CFOA 2021 MECHANICS MANUAL AMENDMENTS

THIRD EDITION

THE OFFICIAL MECHANICS OF
THE COLORADO FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

FOOTBALL OFFICIATING

MECHANICS
MANUAL

CHSAA
Colorado High School Activities Association

CFOA
Colorado Football Officials Association

5 PERSON
HIGH SCHOOL
CREW

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The Official Mechanics Manual of the Colorado Football Officials Association

(2019) Amendments

August 2, 2019

(2020) Amendments

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(2021) Amendments

July 9, 2021

The Manual was reprinted as the 3rd edition in February 2018. For 2019, 2020 and 2021, the amendments are noted below.

Use this document as an insert to the book you received in 2018. New books will not be distributed to those who received a book in 2018.
### Chapter 8 Game Timing for 40-Second Play Clock

***NOTE-The new chapter 8 is formally Appendix E***

(2020) Clock Adjustments page 228

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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Ready</td>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Wind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If event does not occur in conjunction with any other event that stops the clock.

** The game clock will start by rule on the free kick.

*** Includes inadvertent whistle and period extension.

# S3 is stop the clock, S7 is “dead ball - start play clock,” S10 is incomplete pass.
After an official’s timeout, the following occurrences by the defense result in a ready-for-play with a 40-second play clock. The referee should precede the ready-for-play signal with Crew Signal “L” (two hands). The following acronym may be helpful: HEID 40:

H Helmet off  
E Equipment repair  
I Injury  
D by the Defense

(2020) Resetting the Play Clock page 229

If the play clock is interrupted, it will always be reset to 25 seconds (Crew Signal “L” – one hand). If there is an appreciable delay in spotting the ball and the play clock is down to 20 seconds, the play clock should be reset to 25 seconds. When there is no visible play clock the referee should approximate this interval and use his best judgment. When in doubt, reset the play clock. The referee will do this by stopping the game clock and signaling (Crew Signal “L” - one hand) to reset the play clock to 25 seconds. The game clock will start by rule either on the ready-for-play signal or the snap.
(2020) Chapter 9 Coin Toss page 36

Players who are not involved in the toss must be kept completely off the field (at a designated senior night during the regular season, the home team’s seniors may stand at the nine-yard marks during the toss). Non player honorary personnel can be escorted to midfield. The captains are asked to introduce themselves to each other. It is recommended the Referee shake hands only with the speaking captains.

Chapter 13 Flags and Penalties

(Add the following to the end of chapter 13 as two new sections)

(2021) Conflicting Calls page 54

When two officials disagree it sometimes is not obvious and it won’t necessarily involve whether or not a foul has occurred. In those cases, prompt, efficient communication between the differing officials is essential. One example is when an official believes a receiver has caught a pass and another official blows his whistle and signals incomplete. Although the two officials made different judgments, only one signaled and in effect “bought the call.” The likelihood of a changed call on that type of play is slim.
A somewhat similar scenario is whether or not a runner lost the ball before or after he was down. The official who had the runner down by rule will blow his whistle ending the action. If another official judged it to be a fumble, he likely will not have done anything before the whistle is heard, but if he is quick enough he might have dropped his beanbag to mark the spot. Those occurrences are not prone to creating a big controversy as nothing can be done to change the call and the beanbag can be discreetly picked up.

A third scenario prone to conflicting calls is the forward v. backward pass. It is a very difficult play to cover properly with five officials because the wings are torn between watching the ball and keeping an eye on their key receiver. If the ball is thrown in a direction away from the referee, he may also be able to garner an opinion, increasing the odds of brewing a disagreement.

The wing behind the throw has primary responsibility; he has the panoramic view and doesn’t have to watch his key to observe the catch. If a pass to the flank is caught, it doesn’t matter if it was forward or backward unless there is subsequent forward pass. If the ball hits the ground, a whistle indicates an incomplete forward pass and no whistle keeps the ball alive as a grounded backward pass. Where trouble sets in is when one official punches the pass backward while someone else is killing the play. That is why the unnecessary punch is not an accepted mechanic.
Neutral zone infractions are a hot spot because there are always two or three officials with overlapping responsibilities. For instance, say the line judge throws a flag because a team B player entered the neutral zone and contacted the left guard but the umpire throws a flag because the snapper illegally moved the ball. If the line judge stays on the wing, gives the hands-on-hips signal and points to the defense but the penalty is assessed against the offense, the coach of the offensive team is certain to be upset. Instead of signaling from the wing, in that case the linesman, line judge and umpire should get together to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the referee.

The play from which there is no escape from agony is the goal line plunge when one wing crashes in, raising his hand to start the play clock and marking a spot, while his cross field partner is signaling a touchdown. Other scenarios with little wiggle room include a wing signaling a false start while the other wing puts his hands on his hips. Scoring kicks have been known to earn both a successful and unsuccessful signal.

