

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

1. The **pregame conference**, conducted/facilitated by the Referee, **shall start at least 1 hour prior to kickoff** for all Varsity games; officials should already be dressed at that time. The Umpire will start the pregame conference in the Ref's absence.
2. All officials will be on the field 30 min prior to kickoff to assume jurisdiction of the game, by rule.
3. **Pregame Duties:**
 - a. Referee (Ref) and Umpire (U) or any official designated by the Ref.
 - 1) Meet with the Home coach first, Visitors Coach second. Give coaches list of game officials.
 - 2) CONFIRM that all players are properly equipped according to NFHS rules.
 - 3) Review key new rules.
 - 4) Review sportsmanship.
 - 5) Review safety. **NOTE: By State adoption, ONLY the restricted area is extended for coaches.**
 - 6) Check and rule on legality of equipment and check any casts.
 - 7) Request any unusual plays that we should be made aware of.
 - a. *Discuss legal free kick formation and pop-up kicks*
 - b. *Discuss illegal fair catch signals. (fire, get away)*
 - 8) Check and mark game balls.
 - 9) Set conditions for the coin toss to occur at 5 min prior to kickoff – game clock reads 0:00.
 - 10) Determine and instruct coaches on which clock will be official.

NOTE: timing errors can/will be corrected by the on-field officials.
 - 11) Determine length of half time from home coach; notify visiting COACHES and CREW if halftime exceeds 15 minutes in length.
 - b. Line Judge (LJ) – check the field and communicate with ball boy on your sideline with the Field Hudge (FJ).
 - c. Side Judge (SJ) – check the field opposite the LJ and communicate with the ball boy on your sideline with the Head Linesman (HL). Communicate with each head coach and QB (if possible) that the 40/25-second play clock will be kept on the field, then demonstrate how the last 10 seconds of the play clock will counted off.
 - d. HL – meet and instruct chain crew (at 30 min prior to kickoff). Demonstrate the use of a two clip system, if used, and the process for measurements and flipping chains at the conclusion of the 1st and 3^d quarters. Identify and emphasize use and readiness of the ball boy (in coordination with the SJ).
 - e. FJ.
 - 1) Proceed directly to the press box to meet and brief announcer and clock operator.
 - 2) Set the field clock and have it run down to 0:00 for the coin toss at 5 minutes prior to kickoff: *All introductions and the National Anthem must be completed prior to coin toss.*
 - 3) Review time management conditions: determine “official” clock and/or provisions for making in-game corrections, review 5 signals that stop the clock (to include halftime start/stop signals), set half time period (15 – 20 min) + 3 min **mandatory** warm up period, [35-point] mercy rule timing administration and 40/25-second game clock management.
 - 4) Provide and discuss the thunder and lightning sheet and its applications to safety.
 - 5) Provide the announcer the names and positions of the crew members.
 - 6) Identify, instruct and EMPHASIZE use of ball boys with the corresponding wing official.
4. **AFTER pre-game duties are completed:**
 - a. All officials observe players and address uniform adornments and improperly worn equipment.
 - b. Ref & SJ will be opposite the press box at the 50 yd line – standing at parade rest.
 - c. HL will be opposite the press box with the chain crew – standing at parade rest.
 - d. FJ & LJ (& possibly U) will be on the press box side at the 50 yd line – standing at parade rest.

