

REFEREE (R) WHITE HAT (positions himself behind the offensive team, favoring the right side (if the quarterback is a right-handed passer).

- general supervision of the game and has the final authority on all rulings.
- final authority on the score and the down number in case of any disagreement
- any decision involving the application or interpretation of the rules, the referee has the final decision

•announces penalties and the numbers of the players committing them

Passing plays

- he primarily focuses on the quarterback and defenders approaching him
- determines any fouls for roughing the passer and, if the quarterback loses the ball
- determines whether the ball was fumbled or if an incomplete pass had been thrown.
- he also counts offensive players.

Running plays

•observes the quarterback during and after the time he hands off the ball to a running back, holding his attention on him until the action has cleared in case the play becomes a play action pass or some other trick passing play

•after established that the running back will keep the ball, the referee then checks the running back and the contact behind him.

Punts and Field Goals

- observes the kicker (and holder) and any contact made by defenders approaching them.
- on a punt out of bounds, he uses his vantage point behind the punter to direct the nearest sideline official to the spot where the ball went out of bounds.

SIDE JUDGE (S or SJ) BLACK HAT works downfield behind the defensive secondary on the same sideline as the head linesman.

- makes decisions near the sideline on his side of field
- judges the action of nearby running backs, receivers and defenders.
- rules on pass interference, illegal blocks downfield, and incomplete passes.
- counts defensive players.
- during field goal attempts he serves as a second umpire
- responsible for either the game clock or the play clock, which are operated by an assistant under his direction.

BACK JUDGE (B or BJ) BLACK HAT stands deep behind the defensive secondary in the middle of the field

- judges the action of nearby running backs, receivers (primarily the tight ends) and nearby defenders.
- rules on pass interference, illegal blocks downfield, and incomplete passes.
- covers the area in the middle of the field between himself and the umpire.
- has the final say regarding the legality of kicks not made from scrimmage (kickoffs).
- responsible for ruling a "delay of game" infraction if the play clock expires.
- rules whether field goal attempts are successful.
- responsible for either the game clock or the play clock, which are operated by an assistant

UMPIRE (U) BLACK HAT (stands behind the defensive line and linebackers)

- observing the blocks by the offensive line and defenders trying to ward off those blocks, looking for holding or illegal blocks
- prior to the snap, he counts all offensive players.
- responsible for the legality of all of the players' equipment

Passing plays

moves forward towards the line of scrimmage as the play develops to:

- (1) penalize any offensive linemen who move illegally downfield before the pass is thrown or
- (2) penalize the quarterback for throwing the ball when beyond the original line of scrimmage. He also assists in ruling incomplete passes when the ball is thrown short.

HEAD LINESMAN (H or HL) BLACK HAT stands at one end of the line of scrimmage (usually the side opposite the press box, always with the chain crew)

- looking for possible offsides, encroachment and other fouls before the snap.
- as the play develops, he is responsible for judging the action near his sideline, including whether a player is out of bounds.
- during the start of passing plays, he is responsible for watching the receivers near his sideline to a point five to seven yards beyond the line of scrimmage.
- marks the forward progress of the ball and is in charge of the chain crew with regard to its duties.
- carries a chain clip that is used by the chain crew to properly place the chains and ensure an accurate spot when measuring for a first down.

LINE JUDGE (L or LJ) BLACK HAT assists the head linesman at the other end of the line of scrimmage

- looking for possible offsides, encroachment and other fouls before the snap
- as the play develops, he is responsible for the action near his sideline, including whether a player is out of bounds.
- also responsible for counting offensive players.
- during the start of passing plays, he is responsible for watching the receivers near his sideline to a point five to seven yards beyond the line of scrimmage.
- afterwards, he moves back towards the line of scrimmage, ruling if a pass is forward, a lateral, or if it is illegally thrown beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Punts and field goal attempts determines whether the kick is made from behind the line of scrimmage.
- the backup timekeeper.

FIELD JUDGE (F or FJ) BLACK HAT works downfield behind the defensive secondary on the same sideline as the line judge.

- makes decisions near the sideline on his side of the field
- judges the action of nearby running backs, receivers and defenders.
- rules on pass interference, illegal blocks downfield, and incomplete passes.
- responsible for counting defensive players. He has sometimes been the official timekeeper, and in a number of leagues will run the game clock on a six-man crew.
- with the back judge, he rules whether field goal attempts are successful.



Transitioning during turnovers and returns

- During turnovers, punts, and other returns by the defense, and play transitions from one direction to the other, the officials must also adjust.
- Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge become the trail/back positions
- Referee, Head Linesman, and Line Judge then become the lead/front positions.
- Umpire, in his traditional position in the middle of the field, usually stays stationary until the returner and the other players pass him