Selling a call is great but an official should never try to “outsell” another official. When a signal is given, it should not be superseded with a conflicting signal with one exception. That doesn’t necessarily mean the original call will stand, but if at all possible, it should be the only call until the officials can get together and discuss the issue. The one exception is when a catch is signaled in the end zone for a touchdown, it is
permissible for a second official who clearly sees the ball touch the ground to immediately rush to near the spot where the ball was apparently caught signaling incomplete pass and then tapping the ground with an open palm. It is a widely accepted mechanic because of the distinct possibility the first official was not able to see the ball had touched the ground before it was secured.

Conflicting calls are avoidable but inevitable. The two officials must come together to reconcile the call. Egos cannot be allowed to interfere. The discussion should begin with each official explaining what he saw. That may reveal that something happened which one official did not see. If different acts were observed, one official may be able to convince the other of the priorities.

A useful technique is to use the back judge as the “referee of the defense” to reconcile any flags thrown downfield. That especially applies to pass plays. Depending upon the position of the receiver, the covering defender and their location on the field, the play may only be viewed from limited angles. An example is an arm bar that is visible only from the sideline and not from the middle of the field. When a play occurs in an overlapping coverage area and there is only one flag, the back judge should convene a quick discussion to piece together the puzzle. As an example, if a wing official has a flag for pass interference and the back Judge is not sure there is a foul, the back judge should approach that official and offer information
as to what he saw and let the official make the choice to pick up the flag or stick with the call. It is not appropriate for the back judge to demand the flag be picked up.

When there are two flags (or more), it must be ascertained that the flags were for the same offense. Such a discussion also makes sense on possible catches near a sideline where one official has the best view of possession and another on whether or not the receiver was inbounds when the catch was completed.

When the preceding doesn’t work and a stalemate results, it is up to the referee to make the final decision. In almost all cases, he will have to do so without having seen any part of the play. Knowledge of each official’s abilities and tendencies may be an intangible. If one official had the primary coverage, then going with his call would be a logical option. Cases when the officials have a shared responsibility are more difficult to adjudicate. In some cases, the referee may be able to discern which official had the better; it won’t always be the official closest to the play.
The hat is designed to be worn and not as an officiating tool. The hat should never be used in place of the flag. The “Uniform” chapter requires each official to carry two flags thus creating a very low possibility any one official would need a third item to indicate a foul. Additionally, regardless of how the hat is used in other levels of football, the hat should never be thrown or dropped to indicate a player has left the field. When that happens, no foul has occurred so there is no need to mark the spot. If the player subsequently commits a foul as a result of having left the field, the flag is used to mark the spot of the foul.

Field Goals and Kick Tries pages 55-56

Officials must look sharp on scoring kicks. The two officials who are under the goal posts should rehearse their routine. Both officials should say “yes-yes” or “no-no.” That serves as a cue for both officials to take two steps forward, straight out from directly under the goal post counting “one, two,” and then signaling. If the kick is successful, both officials should hold their signal for the same amount of time and drop their hands simultaneously. The Back Judge is responsible to ensure the Referee properly signals the outcome of the play. If the kick is not successful, there should be only one “kick failed” signal.
be given by each official under the goal posts. The two officials should try to end their signal simultaneously. Regardless of the result, the Referee does not echo the signal.

(2020) Two Point Tries page 56

Officials should signal as they would after a scrimmage play. The primary signals utilized are touchdown and incomplete pass. If a try is unsuccessful, the wings should mark the forward progress spot and yell “no, no, no” to the Referee without giving any signal. The Referee is the only official who signals the try is unsuccessful. The Referee does not echo the touchdown signal on a successful try.
S7—Dead ball and the runner is down. For dead ball fouls only, it is not used to indicate the runner is down inbounds. See Appendix E for use of this signal as part of the series of signals that the play is over and to start the 40-second play clock.
False start
Illegal Formation
Defensive disconcerting signals

S19—False start/illegal formation. Arms out from chest. Two rotations are sufficient. Also used for free kicks out of bounds. For false starts, defensive disconcerting signals and illegal snaps, the dead-ball signal (S7) must precede this signal.
Equipment violation

S23—Equipment. The loss-of-down signal with only the right arm.

Effective 2020, signal S23 will no longer be used. Equipment violations are no longer a penalty. A player with an equipment violation is simply to leave the game.
(2019) Crew Signal J page 77

CREW SIGNAL J – OPTIONAL STARTING 2019
Receiver on the line
Used by wings to signal to one another to indicate widest receiver is on the line. Use the arm on the side of the defensive formation.

(2019) Crew Signal I page 76

CREW SIGNAL I – REMAINS IN AFFECT FOR 2019 & BEYOND
Receiver off the line/Runner inbounds
Used by wings to signal to one another to indicate widest receiver is off the line. Also used by a wing official (quick punch) to signal the Back Judge that the runner remained inbounds during a touchdown run.
CREW SIGNAL C – REMAINS IN AFFECT FOR 2019 & BEYOND
Play ended inbounds, start clock.

