



# **SPECIAL OLYMPICS WASHINGTON OFFICIALS HANDBOOK**





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## **WELCOME!**

Welcome to Special Olympics Washington's Officials Program.

This resource is here to help you understand the rules within Special Olympics Washington, expectations for our officials and provide tips for officiating if you are new to it. We really appreciate your willingness to join the SOWA team in providing sporting opportunities, health and family resources to Special Olympics athletes and our community. This guide will not only tell you more about us and our mission, but it will help you put your best foot forward as you embark on your volunteering experience.



### **Ref Hacks – Helpful Tools When Starting Out**

1. Change One Word: Instead of saying, “I didn’t see it”, change to “I didn’t have it”. This helps build credibility among the competitors.
2. Start With “Yeah”: When responding start by saying yeah; “Yeah, but I didn’t have it on that play”. Starting with yeah creates a positive and casual tone and diffuses the situation.
3. Keep a Pivot, or a change in the conversation, in Your Back pocket: You’re not in the business to change minds, don’t try to persuade, try and diffuse. The more you explain the call, the worse it is going to be. Avoid the re-enactment.
4. Gift Information: Instead of just saying “Two minutes on the clock” say things like “Quarterback, I have two minutes left on the clock and a first down for you”. It creates a personal touch and builds trust.
5. Take Out the Blame: Instead of saying “this is what you did”, use phrases like “this is what I saw”.

### **Tips to Improve Your Communication on the Playing Field**

1. Sarcasm doesn’t work. Sarcasm on the playing field can be misinterpreted and backfire in the long run.
2. Avoid Negative Communication Patters. Saying things like “That was not a strike”, lets people hear what they want to hear and think it was a strike, be direct and call it what it is, a ball.
3. Avoid Class room talk. Simplify your language and explain what you saw using simplified language and not class room verbiage.

### **Pivoting – Dealing with a Response From a Player That Throws You Off**

1. Proximity – “How did you call that from all the way over there, the other ref was right here”. A bad pivot back would be to say something like “Yeah, but it was so obvious”. A good pivot back would be “Yeah, I had the better angle than my partner”.
2. What-about?! This is an instant reaction and brings up an earlier play, “what about earlier, you called that exact pitch a strike!”. Don’t get dragged into the past, rather deal with what is in front of you. A good pivot pack would be “I cannot speak to what happened earlier, but here is what I had just now”.
3. Last Week’s Ref – “Last week’s ref” comments try and take you out of the present. “Well, last week’s ref was calling that a foul all game!”. A good pivot back would be “I can’t speak to the ref from last week, but here is what I saw”. The same thing goes when a hypothetical play occurs. A good pivot back, “Man, I would have loved to see that play, but in general, here’s how I would call it”.



### **20 Keys to Becoming a Successful Official!**

1. Most importantly, **get control of the game from the beginning**. Blow the whistle loud and sell the call!
2. Call the obvious.
3. Study the rules to improve your officiating.
4. Don't draw unnecessary attention to yourself, **it's the players show!**
5. **Enforce, don't legislate.**
6. Dress and act in an appropriate manner.
7. Report to your game assignments on time and ready to work!
8. **Be fair and unbiased in your decisions.**
9. Be **proactive**, not reactive. The earlier you set the tempo of the game the more controlled the game will be.
10. When the ball is dead, be alive. Be ready to hustle at all times with your head turned toward the action.
11. Anticipate the **play**, and not the call.
12. Cooperate, support and be professional with other officials. You might be taking a volunteer under your wing to help you. Use this as an opportunity to teach them and even recruit!
13. Be firm but not overbearing; positive, but never rude; dignified, but never "cocky"; **remember a good official doesn't always have to have the last word.**
14. Do **not** use profanity.
15. No matter what a participant, coach or parent says or does to you, do not retaliate verbally or physically; **walk away.**
16. **Not all contact is a foul** – Read what plays into an Advantage vs. Disadvantage.
17. Do not give information that might be used by a team's future opponent.
18. If you miss a call, don't get down on yourself, remain focused on the game.
19. If you cannot explain the call, don't call it.
20. **HAVE FUN!!!!**



## Official's Checklist

- **Prior to Arrival**
  - Whistle Packed.
  - Timing Device.
  - Token or coin for use in coin-toss.
  - Black Shorts or Pants.
  - Officials Shirt.
  - Weather appropriate clothing.
  - If you do not have an official's shirt or a whistle, these items will be provided by SOWA.
  - Sport specific equipment i.e. cards for soccer, penalty flags for flag football.
  - Snacks and water.
- **Pregame**
  - Check In at the SOWA volunteer check-in desk.
  - Receive a brief orientation and training with other officials.
  - Receive court/field assignments for the day.
  - Orient with fellow officials at your court/field to determine responsibilities.
  - Communicate with scorekeepers and other volunteers at your area to establish responsibilities.
  - Ensure that game balls are inflated and in good condition.
  - Inspect court or field for potential hazards and proper set up.
  - Ensure all players are wearing proper uniform and equipment.
  - Host a pre-game meeting with coaches.
- **In-Game**
  - Work Hard.
  - Keep calls consistent.
  - Set the tempo from the beginning.
  - Keep the sideline clear and players in the designated areas.
  - Announce important time such as 10 minutes, 5 minutes, 2-minute warning.
  - Call fouls with authority, "Sell the call".
  - Blow the whistle loudly.
  - Educate coaches and players if they are doing something incorrectly such as subbing before a dead ball.
- **Post-Game**
  - Discuss any plays that may have been missed, unusual situations or concerns and technicals.
  - Report any situation to Special Olympics Washington supervisor.



### **Basic Body Positioning for all Officials**

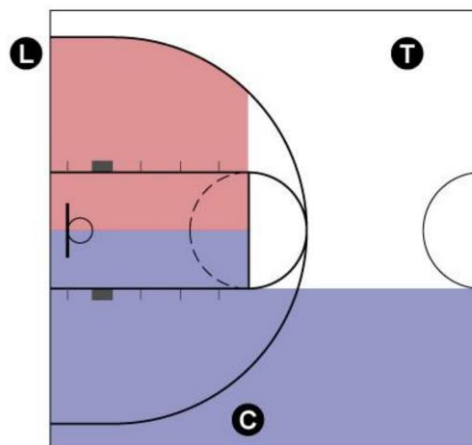
- **Basic Stance for All Officials Should Facilitate Movement**
  - Feet shoulder width apart.
  - Weight distributed evenly with emphasis on inside of feet.
  - Stagger of feet.
  - Knees flexed with weight slightly forward.
  - Arms straight and loose.
  - Any stance that locks off physical movement should be avoided.
- **The Following are do nots:**
  - Standing flat footed.
  - Putting hands at hips or crossing arms.
  - Bend at waist with hands on the knees or thighs, exception comes with Flag Football officials where this is a common position.
  - Sitting Down.
  - Lock knees.
  - Twirl Whistle.
  - Yawn.
- **Basic Movements**
  - Forward – Short bursts of movement and all-out.
  - Backward – Be aware of player movement.
  - Do not let players get behind you at any time!
  - Side steps – Line judges, keep body parallel to the sideline and move sideways along the sideline to follow the play. Turn and run when the play is way down the field, and you need to catch up to the action.



## Basketball Referee Positioning

### Positioning When Working in a Three Member Crew

- **Lead**
  - Positioned on the ball side or strong side of court.
  - In a typical half court position, located under the basket along the baseline.
  - Watching the lane and all play under the basket. Responsible for fouls in the paint, baseline out of bounds and infractions.
  - Different calls that can be made include shooting fouls, blocks, push offs, and charges.
  -
- **Center**
  - Positioned on the opposite or weak side.
  - Stands on the sideline furthest away from the lead official.
  - Positioned "foul-line" extended.
  - This position must watch the weak side or nonball side of the court.
  - Expected to call a lot of off ball fouls, such as illegal screens or contact away from the ball.
  - Also must call out of bounds along their sideline.
  - Another call the center must make comes when perimeter players go into the lane for rebounds and contact is made.
- **Trail**
  - Positioned on the ball side or strong side of court.
  - Always on the same side as the lead but trying to be closer than the players to the opposing basket.
  - Responsibilities include any fouls that occur around the perimeter, determining if a shot attempt is a three or two attempt, out of bounds along the sideline, and back court violations.
  - The trail is watching the ball after the shot.





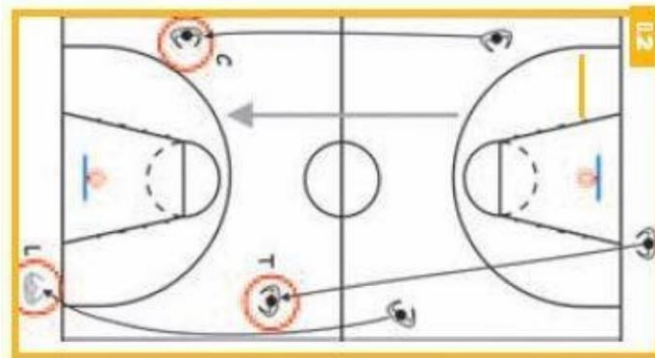


## Movement and Rotation System in a Three Person Crew

- **Transition Movement and Strong Side Switch**

- Occurs when possession switches from one half to the other.
- The trail official becomes the new lead moving along the sideline and towards the baseline.
- The lead official becomes the new trail and follows the ball carrier up the court.
- The center official transitions along the sideline from foul line extended to foul line extended.

