

Free Kicks



2023 New Officials Training

Objective

- The intent of this training session is to help you understand and familiarize you with the rules pertaining to the content in this presentation.
- It's important you also read & study the NCAA Rules, Exceptions and TASO mechanics manuals outside of training sessions to get the best understanding of the subject of this presentation.
- The information covered has been condensed and paraphrased to help you understand both the intent and the philosophy of the rules. The current NCAA Rule Book, UIL Exceptions and TASO Mechanics manuals are the final authority.

FREE KICK

Free Kick: A free kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession

- while the ball is positioned on a tee or the ground. It may be controlled by a teammate. A tee cannot elevate ball > 2" (UIL exception allows up to 2")
- the ball may be positioned on the ground contacting the tee.
- after a safety it can be a punt, drop kick or place kick.

Kickoff: free kick starts each half and follows tries or field goals (Exception: Extra periods). Must be a place kick or a drop kick.

NOTE: For UIL games the kick-off is from the 40-yard line (A-40), unless relocated by rule.

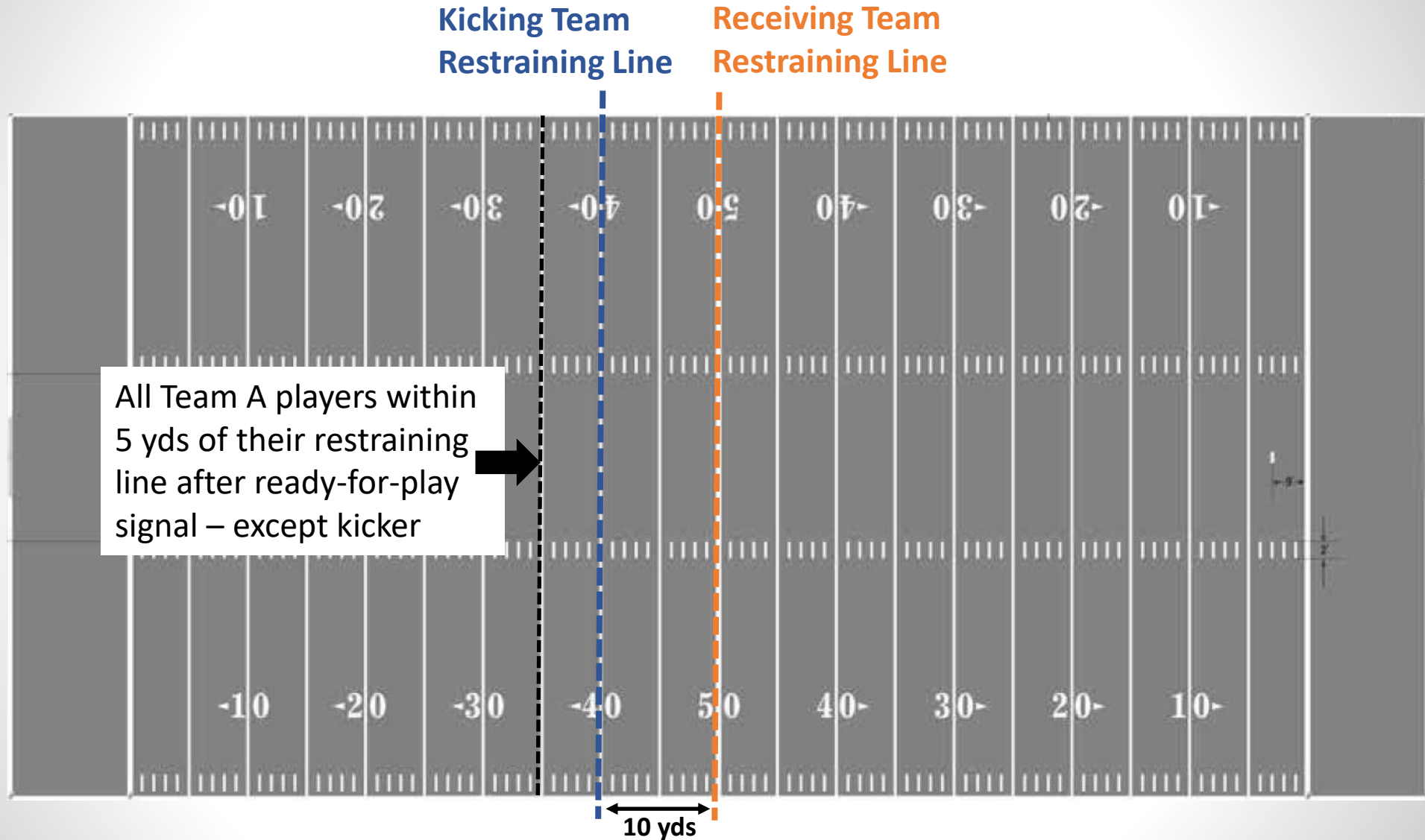
RESTRAINING LINES

- **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE:** the yard line through the most forward point from which the ball shall be kicked
- **RECEIVING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE:** the yard line 10 yards beyond the **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE.**
- Unless relocated by a penalty, the **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE** is its 40-yard line, and after a safety, its 20-yard line.