CREW SIGNAL D – REPLACE TO CROSSED WRISTS AT BELT 2019
Play ended out of bounds, don’t start clock
Make sure the Referee can see the signal.
Used to change time on the *play game* clock.

**Reset play clock**
A pumping motion with one hand up and down near the head, “push the sky.”

One hand – 25 sec  
Two hands – 40 sec **HEID 40*** (See Appendix E)
Charged Timeout

(The following is added after the last paragraph of the Charged Timeout section)

The rules allow only one coach to call timeouts and that almost always will be the head coach. The wing official should discuss timeout request procedures with head coach before the game. Some timeout requests are urgent because they are needed either to conserve time, to stop the wrong play from being run or to make a defensive adjustment/substitution. In those situations, it may be difficult to determine which coach is requesting the timeout. Nonetheless, such a request should be granted immediately. The wing official should not turn his back to the field to verify it was the head coach who spoke. The interests of the game are best served by granting timeouts immediately and asking questions later.
Chapter 21 Between Downs

(2019) Umpire page 99

(In the Umpire section, replace the 5th paragraph with a new paragraph)

The umpire must be cognizant of the play clock at all times. If a 40-second play clock is running, he simply spots the ball and moves promptly to his pre-snap position unless the play resulted in a first down inbounds for Team A. In that case, he must wait for the referee to start the clock (“silent wind”). If there is an administrative stoppage, the umpire should stand over the ball until the ready-for-play signal, especially if the snapper is in position to place a hand on the ball; he then moves to a pre-snap position. If preparation for the next down is such that the offense is nowhere near the ball for the next snap before the ready-for-play, the Umpire can move off the ball to his pre-snap position. In either case, when the umpire is standing over the ball and Team A is ready to snap it, the umpire may ask the snapper “Please wait until I am in position.”

The umpire must remain in control of the ball at all times. If the Referee is not in position, he stands over the ball until the ready-for-play signal, especially if the snapper is in position to place a hand on the ball; he then moves to a pre-snap position. If preparation for the next down is such that the offense is nowhere near the ball for the next snap before the ready-for-play, the Umpire can move off the ball to his pre-snap position.
(making sure the Referee is aware of the movement). In that case, the Umpire must ensure the snapper does not place a hand on the ball until the ready-for-play is given.

(2020) Linesman and Line Judge pages 99-100

Next comes the check for no more than four in the backfield seven on the line. He can ascertain there are exactly 11 players on the offense from the signal given by the Referee and Umpire when the offensive huddle breaks (crew signal “A”).

(2020) Back Judge page 100

When a player, either offensive or defensive, is departing the field and the snap is imminent, the Back Judge is responsible for determining if the player was on the field at the snap. Such a player is off the field if his next step would be out of bounds.

Unless there is a visible play clock, the Back Judge keeps the play clock and uses a visible count to count off the last 10 seconds (crew signal “P”). The Back Judge also times the 60-second interval between a successful field goal or try and the ensuing kickoff.
Anyone subject to the rules may be disqualified or removed from the field area. The only exceptions are trainers, the Athletic Directors of each school, school principals and school district superintendents. Objectionable behavior by any of the preceding personnel should be noted in the game report. Problems with other personnel such as announcers, grounds keepers, etc. should be addressed with game management without delaying the game.

When a player is disqualified from a game, he may not participate in the remainder of that game. At the discretion of the head coach, the player may remain in the team bench area, but must remain under adult supervision until the game is concluded. Officials are not authorized to mandate a player’s removal from the team area.

When a coach (or any other adult support person) is disqualified from a game, he must leave the stadium area and is prohibited from any further contact with his team, direct or indirect, for the remainder of the game. Such disqualified personnel may not go to the press box or go sit in the stands. For non-compliance, the referee may forfeit the game.
The monitoring of lightning is the responsibility of game management. Officials shall abide by the policy of the host school district. It is important for crew chiefs to have a pregame conversation with the site director to know the protocol for handling a lightning disturbance. The site director should be the one coordinating that process. The site director will have contact with the crew chief, the coaches, the PA announcer, et al to alert them of impending action. In accordance with Rule 3-1-5, the referee is authorized to delay the game before it starts or suspend a game in progress when weather conditions are construed to be hazardous to life or limb of the participants. If the site director requests such a delay/suspension, the referee should comply with the request. The officiating crew will remain on site and be prepared to continue the game unless all three parties (the referee and both head coaches) agree that the game cannot be continued that day and should be terminated. If the game is terminated due to hazardous conditions, officials should record all relevant information (score, possession, timeouts, ball location, chains, down, etc), and relay that information in the game report. Resumption of a terminated game is outside the
purview of the officials and would be handled by the schools, their league, and CHSAA.

The referee shall not *terminate* the game without the concurrence of both coaches; however, if a game being played under the mercy rule is halted by lightning, the game is immediately terminated even without consensus of the coaches. If a game is terminated, the team that is ahead as the winner with the existing score (Rule 3-1-4). If the game is continued, any period may be shortened by agreement of the three parties (Rule 3-1-3). This could include using a running clock or reducing the length of the period. Prior to continuation of the game, the teams shall be afforded sufficient time to warm up as determined by the coaches. The game shall then resume from the point of interruption.

