

Tandem Communication

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Tandem Communication

Basics



COMMUNICATION with fellow officials is imperative. Communication starts prior to the season and in the Pregame –

- Get to know your crew mates before the season or prior to an assignment. Discuss what information they need from you, and when to provide it. Discuss what information you need from them, and when to provide that.
- Be a listener- look at the person doing the talking.
- During the game - use a calm tone - do not yell; go slow.
- Look everyone with whom you speak in the eye.
- Use the right words ... think before you speak
- Get proper data from other officials before talking with captains or coach.
- Record all pertinent data on your game card so that you can decipher it if is needed. It is very important that all officials document game situation at the end of quarters 1 and 3. Verbalize all information before proceeding with duties.
- Pay attention to the clock... We should all be aware of the status of clock and time.
- Instant Replay communication. The Referee gets a brief description of the play from the covering official(s) to discern what unique aspects of the ruling can be relayed to the replay official.
- If you miss one, don't look back! We must always be ready to officiate the "next" play is an axiom in the CCA manual. We must always be ready to communicate with a tandem official to keep them in the game when this happens.

Tandem Communication

Signals



- Signals are a very important part of our communication. Crisp signals send a clear message of our attitude towards the game and ourselves as officials. Work on signals. Make them brisk and professional. Look at your self in the mirror as you practice signals. These need to be practiced before going out on the field. If available, watch yourself on tape; correct any sloppy or incorrect motions.
- Officials should be prepared to share information or communicate as determined during the pregame. This is expected for experienced officials working with younger ones.
- Officials who have player-counting responsibilities should confirm their count with officials who share that duty. Suggested signals: thumb up for a count of 11, thumb down for more or less than 11.

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Signals



- Officials should understand pre-snap signals prior to working on the field (examples include players off the LOS, unbalanced line, long 5/short 5 for penalty administration, etc.)
- All officials should confirm the down after each play.
- Review signals for use of one ball, under 2 minutes and under 1 minute in each half, fourth down fumble, etc. What other signals are important for the entire crew to know? These must be discussed with the crew prior to the game.

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Sidelines



- On pass plays near the sidelines, wing officials can communicate before making their ruling. The officials need only make eye contact and nod “yes” to indicate a legal catch. If either sees the ball dropped or the receiver fail to get a foot down inbounds, the incomplete pass signal should be given. If there is disagreement, both officials should give the stop-the-clock signal but no other signal. They then confer to share information before arriving at a consensus. Emphasis here is to slow down and digest the play. Don’t be in a rush to rule on this.

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Catchable Pass



- If the pass may have been uncatchable, never ask the covering official, "Do you think the pass was catchable?" This sends many messages which are not helpful. One, he may be intimidated by the presence of another official and feel that he now needs to say it was uncatchable merely because the seed was planted. Two, it can also send the signal that the helping official disagrees with the call and is challenging his ability. So instead ask, "Did you see the pass?" This is an open question which plants no seeds and yet still gives the official an opportunity to rethink his position.
- If the calling official agrees to make the change, the calling official signals the correct decision, not the helping official.

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Penalty Administration



- Any official who calls a foul should tell the Referee the clock status in addition to the information relating to the foul (including status - during the run, during the kick, during the return, etc.). On plays that end at the sideline, covering officials must signal whether the clock should remain running or should be stopped. The Line Judge, Center Judge and Umpire should confirm with the Referee whether the clock should start on the ready or the snap. Suggested signals are a circular motion of the index finger at waist level to indicate the clock starts on the ready and snapping the fingers at waist level or crossed arms across the chest to indicate it will start on the snap. The appropriate wing official may also help the Referee by placing the ball outside the sideline if the clock starts on the snap or inside the sideline if it starts on the ready.
- Verbal communication is necessary if two officials throw penalty flags in the same area of the field. A brief conversation allows the officials to confirm what they've seen and ensure that the proper penalty is enforced.

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Penalty administration



- It is now mandatory that the calling official give a preliminary signal unless there are mitigating circumstances such as multiple fouls, double fouls or situation that require verbal communications with other officials prior to determination of the foul. It is absolutely crucial that this signal be given so that everyone can make an immediate determination whether the enforcement is obvious or an option is required from the offended team. Additionally, it helps to sell difficult calls such as pass interference.
- The calling official shall give a preliminary signal to include the foul signal and the direction of the offending team as soon as the play is over. Advance toward the Referee to provide the number of the player that committed the foul and any other information required to correctly enforce the penalty. Use of the O2O helps speed up the process. If multiple officials call a foul, they should quickly determine they have called the same foul and one of them would then give the signal and report the number.
- The Umpire, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge will work together to enforce the yardage distance while the Referee makes the announcement. The 1,2,3 finger signal for 5,10,15 yard penalties can be used.