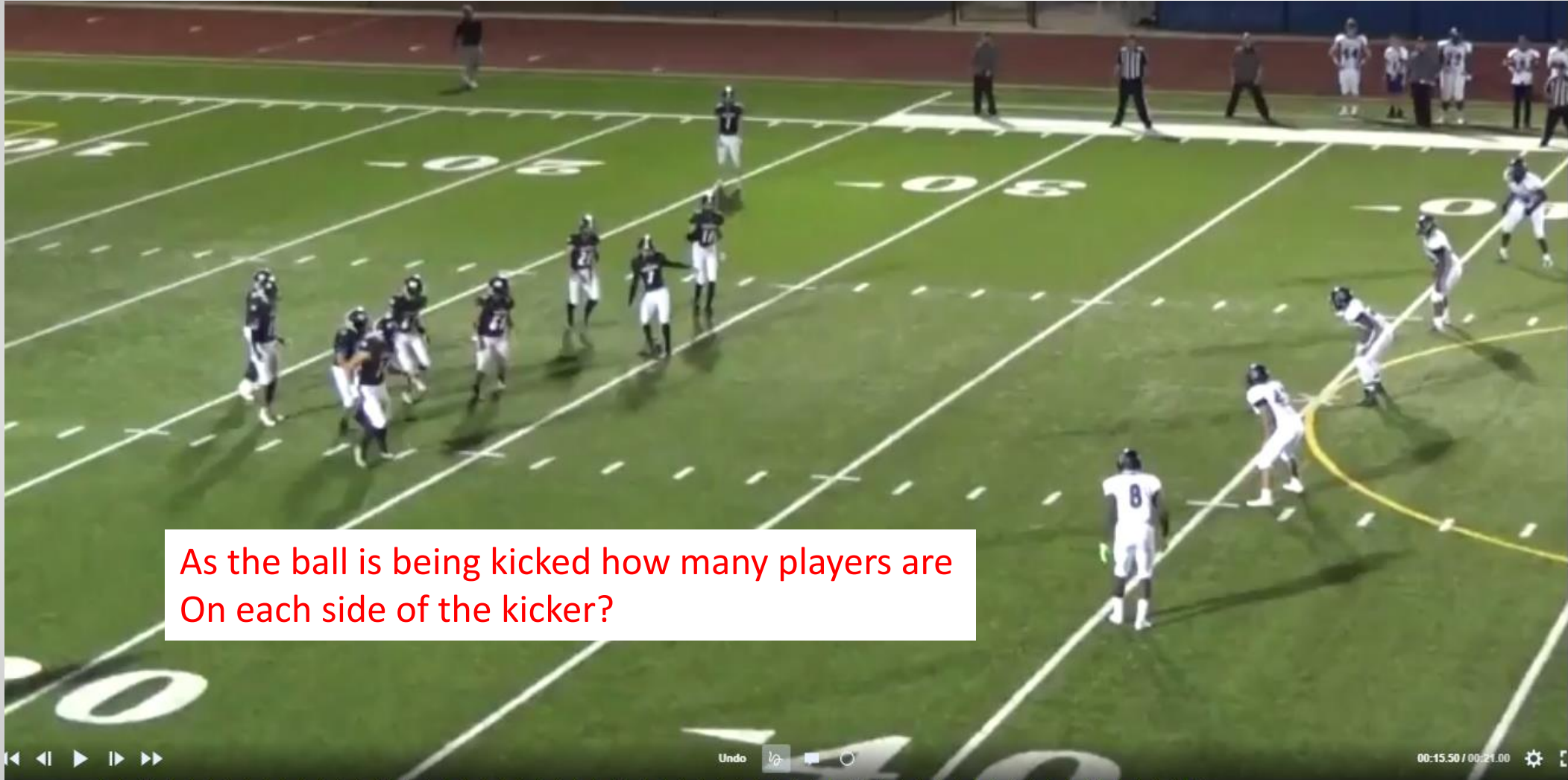
FREE KICK FORMATION

- All **TEAM A** players, except the kicker, must be no more than 5 yards behind their restraining line from the ready-for-play signal until the ball is kicked. The farthest would be a foot on the line 5-yds behind.
- All **TEAM A** players must have been between the nine-yard marks after the ready-for-play signal
- When the ball is kicked **TEAM A**:
 - must have at least 4 players on either side of kicker
 - players must be behind the ball (exception kicker and/or holder) otherwise OFFSIDE foul but do not get picky. Make it BIG!
- Ball can be placed anywhere between hash marks
- All **TEAM B** players must be inbounds and behind their restraining line

FREE KICK



FREE KICK - Formation



FREE KICK - Formation

Are all Team A players within 5yds of their restraining Line?



Player In/Out of Bounds

Let's Recap

Out of Bounds

- A player is out of bounds when any part of his body touches anything other than another player or a game official on or outside a boundary line.
- An out-of-bounds player who becomes airborne remains out of bounds until he touches the ground in bounds without simultaneously being out of bounds.

InBounds

- An inbounds player is a player who is not out of bounds.
- An inbounds player who becomes airborne remains inbounds until he is out of bounds.

Touching & Recovery - Free Kick

TEAM A can get possession if they catch or recover the kick

- beyond **TEAM B's** restraining line –OR–
- after a **TEAM B** player touches the kick –OR–
- after ball touches ground, official or anything beyond **TEAM B's** restraining line (even if it subsequently bounces back)

Any other touching by **TEAM A** is illegal touching, a violation that, when the ball becomes dead, gives the receiving team the privilege of taking the ball at the spot of the violation.

- If there is an accepted penalty for a live-ball foul by either team, or if there are offsetting fouls, the illegal touching privilege is canceled
- Illegal touching in **TEAM A's** end zone is ignored.

Touching & Recovery - Free Kick (cont'd)

Forced Touching Disregarded

- A player blocked by an opponent into a free kick is not, while inbounds, deemed to have touched the kick.
- An inbounds player touched by a ball either batted or illegally kicked by an opponent is not deemed to have touched the ball.

Touching & Recovery - Free Kick (cont'd)

- If a free kick is caught or recovered by the **RECEIVING TEAM**, the ball continues in play.
- If caught or recovered by the **KICKING TEAM**, the ball becomes dead and
 - **RECEIVING TEAM** ball at the dead-ball spot unless the **KICKING TEAM** is in legal possession when the ball is declared dead.
- A kick declared dead in joint possession is awarded to the **RECEIVING TEAM**.
- Free kick untouched by **TEAM B** touches the ground on or behind **TEAM B's** goal becomes dead → touchback for **TEAM B**, 1st down at B-25.
- **Free Kick at Rest:** If a free kick comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, ball becomes dead & belongs to the **RECEIVING TEAM** at the dead-ball spot.

Fouls by Kicking Team

Penalties for all fouls by the **KICKING TEAM** other than kick-catch interference (KCI) during a free kick play may be enforced at the previous spot with the free kick repeated or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to **TEAM B**, at the option of Team B.

A **TEAM A** player who goes out of bounds during a free kick play may not return inbounds during the kick (Exception: if blocked out of bounds and returns immediately). They can return inbounds if there is a return.

→ *Live Ball Foul. 5 yds. from previous spot, or succeeding spot where belongs to **TEAM B***

No **TEAM A** player may block an opponent until **TEAM A** is eligible to touch a free-kicked ball.