If an administrator is present (Athletic Director, Principal, School Board member, etc.) and expresses disagreement with his head coach regarding game termination, it is the coach’s responsibility to resolve the conflict. The referee shall only consider the decision of the head coaches.

When activity is stopped, the following individuals shall be responsible for the safety of personnel:
- The head coach for players and other team personnel.
- Game management for spectators and support personnel.
- The Referee for the officiating crew.

If appropriate, the lightning delay can serve as the halftime
intermission. For example, if the game is suspended with two minutes remaining in the second quarter, when play is resumed the second quarter will be completed, followed by a short intermission taken before the second half kickoff. Both coaches must agree to any such modification; if they do not agree, the quarter will be finished when play is resumed, followed by the standard 15-minute halftime intermission.

(Add the following to the end of chapter 24 as a new section)

(2020) Cold Weather page 106

Dealing with cold weather is not as finite as lightning. A one-size fits all approach does not work equally across the state. As an example, 10 degrees after dark on a wet field is different than 10 degrees at altitude on a sunny day with no wind. In all cases, common sense must be used.

Some school districts may have a cold weather policy. If conditions are such that cold weather may be a factor, the referee should ascertain local guidelines before the game so that game administrator(s), officials, and both sidelines are aware of potential disruptions.

An extended half time may be warranted to afford athletes time to warm up/dry off and or change to dry clothing under their uniform. The coaches must mutually agree to terminate the game.
Most coaches identify communication as the single most important attribute of an official. Knowing when not to communicate is as important as knowing what to say and when to have a dialogue with a coach. Officials must understand the importance of their relationship with coaches and manage it for the benefit of all of those involved in the game.

Because of their position on the sidelines, wing officials are the main conduit between the coaching staff and the crew. The wing official’s poise is a critical component in maintaining a good rapport with the head coach. That includes knowing what to hear and what not to hear. All officials are responsible for proper communication but in some instances the Referee must be prepared to intervene in a statesmanship manner if the interaction erodes to a point that is detrimental to the game.

**Responsibilities.** When the pregame is held on the field with the head coach it represents a transfer of power. The coach has been in charge all week and has had complete control on the practice field, but now the Referee is a superior authority and that may cause strife in some situations. It is helpful to keep in mind officials and coaches have different goals. For the officials, it is an avocation and the primary interest is implementing the
rules of the game in order to have a fair and safe game. The coach is there to win. It is true he is also an educator and he wants the players to learn, but at game time education may sometimes become secondary. His coaching career may pivot on winning so he may have an elevated interest in the outcome. We should accept that he isn’t always going to see things in an unbiased manner and he won’t agree with every call. The officials must remain steady and without emotion. Officials must understand they are a component of a game that is part of the education system and get to be part of the formative phase of player’s lives.

The assistant coaches are there to help the head coach. Technically, they are not entitled to any information from the officials. However, that doesn’t mean ignoring them all the time is the best option. Telling the coach “I only talk with the head coach” may be a valid statement but is not likely to be helpful especially if the coach is sincere and respectful in his approach. If an assistant is affecting the officiating and becoming a “challenge”, let the head coach know and give him a chance to take care of it.

Consequently, it’s okay to answer any question that is asked in a polite manner that doesn’t interfere with the ability to officiate the game. The wing official should try to respond to simple direct questions such as the down number or how many timeouts remain, will the clock start on the snap, etc. If the
coaches are helped in doing their job, the more apt they’ll be in returning the favor. The get-back coach is there to help both his team and the officials. Communicating with him early and often can be very effective in preventing sideline infractions. It is not okay to utilize a sideline warning for unsportsmanlike actions by a member of the coaching staff. However, a verbal warning or two can help avoid the need for a flag.

The head coach is entitled to an explanation of all unusual rulings or situations. A timeout is not charged for those types of discussions. Officials can talk with coaches during a dead-ball period as long as the official can maintain their focus on the field of play. The explanations will normally be given by the wing official, but as necessary, may be given directly by the Referee. The emphasis here is this communication is with the head coach only. The head coach is entitled to the following information for all fouls, including those by the opponent: the type of foul, a brief description of the act, the number or position of the offending player, and the enforcement. For example: “#62 was called for holding; he pulled down an opponent. “It is also okay to explain the penalty and its enforcement, “It’ll be 10 yards from the spot of the foul and second down will be repeated.” Referees should announce the number of the fouling player whether they have a microphone or not (see the chapter entitled “Microphone Use”).
This communication is important because it emphasizes the need for accuracy in calling fouls and deters phantom calls. Under no circumstances should a number be fabricated. If that player wasn’t on the field or worse yet, that number is not assigned, credibility is destroyed. Stating the position instead of the number is acceptable, “the motion man cut up too soon,” or “the whole team moved before the snap.”

