



Colorado Football Officials Association
Mechanics Manual
4-Person Mechanics Supplement

2016

The CFOA 5-Person Mechanics Manual contains the mechanics and philosophies for officiating football in Colorado and provides the foundational information necessary to officiate a 4-Person game. The mechanics contained in this supplement are intended to assist with the transition from 5-Person mechanics to 4-Person mechanics without a significant amount of change. Officials must read and understand the 5-Person Mechanics Manual prior to utilizing this supplemental information.

Notable differences between the 5-Person and 4-Person mechanics:

1. Referee will time and communicate the 25-second play clock to the quarterback and coach
2. Wings will count Team B players and the Referee & Umpire will count Team A players
3. Pregame communication with clock operator in pressbox is done by the Line Judge
4. Line Judge will hold the ball during a measurement.
5. Presnap and Keys
6. Positioning and Coverage of Free Kicks, Scrimmage Kicks and Scoring Kicks
7. Scrimmage Play Coverage

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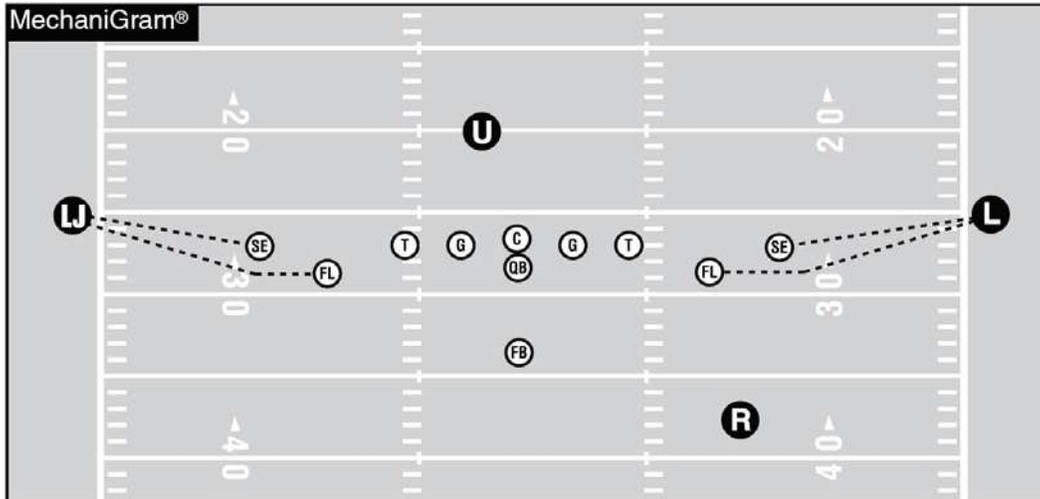
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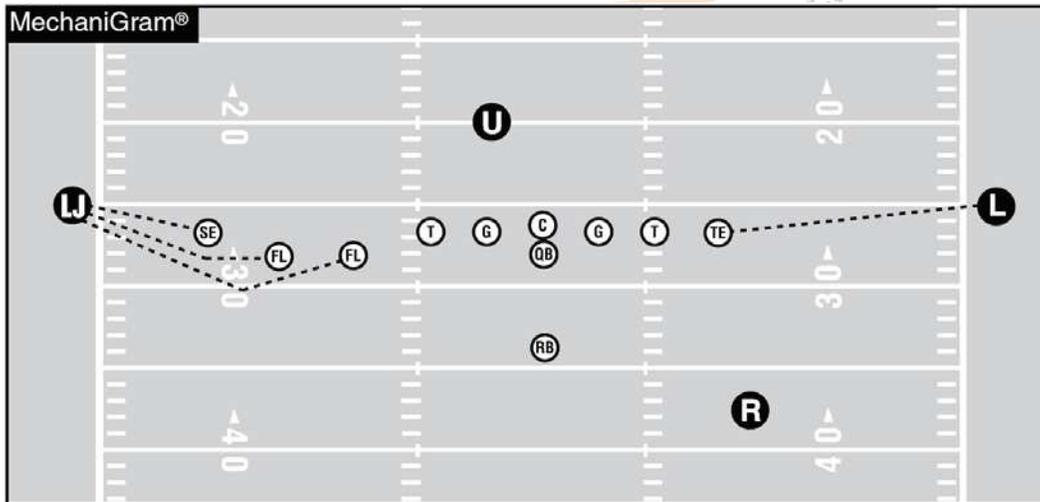
KEYS

BALANCED FORMATION



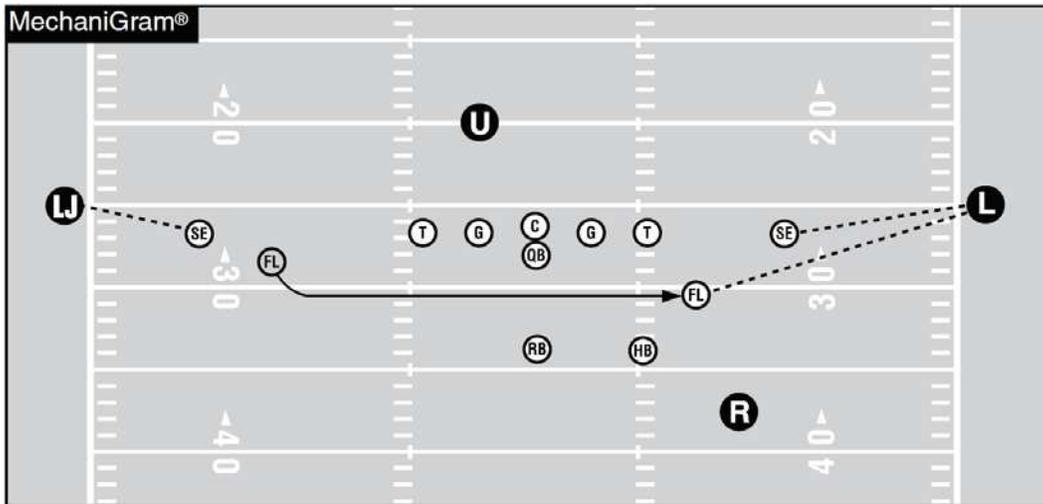
In this balanced formation, there are two receivers outside of the tackles on either side of the formation. The wing officials' main key is the widest receiver (in this case, the split end); the flankers are secondary keys.