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

5. **Coin Toss** – to be completed at minimum 5 min prior to kickoff.
 - a. Ref & U can begin in the middle of the field, with the Ref facing the scoreboard.
 - 1) U – if escorting captains, take the team out from the press box side, standing opposite the Ref.
 - b. FJ and SJ secure a ball from each of their side lines prior to coin toss.
 - c. SJ come out opposite the press box, escort captains to the Ref and then retreat to the top of the 9-yd marks.
 - d. FJ come from press box side, escort captains to the Ref and then retreat to the top of the 9-yd marks.
 - e. HL stays on opposite press box sideline.
 - f. LJ stays on press box sideline.
6. **Counting**
 - a. Free Kick:
 - 1) FJ, SJ, & LJ count K.
 - 2) HL, U, and Ref count Receivers.
 - 3) SJ & LJ also count 4 players on either side of kicker... making sure of legal kick formation.
 - b. Scrimmage Plays:
 - 1) Ref and U count A and K.
 - 2) FJ, SJ, & LJ count B and R.
 - 3) HL and LJ count no more than four (4) players in the backfield **every** play.
7. **Kickoff** (free kick).
 - a. K can recover but cannot advance a ‘kick’.
 - b. Positions:
 - 1) FJ has kickers restraining line (40-yd). Instruct the kickers. **Include reminder about 4 on each side of kicker both at ready for play and at the kick. Ensure no more than 1 player >5 yards deep.** Angle in towards the hash on a deep kick as you drift downfield slowly, no more than 10 yards. After the kick, ensure the kicker has advanced 5 yards before being contacted by R.
 - 2) SJ & LJ have receivers restraining line (50-yd) with bean bag in hand for first touching.
 - 3) U is on the press box side, approximately 10 yd line (opposite line to gain equipment).
 - 4) HL is opposite the press box side, approx. 10 yd line.
 - 5) Ref is on goal line.
 - c. The Ref rules on momentum rule at goal line and kicks entering the receiver’s end zone.
 - d. All kicks entering the receiver’s end zone are dead (touchback), including muffs.
 - e. All officials watch for Kick Catch Interference – K can’t touch the ball in flight if an R player is in position to catch the kick.
 - f. All officials watch for 1st touching – K can’t touch the ball until it is grounded and travel 10 yards.
 - g. All Receivers can give a fair catch signal in or beyond the neutral zone, and *anyone who gives a valid fair catch signal is provided protection – and is restricted from blocking.*
 - h. All free kicks that go out of bounds untouched by the receivers, give the 3 options:
 - 1) **5 yd penalty from previous spot and re-kick.**
 - 2) **R can have the ball placed 5 yards beyond where the kick went out of bounds.**
 - 3) **R can have the ball placed 25 yds in advance of the kickers restraining line.**
8. **On-side kicks** (free kick).
 - a. FJ & HL have kickers restraining line. Have bean bag in hand. The kicker’s restraining line should be treated as a plane. **Be alert for the pop-up kick and whistle the play dead before the ball descends.** If the kick is to your side, you have secondary responsibility for touching by either team. If the kick is to the opposite side, focus on blocking infractions.

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

- b. *SJ & LJ have receivers restraining line.* Have beanbag in hand for first touching. Must know if the kick broke the plane of R's restraining line. If the kick is to your side, you have primary responsibility for touching by either team. If the kick is to the other side, you have primary responsibility for illegal blocks by K.
- c. R & U move up the sideline, 40 yards from free kick line, or 5 yards deeper than deepest R receiver (whichever is deeper). R & U have all forward progress on any keep kicks.
- d. K cannot muff the ball into the receivers or block receivers into the ball (touching ignored).
- e. Watch for Kick Catch Interference, and for blocks below the waist.
- f. FJ, SJ, HL, and LJ be alert for illegal blocks by K. ***K CANNOT initiate a block prior to the ball going 10 yards.*** If R initiates a block anywhere on the field, legal blocking by K is permitted.