Official’s timeouts to talk to coaches outside of a coach-Referee conference should seldom be allowed. The head coach may request a coach-Referee conference at any time while the ball is dead. The purpose of the rule is to review a possible misapplication of a rule by the officials, not to question a judgment call, nor to express an opinion on the quality of the calls. In addition, a coach should never be allowed to criticize a call or the lack of a call while attending to an injured player. Officials should move away from the injured player to avoid the potential for an emotionally charged comment. When either team takes a charged timeout, there are specific communication responsibilities involving the wing officials and/or the Referee; those are discussed in the “Timeouts” chapter.

**Official’s Techniques.** Active, effective listening by officials is part of good communication. Officials need to understand thoroughly what the coach is saying. It’s important to listen carefully to coaches and ask pertinent questions, if necessary,
to find out exactly what is on their mind. Treat them as a valued customer when they think they have a problem.

Officials should never be confrontational or short-tempered, nor can they be timid or easily intimidated. Effective officials convey a calm, relaxed demeanor, including direct eye contact. There is a double standard – the coach can yell, the official cannot. When a coach’s emotions become elevated, the official must stay calm. Be careful to not take coaches comments personally, but apply any appropriate warnings and/or penalties when warranted. Under no circumstances should an official engage in an argument with a coach and under no circumstance shall an official reach out and touch the coach. Standing beside the coach with hands at the side or behind the back without using gestures is the best posture. When a coach is convinced a call was incorrect, no amount of discussion is going to change his mind. In some instances, allowing the coach to explain what he saw and providing him the assurance that you respect his opinion will be good for the game and make you a better official. Arguing only inflames the situation and diverts the official’s concentration from the job at hand.

When a coach asks about a call, he should never be told, “That’s not my call, Coach.” It is permissible to say, “I’m sorry, Coach. That’s not my coverage area on that play, but I’ll try to get you that information when I get a chance” or “I’ll ask the
covering official when time allows.” The wing should then make an effort to follow up with the coach.

Many officials give coaches a chance to, in effect, retract their comments by asking, “Do you care to repeat that, Coach?” The theory holds that the coach will take the hint and end or at least modify his outburst. Conversely, if the coach repeats the objectionable comment or responds with even stronger language, he’s earned a flag. This approach can also be considered baiting a coach and should be used with discretion. Because of the wide disparity in personal preferences, crews should find common ground on the acceptability of foul language so the game is officiated consistently.

While verbal communication is critical when interacting with coaches, it shares billing with body language. An official’s posture, movements, stance and facial expression send messages that words cannot. Stand with an upright but relaxed posture, hands behind the back or at your sides, and make eye contact when talking to coaches. Avoid thrusting out the chest or jaw, which indicate aggression; crossing the arms in front of the chest, which suggests inflexibility; slouching the shoulders or dropping the head, which indicate submission or timidity; standing stiffly, which makes the official appear intimidated; shifting the weight from foot to foot, which communicates uncertainty; or rolling the eyes, which expresses arrogance. Without exception, officials must stay calm at all times.
Officials must also avoid what is commonly referred to as “rabbit ears.” The term is commonly used to describe an official who has excessive sensitivity to criticism and uses selective hearing to pick up on comments not directed to him.

**Profanity.** There cannot be any profanity of any kind spoken by an official. It is also not a good idea to try using humor in a confrontation. There is no reason to converse with a coach except to answer a question, to give him essential information, or to request help. Request means asking and not demanding. Compare these two approaches: “Coach, you need to stay out of the restricted area because that area is for the officials” vs. “Coach, could you please help us keep the restricted area clear so we can work safely along the sideline and avoid contact with a coach or players?” The first one creates confrontation that isn't necessary. It is demanding space just because it's ‘yours’. The second creates cooperation and explains why it is important with a stated benefit for the coach.

There is no clear consensus on the use of foul language by coaches or players. While the rules prohibit profanity and vulgar language, every official has his own idea of what language is acceptable and what is objectionable. Because of the wide diversity of opinions on the topic, it is difficult to mandate treatment of foul language in all possible situations.
However, all officials are expected to abide by the following guidelines.

**USC foul with automatic disqualification.** Any taunt which includes profanity or a racial slur including the n-word. This is a zero tolerance policy.

**USC foul only (unless there are aggravating circumstances or repeated offenses).** Any other use of vulgar or profane language including slurs used among teammates in the spirit of comradery.

The preceding applies if the speaker is clearly identifiable. For unknown culprits, the coach should be told exactly what was heard and asked to address it with his team. The skin color or the heritage of either the speaker or the recipient is not a factor. Colloquial variations of racial slurs are to be treated the same as the racial slur itself. If the inappropriate language is not directed to the opponent and the fans cannot hear it, calling a foul is sufficient.

**Examples of Effective Communication.** The following are things which should never be said to a coach and some helpful alternatives.

