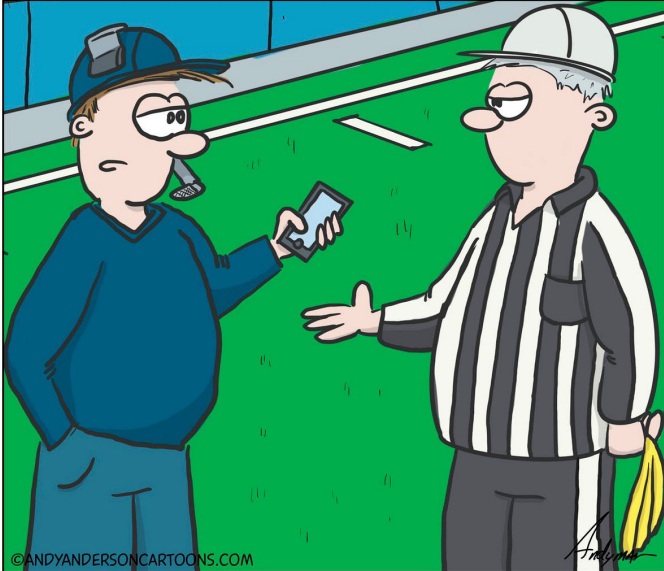


**This Session Is Being Recorded**  
**2026 Pre Season Week A**  
**See it Right. Call it Right.**



THIS PHONE MUST BE YOURS.  
IT HAS 40 MISSED CALLS.

**Michigan 5-official and occasional 7-official mechanics**

**Hosted by: Tri-City Area Officials Association**

- **2025 NFHS Rules Book – Until 2026 rulebooks are available**
- **Please open and use the Chat window during the meeting for questions or comments**
- **Please MUTE now**

**Agenda**

- Weekly Quiz
- Universal Positioning Principles
- The Fundamentals of Positioning
- Rule Dive - Review of 2024, 2025 rule changes and intro to 2026
- Podcast / Video of the Week – 2026 rule changes
- State of Officiating – 2026 Officiate Michigan day and NASO summit
- Philosophy – How to be a great crew member
- Weekly Quiz Answers
- Introduction to Referee U

## Weekly Quiz

1. On first and 10 from the 20, A10 is stopped for no gain. After the play, the A coach on the sideline uses a large screen TV to show an electronic image of a Lion and a Cheesehead. The players from A all look to the sideline, then get immediately into a formation and run a play.
2. First and 10 from the 20. A80 comes out of the huddle and has a mouthpiece inserted into his mouth, and a backup one dangling on a strap from his facemask.
3. First and 10 from the 20. A33 runs a sweep toward the sideline. He fumbles at the 28 yard line as the ball flies out of his hands, crosses the sideline at the 31 and lands out of bounds there. Where is the next snap and when does the game clock start?
4. On the opening kickoff, A18 catches the ball at the 2 yard line and his momentum carries him into the end zone. He tries to run the ball out but fumbles the ball while he is still in the end zone. His fumble bounces into the field of play and rolls out of bounds at the 4 yard line.

## Universal Positioning Principles

Founded in the [2024-2026 Officials Manual](#)

These apply to ALL five officials:

1. Angles over distance

- Proper line of sight > being close to play

2. Continuous movement – page 111

- Small adjustments create better visibility
- “A step or two can open the whole play”

3. Halo principle – page 35

- Closest official handles ball + immediate action
- Others cover surrounding players/secondary action

4. Stay in your lane

- Trust coverage responsibilities
- Avoid ball-watching if not primary

5. Officiate after the play – page 7

- Maintaining distance and angles after a play allows officials to monitor areas around the ball – stay focused until the colors separate

## 5-Person Mechanics — Positioning Fundamentals

### 1. Referee (R)

#### Pre-snap positioning

- 10–12 yards deep (*be at least 12 for safety*), passing-arm side of QB, at least as wide as TE

#### Primary responsibilities

- QB, passer protection, and action behind the play
- Initial direction of pass (forward/backward)
- Trail runner once play develops beyond LOS

#### Movement fundamentals

- **Maintain depth + angle** (don't get too close)
- **Drift laterally with play**; stay behind runner
- Shift focus after handoff → from runner → to trailing action/blocks

#### Key positioning principle

- “Let the play come to you” — keep spacing for a wide field of view

### 2. Umpire (U)

#### Pre-snap positioning

- 5–8 yards behind defensive line, between DEs

#### Primary responsibilities

- Point of **attack interior line play (center/guards)**
- Holding, chop blocks, contact near LOS
- Spot the ball and manage mechanics

#### Movement fundamentals

- Read blocking → move laterally away from hole
- **Use inside-out angles**
- Step up on pass plays to LOS for ineligible/downfield awareness

#### Key positioning principle

- Avoid getting trapped in the hole — create a viewing lane

### 3. Head Linesman (HL)/(LJ)

#### Pre-snap positioning

- Sideline, straddling LOS

#### Primary responsibilities

- Line of scrimmage, offsides, formation
- Forward progress spot on his side
- Sideline + chain crew

