiving the proper information and are ready to make an announcement, get to an open area quickly. Be stopped before you turn on your microphone and begin to speak. 2 steps should be the normal maximum movement. Look at a specific spot and do not let your eyes wander. Do not walk out of your announcement. Finish and then turn off your microphone and walk away.
- Never make an issue out of not having a number. It is better to announce no number than to have an official guess and announce the wrong number. When announcing a number such as 24, say "twenty-four" NOT "two-four."

- Instruct all members of your crew that any official who calls a foul should stay with you (if needed) until your announcement is made. They can immediately give the correct number if needed. Situations where the O2O is used to expedite foul reporting are preferred.
- Don't ever delay making an announcement because of crowd noise.

### **PENALTY ADMINISTRATION**

- On a penalty enforcement where a captain/coach decides on accepting or declining the penalty, and subsequently, the player or coach decides he would rather do the opposite of the original choice, allow the change. Just announce the correct choice i.e.: "Correction, the penalty is declined."
- If there is going to be a delay in enforcing a penalty, or you have to confer with a coach about his options, give a preliminary signal to the press box so TV is aware of the foul(s).
- If possible, make an explanation on a foul announcement early in the game so that the TV commentators are talking about what you said rather than what they think happened on a particular play. If you do this, they will tend to go to you later in the game when you talk.
- To keep up the pace of the game, when the choice is obvious, administer penalties quickly without consulting a captain or coach.
- It is a must to give the correct signal for the foul called, and always make sure the crew enforces the proper yardage on every penalty.
- Make sure that your physical signals match up with what you are saying. Don't give "violent" signals or lose your composure on announcements.

### **TERMINOLOGY**

- A penalty is always "declined" not "refused."
- Say "offside." Do not say "offsides."
- Never say "no flag" on the play. Say "There was no foul on the play for ..." and give a brief explanation as to why the flag is being picked up i.e., "... a block in the back, the block was from the side."
- Never say "IBW," say "illegal block below the waist," or "tack on" (say "enforced from the end of the run" or the dead ball spot), or "clean hands" (say "there were fouls by both teams"). Use the terms "passing" team or "intercepting" team or "kicking" team or "receiving" team for fouls that occur after a change of possession.
- When there is a foul on a free or scrimmage kick by Team B during the return, say "during the return, Holding #56 receiving team." Better to not be redundant and say return team twice.
- When announcing fouls for UNS or UNR, fully explain what action took place to warrant the foul. For instance, if an official contacts a non-player on the sideline, say, "Unsportsmanlike conduct foul, offense – An official collided with bench personnel in the 6-foot border," or "Player struck/kicked an opponent."
- If there is a play that ends with a first down inside the defensive team's 10-yard line and there is an offensive dead ball UNR/UNS foul, make sure you end your announcement with "...15-yard penalty and it will be first and ten." Also make sure that the chains are set up properly.
- Do not announce a UNS foul for a "group celebration" if the players refuse to cease their actions after being warned to stop by an official. Use the term "Group demonstration." If an individual player does a "six-shooter", "throat slash" or something sexually suggestive (even if not directed at anyone

specifically), or uses demeaning, insulting, abusive or threatening language directed at an opponent, simply announce, “Unsportsmanlike Conduct.”

- If a player taunts another player, or the opposing bench, announce it as taunting and not simply unsportsmanlike conduct. Additionally, you can add “This is the first foul of this type for #24 for potential disqualification.”
- Use the name of the school and not the nickname of the team when making an announcement.
- If a flag is thrown for a UOH, or illegal contact with a defenseless receiver, and you ultimately pick up the flag, in your announcement do not say “There is no foul for contact on a defenseless receiver, the hit was legal.” Simply say: “There was no foul on the play for unnecessary roughness.” That will cover any potential foul that could have been called without specifically identifying the foul that was originally flagged.