"One more word and you're gone." That will jam you into a corner if you don’t back it up. Ultimatums can cause you to lose
respect. Any hard line approach can exacerbate a situation, rather than defusing it. Avoid committing yourself to a specific action.

“Shut up.” It’s antagonistic and unprofessional. Coaches should be allowed to have their say.

“You’re wrong.” That will only serve to prolong the debate. Instead you can try “That’s not what I saw,” or “I’ll check the play after the game.” Those should serve to mitigate the situation and allow both parties to move on.

“It’s just a game” or “Are you serious?” Those serve to belittle what the coach is objecting to and are not relevant to the coach’s concern.

Watch your tone meaning be careful as to "how" things are said. It’s not simply avoiding bad words, but tone of voice or body language tells participants about lack of care or anger beyond repair, limiting effectiveness. Firm, fair and nonabrasive language with no sarcasm is the way to go. Also snide remarks can be funny, but there is no telling how they will come across.

While it's good to think through situations beforehand and be prepared with certain responses, they have to make sense in
the context of the game and the player has to understand your intent.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Disqualification.** Unfortunately, the situation may get to the point where the flag becomes the next most viable option. Here are some guidelines.

**Physical Contact.** This is almost a certain ejection. Accidental or unintentional contact such as when a coach is pointing or gesturing and inadvertently makes contact with an official should be excused. Other forms of unintentional contact may not be overlooked. An example of an act which deserves a foul is a coach who out of anger rushes an official and doesn’t stop quickly enough resulting in a bump or brushing of an official. Some other examples of unacceptable contact worthy of a foul are: deliberate pushing, grabbing an official’s arm to keep him from walking away, turning an official’s shoulders to get him to face you, and getting close enough face to face so that saliva is sprayed.

**Integrity Assault.** No one likes to be called a liar or a cheater in any forum. In an athletic contest, an official who ignores accusations that he is biased against one team or has purposely missed calls must eject his accuser or risk being perceived of admitting to the allegation. One example of an improper statement: “Oh c’mon, we’re playing 11 against 16.” This does not likely draw an immediate flag but should at a minimum
result in a warning indicating that is an unacceptable comment and it should cease.

**Verbal Abuse.** In addition to vulgarity which was previously discussed, voice volume, personal remarks and attacks of excessive duration may justify using the flag. A general guideline is if the improper speech is loud enough for spectators to hear, a penalty is appropriate.

There is no decibel limit for discussions with officials; however, shouting indicates a loss of control. A good official will tolerate a brief outburst as an instinctive reaction and allow the coach a few moments to regain his composure. Excessive tirades should not be permitted. All communications with a coach should occur near the sideline. If a coach is addressing an official on the field of play the official should walk to the sideline which will result in the coach following him.

Remarks directed at the official instead of the call cannot be tolerated. Anything regarding the official’s ancestry or heritage is surely inappropriate. Also suspect is any sentence beginning with “You.” One possible exception is “You missed that one (call).” Only the most sensitive officials who feel their uniform grants them immunity from any criticism whatsoever would react to that statement.
Objectionable Gestures. There are many forms of communication, non-verbal as well as verbal. If an objectionable message is discerned, it doesn’t matter if it was spoken or not. The first type of sign language which comes to mind is obscene gestures. There are at least three other gestures which are not acceptable. The first is grabbing the throat to indicate the official is choking. Another is a waving motion with a flat palm above the head to say the official is in over his head. The last is any exaggerated display of disgust as evidenced by throwing headsets, clipboards, etc.

Prolonged Discussion. Even though none of the above sins are committed, a prolonged discussion to the point where it interferes with resumption of the game may necessitate ejection simply to hasten closure of the discussion. Misapplication of rules can usually be corrected. A judgment call cannot be reversed and a filibuster on that issue should draw the flag.

Accumulation. The concept of penalizing a garrulous coach was pioneered by Gary Montel, a prominent Colorado basketball official. The “Montel” rule deals with unsporting conduct by coaches; he refers to it as an “accumulation technical.”

The rules specifically prohibit criticism of the officials and the use of foul language. The vast majority of coaches steer clear of those transgressions. However, some coaches have developed
the skill to push the envelope to the limit through repeated and voluminous commentary. Each comment is seemingly innocuous and within the limit of the rules, but the incessant barrage eventually creates a distraction. The Montel rule allows each official to privately establish his own threshold of tolerance and when the limit is reached, an unsportsmanlike conduct foul for “excessive commentary” is assessed under the provisions of Rules 9-8-1b-d which prohibit commentary relating to officials. The official may or may not choose to issue a warning before calling a foul. In some cases, a warning may be appropriate and is recommended if possible, “Coach, I’ve heard enough,” or “Stop, you’ve made your point.”

Brief exclamations such as “Oh, no!” or “That wasn’t interference.” or requests like “Can you watch for holding on #65?” are acceptable. Football is a game of emotion and no attempt should be made to stifle normal reactions. Comments such as “They are holding on every play” or “If you’re not going to call holding today, just let me know” are inappropriate and are attempts to influence decisions or question judgment.