TRIPS TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



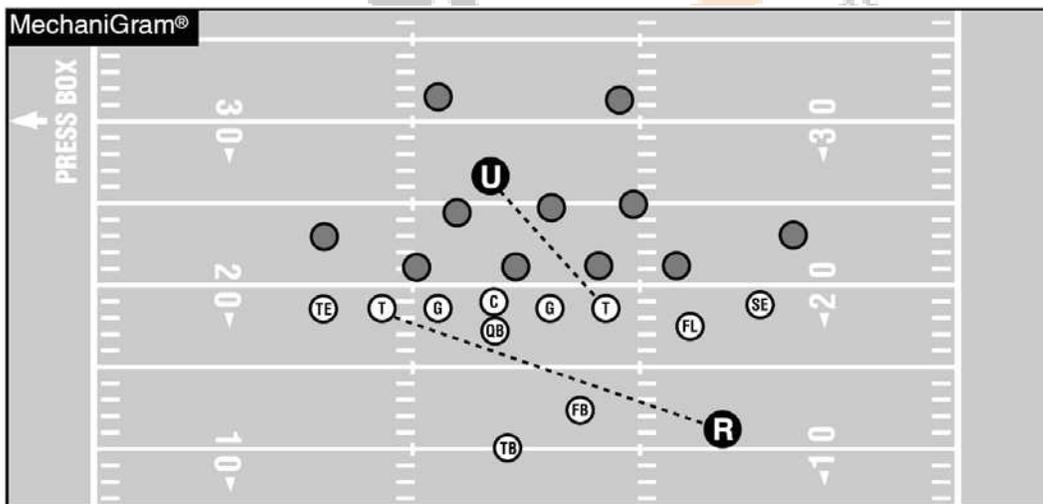
In a trips formation, the wing official on the strong side keys on the widest receiver on the end of the line (in this case the split end) and the two flankers are secondary keys. The Line Judge keys on the tight end, the only receiver on the line on his side of the formation.

MOTION CHANGES FORMATION FROM UNBALANCED TO BALANCED



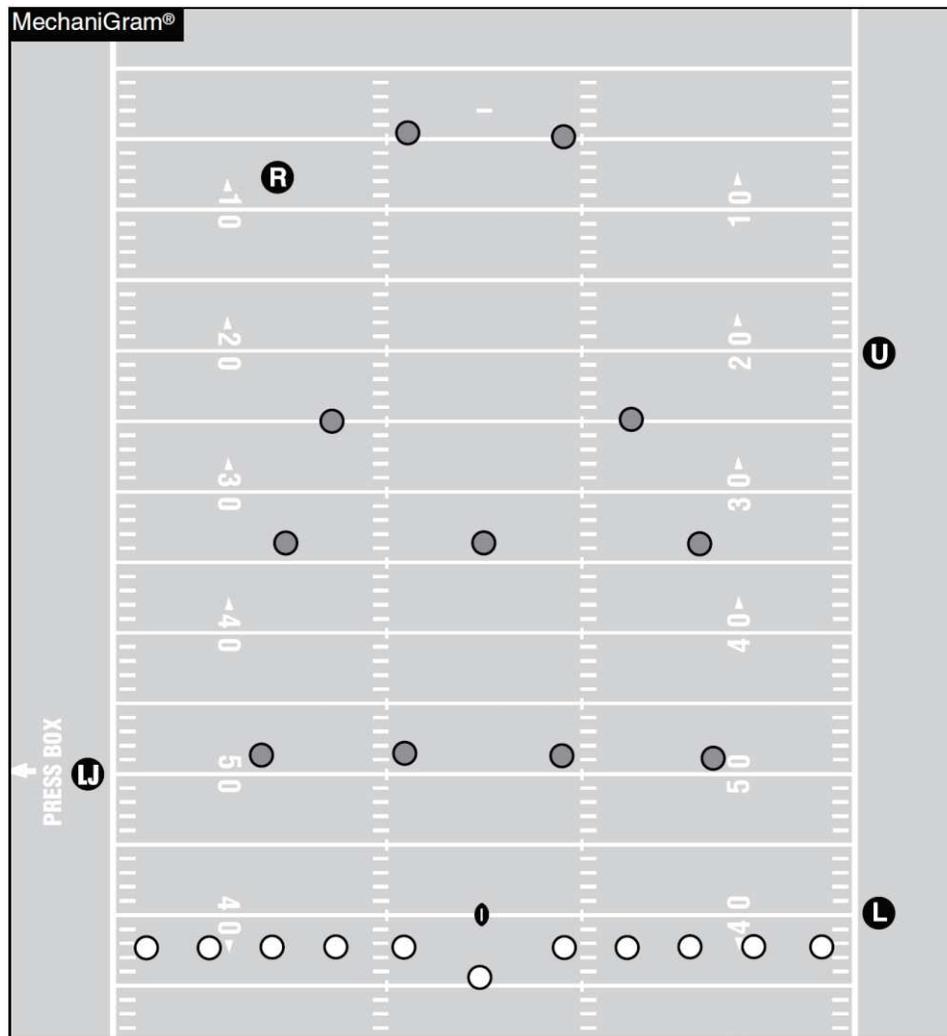
Strength was to the Line Judge's side, but motion changed the strength of the formation to the Linesman's side. However, the Line Judge observes the action of the motion man. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving. The split end is the Line Judge's key. The flanker and the split end are the Linesman's keys.

REFEREE AND UMPIRE READS



Regardless of the formation, the Referee and Umpire key on the opposite-side tackle. If the quarterback is right handed, the Referee keys on the left tackle and the Umpire keys on the right tackle, guards and center.

