

# NFHS GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOTBALL CLOCK OPERATORS



- A. The clock operator should report to the game officials at the stadium at least 30 minutes before game time for the following purposes:
  - 1. To synchronize timer's watch with official game time as established by the game official responsible for timing.
  - 2. To advise game officials whether the clock operator will be in the press box or on the sideline. Determine procedure for communication with timer and check this procedure prior to the game.
  - 3. To discuss coordination of starting, stopping and adjusting the clock in accordance with the playing rules.
  - 4. To discuss if the game clock horn (mechanical signal) can be turned off. Preference is for the game clock horn (mechanical signal) to be turned off for the duration of the game.
- B. The field clock is normally started 30 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will start on the referee's signal when the players and game officials leave the field. All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The mandatory three-minute warm-up period will be put on the clock after the intermission time has elapsed and shall be started immediately.
- C. The clock operator shall have an extra stopwatch available. In case of failure of the game clock, the clock operator shall immediately contact the game officials, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The game official responsible for timing will then pick up the correct game time on the stopwatch. If the field clock becomes inoperative and is subsequently repaired, it will not be used again until the next period or when the referee determines it is operational. The public-address announcer will indicate the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected and a subsequent announcement is made on the public-address system.
- D. Game Procedures:
  - 1. The clock operator is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the game clock is not started or stopped correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clock.
  - 2. On all free kicks, the nearest game official(s) will signal the legal touching of the ball by indicating that the clock should start.
  - 3. Any game official may signal a time-out; therefore, the operator should be alert to stop the clock.
  - 4. The incompletion signal will stop the clock.
  - 5. The clock operator will automatically stop the clock following a touchdown, field goal, touchback or safety after the appropriate scoring signal has been made.
  - 6. After the clock has been stopped, the referee will start it again on the referee's start-the-clock signal and if no such signal is given, the operator will start the clock on the snap without the signal from the referee.
  - 7. The referee may start the clock again in certain instances before the ready-for-play signal.
  - 8. The try is not a timed down.
  - 9. There are instances when a period shall be extended by an untimed down. During these extensions, leave the clock at :00. Do not reset the clock for the next period until the referee declares the period over by facing the press box and holding the ball overhead.
  - 10. Each state association may decide whether or not to utilize a running clock in certain situations, and the procedures for those situations.

# NFHS GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOTBALL LINE-TO-GAIN CREWS



The typical line-to-gain crew consists of at least three individuals – a down-marker indicator operator and two to hold the rods. Unless otherwise possible by use of a fourth crew member, the down-marker indicator operator will attach the clip as specified. In some cases where a fourth crew member is present, that member may also be requested to record penalties on a chart provided by the game officials. It is recommended that the members of the crew wear distinctive vests or jackets furnished by home or game management. Remind crew members that they are assistant officials, not fans.

## PREGAME DUTIES

1. The line-to-gain crew shall meet the HEAD LINESMAN on the sideline opposite the press box at least 15 minutes before game time and also five minutes prior to the second-half kickoff. If an auxiliary down-marker indicator is used, the operator shall meet the LINE JUDGE on the press-box side at the same time.
2. The HEAD LINESMAN shall make certain that the official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators have been placed opposite the press box or on the designated sideline and that all are in good working order and conform to the rules. The LINE JUDGE shall make certain that the auxiliary down-marker indicator is in good working order and is placed on the opposite side of the field from the line-to-gain crew.
3. The complete concentration of the crew is absolutely necessary if crew members are to discharge their duties efficiently. The crew must refrain from showing any partisan reaction to the events taking place on the playing field. The crew must be prepared to act immediately on instructions from the HEAD LINESMAN so that teams and all concerned will know the exact situation concerning the down and yards to be gained. The crew shall not move or change the number of the down until signaled to do so by the HEAD LINESMAN. The auxiliary down-marker indicator operator shall act only on instructions from the LINE JUDGE. The crew must remain impartial and may not communicate down and distance information to members of the coaching staff or team.
4. While serving on the line-to-gain crew, the crew should refrain from using items that would distract them from their responsibility (i.e. using electronic devices).

## GAME PROCEDURES

1. On the HEAD LINESMAN'S signal, the crew shall move as quickly as possible to the next position.
2. When a runner or pass receiver is going out of bounds in the immediate vicinity, the involved crew member is to quickly and carefully drop the marker and move away from the sideline, keeping his/her eye on the spot of the marker. The crew members away from the play should hold their positions if possible.
3. The HEAD LINESMAN will set the spot of all first downs by going to the sidelines and marking, while facing the field, the exact spot where the rear stake will be set. The front crew member will then be sure the chain is fully extended before setting his/her stake.
4. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR, on every new series of downs, will set the down-marker indicator at the spot marked by the HEAD LINESMAN. When the line-to-gain equipment is moved, the rear rod is to be set behind the down-marker indicator and then the clip shall be placed at the back edge of the 5-yard line nearest the rear rod. The down-marker indicator must be held at all times in an upright position with the down correctly shown.
5. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR is to show the number of the down just completed and shall not indicate the new down until so notified by the HEAD LINESMAN. On instruction from the HEAD LINESMAN, the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR will move the down-marker indicator to a new position with the marker indicator placed at the forward point of the ball and change the marker indicator to the correct down.
6. On all measurements for first down when the chain is moved onto the field, the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR is to place his/her marker indicator at the spot of the front rod until a new series of downs is declared or the chain is returned to its previous position.
7. The chain is not extended if it is a first-and-goal situation. The HEAD LINESMAN should provide the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR a bean bag in this situation to mark location of the box in case it is moved during the down.
8. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR should place the marker indicator on the line of scrimmage on all try situations. This will aid players and officials in determining the line of scrimmage on all plays toward the sideline. The chain will not be placed on a try.
9. If the sidelines become crowded and the crew does not have room to efficiently discharge its duties, the crew is to notify the HEAD LINESMAN immediately so that a time-out may be called and sidelines cleared before the game will be allowed to proceed.
10. If the game is delayed for any reason, the crew will stay with the game officials.
11. The official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline opposite the press box, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. Unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain and down-marker indicators may be used on the sideline opposite the official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators, and shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. All indicators shall be operated as far off the sideline (up to 2 yards) as facilities permit and as directed by the HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE.