

For the 2015 football season, there is a major change in on-field mechanics for officials in four- and five-person coverage, and a reminder about the changes for 2014 kickoff change. At this time, these are the only known mechanics clarification and all officials are expected to otherwise apply only the mechanics in the NFHS Football Officials Manual.

FREE KICK MECHANICS

The Back Judge in a five-person crew (page 27, V, B, 6) is supposed to move to the center of the field after the kick goes downfield. This is important in order to get the Back Judge in his/her normal position as the return begins.

LINESMAN/LINE JUDGE MECHANICS

Beginning with the 2015 season, the Linesman and Line Judge will be changing sides of the field at halftime for all games using four or five person mechanics. This is not a local option and is required statewide.

The following changes from the Officials Manual are necessary due to this mechanic:

Base Coverage and Halftime Adjustment

The Line Judge will be positioned opposite the press box in the first half and the Line Judge will be responsible for the chains. The Head Linesman will be opposite the press box side in the second half and the Head Linesman will be responsible for the chains.

Mechanics and keys do not change regardless of which side of the field the officials are working, other than responsibility for the chains.

Except as noted, normal mechanics for sideline officials will remain unchanged.

If a sideline penalty recorder is present, he shall remain with the Head Linesman throughout the game.

Pre-Game Conferences

The official chains and down box remain on the side of the field opposite the press box throughout the game. Similarly, auxiliary chains and box (if used) remain on the press box side.

The Head Linesman and Line Judge shall meet with the chain crew before the game. The box holder and chain crew should be instructed to place markers, rods and the clip where indicated by the Head Linesman and Line Judge. When a new series begins, the chains should be positioned adjacent to the sideline. The box holder places the marker on the sideline where indicated by the Head Linesman. The chains are then set on the sideline and the clip attached to the chain on the side of the yardline closest to the rear chain rod. When the chains are set, the box holder retreats six feet and establishes the spot where the chains are to be reset after the clip has been attached. Use of a second clip is mandatory. The clip man should mark the new yardline with a second clip, leaving the original clip in place until after the first-down play ends.

The chains must not be moved or the number on the box changed until the Head Linesman or Line Judge instructs the appropriate personnel to do so. Once instructed to move, the chain crew must move quickly.

Chain personnel are to make no remarks to players nor express opinions concerning any ruling.

CASE BOOK CLARIFICATION – FREE BLOCKING ZONE (CB 2.17.2 SITUATION E:)

The allowance for blocking below the waist and clipping in the Free Blocking Zone that is listed in this play does NOT apply no one is under center, the QB is more than three yards off the line of scrimmage, AND the blocker is not in a three-point or four-point stance. Any blocks below the waist and clipping by blockers in a two-point stance, even if the players originally were lined up in the free blocking zone, are illegal as they would not be considered immediate and the ball is to be considered to be out of the free blocking zone.

This application applies to all levels, grade nine through twelve (freshman, JV, varsity)