FREE KICK Positioning

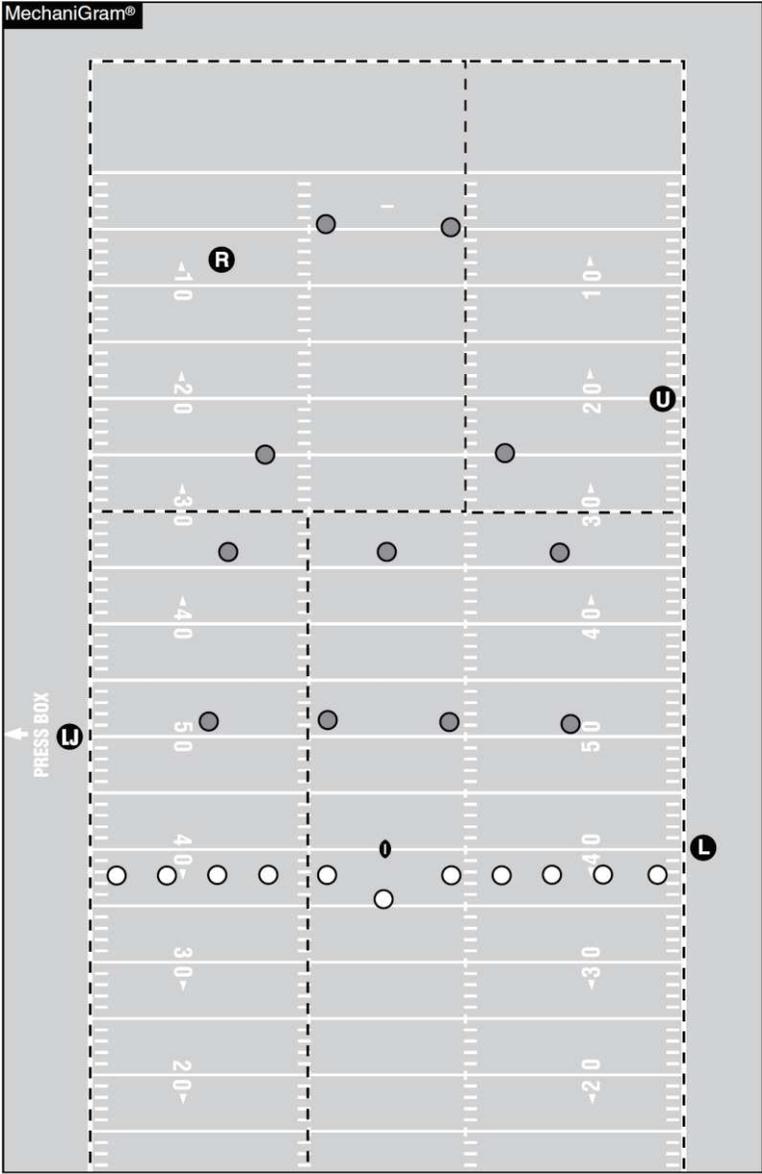


Referee: Starting position is near the top of the numbers near team R's five or 10 yardline on the Line Judge's side of the field. He counts Team R players and confirms his count with the Umpire. Once he sees a ready signal from each official, the Referee blows his whistle and gives the ready-for-play signal. Because the goal line is solely the Referee's responsibility, he must be prepared to cover the goal line to rule on momentum. Adjustments in starting position may be necessary based on kicker's leg strength.

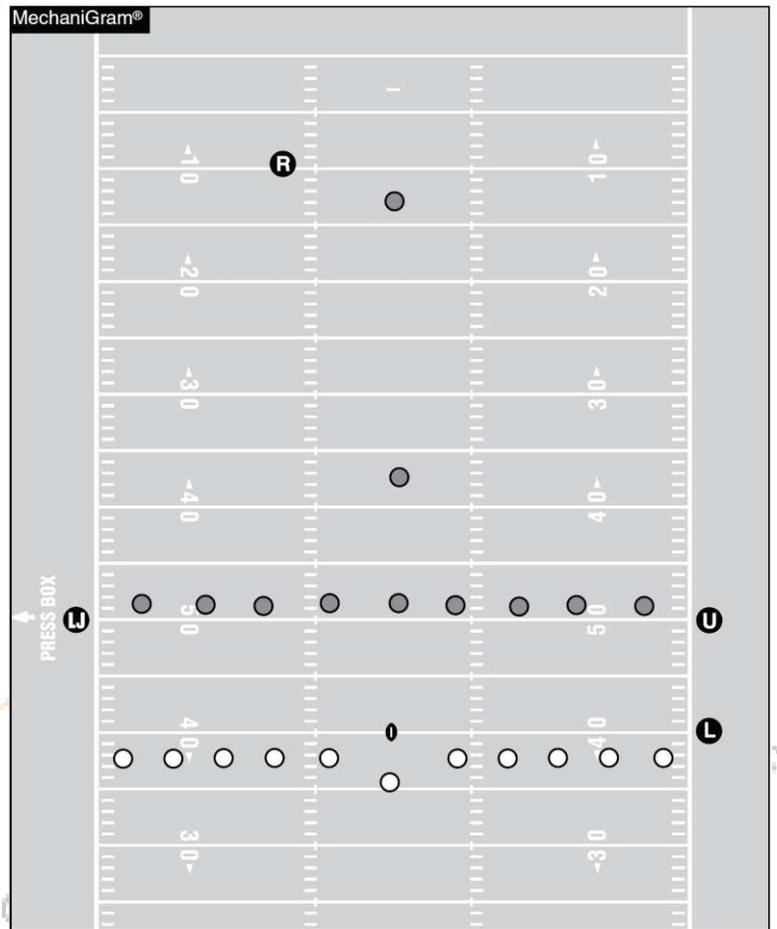
Umpire: Starting position is on the sideline at team R's 20 yardline. The Umpire counts the receivers and signals the Referee by raising an arm overhead when he is ready for the kickoff.

