

FOOTBALL OFFICIALS MANUAL

POSITIONS AND MECHANICS FOR CREW of 5 OFFICIALS

(Edited 6/11/2026)

****Unless otherwise stated, all Crew of 5 Mechanics are the same as Crew of 7 Mechanics.**



ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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RUNNING PLAYS

	Position indicators are as follows for the remainder of the document: Ⓡeferee, Ⓢcore, Ⓜanager, Ⓜanager, Ⓜanager, Ⓜanager, Ⓜanager <u>RUNNING PLAYS</u> Ⓜanager Ⓜanager III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE – SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: B. After snap: 6. Assume primary goal line responsibility following the snap when the snap originates from on or inside the 10-yard line on either end of the field. Ⓜanager V. BACK JUDGE – SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: A. After ball is spotted: 1. Basic position and responsibilities: a. Approximately 18 – 20 from the line of scrimmage yards. c. Count B players every down and exchange signal with the Head Linesman or Line Judge when their sideline is Team B. d. Responsible for timing, ruling on the play clock and timeouts. a) Identify your pre-snap key player which will be the second and third eligible receiver in when the offense is in Trips (See Figure A); otherwise, the second eligible receiver in on the strong side of the formation. If the formation is balanced, key the second eligible receiver on the press box side of the field (See Figure B). B. After snap: 4. Assume primary goal line responsibility for any run where the snap originates outside the 10-yard line.
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PASSING PLAYS

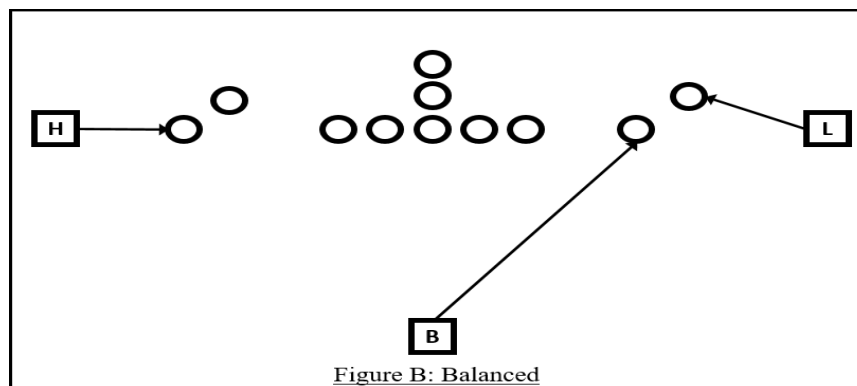
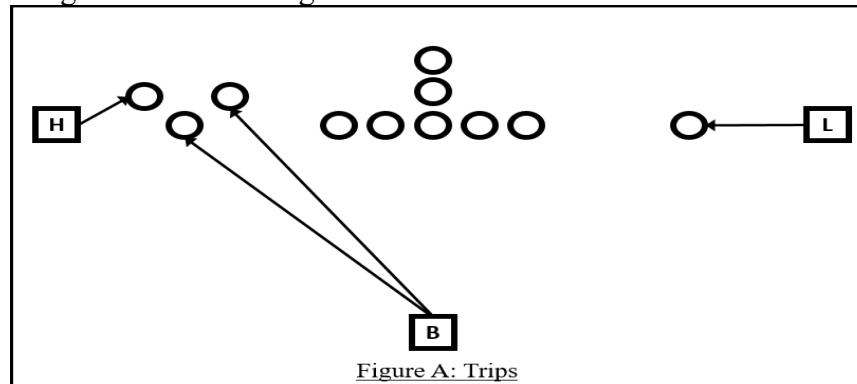
	<u>FORWARD PASS</u> Ⓜanager Ⓜanager III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE - SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: B. After snap: 1. Focus on the initial actions of your post-snap key as follows: A. Trips: The widest eligible receiver(s) (See Figure A) B. Balanced: The widest eligible receiver(s) (See Figure B) 4. Move downfield 5 – 7 yards to cover short passes on your side Ⓜanager V. BACK JUDGE – SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: A. After ball is spotted: 1. Basic position and responsibilities are the same as Running Plays B. After snap: 6. Be alert to rule on passes involving the Goal Line or End Line. Get visual confirmation from the Head Linesman/Line Judge before making the ruling. The
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official looking into the receiver and the ball rules on the catch (possession);
other official rules on the feet and the line (side or End Line).

