

20. TIMING AND THE END OF PERIODS

20.1 – Stadium clocks

1. If there are one or more visible game clocks, they will be official. (It would be silly for officials not to use a clock that is visible to the players, coaches, spectators and their colleagues.) To be considered visible, at least one clock must be visible from every spot on the field of play. If not, the stadium clock(s) will not be used.
2. If there are visible play clocks, they will be official. To be considered visible, there must be play clocks behind each end line, at least one of which is visible to the quarterback from every point in the field of play inside the hashmarks. If not, the stadium play clocks will not be used.
3. In most circumstances, the stadium clock operator(s) should be able to start and stop the clock more accurately than anyone on the crew. He/they should have nothing else to do.
4. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] Keep your watch in approximate time with the stadium clock. The main reasons for doing this are:
 - (a) in case the stadium clock suddenly goes blank;
 - (b) in case the stadium clock operator forgets to start or stop it, and as a consequence a significant amount of time is lost or gained.
5. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] You are responsible for checking that the stadium clock starts and stops when it should. Other officials in a better position to view the clock may help you. This is most important if the game clock is behind you. Discuss in the pre-game who is going to do this.
6. Small errors in timing should just be ignored. A few seconds here or there, especially early in a period, are unlikely to bother anyone. Even at the end of a half, an error of a second or two may not matter unless it denies a team an opportunity to score, or gives them an opportunity they should not have.
7. Corrections to the stadium clock should only be made when there is an important or obvious error. An error of less than one second per minute remaining in the quarter should be ignored (e.g. an error of five seconds can be ignored if there are more than five minutes remaining).
8. When a correction is necessary, it should be made before the next play starts. If an error is not corrected promptly, ignore it and carry on.
9. If the visible clock is malfunctioning (or in very extreme cases, if the stadium clock operator is completely incompetent), the Referee should order it to be switched off.
10. Don't ruin a good game by splitting hairs about the time. It will make you look over-officious, especially if you do it repeatedly.

20.2 – Two-minute warning

1. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] If the rules provide for it, notify the Referee to issue the two-minute warning when the ball is dead and two minutes or less remain in the half. (Exception: If a touchdown has been scored on the previous play the two-minute warning will be given after the try.)
2. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] At the appropriate time, blow your whistle, stop your watch and signal timeout (S3). Notify the Referee that it is the two-minute warning, and inform him of the exact time remaining.
3. [REFEREE] Announce the two-minute warning and signal it to both sidelines using the TV/radio timeout signal (S4) (Rule 3-3-8-b). Ensure that the on-field captain and Head Coach of each team have been informed of *exactly* how much time remains in the half, not just that it is the two-minute warning.
4. If the clock was stopped to issue the two-minute warning it must be started again when the ball is next snapped (or after a free kick).

20.3 – Each period

1. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] Near the end of each half, ensure whenever the clock stops that all officials are kept informed of the time remaining. By rule, unless there is a stadium clock, after the two-minute warning in each half, inform the on-field captain and Head Coach of each team of the exact time remaining each time the clock is stopped (Rule 3-3-8-c).
2. Responsibility for ruling whether the ball is snapped before or after the period ended:
 - (a) If there are no stadium clocks, the on-field timekeeper is responsible. If his watch does not have an audible or vibration alert, he should raise it in front of his eyes so that he can monitor play and the time concurrently.
 - (b) If there are stadium clocks, the on-field timekeeper should remind the Referee and Umpire that they are responsible. If there is a clock behind each end zone, the primary responsibility rests with the Referee. If there is a clock behind only one end zone, the responsibility rests with whoever is facing it. If the clock is behind neither end zone or it is out of the Referee and Umpire's normal view, an appropriate official has the responsibility. Which official this is should be determined in the pre-game conference.
3. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] When time expires, blow your whistle if the ball is dead. Other officials should assist in relaying a ball to the Referee in order that he can signal the end of the quarter.

20.4 – First and third periods

1. [REFEREE AND UMPIRE] Go to the succeeding spot and record (in writing) the yard line on which the ball is placed, its lateral position, the number of the next down and the distance to the line to gain.
2. [UMPIRE] Accompanied by the Referee, take the ball across midfield to its new location and re-spot it.
3. [LINE JUDGE] Move quickly to the succeeding spot (both yard line *and* lateral position) in the opposite half of the field, and indicate the new location where the ball should next be put into play.
4. [LINE JUDGE] Move the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker, but they should remain at their end of period location until you have recorded their positions.
5. [LINESMAN] Record the yard line on which the chain clip is set, the yard line on which the ball is placed, the number of the next down and the distance to the line to gain.
6. [LINESMAN] Once you have recorded these details, grasp the chain and the clip, and keeping hold of it, reverse the chain and move it and its crew to the corresponding yard line in the other half of the field. The down box should be moved to its new position at the same time (under the supervision of the Side Judge, if there is one).
7. [SIDE JUDGE] Supervise the down box operator in moving the down box to its new position.
8. [BACK JUDGE AND FIELD JUDGE] Move to the new location for the next play with the players.
9. After completion of these duties, take position for the next play. The ball should not be declared ready for play until one minute has elapsed since the end of the period. [UMPIRE] Time this intermission.

20.5 – Half time intermission

1. [LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE] Ensure that one captain from the team on your side of the field reports to the Referee before leaving the playing area.
2. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] Confirm to the Referee the duration of the interval, the correct time of day, and the correct time that the second half will commence.
3. [REFEREE] Relay this information to the captains, with the instruction that the teams must be back on the field ready to restart at the scheduled time.
4. [REFEREE] When the field is clear of players and coaches, signal the start of the intermission by giving the start the clock signal (S2). [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] Start your watch on this signal. If there is a stadium clock, it too should be started and shall count down the time remaining in the interval.
5. Maintain possession of the game balls during the interval.
6. [REFEREE] [UMPIRE] Not more than five minutes before the end of the interval, visit each team (in the place where they have spent the interval, if necessary) and establish the options for the second half. Go first to the team having first choice of option in the second half, and then their opponents. [REFEREE] Ensure that both teams know who is kicking off and which goal each team is defending.
7. The other officials should go directly to the field and ensure that the chain crew, alternate crew and ball boys are present. The responsible official(s) shall ensure that the game balls are taken back to the field.
8. [ON A 4-MAN CREW] [LINE JUDGE]
[ON A 5/7-MAN CREW] [BACK JUDGE]
[ON A 6-MAN CREW] [FIELD JUDGE] Make sure that a ball is available for the kick-off.

20.6 – End of game

1. [REFEREE] Signal the end of the game (S14).
2. [LINESMAN] Recover your chain clip.
3. [UMPIRE] Recover the game ball last used.
4. [LINESMAN, LINE JUDGE, FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE] Recover the spare game balls from the ball persons.
5. After the Referee has signalled the end of the game, immediately get together in pairs (or larger groups) and leave the field at a modest and uniform pace (set by the nearest official to the dressing room).
 - (a) If an official is carrying the dressing room key, he should ensure he is the first one to reach the dressing room.
 - (b) You should neither seek nor avoid coaches and players.
 - (c) If hassled by anyone, keep walking.
 - (d) Do not remain on or near the field to chat with players, coaches, spectators or anyone.
6. Any request for discussion regarding the officiating of the game must be directed towards the Referee. [REFEREE] Be prepared to discuss any rules interpretation (in the dressing room, not on the field), but politely refuse to discuss judgment calls.
7. All officials should complete any administrative duties required of them.
8. Officials are responsible after the game to ensure that the balls and any other equipment are returned to game management.