### Transition Movement and Strong Side Switch



- **Strong Side Rotation**

- During typical half court possessions, the offensive team will pass from one side to another.
- As the ball moves from strong side to weak side, so do the officials if a shot is not taken.
- The lead official will move along the baseline while the center moves closer to half court to be the new trail.
- As the center is moving towards half court, the previous trail moves up to foul line extended, becoming the new center official.





- **Foul Rotation**

- When a foul is called in the paint, the lead official will run to the scorer's table to report the foul.
- Instead of running back from half court, the center and trail rotate to lead and center.
- This allows the other officials to get the players ready for free throw attempts while the official that made the call is notifying the table.

### **Positioning When Working in a Two Person Crew**

- **Lead**

- Establish a position 2-3 steps in from 3-point arc on baseline.
- Try to be parallel to ball position.
- Primary Area – The end line to far lane line to free throw extended to near sideline.
- Signal try and make of three-point attempt in your coverage area.
- Responsible for calling infractions in the paint area.
- Protect the shooter, keep eyes on the shooter until the play is over, do not look at basket.

- **Trail**

- Primary area starts at the 28ft line and consists of area above ft line extended, also, area outside of near lane.
- Trail official should be proactive and hustle on fast breaks.
- Responsible for rim area, made basket on shooting foul, basket interference, goaltending.
- Responsible for calling illegal screens and off ball fouls.
- Responsible for calling push fouls on rebounds.

- **Rotations**

- Lead transitions to trail and vice versa.
- Be prepared for the turnover.
- Stay two steps behind the dribbler.
- Stay out of the way of pressure defense and press breaks.





## **Positioning When Working a One Person Crew**

Certain times when volunteer count is short, the official shall work the game as a '**1 person crew**', following the guidelines below.

1. Have a pre-game meeting with the coaches, explaining that you will be officiating the game alone.
  2. Request coaches cooperation, express advance appreciation for them assisting you in keeping themselves and the game under control.
  3. Advise volunteers at the scores table. of your requests of coaches & players. The cooperation of spectators should also be expected! The game is being played for the benefit of our athletes; your best efforts will ensure a consistently and fairly officiated game.
- **Position**
    - Working Free Throw Line extended, to free throw line extended, opposite of the scorer's table.
    - As the ball moves toward the opposite sideline, move off the sideline toward the center of the floor.
  - **Out-of-Bounds**
    - After you have designated a spot for the player to be stationed, move a short distance away and bounce the ball to them.
    - Avoid Getting caught on the baseline. While sometimes necessary to cover a player near it, it will not put you in the best position to see it.
    - If you're having trouble with the out of bounds call, observe the reaction of the players. If you are not sure, go to the alternating possession arrow.
  - **Free Throws and Reporting Fouls**
    - Administer both free throws from the baseline. Notice the initial placement of the shooters feet and then turn attention to non-shooters.
    - When report a foul, "cheat" slightly toward the reporting position but remain in the middle of the floor.
  - **Do Not Guess – You cannot see everything and that's okay**
  - **Maintain a sense of humor and composure**
  - **Remember, you are the best official on the floor**



### **Basketball Points of Emphasis**

- All Unified Teams will play two 20-minute (15 minutes at sub-regional and regional levels) halves with a running clock. The clock will only stop in the last minute of the game for dead balls.
- All community based traditional teams will play four 8-minute (6 minutes at sub-regional and regional levels) quarters with a running clock. The clock will only stop in the last minute of the game for dead balls.
- One-minute intermissions follow the 1<sup>st</sup> and second quarters and 5 minutes between half.
- Begin game with jump ball – alternating possession for the remainder.
- A team may be granted 4 (1 minute) time outs per game (2 per half). Unused timeouts do not carry over.
- The three-second rule restriction is enforced when team control exists in the opponent’s frontcourt.
- When attempting a free throw, no one (including the shooter) can enter the three second lane until the ball has touched the rim.
- During multiple free throws, substitutions may only occur before the last free throw.
- The free throw shooter shall release the ball within 10 seconds from the time it is placed at their disposal.
- Women and Junior Divisions must play with a smaller ball, 28 ½ inches in circumference.
- A player/head coach may orally or visually request a time-out.
- During unified competition, the lineup shall never exceed three athletes and two partners at a time. Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.
- Overtime – If overtime is required due to a tie, it will begin with a coin flip for possession then move to alternating possession. A one-minute intermission will follow regulation. To determine the winner of the game, there will be on 3-minute period. If the score is still tied, a one-minute intermission will follow another 3-minute overtime period. The first team to score in the second period will be declared the winner. The clock will stop during the last minute of overtime for all dead ball situations.
- Two Step Rule – A player may take two steps beyond what is permitted by NGB rules. However, if the player scores, is deemed to have “traveled” or escapes the defense as a result of these additional steps, an advantage has been gained – a violation is called immediately. Officials may adjust according to skill levels.
- Double Dribble – It is a violation for a player to double dribble. However, officials may adjust according to skill levels.
- Defense- Any type of defense is allowed.
- Fouls – All typical fouls are called and recorded. Bonus and double bonus team fouls awarded. Two free throws awarded beginning with the tenth team foul in each half.
- Substitutions – After each dead ball and when directed by official.
- Help keep games on time.
- Check with the scorekeeper that fouls and the flip chart are recorded accurately.
- Remind the scorekeepers to immediately submit the scoresheet after the game.
- Assist the scorekeeper in making sure the score sheet is complete and accurate before the game begins.