9. Scrimmage Kick (punt).

- a. K can only advance a kick or blocked kick that is in or behind the neutral zone.
- b. All officials should be alert for first touching by K, or a muff by the receivers. All officials watch for Kick Catch Interference – K can't touch the ball in flight if a receiver is in position to catch the ball.
- c. Referee:
 - 1) Position 2-3 yds behind the kicker, and 3-5 yds outside normal TE position on the kicking leg side of kicker.
 - 2) Stay with kicker, even if he goes out of bounds on a run.
 - 3) Be alert for a blocked kick, and rule on recovery.
- d. Umpire:
 - 1) Position 7-10 yds deep.
 - 2) Check numbering exceptions.
 - 3) If ball goes over punters head, get to the line of scrimmage (LoS).
 - 4) Priority is the center responsibility, then shift to the guards.
- e. Field Judge and Side Judge:
 - 1) Count R and signal to deep wing partner.
 - 2) Instruct R on legal fair catch signal. Watch for Invalid/Illegal fair catch signals (5/15-yd penalty): the ball is dead where possessed.
 - 3) Blue bean bag in hand, mark end of the kick for PSK, 2nd bean bag for fumble or momentum inside the 5-yd line.
 - 4) Be prepared to rule on R's goal line and any fair catch or muff by assigned return man. All kicks crossing R's goal line are a touchback.
 - 5) When punting from the 40 yd line or closer, line up on the goal line.
- f. Field Judge:
 - 1) Mark PSK with *blue bean bag* on 2/3 of field.
 - 2) Take initial position no more than 7 yds on the field and 2-3 yards in front of up receiver.
 - 3) Watch snap if clock needs to be started on snap.
- g. Side Judge:
 - 1) Mark PSK with *blue bean bag* on 1/3 of field.
 - 2) Take initial position no more than 7 yds on the field and 2-3 yards behind of deepest receiver.
 - 3) Watch snap for delay of game penalty.
- h. Head Linesman:
 - 1) At the snap, responsible for action on and by the gunner.
 - 2) If the ball goes over the punters head, move into backfield and help R.
 - 3) Stay on LoS until the ball crosses line, and then maneuver down field, but keep cushion with SJ on reverse mechanics. Will rule on forward progress inside the 1 yd line

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

- i. Line Judge:
 - 1) At the snap, responsible for action on and by the gunner.
 - 2) After the ball crosses the line, maneuver down field, but keep cushion with FJ on reverse mechanics. Will rule on forward progress inside the 1 yd line.
 - 3) If the ball goes over the punters head, stay on the line to rule on kick crossing LOS.
- j. If ball goes out of bounds in the air either the FJ or SJ (depending on side) will go beyond the spot, raise hand, wait for Ref to raise hand, and then walk the sideline toward Ref until he chops. Remember to start the next series on a yard line (hash mark). *(Discuss mechanics in pre-game)*

10. Scrimmage Kick (FG and PAT)

- a. Positions:
 - 1) U 7-10 yds deep, off set to the Ref.
 - 2) FJ & SJ are underneath the goalpost, 3-5 yds deep.
 - 3) Ref faces the holder 2-3 yds behind and 8-10 yards wide of kicker.
 - 4) Both wing officials remain at the LoS.
- b. On PATs, wing officials crash in after the kicker's foot contacts the ball. On FGs, wings should hold on or near the sideline to make sure the ball is not blocked with the possibility of being advanced by K, or for a busted play. After kick has been ruled dead, crash in to assist Ref and U.
- c. HL, LJ, FJ, & SJ know who the eligible receivers are. FJ & SJ communicate this to each other.
- d. U has legality of snap, numbering exception, and snapper protection. Signal snapper protection to the Ref after K lines up in a scrimmage kick formation.
- e. FJ blows the whistle when ball becomes dead by rule (crosses goal line).
- f. FJ is responsible for his upright and the crossbar.
- g. Remember a live ball in the field of play (before the kick crosses the goal line on FG attempt) can be returned.
- h. Ref needs to know what the holder can and cannot do.

NOTE: For penalty enforcement and by exception, the Referee should offer [team] R the option to accept penalty yardage from the succeeding spot for fouls by K prior to the end of the kick when K will not be next to put the ball in play.

11. Measurements.

- a. If there is a measurement on a play with a flag, leave the box at the previous spot with the previous down displayed.
- b. Otherwise, the HL moves box (with the previous down displayed) to the front stick, where the SJ will hold it
 - 1) HL carries the chain at the clip.
 - 2) LJ provides the spot for HL to place the chain with the clip.
 - 3) FJ holds the ball down with his/her back toward the defensive goal line.
 - 4) U pulls stick after the HL says "ready".
 - 5) Ref awards 1st down, and/or moves ball to the inside the hash marks using the chains, if necessary.