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Managing the 10 Second Run Off Rule



- Situations involving the 10-second runoff rule require extreme focus and concentration by the entire crew so that the rule is administered correctly and as efficiently as possible.
- All officials need to know when this rule is applicable.
- Communication between Referee and sideline officials is critical, especially when both coaches have options (Fouling team has timeouts remaining and it is not obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff (e.g., foul occurs on third or fourth down in the first half). The O2O is used, however, officials should understand how to communicate either verbally or with signals if O2O is not in use.
- It will be crucial that sideline officials recognize when it arises. They should get the appropriate information to each head coach so that the proper decisions can be made with as little delay.

Tandem Communication

Changing a Call



- If there is disagreement on a call, the helping official blows the whistle and simultaneously uses the stop-the-clock signal. The helping official then runs toward the calling official. That's an obvious indicator to the calling official that something needs discussion.
- The helping official tells the calling official, "Here's what I saw." That initiates a quick conversation about what happened. The calling official makes the decision on how to handle it.
- If the calling official agrees to make the change, the calling official signals the correct decision, not the helping official.
- When two officials cannot agree on what they saw or are unsure, the Referee must become involved. The Referee listens to each official in turn, the three arrive at a decision (the Referee may be forced to break a tie vote) and the Referee alone signals.

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Changing a Call



- Changing a call should be a rare occurrence. However, a call must be changed whenever officials are 100% certain an error has occurred. “I think” is not acceptable. The helping official must see the entire play clearly to offer an opinion. Ninety-nine percent confidence is not enough to change a call.
- Virtually any call can be discussed. Whether it’s a catch/no catch or facemask/no facemask, if an official who had a better angle can help his crew get the call right, the helping official owes it to his crewmate to initiate a discussion. Help is expected and commonly accepted.
- Incorrect rule applications must be changed. Rules applications are different from judgment calls. If you know your crew is applying a rule incorrectly (such as including a loss of down on an ineligible downfield penalty), step in immediately.

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On Field Discussions



- Crews should seek to minimize on-field conferences, as they give the appearance of weakness and confusion. Those should be limited to complex situations that demand officials communicate the specifics of the play to one another.

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Managing Time Outs



GAMES w/o MEDIA:

- The Back Judge times all time outs. On the Back Judge's signal, which comes with 30 seconds remaining in the timeout, point to the appropriate sideline officials so they may tell the teams the timeout is over. On the Back Judge's subsequent signal that the timeout has expired, or if both teams return to the field before the time expires, the referee will blow the whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. If a team has used its last timeout of a half, the referee shall inform the head coach.

Games with MEDIA:

- The Red Hat will not start the TV timeout until the Referee gives the "TV timeout signal," which is punching out with both fists. In requesting a TV timeout, the Red Hat will cross both arms and the Referee will acknowledge if he plans to grant the request by pointing to the ground. Once granted, keep arms crossed as you step out onto the field so that it is clear to both benches that a TV timeout has been granted.
- At each allowed TV or media timeout, the Back Judge will stand next to the Red Hat. He should confirm the number of timeouts taken during the quarter and the length of the current timeout. While timing the timeout, the Back Judge and Red Hat should agree on the consumed time.
- When 30 seconds remain in the TV timeout, the Back Judge should jog to his position. This is an indication to the coaches, players, game day managers and other officials that the TV timeout is less than 30 seconds from concluding. At the same time, the Red Hat will extend his left arm fully down to his side at a 45 degree angle. The right hand will remain crossed.
- When 15 seconds remain in the TV time out, the Red Hat will raise his right hand above his head to signal "15 seconds until the end of the TV timeout." The officials with each team will tell the coach "15 seconds" and be proactive in getting the teams onto the field to begin play.
- At the end of the timeout, the Back Judge will point to the Referee who will then make the ball ready for play.
- All officials should record the team requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. The calling official also records the player's number or that the coach called the timeout.