Linesman and Line Judge: The Linesman is on team K's restraining line, the Line Judge on team R's restraining line. They each count Team K players. The Linesman should not give the ball to the kicker until team K has 11 players on the field and should remind the kicker not to kick the ball until the Referee has sounded his whistle. When they are in position and ready for the kick, they should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

FREE KICK Coverage Zones



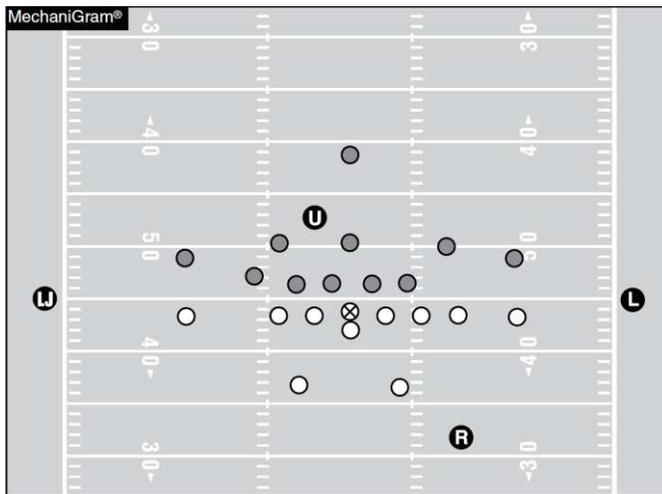
ONSIDE KICK Positioning & Coverage



The Linesman and Line Judge assume their regular positions while the Referee establishes his position based on the deepest receiver maintaining a view of all players. The Umpire moves to share team R's restraining line with the Line Judge.

The Umpire, Linesman and Line Judge should have their bean bags in hand to mark the spot if team K first touches the kick and should be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards.

SCRIMMAGE PLAY Positioning



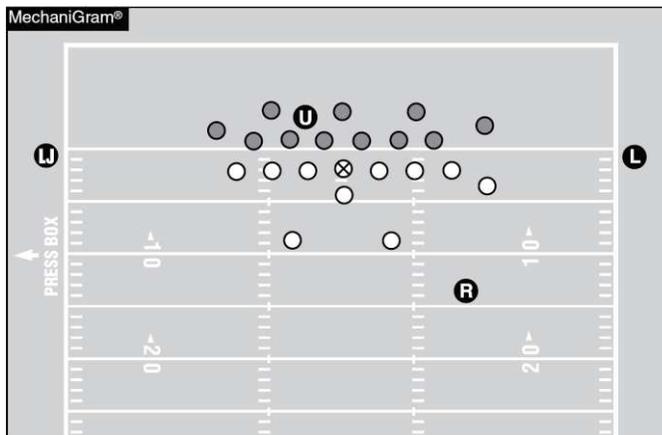
Referee: Starting position is on the passing-arm side of the quarterback, approximately 12 to 15 yards deep and about 4-5 yards outside the tight end on the quarterback's throwing arm side. The Referee should be in an upright stature with a balanced and athletic posture. The Referee is responsible for Team A's player count and knows how many players are in the huddle. He signals the player count when the huddle breaks, holding it until the offense reaches the line of scrimmage. **The Referee will keep the 25 second clock.** He must develop a consistent tempo for marking the ball ready for play.

Umpire: Starting position is 4-7 yards behind Team B's line and between the defensive ends in a hands-on-thighs position. The Umpire must be able to see the snapper hands whenever they are on the ball. Until the Referee blows the ready for play whistle, the Umpire must maintain control of the ball by voice or position. He must know which players are on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone. He shall note the position of ball between hash marks. He will count Team A and confirm count with Referee (Crew Signal A).

Linesman and Line Judge: Starting position is straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline. They will use an upright stance while working off the field of play. They each count Team B but no confirmation signal is required.

Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field and determine legality of the offensive formation. As the widest receiver approaches his position near the wing official, the Wing will indicate the location of the line of scrimmage by placing his upfield foot on the line of scrimmage and patting his hand on his thigh. After the receiver has established his position, the Wing official will signal and declare the receiver's position. If the receiver is in the back field the wing will extend his arm toward the offensive backfield (Crew Signal I). If he is on the line of scrimmage the wing official shall point with the upfield arm to the ground (Crew Signal J).

GOAL LINE GOING IN Position & Coverage



A touchdown signal is given only by an official who actually rules on the play. Never mirror a touchdown signal if you do not see the action. The crew will find it difficult to overcome two officials making an incorrect ruling.

Referee: Standard starting position and coverage.

Umpire: Standard starting position; however, do not stand on the goal line as this will interfere with the wing's goal line coverage.

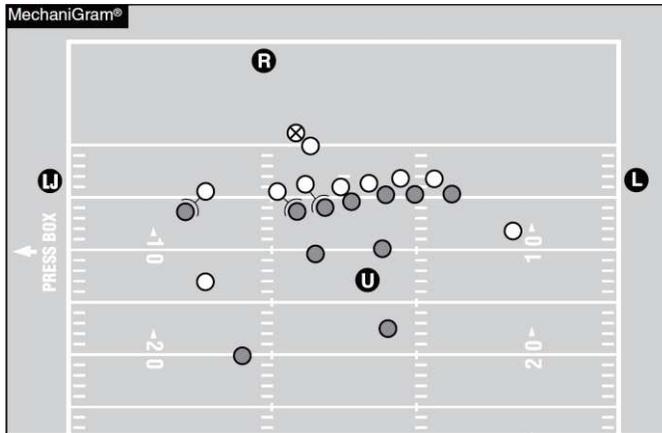
On running play between the tackle that results in the ball ending in a pile near the goal line, point to the ball to assist the crashing wings in determining if result is a touchdown.