12. Change of quarter.

- a. HL will meet with Ref and U at the spot of the ball to confirm and record the down, distance, current yard line, and team in possession *before* relocating the chains and down marker.
- b. SJ will stay with chain crew, holding and then moving the down box when told to do so by the HL.
- c. Ref measure distance to nearest yard line, U quickly takes the ball to the corresponding spot.
- d. LJ monitors the team on his sideline.
- e. FJ moves to middle of the field to monitor team on opposite sideline, has 1:00 timeout, Let R know when time is about to run out (0:45).
- f. *The SJ's 25-second play clock resumes when ready for play is signaled by the Ref.*

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

13. Second half kickoff:

- a. FJ or SJ obtain ball from kicking team.
- b. HL and LJ ensure their teams are on field for 3:00 warm up period.
- c. In coordination with wing officials (HL and LJ) ensure ball boys are in place and at the ready (*prior to kick-off*) to facilitate efficient management of the play clock.

14. Scrimmage Downs.

- a. Referee:
 - 1) In coordination with the U, sweep the field to first ensure the crew is ready before the ball is placed on the ground and ready for play.
 - 2) Give the ready-for-play signal to start the 40/25-second play clock (as required) from 10-15 yds behind the LOS and 5 yds outside the huddle.
 - 3) Will be 12 to 15 yds deep lined up at the normal TE position on the passer's arm.
 - 4) Stay with the QB/K no matter what, protect QB, K and holder, and rule on personal fouls.
 - 5) When circumstances dictate a reset of the 40/25-second play clock, the Ref shall stop the play/game clock(s), then signal with a pumping motion of one arm to reset the play clock to 25-seconds or signal with a pumping motion of both arms to reset to 40-seconds, then restart the play/game clock(s) accordingly.

NOTE: Fouls by the DEFENSE only warrant a reset of the play clock to 40 seconds.

- b. Umpire:
 - 1) In coordination with the Ref, U maintains control of the ball and places it on the ground as to indicate ready for play when signaled by the Ref with a gesture or whistle.
 - 2) Take a position 4 to 7 yards behind B's line and between A's tackles keeping snap in view. Vary position so players cannot use you as interference.
 - 3) Count five (numbers 50 to 79) A players to ensure a minimum of five players on the LOS with help from the HL and LJ
 - 4) Know position of the ball for incomplete passes coming back to the previous spot.
 - 5) Get to the LoS on a pass; be able to rule whether the pass crossed the line.
 - 6) Identify B players on the LoS in the free blocking zone.
 - 7) Be aware of disconcerting signals by B.
 - 8) Do not blow whistle unless covering official is out of position.
 - 9) Watch for tipped passes and signal if the ball is tipped.
 - 10) As the focal point for continuity of play according to the 40/25-second play clock rules, carefully manage placement of the ball on the ground in between plays in concert with the HL, LJ and Ref.
- c. **Both** Field Judge and Side Judge:
 - 1) Position approximately 20 yards beyond defensive LoS and always deeper than the deepest DB.
 - 2) When the ball is *snapped from the 20 yd line to but not including the 7 yd line, stay on the goal line.*
 - 3) When the ball is *snapped from the 7 yd line and in, move to the end line, splitting the difference between the hashes and the numbers. Still key on 1st receiver.*
 - 4) Count players on defense and signal with opposite deep wing.
 - 5) Responsible for the sideline all day, in concert with short wing partner.
 - 6) Watch for illegal substitutions and officiate the side line (assist short wing partner to ensure the restricted area is clear at the snap).
 - 7) Rule on forward progress from the **1 yd** line to the goal line when positioned on the goal line.
- d. Field Judge:
 - 1) Manages the game clock.
 - 2) Give a 4:00 warning in the 2nd and 4th quarters *if the scoreboard clock is NOT official.*
 - 3) Any of the on-field game officials may correct the game clock at any time, even if the game clock is official. If the clock is corrected twice, take the clock back on the field.