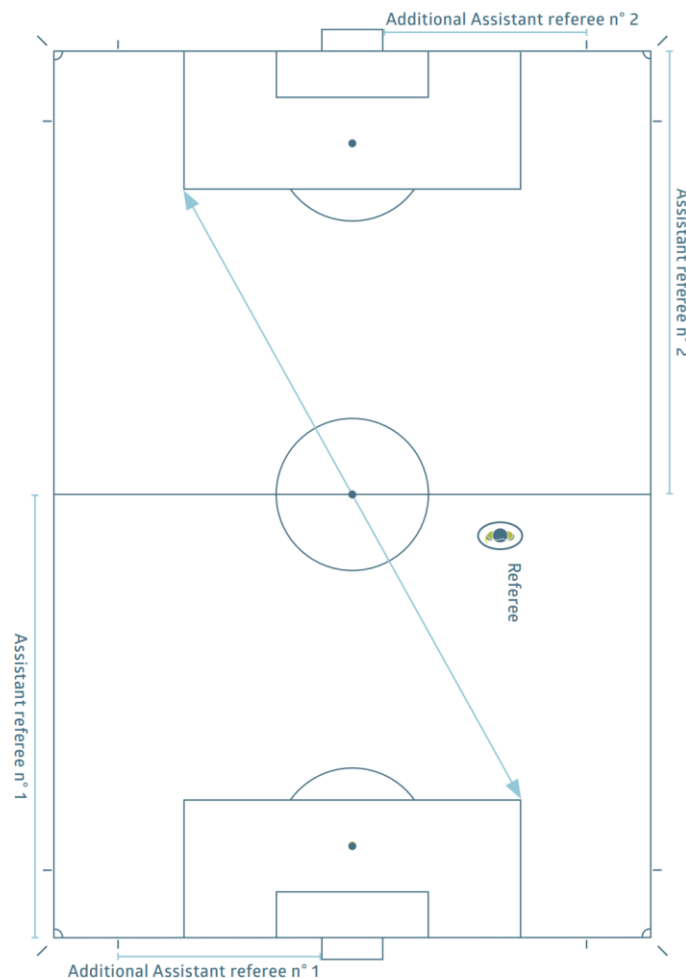
- Stay on your court until your replacement arrives.
- Blow your whistle loudly and “sell the call”! Make sure you are heard.
- Slow the game down if emotions begin to build – you are in control of your court.
- Keep “possession” direction in your pocket – work at making sure you have the same direction. Switch possession at half time.
- Teams warm up at the opposite end of where they are sitting on the bench. Don’t forget to have the teams switch ends at half time. Game ball stays at table.
- Identify the teams head coach before the game – this is the only individual allowed to communicate with you during the game.
- Most importantly, set the “tone” right away on your court – you are in control.



## Soccer Referee Positioning

### Working in a Three Person Crew

- General Position and Movement – The best position is one from which the referee can make the best decision.
- The play should be between the referee and the lead assist referee.
- The lead assistant referee should be in the referee's field of vision so the referee should usually use a wide diagonal system.
- Staying towards the outside of the play makes it easier to keep play and the lead AR in the referee's field of vision.
- The referee should be close enough to see play without interfering with play.
- What needs to be seen is not always visible by the ball, the referee should also pay attention to: player confrontations off the ball, possible offenses in the area towards which play is moving, offenses occurring after the ball is played away.





- **Positioning of Assist Referees (AR)**
  - The AR must be in line with the second-last defender of the ball if it is nearer to the goal line than the second last defender.
  - The AR must always face the field of play, even when running.
- **Corner Kick**
  - The AR position for a corner kick is behind the corner flag in line with the goal but not interfering with the player taking the kick.
- **Free Kick**
  - The AR's position must be in line with the second-last defender to check the offside line. However, the AR must be ready to follow the ball by moving down the touchline towards the corner flag if there is no direct shot on goal.
- **Goal/No Goal**
  - When there is no doubt on the decision, the referee and assistant referee make eye contact with the AR moving quickly along the touchline towards the halfway line without raising the flag.
  - When a goal has been scored but the ball appears to still be in play, the AR must raise the flag to attract the referee's attention.
  - On occasions when the whole of the ball does not cross the line and play continues, the referee must make eye contact with the AR and if necessary, give a discreet hand signal.
- **Goal Kick**
  - The AR must ensure the ball is inside the goal area.
  - Once the ball is placed, the AR moves to the edge of the penalty area to ensure the ball goes in play.
  - Finally, the AR must take a position to check the offside line.
- **Kicks from the Penalty Mark**
  - One AR must be positioned at the intersection of the goal area and the goal line.
  - The other AR must be in the center circle to control the players.