Here are some additional comments that in isolation would ordinarily be ignored. “Call it both ways” implies the officials are biased and are favoring one team over the other. “I’ll show you the film” indicates a call was incorrect. “You’ll never work here again” is a way of saying the official is not worthy and can also be construed as attempted intimidation. Any remark
similar to the preceding that includes the word “you” is inappropriate and should not be tolerated.

Regardless of whether the warning is formal or informal, the Montel rule works best when the coach receives an indication that he has said too much. The Montel rule by its nature appears to promote inconsistency because the threshold will vary not only from crew to crew but by game to game. That isn’t necessarily bad because each game is different and coaches generally behave somewhat differently from week to week. The only way to achieve thorough consistency is to enforce the letter of the conduct rules without exception. Thus, if it doesn’t directly involve the coaching of players, it shouldn’t be said. There are very few coaches who can meet that standard.
Chapter 26 CFOA Philosophies of Officiating

(Add the following to the end of the false starts section)

(2020) Shifts and False Starts pages 110-111

By rule, officials are expected to make this judgment regardless of whether Team B encroaches; however, there will always be marginal cases where preventive officiating should take precedence and the effect of the questionable act should be a consideration. That means if the shift is questionable and no encroachment results, the offense can be advised if a similar shift is repeated, it would likely be judged to be a false start.

Likewise, the defense is prohibited from inducing a false start or attempting to induce one. Team B players are prohibited from making quick non-football related movements in an obvious attempt to draw an offensive player into committing a foul.

The defense is allowed to shift to either side or from lineman to linebacker or vice versa. Also, linebackers and defensive backs who run toward the neutral zone attempting to time their blitz with the snap are not in violation. While it is legal to fake a blitz, repeated fakes, especially in rapid succession, are likely an effort to cause Team A to false start.

Examples of violations include: stomping a foot, clapping hands, quickly and repeatedly standing up or moving to a three- or
four-point stance or vice versa, quickly bobbing their head and/or abruptly flexing legs or arms.

(Add the following new paragraph to the beginning of the shifts section)

**(2020) Multiple Shifts** page 111

In most cases, offensive players can shift as long as they do not commit a false start in doing so. Interior linemen (including covered tight ends), cannot shift once they put a hand on or near the ground. The practical application of “near the ground” is below the knees.

Simultaneous shifts by players on the line can create a judgment dilemma for...

(Add the following as a new section after the shifts section)

**(2020) Defensive Signals** page 111

Defensive lineman as well as any other of their teammates cannot use words or signals that disconcert the opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play. Many players do not understand that and preventive officiating should be exercised, if possible. Restrictions on the defense begin when offensive players take their set positions. Special attention should be given to possible interference during the quarterback's cadence, and particularly during an audible. The
defense is not required to be silent during this interval. The defensive captain has a right to call signals while offense is calling theirs as long as the signals do not resemble those of the opponents. There are legitimate defensive signals which may need to be given immediately prior to snap. Examples include: putting a blitz on or off, changing pass coverage, or telling defensive linemen to shift or stunt.

Officials must determine if the defense is making a legitimate call, or merely making a ruse in attempt to interfere. The defense must avoid anything which simulates the sounds or cadence of offensive starting signals. The offense has "first choice" of signals and the defense is required to use, or change to, something completely different. Specific words which the defense should not be allowed to use include: “go,” “hike,” “hut.” Other words which are questionable and require greater judgment to discern their impact include “now,” and “shift.” The use of “move” would be okay as long as the defense actually shifts and the word is not intended to get the offense to move. General noise, growling, or yelling in an attempt to prevent the offense from hearing their signals is of course prohibited. When in question the defensive signals are legal.
If a substitute does not get inside the nine-yard mark and is observed and covered by the defense, no foul should be called.

A departing player is legally off the field if his next step would get a foot on or past the sideline.

Chapter 32 Positioning and Coverage – Scrimmage Plays

Scrimmage Plays

Positioning

The Back Judge should start about 20 to 25 yards deep depending on player/game situations and no closer than 10 yards from the nearest defensive back.
Coverage – Run Plays

(2020) Linesman and Line Judge: pages 178-179

On long runs, the official should trail the play by straddling the sideline. That will give him the best view if the runner steps on the sideline. He should not go all the way to the goal line because it is the Back Judge’s responsibility. He may use Crew Signal I to affirm to the Back Judge the runner stayed inbounds or otherwise communicate with the Back Judge. If the official is pressured by pursuing defenders during the run, he may move away from the sideline.
THE 40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK BECAME AN NFHS RULE IN 2019.

- USE APPENDIX E, NOT CHAPTER 8, FOR THE PLAY CLOCK.
- ***New Chapter 8 is now from old Appendix E***

**APPENDIX E**

**GAME TIMING FOR 40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK**

*Note:* This appendix can be used for 2018 while the 40-second play clock is an experimental rule and can be used in lieu of Chapter 8 if the rule change is passed.

