

## INTRODUCTION TO OFFICIAL'S POSITIONS

The CSFOA works varsity games with either a 5 or 4-man crew. The duties of each official vary depending on the type of play:

- Kickoff
- Pass or run from scrimmage
- Punt
- Placekick

The following is a brief summary of the general responsibilities of each official. Further detail is in the NFHS *Official's Manual*.

**Referee.** Stands in the offensive backfield, about 12-14 yards behind the line and behind the tackle on the side of the quarterback's passing arm (5-man crew) or wide side of field (4-man crew). Has overall responsibility for the crew, and his decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game. On kickoffs, he has goal line coverage, along with the runner and blocking in his area. His primary responsibility is the quarterback on plays from scrimmage. He is also responsible for the ball while it is behind the neutral zone, and determines if a pass is forward, backward, or instead, a fumble. He assists the umpire in detecting holding. On punts, he rules on contact against the kicker, and picks up the runner on long returns. On placekicks, he may have a goal post or contact against the kicker/holder, depending on the coverage used. When penalties are called, he is responsible for presenting the options to the captains.

**Umpire.** Stands behind the linebackers, 5-7 yards behind the line, and between the offensive tackles. Responsible for line play and focuses on the guards and center. In addition to holding, the umpire monitors the legality of the snap. Also responsible for ineligible receivers downfield, if the ball is thrown from beyond the line, or if a forward pass crosses the line. On kickoffs, he shares deep coverage with the Referee. Before the game he rules on the legality of equipment. When penalties are accepted, he walks off the appropriate distance.

**Linesman.** Teaming with the Line Judge, "the wings" stand off the field on the line of scrimmage and monitor the neutral zone, motion, and the legality of the formation. On running plays to their side, they are responsible for blocking at the point of attack in advance of the runner. On passing plays, they help with blocking by the offensive tackles, and then shift their attention to the receivers on their side of the field. When a run or pass goes away from them, they "clean up" behind the Umpire and Referee, looking for personal fouls, unnecessary contact, and other horseplay.

The Linesman operates the line to gain equipment off the sideline opposite the press box. On kickoffs, he has the R's restraining line (4-man crew), or shares deep coverage with the Referee (5-man crew). On punts, he must determine if the kick is behind or beyond the line, and cover the blocking downfield before and after a catch. On placekicks, he assists the Referee with contact against the kicker/holder.

**Line Judge.** In addition to his "wings" responsibilities outlined above, the Line Judge monitors the game clock. On kickoffs, he has K's restraining line. On punts in a 4-man crew, he has fair catch signals and the receiver's return. In a 5-man crew, he covers the blocking before and after the catch. On placekicks, he rules on the score.

**Back Judge (5-man crew).** Stands in the defensive backfield about 20 - 25 yards from the line, Responsible for receivers downfield, keying on the inside eligibles, especially contact by and against the tight end. On punts, he monitors the fair catch signal and has responsibility for the punt returner. He also briefs the clock operator and keeps the 25-second clock.