## FOUL ANNOUNCEMENT EXAMPLES

*Suggested language for various fouls — adapt to what is comfortable for you*

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| <b>KOB –</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | “Kickoff out of bounds – BY RULE, the ball is placed at the 40-yard line – First down, [SCHOOL NAME].” Or “BY RULE, the ball is placed 25 yards from where the ball was kicked.”                                                                                                      |
| <b>KOB ON A SAFETY KICK –</b>                                                                                                                                                                     | “Kickoff out of bounds – BY RULE, the ball is placed 30 yards from where the ball was kicked.”                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>ITK BEFORE BALL GOES 10 YARDS –</b>                                                                                                                                                            | “Illegal touching of a free kick before it went 10 yards. BY RULE, the ball belongs to the receiving team at the spot of the illegal touch. First down, [SCHOOL NAME].”                                                                                                               |
| Do not say “prior to the snap” on a FST, just announce “FST – #55 offense – 5-yard penalty, still 2nd down” (unless the whistle was extremely late and the play was stopped well after the snap). |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>DH (PASS) –</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | “Prior to the pass – Holding – #46 – defense – 10-yard penalty from the previous spot automatic first down” or “The penalty is declined as the pass was completed for a first down.”                                                                                                  |
| <b>Illegal forward handoff –</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Use the illegal forward pass signal and announce, “Illegal forward handoff #16 – 5-yard penalty and loss of down, 3rd down.”                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>ITP –</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | “Illegal touching of a forward pass – #32 – offense – The player went out of bounds, reestablished in bounds and was the first to touch the ball – loss of down at the previous spot.”                                                                                                |
| <b>2nd FORWARD PASS –</b>                                                                                                                                                                         | “Illegal forward pass #12 – offense. There was a second forward pass during the play. 5-yard penalty and loss of down, 3rd down.”                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>PASS THROWN AFTER BALL WAS BEYOND THE LOS –</b>                                                                                                                                                | “Illegal forward pass – #12 – offense – The ball was thrown from behind the LOS after the ball had been beyond the LOS – 5-yard penalty, and loss of down, 3rd down.”                                                                                                                 |
| <b>PASS THROWN FROM BEYOND THE LOS –</b>                                                                                                                                                          | “Illegal forward pass – #12 – offense – The pass was thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage – 5-yard penalty from the spot of the pass and loss of down – 3rd down.”                                                                                                                |
| <b>ING –</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | “Intentional grounding – #14 – offense – 10-yard penalty and loss of down.” Or “the penalty is enforced at the spot of the pass and loss of down.”                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>ILF –</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | “Illegal formation #78 – offense – he was not on the line of scrimmage – 5-yard penalty, repeat 2nd down.” Or “Illegal formation offense – #76 was the end player on the line of scrimmage,” or “there were only six men on the line of scrimmage – 5-yard penalty, repeat 2nd down.” |