### **Working in a Two Person Crew**

- **Referee**
  - In a two position system, the referee will operate in the same diagonal pattern as with three referees.
  - Stay toward the outside of the play.
  - Keep the play in front of you while working in the diagonal system.
- **Assistant Referee (AR)**
  - The AR must always face the field, even while running.
  - The AR in this case will no longer stick to just one side of the field and will follow the play along the sideline.
  - The AR can "cheat" slightly toward the center line to help in getting back, since there is no offsides to track.



## **Positioning When Working a One Person Crew**

Certain times when volunteer count is short, the official shall work the game as a '**1-person crew**', following the guidelines below.

1. Have a pre-game meeting with the coaches, explaining that you will be officiating the game alone.
  2. Request coaches cooperation, express advance appreciation for them assisting you in keeping themselves and the game under control.
  3. Advise volunteers at the scores table. of your requests of coaches & players. The cooperation of spectators should also be expected! The game is being played for the benefit of our athletes; your best efforts will ensure a consistently and fairly officiated game.
- **Position**
    - Work in the middle of the field in a diagonal pattern.
    - Stay towards the outside of the play.
    - Be ready for a quick change of possession, remember you do not have to watch for offsides.
  - **Out-of-Bounds**
    - Volunteers will be stationed around the field to help retrieve balls as they come loose off the field. Remain in your position in the center of the field.
  - **Bookings and Substitutions**
    - Administer any bookings and foul calls from where they play by recording them in your book.
    - Call substitutions in from where you stand, volunteers at the scorer's table will alert you of any substitutions.
  - **Do Not Guess – You cannot see everything and that's okay.**
  - **Maintain a sense of humor and composure.**
  - **Remember, you are the best official on the pitch.**





### Soccer Points of Emphasis

- **Special Olympics Washington Plays 5-a-side and 7-a-side**
  - Maximum dimensions of 50 meters by 35 meters, minimum distance of 40 meters by 30 meters in 5-a-side. Maximum dimensions of 70 meters by 50 meters, minimum dimensions of 50 meters by 35 meters in 7-a-side.
  - The goal size must be a minimum of three meters by two meters and a maximum of four meters by two meters in 5-a-side. In 7-a-side the goal will be five meters by two meters.
  - Ages 8-15 use a size 4 ball, all other players, size 5 ball.
  - A minimum of three players shall be on the field at any time in 5-a-side, and five players on the field at any time in 7-a-side.
  - Rosters shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
  - Substitutions can be made at any time the ball is out of bounds, between periods, after a goal is scored or during a timeout for an injury.
  - Two equal periods of fifteen minutes with a halftime interval of five minutes. As the referee you are responsible for keeping playing time.
  - If over time is used to break a tie, two five-minute overtime periods are used. If the game is still tied, penalty kicks will be used.
  - **Kick-Off:** The team that wins the coin toss can choose to kick-off or which goal to attack.
  - **To start play:** all players must be in their own half, the ball must be stationary on the center mark, the referee gives a signal, the ball is in play when kicked and clearly moves, a goal can be scored directly against the opponent from the kick-off.
  - **Ball in and out of play:** ball over the sideline results in a kick in, ball over the end line results in a goal clearance or a corner kick, the ball must be completely over the line to be out of play.
  - **Goal Clearance:** When the ball passes over the goal line, the goalkeeper shall throw the ball back into play. If the ball thrown in by the goalkeeper passes beyond the goalkeeper's half without being touched, the referee awards an indirect free kick for the opposing team from any point on the halfway line. If on the goalkeeper's throw, the ball is touched by any player in the penalty area, the throw shall be retaken.
  - **Method of Scoring:** The whole ball must completely cross the line inside the goal to count as a goal.
  - **Fouls and misconduct**
    - There is no offsides
    - Tripping, pushing, handball or charging result in a direct free kick. Obstruction or dangerous play results in an indirect.
    - If a player is expelled from the game, this player may not re-enter the game, and their team must play two minutes a player down.
  - **Free Kick**
    - Opposing players must retire at least five meters.
    - When an indirect free kick is awarded inside the penalty area within five meters of the goal, the referee must place the ball at five meters from the goal line.
  - **Penalty Kick**
    - A penalty kick is taken from the seven-meter or six-meter mark depending on size of goal.



