

Mental Check Lists

Football officiating can be simplified, and made more consistent, by employing mental check lists at specific times, that when repeated often enough become second nature and automatic, assuring observation. Develop your own personal “check list” that may, or may not, follow some, or all, of the suggestions below. Apply your own personal “check list” sequence **EVERY PLAY** until it becomes automatic & habit.

Before the Snap

Linesman	Line Judge	Umpire	Referee
Check the Down Box, make sure you agree. Signal down #	Check the Down Box, make sure you agree. Signal down #	Spot the Ball	Check the Down Box, make sure you agree.
Have an idea where 1 st down is on the field.		Check the Down Box, make sure you agree. Signal down #	Announce “down and distance”. Signal down #
Be aware of each “down and distance”	Be aware of each “down and distance”	Be aware of each “down and distance”	Any disagreement on # down, STOP everything and clarify.
Count the Defense, signal the Line Judge.	Count the Defense, signal the Linesman	Stay with ball till huddle breaks, or Offense moves to the ball.	Make sure entire crew is ready before signaling RFP.
Mark the LOS extended with your foot.	Mark the LOS extended with your foot.	If “hurry-up” caution center, “wait for the R’s whistle”	Count the Offense, signal the Umpire. Watch for substitutes.
Identify the eligible receivers on your side.	Identify the eligible receivers on your side.	Count the Offense, signal the Referee.	Retreat 10-15 yds. behind & wide(tackle/end) of deepest back on “throwing” arm side
Observe whether a TE is covered by a wide out.	Observe whether a TE is covered by a wide out.	Try and stay on opposite side of center than Referee.	Be alert for false starts by backs & linemen.
If asked, tell a wideout, only “He’s on/off the line”.	If asked, tell a wideout only “He’s on/off the line”.	Vary your positioning (always behind Linebackers)	Be alert for shifts
You counted 11, verify only 4 backs.	You counted 11, verify only 4 backs.	Identify receivers, focus between tackles.	Be alert for Motion
Focus on LOS for false starts/encroachments.	Focus on LOS for false starts/encroachments.	Observe for O-Line false starts.	Watch timing of players getting set.
Be aware of “motion” going away.	Be aware of “motion” going away.	Look for mouthpieces, chin straps, alert players “in general”	Monitor 25 second count
Stay wide enough (consider the level) to be effective & keep play boxed.		Snap Infraction – Kill play	Look for mouthpieces, chin straps, alert players “in general”
False Start or Encroachment BEFORE the snap. KILL THE PLAY to prevent or stop any delayed action	False Start or Encroachment BEFORE the snap. KILL THE PLAY to prevent or stop any delayed action	False Start or Encroachment BEFORE the snap. KILL THE PLAY to prevent or stop any delayed action	False Start or Encroachment BEFORE the snap. KILL THE PLAY to prevent or stop any delayed action

At / After the Snap

Linesman	Line Judge	Umpire	Referee
Illegal Shift or Motion, Flag (high) DO NOT BLOW WHISTLE	Illegal Shift or Motion, Flag (high) DO NOT BLOW WHISTLE	<u>KNOW where the ball is going</u>	Illegal Shift or Motion, Flag (high) DO NOT BLOW WHISTLE
Observe interior blocks to key on action.	Observe interior blocks to key on action.	Observe interior blocks to key on action.	Retreat as soon as passer starts retreating – keep cushion.
Hold position to determine action, then respond.	Key on Receiver’s actions:	Key on interior blocks for pass or run	<u>KNOW</u> where the ball is going
<u>Run towards:</u> let play come to you. Stay wide, or retreat OOB. Observe blocks, let runner pass & follow. Near sideline- watch feet. . Stop Clock, OOB	<u>Run towards:</u> let play come to you. Stay wide, or retreat OOB. Observe blocks, let runner pass & follow. Near sideline- watch feet. Stop Clock, OOB	<u>Run towards:</u> Let runner avoid you & run past, observe blocking around point of attack. <u>Converge quickly</u> to retrieve ball. USE YOUR VOICE	<u>Runs:</u> Follow the runner to either side observing blocking & runner. Don’t get too close until runner is down.
<u>Run away:</u> Slowly follow to YOUR hash (be wary of reverse). Observe action behind run. Stay outside YOUR hash and ALL players	<u>Run away:</u> Slowly follow to YOUR hash (be wary of reverse). Observe action behind run. Stay outside YOUR hash and ALL players	<u>Run away:</u> hold position, turn and follow action. Normally stay within hashes. <u>Converge quickly</u> to retrieve ball. USE YOUR VOICE	<u>Passes:</u> Passer is YOURS . Stay with him after pass is thrown. Observe blocking.
<u>Pass:</u> go with receivers- No help deep. (be aware of short routes underneath) Retreat if QB scramble.	<u>Pass:</u> go with receivers- No help deep. (be aware of short routes underneath) Retreat if QB scramble.	<u>USE YOUR VOICE,</u> players should “feel” your presence” “Play’s over, get up easy” etc.	Be alert for fumbles. Don’t follow too close. Converge quickly- <u>Use your voice</u>
Wind and/or Stop Clock signal if 1 st Down Inbounds or OOB	Wind and/or Stop Clock signal if 1 st Down Inbounds or OOB	Watch for players jumping up <u>Avoid mouthful of helmet</u>	Watch for players jumping up <u>Avoid mouthful of helmet</u>
OOB: Go to sideline spot, face OOB, Stop the clock, <u>if necessary,</u> to assist runner, drop beanbag, go to runner. Otherwise hold spot & observe runner	OOB: Go to sideline spot, face OOB, Stop the clock, <u>if necessary,</u> to assist runner, drop beanbag, go to runner. Otherwise hold spot & observe runner	<u>PASS:</u> Read pass, move up to LOS, watch blocking/holding. Observe ineligible downfield	<u>USE YOUR VOICE,</u> players should “feel” your presence” “Play’s over, get up easy” etc.
Flag downfield, wait for Line Judge to cover flag, Report to Referee.	Flag downfield, wait for Linesman to cover flag, Report to Referee.	<u>Short pass:</u> Spin and help out, <u>when wings need help</u>	Look for flags, be alert for questions or problems.
LineJudge flag downfield, cover his flag while he reports	Linesman flag downfield, cover his flag while he reports	<u>Talk to Players:</u> Help them avoid losing poise- <u>You control tempo</u>	<u>Understand</u> who wound up in possession <u>DON’T ASSUME</u>
<u>Punt:</u> Hold until kick crosses LOS Responsible for <u>your</u> hash to <u>your</u> sideline	<u>Punt:</u> Make eye contact with receiver and demonstrate legal FC signal. Position downfield even with deepest receiver & wide. Responsible for <u>your</u> sideline to <u>opposite</u> hash	<u>When the players do something right-NOTICE & TELL THEM.</u> Defensive Captains can be your best friends	<u>When the players do something right-NOTICE & TELL THEM.</u> Defensive Captains can be your best friends