→ *Live Ball Foul. 5 yds. from previous spot, or succeeding spot where belongs to **TEAM B***

Fouls by Kicking Team (cont'd)

FREE KICK OUT-OF-BOUNDS:

- Penalty options for free kick out-of-bounds between goal lines and untouched by inbounds TEAM B player is:
 1. 30 yards beyond **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE** (Team B ball) –OR–
 2. -5 yards from the previous spot & re-kick –OR–
 3. +5 yards from the out-of-bounds spot (Team B ball)
- Free kick touched by **TEAM B** player straddling the sideline, or by any out-of-bounds player, the ball becomes dead and foul for free kick out-of-bounds
- No Foul if free kick caught by an airborne “inbounds” **TEAM B** player who lands out-of-bounds

Fouls by Kicking Team (cont'd)

KICK-CATCH-INTERFERENCE: **TEAM B** player in position to catch a kick must be given an unimpeded opportunity to catch it – *when in doubt it is a foul!*

- Foul if, before the receiver touches the ball, a **TEAM A** player enters the area defined by the width of the receiver's shoulders and extending one yard in front of him.
- Foul if, the kicking team contacts the potential receiver before, or simultaneous to, his first touching the ball
- No foul if interference is the result of a player being blocked by an opponent.
- Protection ends when the kick touches the ground or any player of **TEAM B** in the field of play or end zone. Protection continues if when kicked, the ball is immediately driven to the ground, strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of the ball kicked directly off the tee. *Pay attention to how the ball is kicked!*

→ ***Live Ball Foul. 15 yards from the spot of the foul***

Fouls by Receiving Team

ILLEGAL WEDGE: **TEAM B** is prohibited from intentionally aligning two or more players shoulder-to-shoulder for the purpose of blocking

- No foul when the kick is from an obvious onside kick formation, the play results in a touchback, free kick out of bounds, or fair catch.

→ *15 yards, spot of the foul, or 15 yards, spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to **TEAM B** if this is behind the spot of the foul.*

KICKER PROTECTION: The **kicker** of a free kick may not be blocked until he has advanced five yards beyond his restraining line or the kick has touched a player, an official or the ground.

→ *15 yards, previous spot*

Other Common Fouls on Free Kicks

- Blocking Below the Waist
- Illegal Block in the Back
- Offside – most often the kicking team – **make it big; don't be too technical!**
- Face Mask
- Holding
- Blind Side Blocks (BSB)

Fair Catch - Refresher

On Free Kicks

- **Valid** signal gives protection
- **Invalid** signal does not provide protection – KCI rules still apply!
- Any waving signal prevents an advance of the ball by either team.
- If there is an advance, it's a delay of the game. *(Don't be picky!)*
- Shading eyes permissible without waving hand.
- A player of Team B who has made a valid or invalid signal for a fair catch and does not touch the ball shall not block or foul an opponent during that down.
- Completed fair catches inside the B-25 yard line will result in Team B getting ball at the B-25 (unless relocated due to penalties)
- If the Fair Catch signaler muffs the kick they must be given an opportunity to catch the muffed kick to complete the catch process.

Clock Management – Free Kicks

Starting and Stopping the Clock on Free Kicks

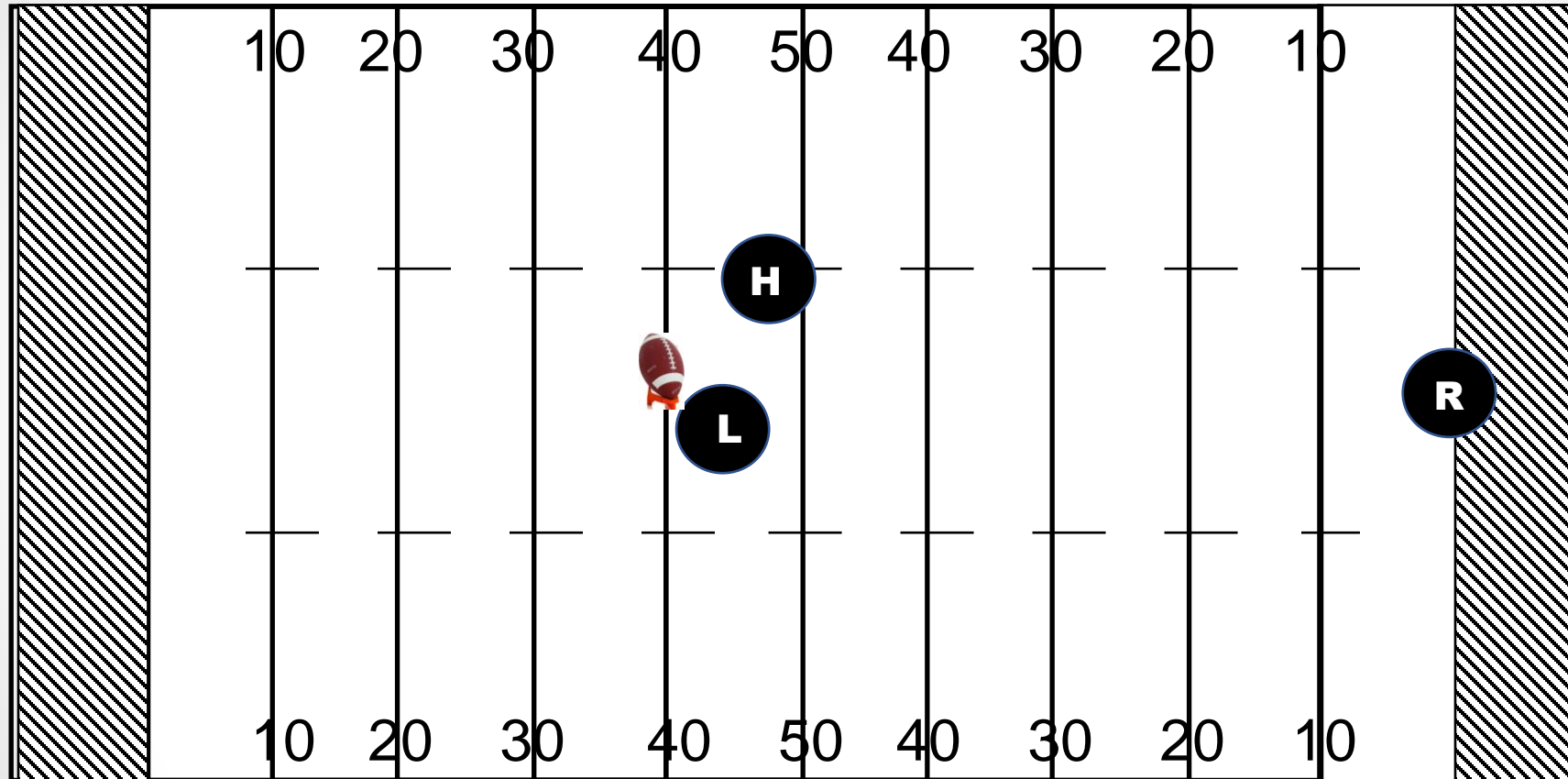
- Game clock started on an official's signal when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, or when it crosses the goal line after being touched legally by **TEAM B** in its end zone.
 - Wind clock when touched by **TEAM B** in field of play or when ball touched/carried by **TEAM B** out of end zone
 - Do not start the clock if **TEAM A** touches the kick
 - Do not start the clock on a fair catch
- Stop game clock when the ball is dead by rule.