- **Kick In**
  - When the whole of the ball passes over a sideline, it shall be kicked back into the game from where it crosses by a player from the opposing team.
  - A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick in
  - A goalkeeper may not touch the ball with hands receiving it directly from a kick in by a teammate.
- **Infringement Penalties**
  - If the player taking the kick in plays the ball for a second time before it has been touched by another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the point where the infringement occurred.
- **Corner Kick**
  - Awarded to the attacking team when a player from the defending team kicks the ball over his/her own end line.
  - Opposing players must retire at least five meters.
- **Overtime/Penalties**
  - In regular league play, all ties are final.
  - In tournament play, two five-minute overtime periods are used and if still tied penalty kicks are taken.
  - The referee chooses which goal.
  - The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides to go first or second.
  - The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner. The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
  - The kicks are taken in an alternating fashion.
  - If, before the five kicks, a team cannot reach the others score, no more kicks are taken.
  - If after five kicks things are still tied, kicks are taken in a sudden death fashion.
  - Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before anyone takes a second.
  - Once all eligible players have taken a kick, a new sequence can be introduced.
  - An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any point.
  - In Unified Sports, kicks must alternate between athletes and partners with the athlete taking the first kick.



### Fouls vs. Misconduct

A foul is any unfair act by a player, that disrupts the game's laws, and interferes with active play of the game. Fouls are punished with the awarded of a free kick, or penalty kick. An example of a foul would be pulling an opponent's shirt. An infringement is classified as a foul only when it has met all of the conditions: it is committed by a player (not a substitute), on the field of play, while the ball is in play and committed against an opponent.

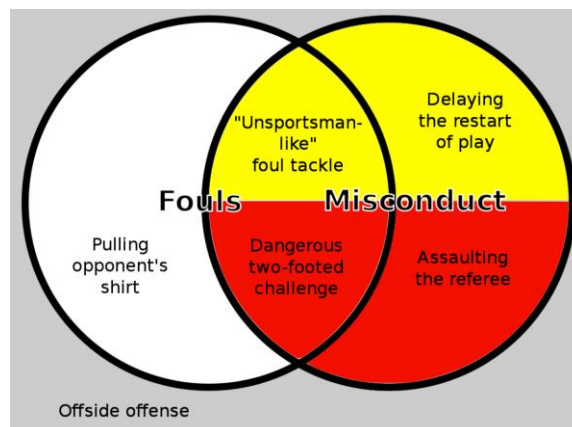
Once a foul transitions to aggressive and reckless behavior it is considered misconduct. These are acts, which additionally are fouls. These may occur at any time. Misconduct results in either a caution (yellow card) or a sending off (red card). A second caution will also result in a dismissal.

A yellow card is shown by the referee indicating a caution. The referee should record the details into their notebook. The following acts would warrant a yellow card:

- Unsportsmanlike behavior – Foul play, simulation, denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity
- Dissent by word or action
- Persistent infringement of the laws of the game
- Delaying the play of game.
- Failure to respect the require distance on game restarts.
- Entering or re-entering the field of play without referee's permission.
- Deliberately leaving play without referee's permission.

A step above a yellow card is the red card, which is signifying the player to be sent off. The following acts may result in an automatic red card:

- Serious foul play
- Violent contact
- Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity with a handball
- Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity with a deliberate foul
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- Receiving a second yellow card

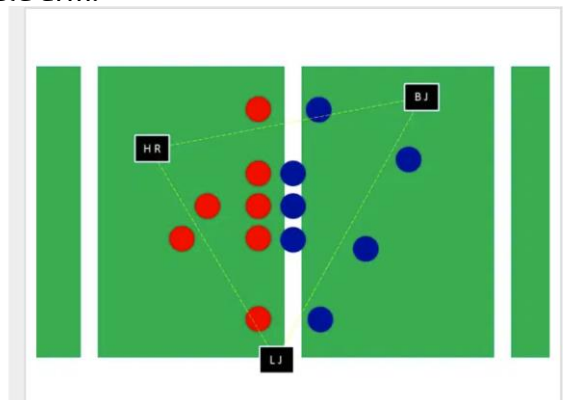




## Flag Football Referee Positioning

### Positioning in a Three-Person Crew

- **Referee**
  - In a three person crew this referee will be located in the offensive backfield.
  - The referee has general oversight and control and the game and is the sole authority for the score and decisions upon rules and other matters.
  - The referee shall inspect the field and report irregularities to game management, coaches and other officials.
  - The referee has jurisdiction over player equipment
  - The referee shall indicate that the ball is ready for play, direct the clock, count time out charged, award new series of downs and administer penalties.
  - The referee shall notify both head coaches of any disqualifications.
  - After the snap, the referee is responsible for watching the quarterback
- **Back Judge**
  - Located seven yards deep in the defensive side
  - Responsible for placing the “rush zone” marker and viewing defensive procedures as such
  - Once the ball has crossed the scrimmage line to the defensive side of the field, the back judge is responsible for calls
  - The judge shall be responsible for observing receivers on deep routes and for ruling on long passes and the status of the ball in the area. The judge will indicate forward progress on deep plays to the referee.
- **Linesman**
  - The initial position of the linesman is on the scrimmage line at the sideline with the down indicator.
  - The linesman is responsible for the operation of the down indicator.
  - The linesman shall count the number of offensive players and keeps the count of downs.
  - The linesman has jurisdiction over the scrimmage line and their sideline.
  - Once the ball has crossed the scrimmage line, the linesman shall be responsible for ruling on ball placement.
  - Responsible for sideline management.
  - Keep shoulders parallel to the ball carrier.
  - When the ball becomes dead, keep your shoulders square.
  - Do not round off, and mark the spot with your downfield foot.
  - Signal down with downfield arm.