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

e. Side Judge:

- 1) Manages the play clock and time outs; be prepared to provide back-up game clock.
- 2) Provide a visible count when the play clock is about to expire, stepping onto the field with 10 seconds remaining and counting down each of the **last 5 seconds from at or near top of the numbers.**
- 3) Following a designated dead ball, start the 40/25-second play clock according to rule

The **25-second play clock** is used following

1. any scoring play and/or prior to a try following a score
2. to start a period or overtime series
3. changes of possession,
4. after a foul to administer a penalty (*except B fouls ONLY*); includes administration of an inadvertent whistle.
5. after a charged time-out and official time-outs initiated by the Ref.

The **40-second play clock** is used following

1. dead ball (including when a play ends beyond the line to gain),
2. incomplete pass,
3. out of bounds play or
4. when directed to be reset by the Ref in special circumstances.

NOTE: Fouls by the DEFENSE **only** warrant a reset of the play clock to 40 seconds.

f. *Both* Head Linesman and Line Judge:

- 1) Signal if the closest man to you is in the backfield, hold signal until snap.
- 2) Support U in confirming a minimum of five A players are on the LOS. Confirm a maximum of four A players are aligned in the backfield position
- 3) Inform receivers they are either “on the line” or “in the backfield.”
- 4) When marking forward progress and a subsequent dead ball, only the covering official with a whistle should use the appropriate signal (one signal arm held high) to indicate the restart by the BJ of the 40/25-second play clock according to rule. The signal to reset the play clock is predicated on the principle of one whistle by the ***one official having the hard spot.***
- 5) On most plays the finishing position will be somewhere between the top of the 9’s and the hash mark (unless play ends between the 9’s and the sideline).
- 6) If the Referee is facing you, and if you read pass from the tackle, can move cautiously downfield 5 – 7 yards to cover a short pass to your side of the field (be prepared to adjust coverage if potential passer becomes runner).
- 7) Both wings are responsible for the sideline all day (with a few kicking exceptions).
- 8) Watch for illegal substitutions and officiate the side line (ensure players and coaches are not in the restricted area at the snap).
- 9) Responsible for false starts and encroachment from the center to your side.
- 10) Inside the 5 yd line or any other critical spot (3 yds or less on 3rd / 4th down), get to goal line or critical spot on the snap, and then officiate back.
- 11) Pinch the goal line on short yardage situations, hold whistle, signal ONLY IF you see the ball.
- 12) Communicate with U on dive plays up the middle in the end zone (***read signal from U.***)
- 13) Responsible for knowing whether man in motion is moving forward at snap. If he goes away from you, he is yours, if he comes back toward you, he is still yours.
- 14) Make sure all A players (tag up) inside the 9 yard marks after the ready for play signal.
- 15) Punch backward for a **backward** pass behind the LoS.
- 16) When an offensive player moves towards the ball before or after the snap, be alert for illegal block in the back or blindside block by the WR.
- 17) With trips to your side, key on 3rd receiver at the snap.

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

- g. Head Linesman:
 - 1) Know the down and distance.
 - 2) Walks off all penalties with U.
 - 3) Prior to snaps inside the 10 yd line, drop a bean bag at the LoS for reference point.
 - 4) Get to line to gain in critical spot situations. (3 yards or less, on 3rd/4th down); officiate back.
 - 5) Snaps over the QB's head, come back to rule on forward progress.
- h. Line Judge:
 - 1) Know the previous spot.
 - 2) Hold spot of enforcement until it is no longer needed.
 - 3) Hold LOS on snaps over QB's head.
 - 4) Responsible for informing R on obvious 1st downs (on a grass field this will be 3 or more yards beyond sticks, on a well-marked field this will be the entire ball beyond the sticks).
 - 5) Responsible for relaying clock status to Ref after penalties and first downs.