STRENGTH OF FORMATION

Strong side determination is based on:

- Most eligible receivers outside the tackle
- Line Judge side is the strong side in balanced formation



SCRIMAGE KICKS

SCRIMAGE KICK (PUNT)

Ⓜ Ⓛ

III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE –
SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS **EXCEPT:**

B. After snap:

1. Head Linesman: Hold your positions after the kick until the ball crosses the neutral zone, then move slowly downfield covering your side between neutral zone and deep receiver(s).

Line Judge: With bean bag in hand, release on the snap and move downfield covering your side between the neutral zone and the deepest receiver(s).

5. Routine kick:

b. Line Judge: Observe action of signaler when no fair catch is completed.

Ⓟ

V. BACK JUDGE –

SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS **EXCEPT:**

A. After ball is spotted:

1. Initial position shall be no less than 5 yards behind the deepest receiver, and to the side of the Head Linesman.

KICKOFFS

KICKOFF

III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE –
SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS **EXCEPT**:

A. Before kick:

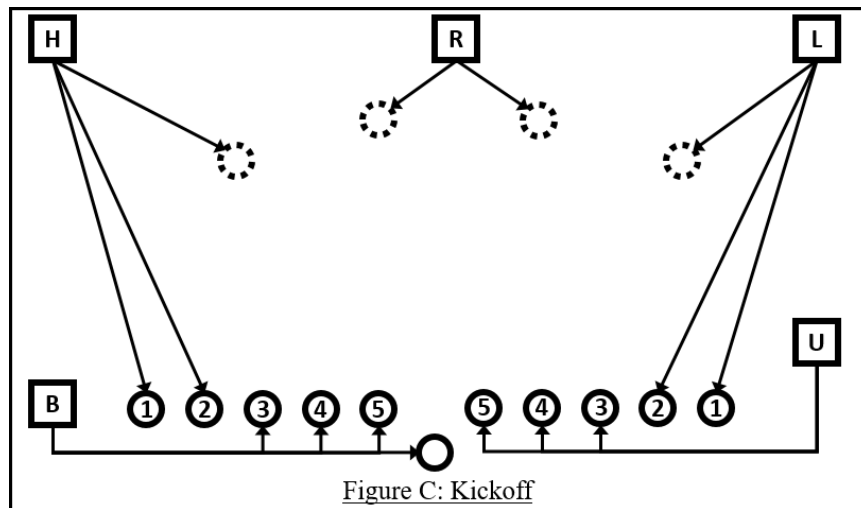
6. If a short free kick is obvious:

- HEAD LINESMAN position on R's free kick line opposite press box sideline.
- LINE JUDGE position on K's free kick line press box sideline.
- Be alert and ready to assist with touching.

INITIAL KEYS FOR KICKOFFS

(See Figure C)

- Referee – Deep receivers, Middle of Field
- Umpire – Interior three K players (3-5), Press Box side
- Head Linesman – Outer two K players (1-2); Opposite Press Box side
- Line Judge – Outer two K players (1-2); Press Box side
- Back Judge – Interior three K players (3-5) and Kicker, Opposite Press Box side



FIELD GOAL AFTER A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH

- Referee shall be on the goal line opposite the press box sideline.
- Head Linesman shall be on K's restraining line opposite the press box sideline.
- Line Judge shall be positioned under the upright on the press box side.