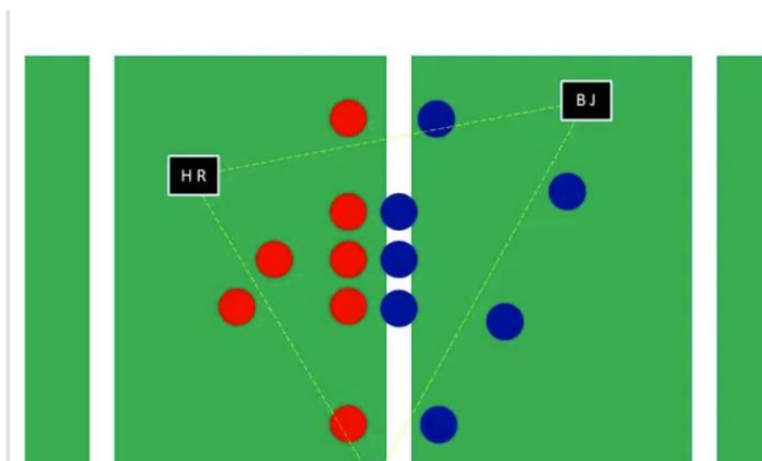




## Positioning When Working a Two Person Crew

When times require working a two person crew, the position of **linesman** shall be removed. The remaining roles will be as follows:

- **Referee**
  - The referee will be located in the offensive backfield.
  - The referee has general oversight and control and the game and is the sole authority for the score and decisions upon rules and other matters.
  - The referee shall indicate that the ball is ready for play, direct the clock, count time out charged, award new series of downs and administer penalties.
  - After the snap, the referee is responsible for watching the quarterback
  - The referee will be responsible for spotting the ball when the play stays near the line of scrimmage.
- **Back Judge**
  - Located seven yards deep in the defensive side
  - Responsible for placing the “rush zone” marker and viewing defensive procedures as such
  - Once the ball has crossed the scrimmage line to the defensive side of the field, the back judge is responsible for calls
  - The back judge will have responsibility of spotting the ball on downfield plays.





## **Positioning When Working a One Person Crew**

Certain times when volunteer count is short, the official shall work the game as a '**1 person crew**', following the guidelines below.

1. Have a pre-game meeting with the coaches, explaining that you will be officiating the game alone.
  2. Request coaches cooperation, express advance appreciation for them assisting you in keeping themselves and the game under control.
  3. Advise volunteers at the scores table. of your requests of coaches & players. The cooperation of spectators should also be expected! The game is being played for the benefit of our athletes; your best efforts will ensure a consistently and fairly officiated game.
- **Position**
    - Start your position in the defensive backfield at the “rush line” marker.
    - Do your best to keep the play in front of you.
    - Focus first on the player rushing the passer and then turn your attention towards the ball carrier.
  - **Out-of-Bounds**
    - Position yourself slightly more toward the side of the field that does not have a volunteer holding the down marker. This volunteer can help you spot the ball when it goes out on that side of the field while you pay more attention to your side of the field.
  - **Penalties**
    - Administer any penalties from where they play, “cheat” towards the scorekeepers table to be sure that they can be recorded accurately.
  - **Do Not Guess – You cannot see everything and that’s okay.**
  - **Maintain a sense of humor and composure.**
  - **Remember, you are the best official on the field.**



## Flag Football Points of Emphasis

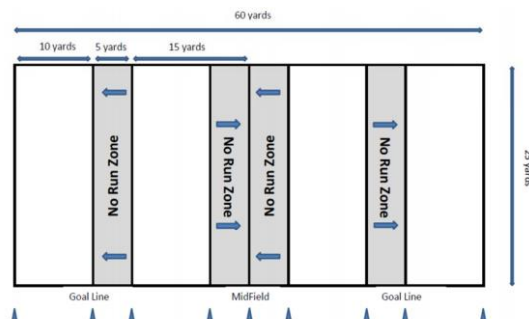
### 1. Equipment

- Youth sized football
- Protective mouthpiece
- A one-piece three flag belt must be worn at all times
- All participants must have a playing uniform consisting of matching shirts/shorts/pants and matching numbers on front and back which can be tucked in at the waist to avoid obstruction of Flag Pulling.
- No blue jeans, jewelry, pockets, metal cleats, spikes, or hiking boots to be worn.
- Medical bracelets are allowed if taped over