Linesman and Line Judge: When the ball is snapped inside the 15 yardline, the wing officials should begin coverage movement toward the goal line at the snap. When the ball is snapped on or inside the 5 yardline, the Wings must move immediately to the goal line pylon. If the play moves toward you, back away from the sideline keeping the goal line in view. When the ball breaks the goal line plane in player possession, use a slow confident touchdown signal while continuing to dead ball officiate. There is no reason to rush this signal.

On close plays in the middle of the field do not stay on sideline. Move rapidly in toward ball after the play is over. When you determine the progress has resulted in a touchdown, stop your feet prior to signaling a confident touchdown signal. Sell your call! If not sure, move in 'inside' the field of play using your feet to mark the progress spot. If you come in on the goal line or in the end zone, everyone will think the ball has crossed the goal line. Avoid pointing to the ground and verbalizing that "he is short" until you have confirmed that the opposite wing does not have a touchdown.

GOAL LINE COMING OUT

Position & Coverage



When the ball is snapped between the goal line and Team A's 10 yard line, proper positioning and coverage is necessary to ensure the goal line is covered. When the ball is snapped inside the 5 yard line, attention to the goal line is even more important. This coverage is called **Reverse Goal Line Mechanics**. The priority is determining if a safety is scored. Covering officials must be alert for the ball becoming dead in the end zone in the possession of the offensive team. A safety signal is given only by an official who actually rules on the play. Mirroring the signal

is unnecessary and dangerous.

When the Ball is Snapped inside the 5 Yard Line:

Referee: The Referee starts near the end line and wider than normal to provide a better view of forward progress if the quarterback scrambles out of the pocket on a pass play and is stopped near the goal line. The Referee is responsible for the goal line on passing plays along with the facing wing official. The Referee is responsible for the end line.

Linesman and Line Judge: At the snap the wings must move immediately to the goal line and about two yards outside the pylon and then read a tackle for run/pass.

On a running play they must determine if the ball gets completely out of the end zone before it becomes dead and stay on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. They must pinch in on the field of play to mark progress or look for the ball near the goal line and pinch in when in the end zone to signal safety. They must work back toward the line of scrimmage if the runner takes them there and square off to identify the forward progress spot. (REMEMBER: The ball must get completely out of the end zone.) If the progress spot is very close to the goal line, the ball is placed at least a foot into the field of play.

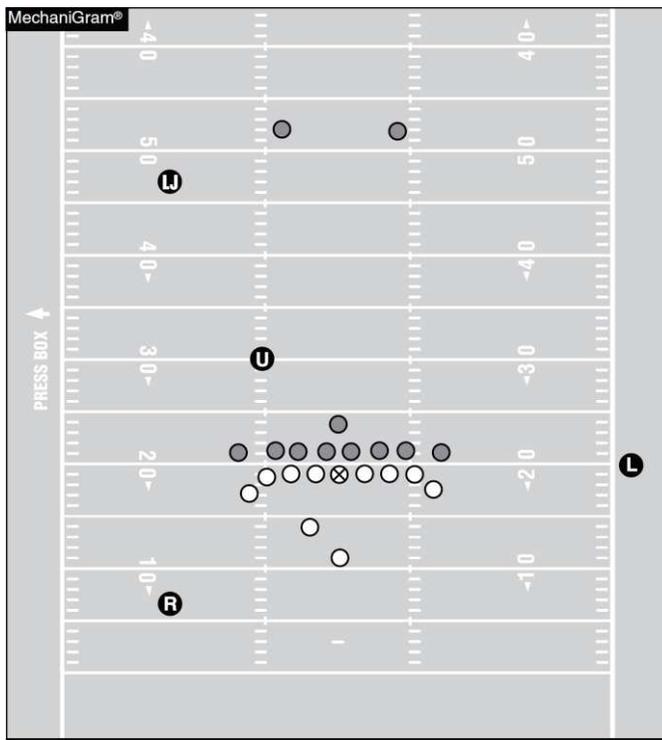
On a passing play the wing official that is NOT facing the Referee shall retreat towards the goal line at the snap while reading the tackle's block for run/pass. If pass is read, he changes direction and observes the receivers. The wing official that is facing the Referee remains on the goal line to assist the Referee with goal line coverage and rotates his focus to pass coverage after the quarterback releases the ball.

When the Ball is Snapped Between the 5 Yard Line and 10 Yard Line:

Referee: The Referee shall start 10 yards deep and wider than normal. Starting wider and closer to the line of scrimmage will allow the Referee to get a better look at the quarterback who drops back to pass near the goal line and is in danger of being sacked there. This position also provides the Referee a better chance to rule on the quarterback's forward progress. The Referee is responsible for the end line and the goal line.

Umpire, Linesman and Line Judge: There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs.

SCRIMMAGE KICK Positioning



Referee: The Referee's position is about five yards outside and five yards behind the kicker and opposite side of the kicker from the Linesman. The Referee should be able to view the snap and the initial block back and the tackle then the action around the kicker before, during and after the kick. The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction if an errant snap leads to a loose ball in the offensive backfield and must have an awareness of the goal line.

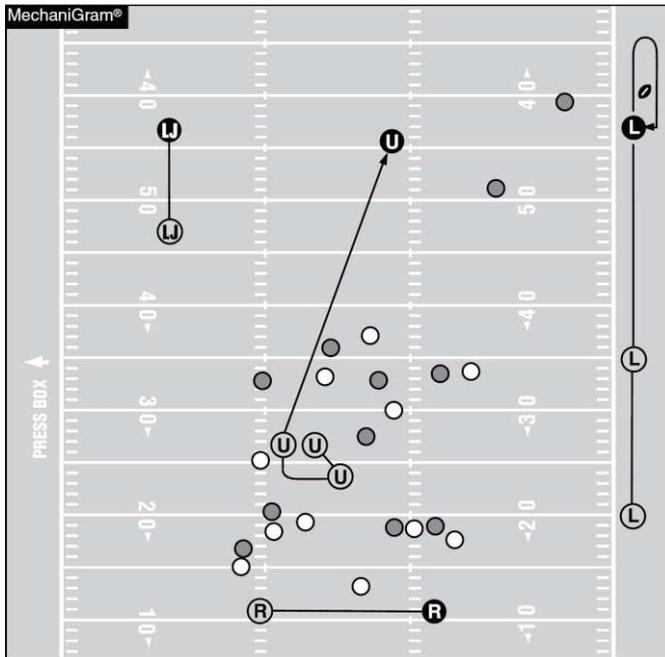
Umpire: Deeper is better on scrimmage kicks. The Umpire should start at least 10 yards off the line of scrimmage.