#### Movement fundamentals

- Move downfield with play flow
- On outside runs → trail runner slightly
- On **opposite-side plays** → step in and “clean up behind”

#### Key positioning principle

- **Maintain sideline leverage + angle, not speed races**

### 4. Back Judge (BJ)

#### Pre-snap positioning

- 20–25 yards deep, middle of field, deeper than deepest receiver

#### Primary responsibilities

- Deep coverage (passes, kicks)
- **Goal line on long plays**
- Play clock + counting defense

#### Movement fundamentals

- **Stay deeper than deepest player at all times**
- Move laterally sideline-to-sideline
- **Close only after play ends**

#### Key positioning principle

- Don't get beat deep — depth > proximity

## Recent Rule Changes

### 2024

- Clarity on jersey colors
- Players may have only 1 mouth protector

### 2025

- 1.5 Mouth guards cannot include any attachments that do not serve a purpose
- 1.5.3c Fixed electronic signs on the sideline can be used for play calling
- 1.5.3c No player may wear any type of audio/video device to record or transmit
- forward fumbles out of bounds shall be returned to the spot of the fumble

### 2026

- 9.4.7 this year it is illegal for either A or B to slap the opponent's head
- Play cards can be worn on the wrist or on the belt

### POE:

- Flagrant and UNS fouls
- Helping the Runner
- Sideline Management and Control
- Authenticating mark on the game ball

## Podcast/Video of the Week

### MIBT 2026 Rule Changes and Points of Emphasis

- Rules, Mechanics and Judgment
- Review of the 2025 rule changes
- Headslap change
- No more play card police
- No bling on the mouth guard

## State of Officiating

### Officiate Michigan Day

- July 25 Grand Rapids
- \$45 Registration before July 1
- Waiting on the full agenda and speakers

### *NASO Summit*

- July 26-28 Grand Rapids
- Vision and Voice: Make the Case – Manage the Message

**Philosophy** – How to be a great Crew Member - **KEVIN**

- **Be prepared** – Know the rules, review film, and come ready every game.
- **Communicate clearly** – Strong pregame, crisp signals, and consistent crew dialogue.
- **Be a support of the team** – Support each other and present a unified crew.
- **Be accountable** – Own mistakes and learn from them.
- **Keep improving** – Seek feedback and refine mechanics, judgment, and consistency
- **Demonstrate Professionalism** – Before, during, and after the game
- **Be Engaged** – Ask questions and volunteer to fill needs
- **Help your partners look good** – strong signals, relay information, never throw them under the bus
- **Support calls** – never show disagreement publicly
- **Be dependable and Consistent** – be where you are supposed to be, when you are supposed to be there
- **Encourage and Uplift** – provide positive reinforcement
- **Debrief as a crew** – All to contribute and cover the good and the bad, and resolve any conflicts

## Weekly Quiz Answers

1. On first and 10 from the 20, A10 is stopped for no gain. After the play, the A coach on the sideline uses a large screen TV to show an electronic image of a Lion and a Cheesehead. The players from A all look to the sideline, then get immediately into a formation and run a play.

1.5.3c – still electronic images to communicate with a player were made legal in 2025. These must be still images as electronic audio and any video images are still illegal to communicate in plays

2. First and 10 from the 20. A80 comes out of the huddle and has a mouthpiece inserted into his mouth, and a backup one dangling on a strap from his facemask.

1.5.1.5 – A player may have only one tooth and mouth protector

3. First and 10 from the 20. A33 runs a sweep toward the sideline. He fumbles at the 28 yard line as the ball flies out of his hands, crosses the sideline at the 31 and lands out of bounds there. Where is the next snap and when does the game clock start?

4.3.1 When a forward fumble goes out of bounds between the goal lines, it is returned to the spot of the fumble. 3.3.4d the game clock shall start with the ready for play

4. On the opening kickoff, A18 catches the ball at the 2 yard line and his momentum carries him into the end zone. He tries to run the ball out but fumbles the ball while he is still in the end zone. His fumble bounces into the field of play and rolls out of bounds at the 4 yard line.

8.5.2a exception – when the momentum rule is in effect, it includes a fumble that goes from the end zone into the field of play and out of bounds. Return this ball to the beanbag spot of momentum.

**Philosophy** – The core philosophy of the entire staff and association must be consistent.

- **Safety first** – the safety of the players, coaches, us, and others on the sideline is job 1.
- **Call Quality Fouls** – See everything you call but do not call everything you see. Get the BIG ones (including all potentially dangerous contact) and pass on the inconsequential contact
- **Use Preventative Officiating** – Early and Often
- **Do your Part** - Know your job and do it – and trust everybody else to do the same
- **Be Professional** – Includes being mentally and physically prepared, being respectful, and hustling.
- **Good Communications** - with players, coaches, and with the rest of the crew. If something does not feel right get the crew together to discuss. If you have information – bring it!
- **Clock** - Know the clock every play, both the status and the time