### 2. Overview of rules and scoring

#### • Penalties

- All penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage
- No penalty may take the ball more than half the distance to the offender's goal line
- **Offensive Penalties (10 yards and a loss of down)**
  - Illegal Motion
  - Offside
  - Illegal forward/backward pass
  - Illegal Procedure
  - Pass Interference
  - Illegal Contact
  - Flag Guarding
  - Delay of Game
- **Defensive Penalties (10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down)**
  - Offside
  - Pass Interference
  - Illegal Contact
  - Illegal Flag Pull
  - Illegal Rushing
- Special Olympics flag football is non-contact, contact will be deemed a penalty
- 5 players will be on each side.
- Playing field is 60 by 25
  - No-run zones prevent teams from running power runs. There will be two no run zones teams face in each drive.





- Possessions start at the 5-yard line
- 4 plays to cross mid-field and then 4 more plays to score a touchdown
- Game play consists of two 20-minute halves.
- Clock stops on time outs which each team receives one 60 second timeout per half.
- 5-minute halftime break.
- In overtime each team receives two plays from midfield and the team gaining the most points or gaining a yardage advantage is awarded one extra points.
- **Scoring**
  - TD=6
  - Extra Point = 1 from the 5-yard line and 2 from the 12-yard line
  - Safety=2
  - Mercy Rule=If a team is up 25 or more points in the last minute of the game, the clock will continue to run.
- **Live Ball/Dead Ball**
  - Positions/Snap – The ball must be snapped between the center’s legs to start each play. No minimum number of players is required to line-up on the line of scrimmage.
  - Dead Balls/Fumbles – There are no fumbles. If the ball comes loose the play is immediately deemed dead.
  - **Play is dead when:**
    - Flag is pulled
    - Loss of flag
    - Out of bounds
    - Knee or hand touches ground
    - Point is scored
    - Defense obtains the ball
    - Incomplete pass
    - Interception
    - Snap touches ground
    - Fumble forward, ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were. Fumble backward, where it hit the ground.
    - Catching ball without flags.
    - Inadvertent whistle.
    - Grounded snap to the quarterback to start a play.
- **Unified Sports**
  - Proportionate number of athletes and partners
  - Lineup shall never exceed 2 partners at a time
  - Partners as quarterbacks may not pass to another partner
  - Partners may handoff to another partner





### **3. Lineups and Formations**

- Formations
  - Each player on a team must be on its side of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped
  - Motion – Only one player of the offensive team can be in motion, you must stay behind the line of scrimmage and stay set for one second
  - Shift – A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who after taking set positions move to a new position prior to snap, these players must be set for one second
  - Snap – A snap is the legal act of passing the ball through the center’s legs to the QB.

### **4. Basics of handoffs and running**

- Running
  - Only direct handoffs behind the line are permitted
  - Multiple handoffs may be used
  - To do a center sneak the ball must completely leave the center’s hands
  - The quarterback cannot advance the ball
  - Laterals or pitches are not allowed
  - Player who received the ball can throw it behind the line
  - No spinning, hurdling, jumping, shielding, stiff arming, etc.
- Screen Blocking
  - Legally obstructing an opponent without contact him/her with any part of the screen blocker’s body
  - The screen blocker shall have his/her arms fully extended to the ground (below the waist) either at his/her side, in front, or behind his/her back
  - Any use of arms, elbows, legs, or shoulders to initiate contact during the screen block is illegal
  - A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking
  - Screen blocking is the only form of legal blocking that can be used by any player at any time
  - Backfield blocking – Not legal when they do not give the opponent one step, do not initiate contact, take a position too close. They can move laterally or backwards two steps
  - Downfield – Only a basketball style screen (non-moving) is allowed

### **5. Catching and passing basics**

- Passing/Receiving
  - All passes must be forward
  - Shovels are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage
  - All players can receive a forward pass
  - Only one player is allowed in motion and they cannot be moving at the snap
  - A player needs to have one foot in bounds on a catch
  - You can dive for a catch, but not for any other reasons.
  - If you step out of bounds, you cannot be the first player to touch the ball upon reentry



## **6. Defensive basics**

- Rushing the Passer
  - All players who rush must be a minimum of 7 yards from the L.O.S., the official will designate where this spot is
  - Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the L.O.S.
  - Once the QB hands off the ball, this 7-yard zone no longer exists, and anyone can rush
- Flag Pulling
  - A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball
  - Illegal to pull or strip the ball
  - If a belt falls off the player is down
  - A defensive player may not intentionally pull flags of a player not involved with the play
  - Flag guarding/shielding is not allowed