Linesman: The starting position is the same as for other plays from scrimmage.

Line Judge: The Line Judge begins the play three to five yards behind the deepest

receiver and wide enough to observe the receiver's hands. The Line Judge must be prepared to move upfield if the kick is short or downfield if the receiver has to retreat. If the deep receiver is near or behind Team R's 15 Yard Line, the Line Judge must start on the goal line and not move off the goal line unless it is certain it will not be threatened.

SCRIMMAGE KICK Coverage



Once the kick is away and the kicker is safe, the Referee takes a quick look to see the flight of the ball. If the kick is toward a sideline, he must be prepared to determine the spot the ball went out of bounds. If the kick is very short, the Referee can identify the out-of-bounds spot by verbalizing the yard line; if the kick is long and goes out of bounds the Referee will take note of the location that the ball landed, the covering official moves past where he thinks it flew out before walking toward the Referee with his hand up — along the sideline — until the Referee chops downward, telling him to halt. The wing officials should always spot the ball on a whole yard line. The wing official should not always expect the Referee to help line up a scrimmage kick that has gone out-of-bounds in the air. If the Referee has a hand up, that

means he can help. You may have to create a spot, but once you choose a spot, **sell it!**

On blocked kicks, the Referee and Linesman should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball.

If the kick is short, officials must know who touched a loose ball; if the kicking team is first to touch the kick, a bean bag should be dropped at the spot of the touching.

During a return, the Line Judge is responsible for covering the runner until he is transferred another official. If the runner breaks into the opposite side zone, coverage transfers to the Linesman and the Line Judge cleans up behind the play. On a return to the middle of the field, the Line Judge has responsibility for the runner until he gives up the runner to the Umpire; the point at which this transfer occurs depends on how far downfield the Umpire has drifted after the kick. The Referee may take over coverage of the runner if the runner breaks off a long return.

Referee: As the ball travels from the snapper to the punter, the Referee should observe the initial block by the near backfield protectors and then shift his focus to any player who becomes a threat to contact the ball or the kicker. If the snap is errant or mishandled, the Referee must be prepared to rule on the legality of any contact with the kicker. He must stay focused on the kicker until all threat of harm has passed. He should alert the defenders when the ball is kicked: "Ball's away, ball's away." Do not move too quickly downfield after the scrimmage kick and keep all players in your view.

The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction in case of a blocked kick. On blocked kicks, the Referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who

runs with a recovered ball. If the kicker runs with the intent to kick rugby style, the Referee must move with him and note the nearest defenders to rule on the legality of any contact.

The Referee must strive for a position where he can watch both the kicker and the flight of the ball. Once it is clear the ball will not go out of bounds in flight, the Referee should no longer be concerned about the ball.

If the kick goes out-of-bounds in flight, the Referee will raise his hand to line up the kick for the covering official. If there is continuing action on the kicker, the Referee must disregard the preceding and let the covering official get the out-of bounds spot by himself.

If the receivers begin a return, the Referee should move slowly downfield; if the runner breaks a long return, the Referee may ultimately assume responsibility for the runner. The Referee has responsibility for the goal line and the sideline opposite from the Linesman. will get an inside-out look regardless of which sideline is involved since the appropriate wing official has sideline responsibility from end line to end line.

Umpire: The Umpire is responsible for the initial action on the snapper and for blocks by all interior linemen and the widest players (gunners) opposite the Linesman. After the ball is kicked and all linemen/backs have cleared his position, he should move slowly downfield along the hash opposite of the Referee keeping as many players in view as possible. The Umpire should be aware of a short kick or a partially blocked kick. The Umpire must observe the action around the ball and help determine if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the neutral zone and prepare to drop a beanbag if first touching occurs by K. On a return, the Umpire has responsibility for blocks between his position and the runner.

Linesman: The Linesman observes the initial line charge and is responsible for encroachment/false start on their side of the field. The Linesman is primarily responsible for determining if the ball crossed the neutral zone and doesn't move downfield until the ball crosses it. The Linesman's focus should include blocking/restraint by Team R on his side of the ball including the 'gunners' followed by coverage around and in front of the kick receiver. The Linesman is responsible for his sideline from endline to endline and for covering the runner when the return is to his area. If the run is to the opposite sideline, he should clean up behind the play.

If the ball is punted near the end zone, the wing officials must be alert for a blocked punt or a broken play and may have to cover action involving the goal line.

If the kick is blocked, the Linesman has primary responsibility for determining if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the line and whether the spot of a recovery is beyond or behind the line. The Linesman must also be cognizant of a fake punt. If the kicker initially starts to run before deciding to kick, the Linesman may have to rule whether the punter was beyond the line when the ball was kicked.

The distance the Linesman moves after the kick is dependent on the length of the kick, but each should strive for covering approximately half the distance between the line and the end of the kick.

If a scrimmage kick goes over the receivers head the Line Judge shall cover the ball and the Linesman will observe the receiver for any blocking after a fair catch signal (valid or invalid).

Line Judge: All deep receivers are the responsibility of the Line Judge. Once the ball is kicked, he judges the validity of any fair catch signal, moves with the receiver and maintains a position to rule on catch vs. muff. He should observe the receivers and the players around them rather than the ball as it flies downfield. Remaining far enough away from the receiver to retain a wide-angle view and moving in at a controlled pace, with eyes searching, once the receiver has completed the fair catch helps the Linesman look for illegal action around the receiver. In such cases, it is also a good idea not to have the whistle in the mouth; it is possible for a fair catch to be muffed and a whistle blown before the ball dribbles loose from the receiver's grasp.