Free Kicks – Player Taking a Knee

If **TEAM B** player takes a knee upon catching/recovering the kick he is down → play is over.

- **Simulates taking a knee:** treat this the same way → the player is down. This is not a foul.

Free Kicks – Positions (3-Man)

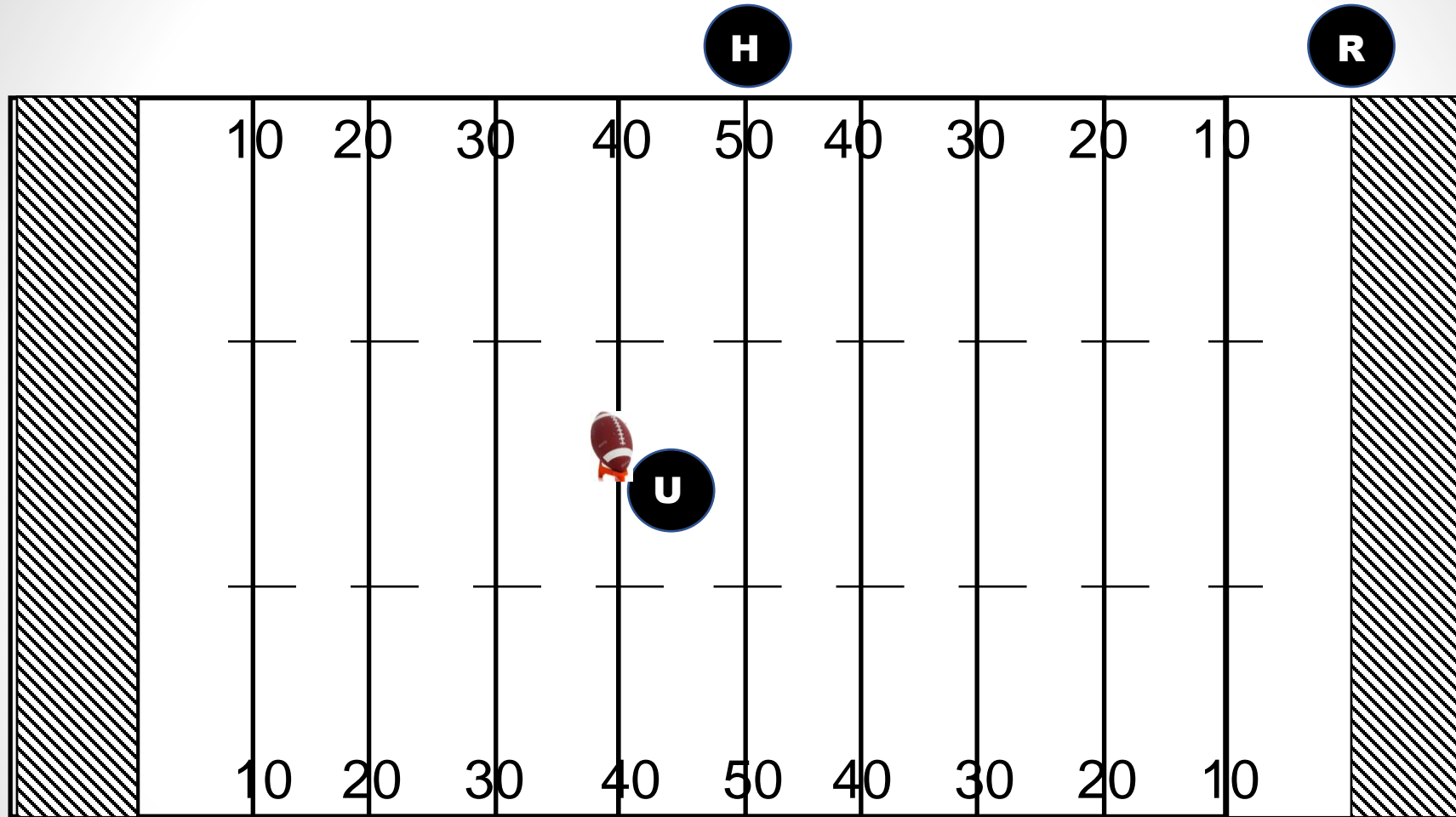


Line Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

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Free Kicks – Positions (4-Man)