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| <b>ILF DEFENSE ON TRY/FG –</b>                                           | “Illegal formation defense – #78 lined up inside the shoulder pads of the center. 5-yard penalty repeat 4th down (or results in a first down).” Or “the penalty is declined, and the FG is good.” If this was a Try, the penalty would also be able to be carried over on a successful Try.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>ILLEGAL SNAP –</b>                                                    | “Illegal snap #52 offense – 5-yard penalty, still 2nd down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>ILLEGALLY BATTING/KICKING THE BALL –</b>                              | “Illegal batting/kicking the ball #24 offense – 10-yard penalty and loss of down (if appropriate) – 2nd down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>DOD –</b>                                                             | “Delay of game – #77 – defense – The defensive player moved abruptly causing the offense to false start – 5-yard penalty, still 2nd down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>12 IN HUDDLE –</b>                                                    | “Illegal substitution offense – 12 men in the huddle – 5-yard penalty, 3rd down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>DTM –</b>                                                             | “12 men on defense with the snap imminent – 5-yard penalty still 2nd down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>OFFENSIVE SUBSTITUTION (OR PRETEND SUBSTITUTION) AND QUICK SNAP –</b> | If you have an offensive substitution with a quick snap of the ball and the defense is caught with 12 players, work in the word “quickly.” “The offense substituted and quickly snapped the ball catching the defense with 12 men on the field. BY RULE, there is no penalty and no play. The down will be repeated. The offense has been warned that a 2nd violation will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul.” Also keep in mind, it is our responsibility to get the Umpire over the ball when the offense has substituted outside 2-minutes of a half. |
| <b>ILLEGAL HANDS TO THE FACE –</b>                                       | “Illegal hands to the face – #24 – offense. 10-yard penalty, repeat 2nd down.”<br>“Illegal hands to the face – #96 – Defense – 5-yard penalty automatic 1st down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>ROUGHING THE PASSER –</b>                                             | “Personal foul – Roughing the Passer – #45 Defense – 15-yard penalty automatic first down.” Do not announce why it is RPS or give any details.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>FOUL BY OFFENSE IN END ZONE –</b>                                     | “Holding – #77 – offense – Since the foul occurred in the end zone, the enforcement results in a safety.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>DEAD BALL FOUL –</b>                                                  | “After the play was over – Personal foul – #65 – offense – BY RULE, the penalty is 15 yards from the end of the play and the down counts – 3rd down.”<br>Or, “Since a first down was made on the play, after the 15-yard penalty, it will be 1st and 10.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>UNS INVOLVING INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE (Taunting) –</b>                 | Do not say “inappropriate language.” Simply say – “Unsportsmanlike conduct – Taunting #56 – offense – 15-yard penalty and the down counts – 3rd down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>UNS INVOLVING LEAPING –</b>                                           | “Unsportsmanlike conduct – Leaping #56 – defense. 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and an automatic first down” (or carry over if the FG or Try was successful).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>SNAP HITS OFF THE GROUND ON A PUNT –</b>                              | “The snap hit the ground; by rule, roughing the kicker is not possible.” Or, “Personal foul – #44 – defense – Even though the snap hit the ground, the action by the defensive player was unnecessary. 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and an automatic 1st down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>ILLEGAL TOUCH OF A KICK (PUNT) –</b>                                  | “Illegal touching of a kick – #45 – kicking team – The player was OB and came back in and touched the ball before it was touched by another player – 5-yard penalty from the previous spot, repeat 4th down.” Or “The 5-yard penalty will be enforced from the end of the play.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>FOUL DURING PUNT –</b>                                                | “During the kick – Holding – #44 – receiving team – 10-yard penalty from the end of the kick – first down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| <b>FOUL DURING RETURN –</b>                                            | “During the return – Illegal block in the back – #14 – receiving team – 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul – 1st down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>IBB BY KICKING TEAM DURING PUNT –</b>                               | “While the punt was in the air, illegal block in the back, #45 kicking team – 10-yard penalty will be enforced from the end of the play. 1st down.” Or “10-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot replay 4th down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>LOW BLOCK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX –</b>                                  | “Personal foul – illegal low block – #26 offense – 15-yard penalty repeat 2nd down,” or “Personal foul – illegal low block – #47 defense – 15-yard penalty enforced from the end of the run – automatic 1st down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>HIT ON DEFENSELESS PLAYER –</b>                                     | “Personal foul Unnecessary Roughness – #45 Defense – 15-yard penalty, automatic first down.” Do not say “Hit on, or illegal hit to a defenseless receiver/player.” Keep the announcement as non-specific as possible.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>OFFSETTING DEAD BALL PERSONAL FOULS –</b>                           | “After the play was over, personal foul – #55 offense – Personal foul #23 defense – The penalties offset and the down counts – 3rd down” (when you begin your announcement, announce the visitors’ foul first).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>PERSONAL FOUL PRIOR TO INTERCEPTION –</b>                           | “Prior to the interception, Personal foul Crackback – #88 – offense – BY RULE, [SCHOOL NAME] retains possession of the ball and the 15-yard penalty is enforced from the end of the play.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>UNS BY A PLAYER – FIRST AND SECOND INVOLVING DISQUALIFICATION –</b> | “Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Taunting – #75 Offense – 15-yard penalty from the end of the run and the down counts. This is #75’s first UNS penalty with regard to potential disqualification.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>2nd UNS FOUL (swing and miss) –</b>                                 | “After the play, – #56 Defense swung at and missed an opponent – 15-yard penalty from the end of the run and an automatic first down. Since this is the second UNS foul of this type for #56, BY RULE, he is disqualified” (do not use the ejection signal, simply say the player is disqualified).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>SITUATIONS INVOLVING A PUNT RETURN MAN –</b>                        | On a kick play if the returner does not signal for a fair catch, and a kicking team player contacts, or interferes with him, before he touches the ball or before he can defend himself, announce “Interference with the opportunity to make a catch/or UNR for a hit on a defenseless player – #45 kicking team – 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul.” If the returner does signal, and the kicking team player contacts him before, or as, the returner touches the ball; announce as “Fair Catch Interference – #45 kicking team – 15 yards from the spot of the foul.” If there is a signal and the kicking team player contacts/tackles the returner after the catch is completed, it should be announced as: “After the fair catch – Unnecessary Roughness, late hit – #56 kicking team – 15-yard penalty from the dead ball spot.” |
| <b>BEHIND/BEHIND –</b>                                                 | “Personal Foul Face Mask – #22 – defense – The 15-yard penalty will be enforced from the previous spot automatic first down.” (All live ball fouls committed by the defense behind the LOS will be enforced from the previous spot and will be an automatic first down.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>FOUL ON A RUN FOLLOWED BY A COP BEHIND THE LOS –</b>                | “Prior to the fumble, illegal hands to the face, #43 defense – The ball is returned to [SCHOOL NAME] and the 5-yard penalty will be enforced from the previous spot and an automatic first down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>FOUL ON A RUN FOLLOWED BY A COP BEYOND THE LOS –</b>                | “Prior to the fumble, holding, #56 defense – The ball is returned to [SCHOOL NAME] and the 5-yard penalty is enforced from the spot of the fumble and an automatic first down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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| <b>MULTIPLE FOULS –</b>                                             | “There were two fouls by the defense – Offside – #72 – that penalty is declined – DPI – #43 – that penalty is accepted – 1st down at the spot of the foul.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>MULTIPLE INTENTIONAL FOULS TO CONSUME TIME/PREVENT A SCORE –</b> | “There were multiple intentional fouls by the offense/defense in an effort to manipulate the game clock.” Give the numbers of the fouling players, and type of foul(s), and add: “BY RULE, a 15-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot and the game clock will be reset to the time it is read at the snap. The clock will start on the snap.”                                      |
| <b>MULTIPLE NON-PERSONAL FOULS BY THE DEFENSE WITH A SCORE –</b>    | “There were two fouls by the defense – Offside – #72 – Pass Interference – #45 – Both fouls are declined – Touchdown.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>DOUBLE FOULS –</b>                                               | “There were fouls by both teams on the play – Holding – #77 – offense – Personal foul, roughing the passer – #56 – defense – The fouls offset – repeat 2nd down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>DOUBLE WITH –</b>                                                | “There were fouls by both teams on the play – Holding – #66 – kicking team – that penalty is disregarded by rule – During the kick – Illegal block in the back – #44 – receiving team – That penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul/or end of the kick 10 yards – 1st down.”                                                                                                          |
| <b>DOUBLE AFTER –</b>                                               | “There were fouls by both teams after the FINAL change of possession – Personal foul face mask – #12 – Kicking Team – Holding – #56 – Receiving Team – BY RULE, the fouls offset, and the receiving team keeps the ball at the spot of its foul – 1st down [SCHOOL NAME].”                                                                                                                   |
| <b>LAST PLAY OF HALF/OFFENSIVE FOUL/SCORE –</b>                     | “Holding – #73 – offense – By rule, an offensive foul on the last play of the half nullifies the score and the half is over.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>LATE HIT/UNS ON LAST PLAY OF 2nd QUARTER –</b>                   | “After the play was over, late hit, #56 – defense – The half is over, and the 15-yard penalty will be assessed against [SCHOOL NAME] on the 3rd quarter kickoff.” Or “After the play was over, unsportsmanlike conduct – taunting – #32 offense. That penalty will be assessed against [SCHOOL NAME] on the 3rd quarter kickoff and will count toward disqualification for a 2nd violation.” |
| <b>LAST PLAY OF GAME – Team B FOUL/WINNING TD/Team A UNS –</b>      | Personal foul, Roughing the Passer – #46 defense – Penalty is declined as the result of the play is a TD. After the TD – TAU – #82 offense – By rule, the penalty will not be enforced, the try will not be attempted, and the game is over. (Provided the team that scored is ahead by at least 1 point.)                                                                                   |
| <b>FIELD GOAL IS NO GOOD – SPOT OF KICK OUTSIDE THE B20 –</b>       | “The FG is unsuccessful. BY RULE, when the spot of the kick is outside the 20-yard line the ball is returned to the spot of the kick. 1st down, [SCHOOL NAME].”                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>OFFENSIVE FOUL ON A KICK TRY –</b>                               | “Holding – #44 – kicking team – 10-yard penalty, repeat the try.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>DEFENSIVE FOUL ON A KICK TRY –</b>                               | “Leaping – #66 – defense – Try is good and a 15-yard penalty will be enforced on the kickoff,” or, “Try is unsuccessful Offside – #76 – defense – 5-yard penalty – repeat the try from the 10.”                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>PULL AND SHOOT –</b>                                             | “Holding – #66 – defense – The defensive player pulled an offensive player aside to allow a teammate to shoot through the gap in an attempt to block the kick – 5-yard penalty and an automatic 1st down.”                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>PUSHING – PUNT, FG, TRY –</b>                                    | “Personal foul – #76 – defense – pushing a teammate into the offensive formation. 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and an automatic first down.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## TIMEOUTS