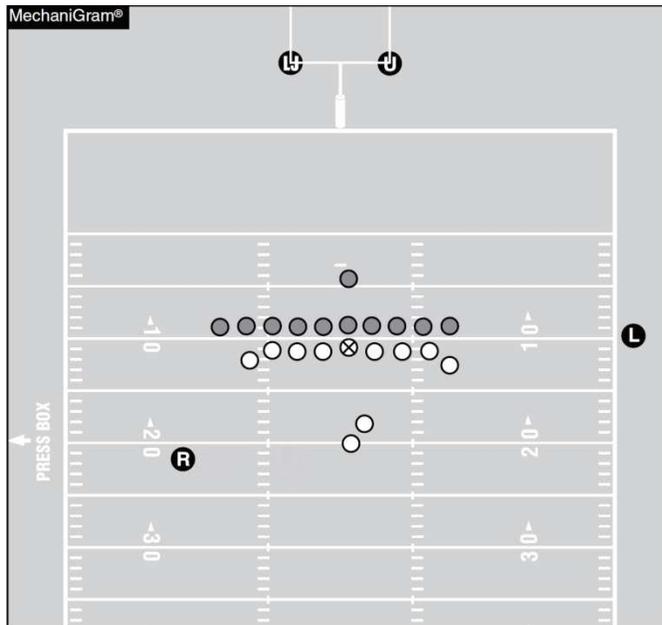
Once the receiver catches the kick, he must watch the players who approach the runner and should track the ball with his peripheral vision. The Line Judge is responsible for his sideline from end zone to end zone and for covering the runner until he is transferred another official.

If the ball is kicked over the head of the deepest receiver, the Line Judge must retreat and not allow any player to get behind him. He will release the receiver to the Linesman and proceed to cover the ball. The Line Judge has sole responsibility for determining if a touchback occurs or the momentum exception applies.

The Line Judge must bean bag the spot where the kick ends unless that spot is also the dead-ball spot in which case the Line Judge will stop the clock and hold the spot. That spot may be used for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement.



SCORING KICK INSIDE TEAM R's 15 YD LINE Positioning



Referee: The Referee's starting position is even with and facing the front of the holder. It is permissible for the Referee to line up 1-2 yards behind the yard line of the holder to get a better view the snap and the initial block by the end and back on his side and then the action around the kicker before the kick. The distance from the holder may vary depending on personal preference, keeping the mind that the Referee is responsible for the sideline and the pylon behind him if there is a run or pass to that side.

The Referee rules on roughing the holder and kicker.

The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction if an errant snap leads

to a loose ball in the offensive backfield and must have an awareness of legality of the holder's position and actions during a fake.

The Referee signals the score to the pressbox after confirmed the signal from the officials under the upright.

Umpire: The starting position is under the upright opposite the Referee. The Umpire is responsible for counting the defense; checking the numbers of the players on the offensive line and reminding Team R players about illegal contact on the snapper.

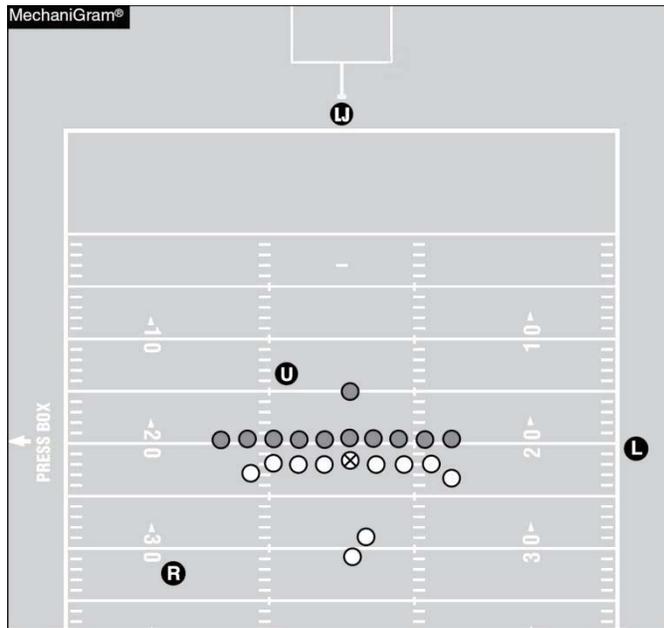
Linesman or Line Judge: The wing official that the Referee faces remains in his normal position straddling the line of scrimmage and off the field. The opposite wing official (from behind the Referee) joins the Umpire at the upright nearest his sideline and rules on his upright and the cross bar. The MechaniGram depicts a situation in which the Line Judge is deep and the Linesman remains on the line. The wing official that remains on the line of scrimmage must be prepared to rule on the entire goal line if the try turns into a run or pass play.

In order to avoid confusion during a last-second field goal attempt, the positioning of the wings must be a point of emphasis during the pregame.

Umpire and Wing under upright: After ruling successful or unsuccessful, take two steps straight forward announcing "yes yes" or "no no" then signal. Officials shall hold their signal until the Referee has made eye contact.

SCORING KICK OUTSIDE TEAM R's 15 YD LINE

Positioning



Referee: The Referee's starting position is even with and facing the front of the holder. It is permissible for the Referee to line up 1-2 yards behind the yard line of the holder to get a better view the snap and the initial block by the end and back on his side and then the action around the kicker before the kick. The distance from the holder may vary depending on personal preference, keeping the mind that the Referee is responsible for the sideline and the pylon behind him if there is a run or pass to that side.

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to a loose ball in the offensive backfield and must have an awareness of legality of the holder's position and actions during a fake.

The Referee signals the score to the pressbox after confirmed the signal from the officials under the upright.

Umpire: Starting position is on the same side of the snapper as the Referee. The Umpire is responsible for checking the numbers of the players on the offensive line and should remind Team R players about rules relating to contact on the snapper.