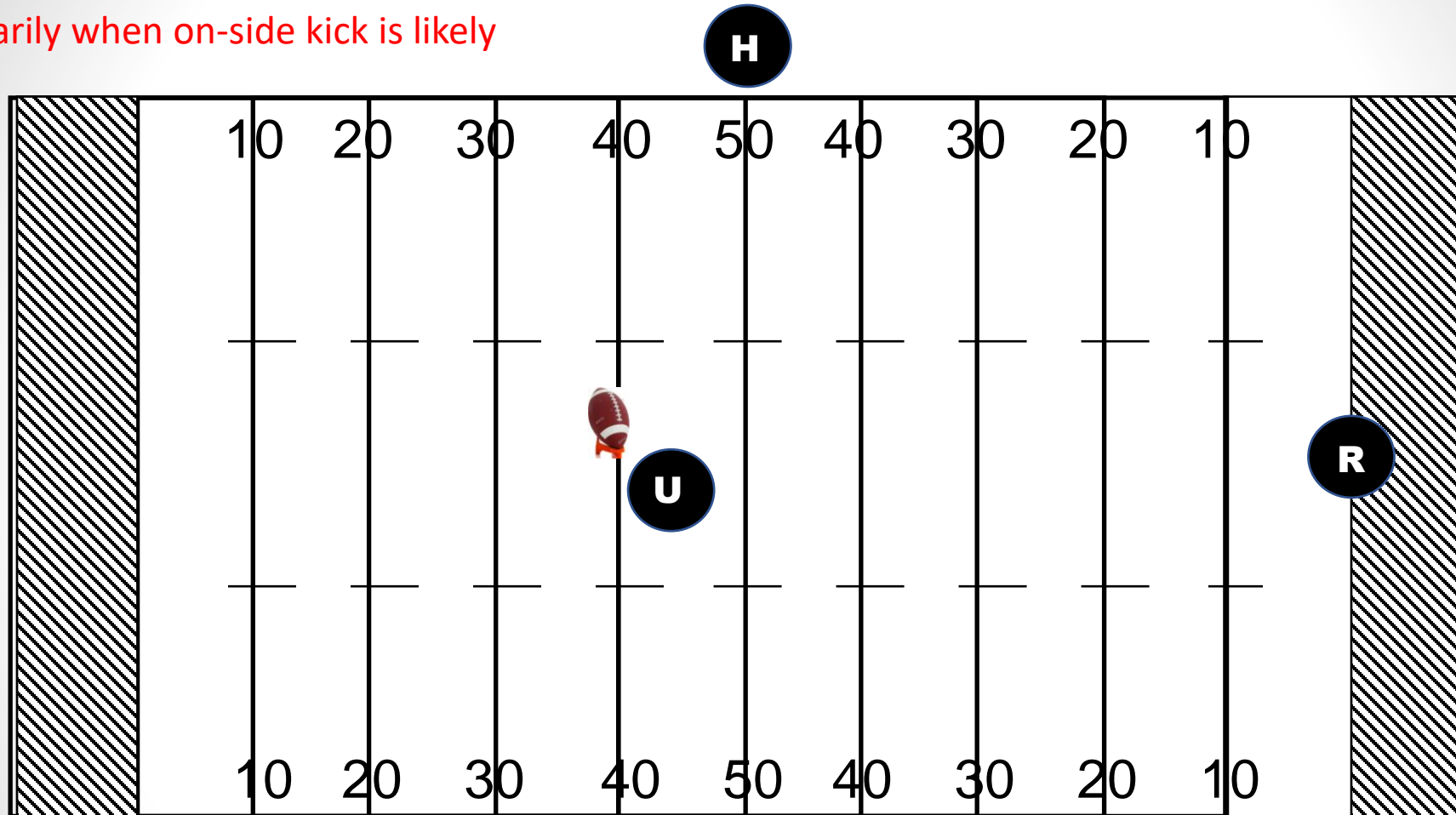
Umpire provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

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Free Kicks – Positions (4-Man) Short Kick

Used primarily when on-side kick is likely



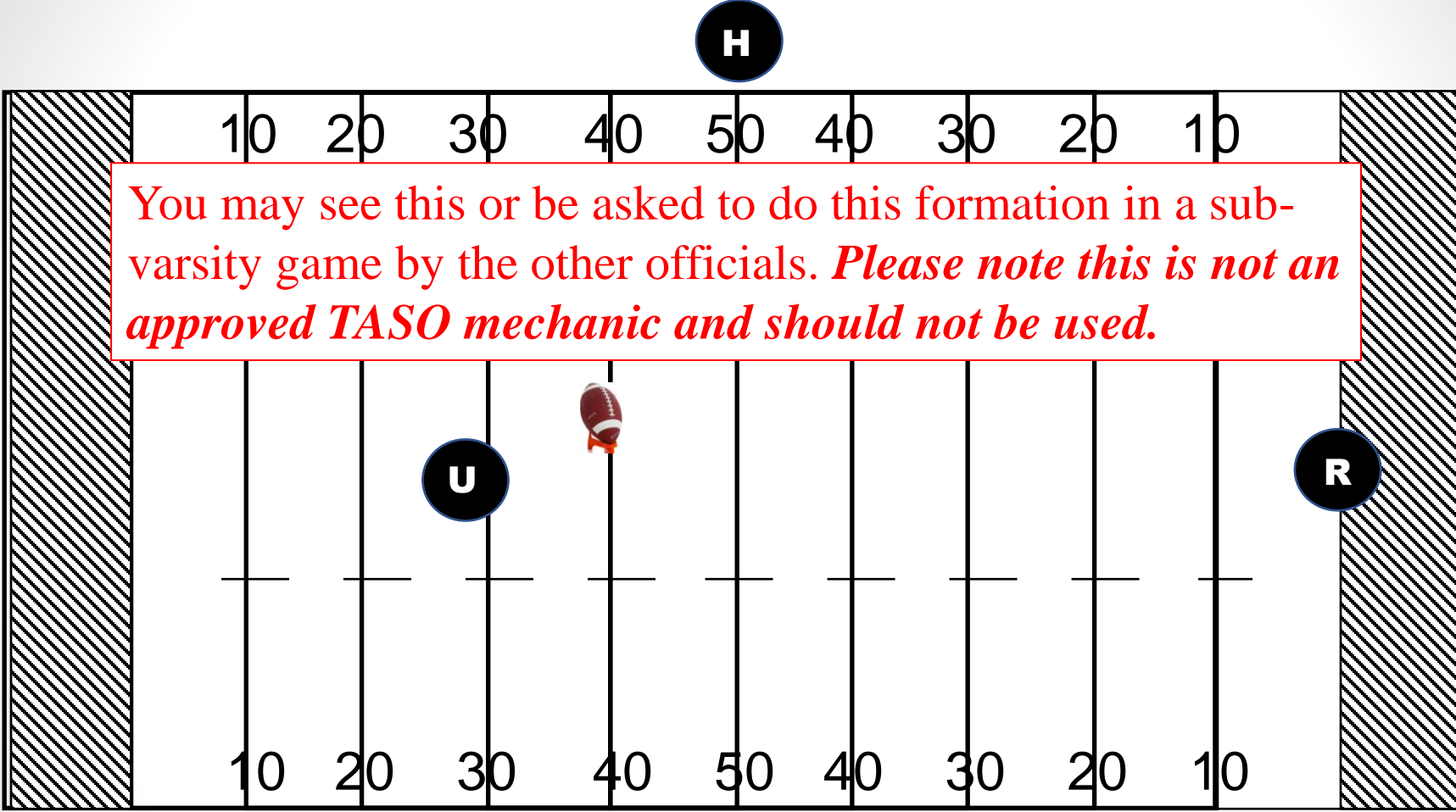
Umpire provides ball & instructions to Kicker

L

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DALLAS FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