*Announcements and clock management situations*

### STANDARD TIMEOUTS & INJURIES

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <b>TIMEOUTS</b>              | Timeout [SCHOOL NAME]; their 2nd of the half;                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>TIMEOUT FOR AN INJURY</b> | You have 2 options. Simply give the kill the clock signal (whether the clock was running or not) with no announcement, or signal time out and announce, timeout for an injured player |

### HOW TO BEST HANDLE CREW CONFERENCES

You must assure that your crew clearly understands how you want your crew conferences to go.

Generally, the fewer conferences during a game the better, but getting a situation right is the ultimate goal. Hold any conference well away from either bench area or players. Listed below are two different ways to handle a crew conference and you can decide which will work best for you.

- Some referees feel that only officials who have something to add to a conference should be allowed to get involved. Officials not involved with the conference should keep players and coaches away from the discussion. Referees and crews should learn to effectively use the O2O to assist in properly resolving on field issues. Also, it looks unprofessional to have one or more officials intently staring at the Jumbotron. Be as discreet as possible.
- Other referees feel that the best way to handle a crew conference is that everyone should know what is going on and what is being discussed. This means that everyone needs to get close enough to figure out what is under consideration. If an official has something to add, or they have a question, they should get involved. The referee must control the discussion so people aren't talking at once, etc.
- If there is a question about a ruling or a foul, you need the calling official and those who potentially could have seen something on the play to come together. It is critical to make sure everyone is calm before you proceed with your questions. Get what was called (or not called) clearly spelled out immediately. Once you understand the play, you must ask questions that can clarify or draw out more information. Who, what, where, when questions are important.
- If there is an official on your crew that you rely on when something unusual happens, have that official come into any conference that may occur.
- If anyone on the crew has a question, they should ask it. Sometimes a well-placed question or comment can give an official enough of a nudge to pick up a flag that that official was not very comfortable with in the first place. For instance, if you called intentional grounding and someone asks, "Was the QB under pressure?" it could help you decide to pick up the flag.
- On every penalty, each member of your crew is responsible for knowing what foul was called and what enforcement is being applied. If they aren't 100% certain that enforcement is being done correctly, they must ask.