Correct timing of the game is the responsibility of every official. Each official has responsibilities for stopping the clock as well as keeping it running. These responsibilities must remain consistent. All officials must know the clock status. The Line Judge must know the time remaining in the game on every play. The Line Judge must have a watch capable of properly timing the entire game in the event the game clock malfunctions.

At the end of every play, the Line Judge (the Back Judge is the back-up) must ensure the clock is continuing to run or is stopped based on the result of the just completed play.

**Before the Game**

The official in charge of timing – the Back Judge in a 5-man crew and the Line Judge in 4-man crew – should meet with the timer, record his name on his game card and synchronize watches. The first task is to set and begin pregame countdown, so the clock hits 0:00 at game time. A complete review of the timing instructions provided in Appendix B should be conducted. The following points should be emphasized:

- Situations and signals that start and stop the clock.
- Confirm the automatic horn is turned off.
- Procedure for resetting the clock, and if it can be reset to an exact time.
- Review Mercy Rule clock procedures (see the chapter entitled “State Association Adoptions for Colorado.”)
- Halftime: Start halftime clock on signal. Start the three-minute warm-up clock immediately after the halftime clock expires.
- Overtime: A three-minute intermission shall be placed on the clock. The clock will remain at zeroes for the remainder of the overtime periods.
This year’s experiment from the 2019 season will not become a permanent change. The board of directors in June 2020 voted to not adopt this mechanic for the 2020 season and beyond. We will revert back to the mechanic as written in the current mechanics manual.

This experiment is required for a 5-Person Crew only and ONLY when an obvious scrimmage kick (punt) is anticipated. For 2019 there is no option to revert back to the old mechanic. The experiment is statewide. All umpires statewide will use this mechanic for 2019, there is no option to use the old mechanic.

The mechanic starts with the Umpire performing normal dead ball mechanics after 3rd down ends. After sensing an apparent punt, the Umpire places the ball at the forward progress spot and moves to a position similar to the Referee but on the opposite side of the punter.

All of the coverage requirements by the Umpire will remain the same including pre-snap keys and post-snap line of scrimmage coverage.

Important message regarding movement: The Umpire shall never move across the LOS after taking an initial position in R’s backfield and after the snapper has approached the ball. Situations that require the Umpire to remain in the Team B/R backfield on 4th down include: Down/Distance plays that are not obvious punts situations; when the crew is aware that Team K uses a rugby style run-punt option play on 4th down; or scoring kick/Try attempts.

Pre-Snap Position & Coverage:

1) Be prepared on 4th down prior to putting ball down to move to position opposite the R
2) Never move from normal position in the Team K’s backfield to Team K’s backfield after snapper is over the ball
3) Never swap sides of the kicker with the R. When placing the ball on the ground for the next play, look up to see where R plans to position himself and go opposite. CFOA recommends R stay on same side as previous down. (i.e. QB-passing arm) to make this work efficiently; however, R may pregame a different approach.
4) Protect the snapper from roughing
5) Observe G-C-G-T for False Start movement.
6) If dead-ball foul occurs, hustle to LOS to control action. (note: A players will not know you are approaching from behind so be careful)

Post-Snap Coverage:

1) Observe blocking by K linemen and possible holding by R players as players transition downfield.
2) Hustle downfield after ball is kicked observing action in front of returner/ball
3) **DO NOT** guess if they are punting ball. If it’s not obviously going to be a punt, move to the defensive backfield.

4) **DO NOT** watch punter. R has 100% punter responsibility. On broken play, triangulate your view with the R and Halo-Officiate.

5) **DO NOT** look to retrieve new “clean” ball after punt ends until all opposing players have separated DBO

6) U may take a little longer to arrive at the post-kick forward progress spot so other officials should cover the space accordingly after the play ends.

**Additional coverage notes:**

**Pregame**—where will R typically stand on punt situations? L still has LOS coverage until it no longer is a factor

**Situations that may require additional focus include:**

1. Punt turns into scramble and/or pass play. R coverage remains with kicker/passer for roughing and LOS ruling.
2. Punter runs directly towards the LJ’s vacated sideline. Wings will have forward-progress spot beyond the LOS and R will have forward-progress behind the LOS.

The CFOA will send a Survey to the Membership mid-season and at the end of the season to request feedback. Here are some possible questions.

1. In your opinion, does it improve your coverage of punts as an Umpire/Crew?
2. Would the coverage improve if we required the R to always be on the HL side of the punter?
3. Were there unique situations that caused this experimental mechanic to be compromised?
4. Were there situations that would have been better covered under the original mechanic?

**Reason for the Experiment:**

During a scrimmage kick the Umpire has difficulty observing players while avoiding contact with players moving downfield. This mechanics will take the dangers out of the situation and allow for an outside-in view of the action in front of the kick returner.

The Experiment is for the 2019 season only and will be voted on by the Area Directors at the end of the season. The vote will be to continue the experiment, disavow the mechanic or implement it as a permanent change.