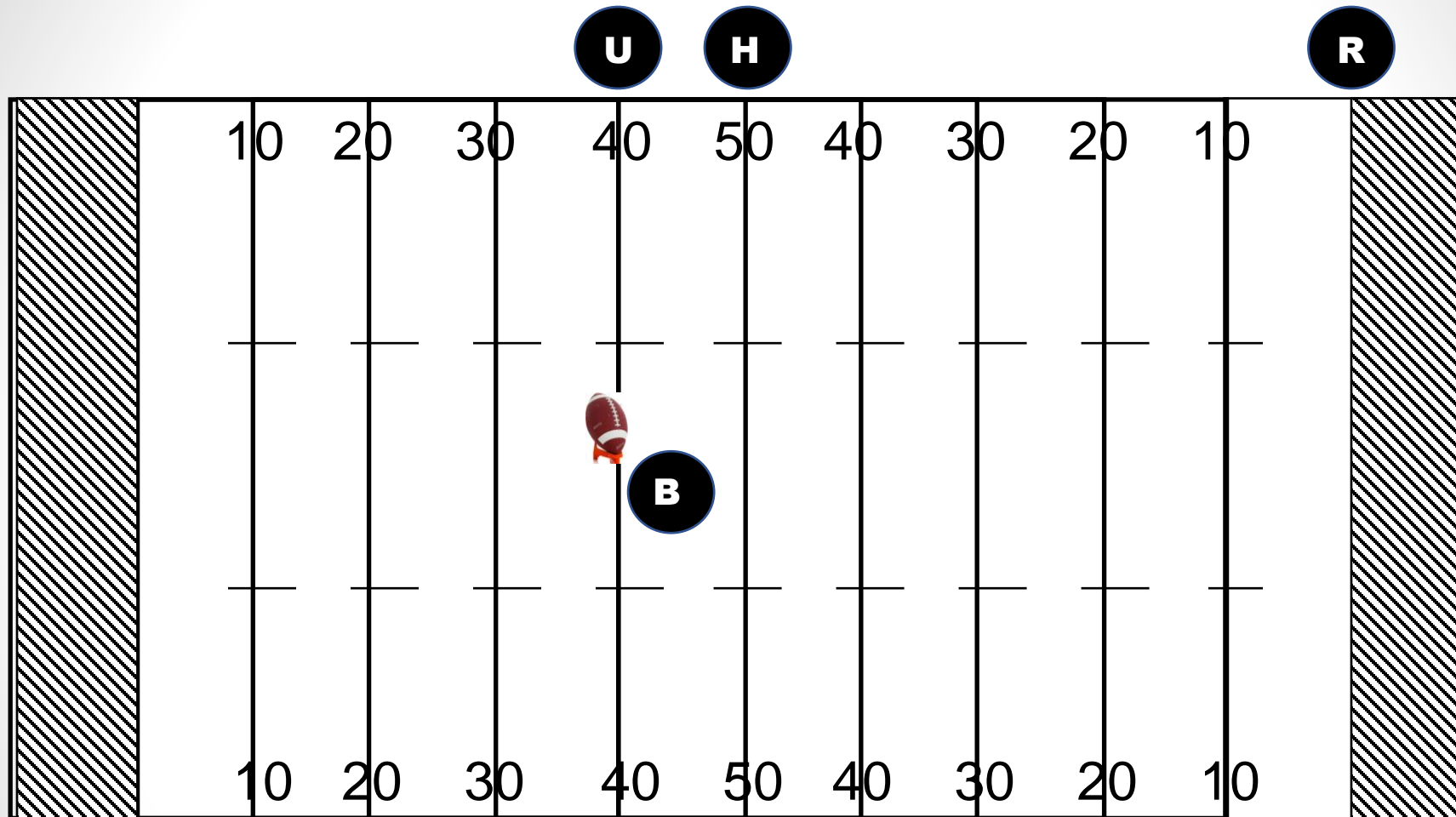
Free Kicks – Positions (4-Man) “Diamond”



L

Press Box

Free Kicks – Positions (5-Man)

