

General Management of the 40-Second Play Clock

In cases where the play continues with no stoppage (*e.g., timeout or penalty*), the offense will have 40 seconds from the end of the previous play to snap the ball. If play has been stopped for an administrative reason listed below, the offense will have 25 seconds from the time the umpire spots the ball and the referee starts the ready-for-play.

Basic Premise: The play clock will **ALWAYS** start at :40 when an official signals one of the following signals is given which identify the conclusion of the play:

- An upward extended arm marking forward progress
- A “stop the clock” signal
- An “incomplete pass” signal
- A “wind the clock” signal indicating the runner remained in-bounds

The following administrative stoppage situations listed are when the play clock will be set at :25.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Referee Signal</u>
Administration of a foul & penalty	Chop or Wind
At the start of a period	Chop
Measurement	Chop or Wind
Helmet comes off	Chop or Wind
Injury	Chop or Wind
Defense (Team B) awarded a 1 st down	Chop
After any score	Chop
Start of Team A’s possession in OT	Chop
Inadvertent whistle	Wind
Timeout by either team	Chop
Official timeout	Chop
Touchback	Chop
Untimed down	Chop
Period extension	Chop

NOTES:

- The change only affects the play clock – not the game clock.
- The back judge will still raise his/her arm to signal with :10 remaining and then will visibly count down the last :05.
- All members of the crew will react to the ball movement and ball placement as efficiently and accurately as possible.
- There is no requirement for officials to allow the defense to “match up” against the offense’s personnel or formation. The umpire is in control of when the ball is ready for play. On short, quick plays, the umpire should consider whether the defensive team is actively and immediately substituting players and allow them to do so. On long or drawn out plays where the defensive has ample opportunity to substitute, the ball can be spotted on the ground as soon as the officials are ready.
- If the ball has not yet been spotted on the ground when the 40-second play clock is started and runs down below :25, the referee shall sound the whistle, reset the play clock to :25 (upward pumping action with **one palm** open over his head) and start the play clock (and possibly the game clock) on his whistle and signal. There is usually no need to stop the game clock to reset the play clock.
- If the 40-second play clock is started before the end of the previous play or malfunctions, the referee shall sound the whistle, reset the play clock to :40 (upward pumping action with **both palms** open over his head) and start the play clock (and possibly the game clock) on his whistle and signal.