15. Reporting Fouls:

- a. Continue to officiate after you throw a penalty flag.
- b. Make sure someone (usually the FJ or SJ) covers your flag.
- c. Toot your whistle to get the attention of Ref.
- d. If you have forward progress, keep it, the Ref should come to you.
- e. Report the foul, the team and number or position of the offending player, and the result of the play to the Ref.

16. Special Penalty Enforcements.

- a. Fouls that carry loss of down:
 - 1) Illegal handing the ball forward (5-yds spot of foul).
 - 2) Illegal forward pass (5-yds spot foul).
 - 3) Intentional grounding (5-yds spot of foul).
 - 4) Illegal touching in, behind, or beyond the LoS (5-yds all-but-one foul).
- b. Fouls that carry automatic first down:
 - 1) Roughing the passer (15-yds from end of last run, or 15 yds previous spot if there was a change of team possession or the last run was not beyond the LoS)
 - 2) Roughing the kicker, holder, or snapper (15-yds from previous spot)
- c. Fouls by the opponents of the scoring team on a TD are penalized on succeeding spot (the try) or on the next kickoff.
- d. A foul by the defense on a successful FG or Try, you will either enforce the penalty and replay the down/retry, or accept the points and enforce the penalty from the succeeding spot (the KO).
- e. The period can only be extended for an untimed down when time expired during the down and if there was an accepted penalty, if there was a double foul, or if there was an inadvertent whistle.
- f. The period cannot be extended for an untimed down if the accepted foul includes loss of down, unsportsmanlike, non-player, or if a safety occurs during the down in which time expired.
- g. PSK: Fouls by R which occurred beyond the expanded neutral zone during the scrimmage kick in which R is next to put the ball in play. Penalize from the end of the kick. (Blue bean bag)
- h. Fouls by K during a free or scrimmage kick when K will not be next to put the ball in play can be penalized from the succeeding or previous spot.

NEMOA 6 Officials Pregame

(Revised August 2023)

17. Recording penalties and injuries.
 - a. All officials must record their own unsportsmanlike penalties.
 - b. U must record all unsportsmanlike penalties.
 - c. All officials are responsible for recording when they sent a player to the sideline for an apparent concussion or signs of an apparent concussion. This info is required for game report.
 - d. Ref will assign official(s) to record all major (10 & 15 yd) penalties and player ejections for the crew.
18. **Overtime (OT) procedures:**
 - a. We will have a 3-minute intermission.
 - b. The winner of the coin toss can chose either offense, defense, or defend a goal.
 - c. Each team will have one Time Out (TO) for each overtime period. TOs do not carry over from 2nd half. Play starts 1st and goal from the 10 yard line for each series, or the succeeding spot after any carry over penalties. The line to gain is always the goal line in OT.
 - d. If the defense has possession of the ball, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive series is over.
 - e. If the defense scores a TD or Safety, the game is over.
 - f. If the game is still tied after one OT period, there will be a 2-minute intermission; the loser of the initial overtime coin toss will have their choice in the second overtime period.
 - g. The offense will gain a new set of downs for:
 - 1) Defense is guilty of roughing the passer, kicker, holder, or snapper.
 - 2) If the offense recovers a scrimmage kick between the goal lines after it has touched a defensive player beyond the neutral zone.
19. Exiting the field at the end of each half:
 - a. All officials will meet at the HL location, make sure the HL has his clips, and ***walk off the field together.***
 - b. No officials will seek out any coach to shake his hand prior to leaving the field.
 - c. No officials will discuss any play that occurred during the game until in a secure locker room.
 - d. As they would during the game, the officials will answer any questions the head coach may have at the end of the game.
 - e. No official will answer any question from a fan, parent, assistant coach, or player.
 - f. If the AD has a question, the Referee may choose to answer his question after the game, but should do so in the locker room if possible with another official present.