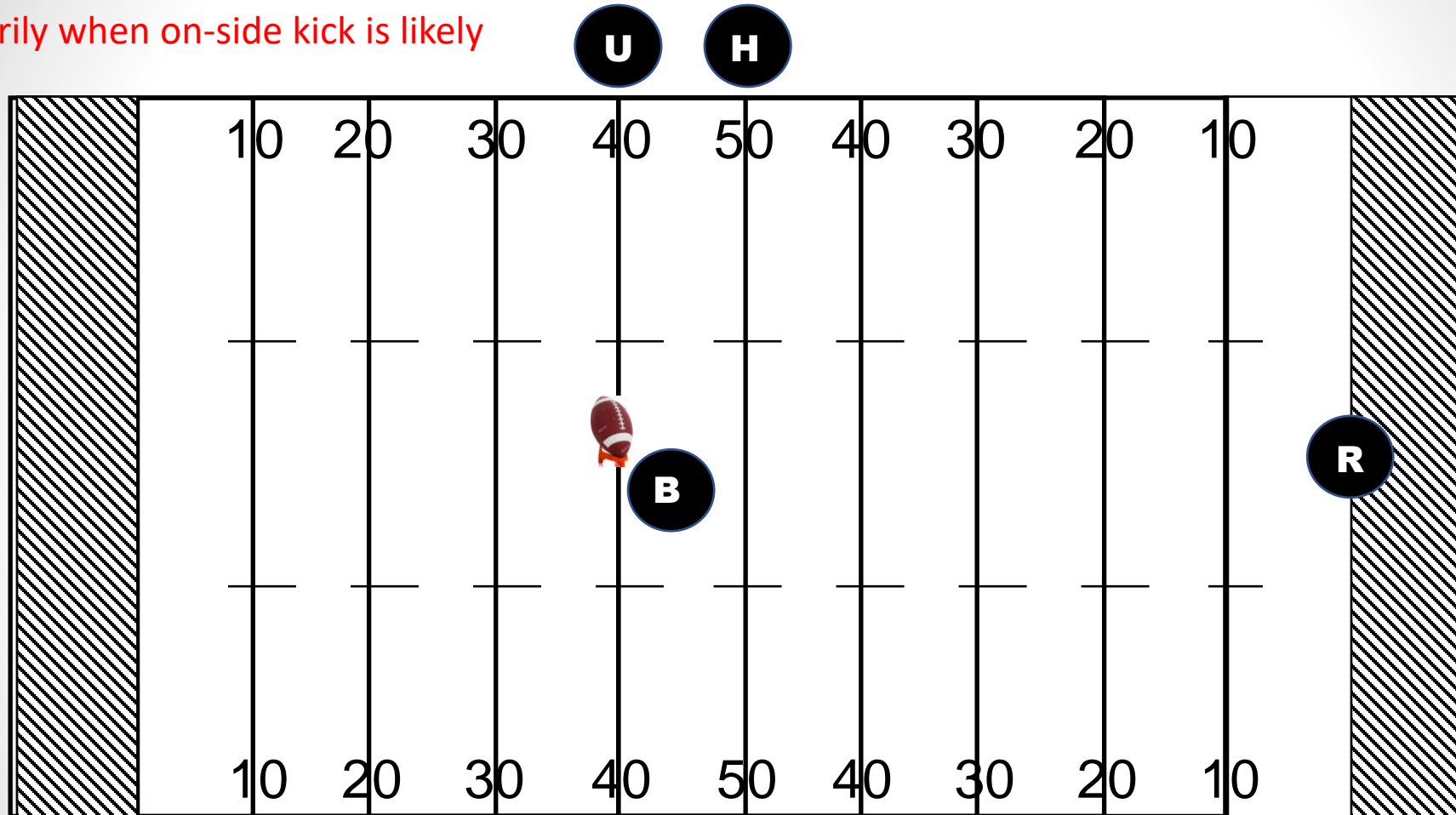


Back Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

Free Kicks – Positions (5-Man) Short Kick

Used primarily when on-side kick is likely

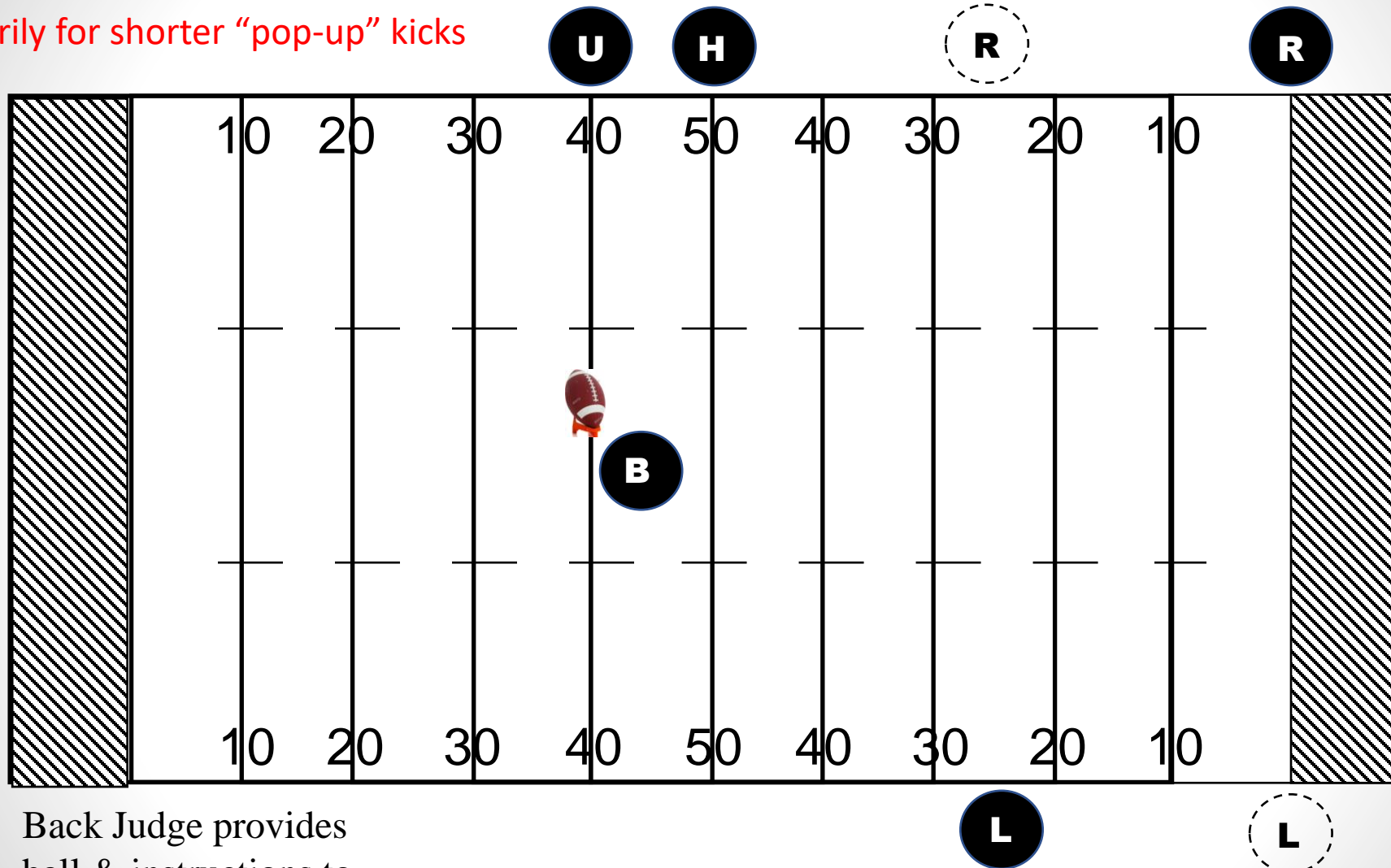


Back Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

L
Press Box

Free Kicks – Positions (5-Man) Alternate Short Kick

Used primarily for shorter “pop-up” kicks



Note: Alternatively Based on R’s decision the L may remain on the Goal Line and the R may setup near the B-25.

Back Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

FREE KICK- Mechanics – Pre-Kick Duties

3-Man Crew

L Count kicking team number of players. Explain to kicker to kick only on **R**'s signal. Point out **R** on each free kick.

H, L Check sidelines to make sure all non-players are out of the restricted area. Ensure Team A players have complied with the 9-yard mark requirements.

R, H Count the receiving team number of players.

ALL Raise hand clearly above head when ready, then drop arm when **R** drops arm and sounds whistle.

4-Man Crew

U Explain to kicker to kick only on **R**'s signal. Point out **R** on each free kick.

U, H Count Kicking Team number of players. Check sidelines to make sure all non-players are out of the restricted area. Ensure Team A players have complied with the 9-yard mark requirements.

R, L Count the receiving team number of players. Check sidelines to make sure all non-players are out of the restricted area.

ALL Raise hand clearly above head when ready, then drop arm when **R** drops arm and sounds whistle.

FREE KICK- Mechanics – After Kick

3-Man Crew

L When the ball kicked, ensure 4 or more players are on each side of the kicker. Watch for unnecessary roughness on holder or kicker. Watch for illegal kicks. Observe action on kicker until five-yard requirement has been met.

L, H Watch for short kicks and ball touched or recovered legally or illegally. Watch for restraining line infractions. Be in position to take runner if ball is advanced beyond B-35 (to GL). Maintain position enabling coverage of your sideline at all times.