FIELD GOAL / TRY

FIELD GOAL / TRY

II. UMPIRE –

SAME AS A CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS **EXCEPT**:

B. After the snap:

8. On a broken play, rotate and rule on goal line.

III. LINE JUDGE –

SAME AS A CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS **EXCEPT**:

A. After ball is spotted:

	1. Positions: Beyond end zone and behind your upright where you feel most comfortable and have best coverage of upright. 2. Count R players and signal. B. After the snap: 1. Assume responsibility for determining if kick goes inside your upright. b. Line Judge rules on his upright and is aware of crossbar status. 3. Only the covering official should rule good or no good by using the appropriate signal when their respective upright is threatened. The official whose upright is not threatened will not provide a signal. 4. Be prepared to move if kick is blocked, obviously short, or a fake: a. If a fake develops, quickly move along the end line to the back pylon to rule on the sideline. b. Use your bean bag to mark the end of the kick if you are the covering official.
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GOAL LINE PLAYS

	<u>GOAL LINE PLAY</u>
ⓂⓁ	III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE – SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS: EXCEPT: B. On a snap at or inside the 10-yard line, has primary responsibility for the goal line going in.
Ⓑ	V. BACK JUDGE – SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS: EXCEPT: A. On a snap from between the 20 and the 10-yard line, positioned at the Goal Line with primary Goal Line responsibility B. Assume primary goal line responsibility for any run where the snap originates outside the 10-yard line. C. On a snap from inside the 10-yard line, positioned at the End Line with primary End Line responsibility.

BETWEEN PERIODS

	<u>BETWEEN PERIODS</u>
Ⓑ	VI. BACK JUDGE – SAME AS A CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: A. Verify down, distance, ball location and yard line of clip with Head Linesman. B. Move to the other end of the field and identify the yard line the clip is to be placed for the linesman. C. Make sure chains are set properly. Confirm down, distance and ball location with the linesman. D. Assume responsibilities as for time-out. E. Times 60-second interval; give 2 or 3 short blasts with the whistle to notify Referee at 45 seconds and visually notify Referee when 60-second interval expires.

COUNTING PLAYERS

Ⓜ Ⓛ	<u>COUNTING PLAYERS –</u> SAME AS A CREW OF 7 EXCEPT: SCRIMMAGE PLAYS Offense: Head Linesman, Line Judge when your sideline is on offense Defense: Head Linesman, Line Judge when your sideline is on defense
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INJURED OFFICIAL

Ⓛ Ⓜ	<u>INJURED OFFICIAL –</u> SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: 4. If the Referee determines that the ECO is not capable of working on the field, adjust positions, as necessary. The Back Judge position will be vacated when the field crew is reduced to four. The Line Judge will be responsible for all timing.
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MEASUREMENTS

Ⓜ	<u>MEASUREMENTS</u> VII. BACK JUDGE – SAME AS CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: A. Go to the down marker on the Head Linesman’s side of the field and assume sideline responsibilities. Make sure the down marker has the correct down and is placed in the spot of the lead stake prior to the linesman removing chains from the sideline. B. Do not allow team attendants to enter the field. C. Observe players on the sideline. D. If a new series is awarded, spot the down marker and return to your normal position. If the measurement is short, return to your normal position.
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TIMEOUT

Ⓜ	<u>TIME-OUT PROCEDURE</u> V. BACK JUDGE – SAME AS A CREW OF 7 OFFICIALS EXCEPT: A. Time 60-second interval; give 2 or 3 short blasts with the whistle to notify the Referee at 45-seconds and visually notify the Referee when the 60-second interval expires.
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ADDENDUMS

UMPIRE MECHANICS FOR KICKOFF - 5 PERSON CREW

KICKOFF – SEE FIGURE C (PAGE 4)

- Umpire – R's Free Kick Line, Press Box side.

II. UMPIRE

A. Before Kick:

1. Position: R's free kick line on the Press Box sideline.
2. Count K players
3. Be certain spectators are behind the restricted area and coaches and substitutes are in the team box.
4. Hold your arm above your head to indicate you are ready.
5. Watch for any infractions involving R's free kick line.
6. If a short free kick is obvious, remain in position on R's restraining line with a bean bag in hand. Always be alert for short free kick.

B. After Kick:

1. Be alert for first touching by K – mark spot with bean bag.
2. Be alert for kick that does not cross R's free kick line.
3. Mark out-of-bounds spot if the kick goes out-of-bounds in your area.
4. Watch initial blocks by players near R's free kick line.
5. Allow the players to advance beyond the receiver's free kick line, then move to your respective hash mark. Watch blocks on initial keys. Move 8-10 yards from R's restraining line and officiate from inside-out.
6. Always be alert for short free kick.