Linesman or Line Judge: The wing official that the Referee faces remains in his normal position straddling the line of scrimmage and off the field. The opposite wing official (from behind the Referee) moves to the upright and will have the sole responsibility of determining the success of the kick. The MechaniGram depicts a situation in which the Line Judge is under the upright and the Linesman remains on the line. The wing official that remains on the line of scrimmage must be prepared to rule on the whether the kick crosses the line of scrimmage and the line to gain if the try turns into a run or pass play.

The wing official under the upright stands beyond the end zone and centered behind the goal post. His position can be adjusted to provide the best look possible once the lateral placement of the ball is determined. The official rules on both uprights and the cross bar.

SCORING KICK

Coverage

Referee: The Referee must watch the holder receive the ball and the action of the holder's knee as the rules distinguish between the lifting of the knee during a muff and after possession of the ball has been obtained. The position of the knee is also critical if the ball is subsequently passed or handed off.

After the kick, the Referee is responsible for ruling on contact on both the kicker and holder. Once he is confident the kicker and holder are no longer in danger of being contacted, the Referee should dead-ball officiate for two-three seconds and then look to the deep officials to learn the result of the kick. The signal should be relayed to the press box once players have separated.

If a kick Try is blocked, the Referee should blow his whistle immediately as the play is over and the ball is dead; however, a blocked field goal remains live. Communication with the crew prior to the kick regarding the live ball/dead ball status of a blocked kick or a kick that fails to reach the goal line is essential.

In cases of a fake or a broken play, if a run or pass develops to his side, the Referee is responsible for sideline coverage including the pylon (acts as the wing). If Team R recovers the ball and runs for a score, the Referee is responsible for his sideline all the way to the goal line.

Umpire: Initially, the Umpire rules on the legality of the snap. His primary responsibility then is action on the snapper. He must also watch the blocks by the snapper and guards. The Umpire should step towards the snapper after the try kick with a vocal presence to reduce the chance of unnecessary acts.

If a blocked kick or fake results in a play toward the goal line, the Umpire has the inside-out look at blocks near the point of attack and can help with goal line coverage on the open side of the field.

Linesman and Line Judge: The wing official on the line of scrimmage has sole responsibility for encroachment/false starts.

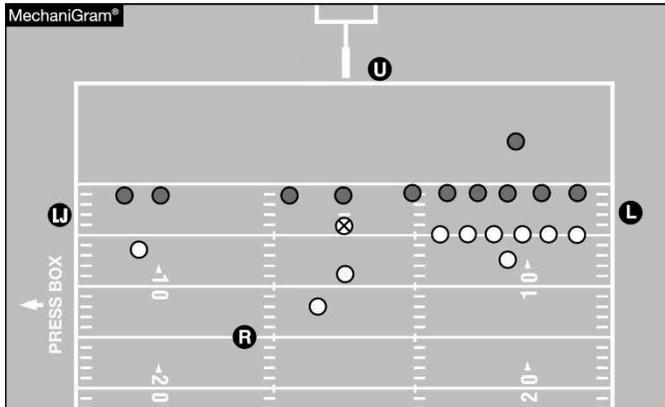
If the Try or FG becomes a run or pass play this wing has sole responsibility for the goal line and the line to gain. He can also help rule on ineligibles downfield on fake kicks that result in a pass that crosses the neutral zone. When a runner approaches the goal line, the wing official will move to the goal line to rule on the potential score.

After the kick, the wing official must pinch-in toward the offensive and defensive linemen to dead-ball officiate and use his voice to encourage players to unpile and return to the sideline.

Wing Under Upright: This wing official is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright. When a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball breaks the goal line plain and it is obvious it will not score, the Wing sounds his whistle. The Wing official should pronounce his ruling verbally using "yes, yes" or "no, no, no." The Wing official shall then take two steps straight forward into the end zone and signal. Hold the signal until the Referee makes eye contact and repeats the signal to the pressbox. If the ball falls short of the goal line, the wing official must rule on touchback, momentum and a kick return by Team R.

SWINGING GATE FORMATION

Positioning & Coverage



The Swinging Gate formation is occasionally used during a Try. See the CFOA 5 Person Mechanics Manual Pg 162 for additional details.

The Referee is encouraged to ask during the pregame discussion with the head coach if he has any trick plays including the use of the Swinging Gate. If so, the crew should subsequently discuss the use of this mechanic in detail.

Some plays that are typically run out of this formation include:

- An angled long snap (not between the snapper's legs) to a running back behind the linemen with a subsequent bull rush to the goal line.
- The holder receives the snap and passes to an eligible receiver (by position and number) which can include the snapper.
- The holder pitches the ball to the kicker and becomes a blocker.

Note: Once officials start in the in the Swinging Gate mechanic position, they will remain in these positions even if the offense shifts to a conventional kick try formation (except for the Umpire who will step back under the upright).

Referee: The Referee faces the holder from a position about three yards behind and five yards to the side of the kicker. The Referee should be able to view the snap and the action around the kicker before the kick. **The Referee rules if the ball passed inside the upright to his side** and signals the score to the pressbox if confirmed by the signal from the Umpire under the post.

The Referee must watch the holder receive the ball and the action of the holder's knee as the rules distinguish between the lifting of the knee during a muff and after possession of the ball has been obtained. The position of the knee is also critical if the ball is subsequently passed or handed off.

Umpire: The Umpire's initial position is seven yards deep in the end zone, favoring the side opposite of the Referee. If Team A shifts into a normal kick try formation, the Umpire will take a position behind the upright. He should vocalize to the Team B players to avoid illegal action against the snapper. **The Umpire is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on his side** as well as whether the ball cleared the crossbar.

Linesman and Line Judge: The wing's starting position and coverage is the same as normal scrimmage plays. Each moves to the goal line at the snap as for any other goal line coverage situation. If Team A shifts into scrimmage kick formation, the wings shall remain on the line of scrimmage.



This document was prepared by

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