ALL Watch for Team A blocks prior to Team A becoming eligible to touch the ball. Mark the out of bounds spot when kick, in flight or rolling, goes out of bounds. (Bean bag if needed, otherwise flag.)

ALL Give signal starting the game clock when kick is first is touched by Team B. Signal to start clock should be given only by official who has the ball in his area of responsibility. Observe any player who is out of bounds before or during the kick. Be alert for fair catch signal, valid or invalid. Be alert for interference with opportunity to catch a kick.

R If kick goes deep, retreat to position to observe actions involving the goal line, end line. Watch for handoffs and criss-cross, do not give play away.

ALL Be alert for illegal handoffs.

FREE KICK- Mechanics – After Kick

4-Man Crew

U, H When ball kicked, ensure 4 or more players are on each side of the kicker. Watch for infractions involving restraining lines. Watch for short kick and whether it is touched or recovered legally or illegally. Following deep kick, move cautiously downfield outside sideline until ball is in return, then retreat toward A's goal line. Lead runner to A's goal line; be on A's goal line before runner crosses. Observe blocking action in front of runner, if to your side; observe action away from runner if to opposite side.

R, L If kick goes deep, rule on actions involving the goal line, sideline or end line. If touchback, move into field of play to stop any late or illegal actions but do not ignore players behind you. If ball is returned, remain off sideline and take forward progress of runner.

L, R Observe legal touching and signal clock to start if between your sideline and opposite inbounds line. If ball falls in opposite side zone, observe action in front of/around receiver.

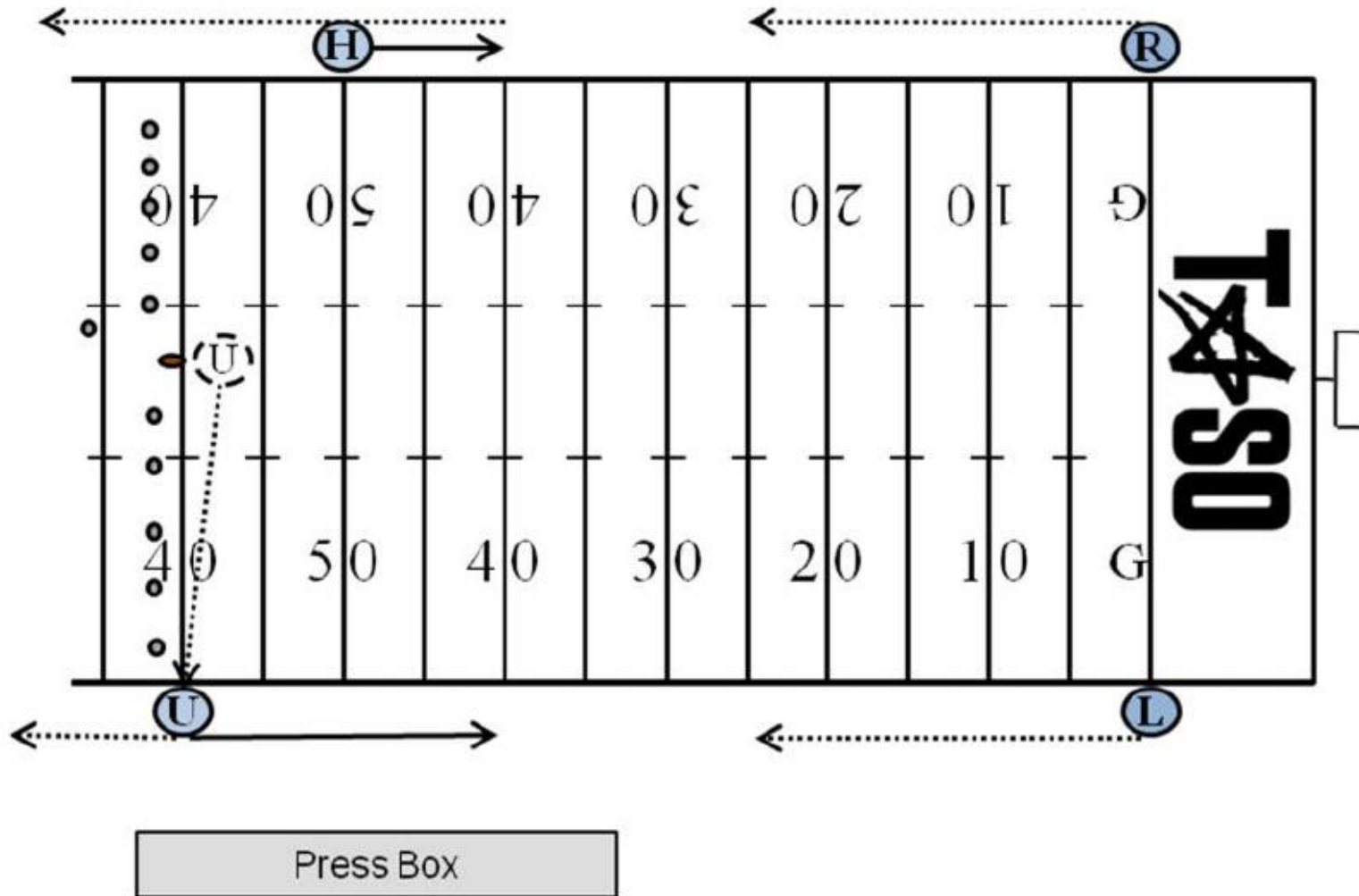
ALL If kick threatens a sideline, move quickly to the area to rule. Mark the out of bounds spot, with flag if appropriate, if kick goes out of bounds between goal lines. Maintain position enabling coverage of your sideline at all times. If kicked in your area, cover any muff, advance, or any Team B player who catches or recovers the ball. Observe any player who is out of bounds before or during the kick. Signal clock to start if you observe ball legally touched in the field of play. Observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when not covering the runner.

H, U Watch for infractions involving restraining lines. Watch for short kick and whether it is touched or recovered legally or illegally.

ALL Be alert for fair catch signal and interference with the opportunity to catch a kick. When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe action in your area ahead of the runner.

Free Kicks – 4-Man Crews

SECTION 10. FREE KICKS



FREE KICK- Mechanics

▪ Review the FREE KICK Mechanics

- Crew of 3-officials: SECTION 9.
- Crew of 4-officials: SECTION 10.
- Crew of 5-officials: SECTION 10.

▪ Mechanics Manuals can be found at: www.taso.org in your MEMBERS PORTAL FOOTBALL page. (login required)