

7. PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

A pre-game conference is an opportunity for the crew to get into the right frame of mind to officiate a football game. For this reason a pre-game conference should always be held.

Although the Referee normally conducts the pre-game conference, he must ensure that all members of the crew are actively involved in the discussion and that it does not turn into a monologue. When working with the same crew regularly, it is essential that the pre-game conference should be varied so that it does not become a boring ritual which everybody has heard before. Share the responsibility for the pre-game by assigning different members of the crew to talk about different points each game.

All aspects of the game must be covered during the pre-game conference; this includes both rules and mechanics. Discuss rare and unusual game situations and decide how you would cover them. Describe experiences of previous games and how you handled them.

The following checklist is provided as a guide.

7.1 – Pre-game duties

1. Coaches certification
2. Spot check players' equipment
3. Check and mark balls
4. Identify medical facilities
5. Instruction of chain crew and alternates
6. Instruction of ball boys
7. Instruction for commentator/stadium clock operator(s)
8. Inspection of field

7.2 – Coin toss procedure

1. First half procedure
2. Second half options

7.3 – Free kicks

1. Positions
2. Instructions to teams
3. Restraining lines
4. Count players
5. Starting clock
6. Momentum into end zone
7. Touchback
8. Untouched kick out of bounds
9. Blocking below waist
10. Kick catch interference
11. Fair catch
12. Handing ball forward
13. Onside kick – illegal touching
14. Free kick after safety

7.4 – Scrimmage plays – general

1. Positions
2. Count players
3. Legality of offensive formation – wing officials signals
4. Man in motion
5. Legality of snap

7.5 – Scrimmage plays – runs

1. Coverage of ball carrier – in backfield, between tackles, sweeps, pitchout
2. Action in front of ball carrier
3. Clean-up coverage
4. Forward progress – out of bounds
5. Goal line/short yardage situations
6. Coverage of fumbles, and ensuing advances and returns

7.6 – Scrimmage plays – passes

1. Coverage of passer – roughing
2. Passer/pass behind/beyond line of scrimmage: clarify jurisdiction
3. Forward/backward pass/fumble: clarify jurisdiction
4. Intentional grounding: clarify jurisdiction
5. Ineligibles downfield
6. Keys and zones
7. Coverage of receivers
8. Complete/incomplete
9. Pass interference – offensive, defensive
10. First touching
11. Coverage on interception – momentum into end zone, blocking below waist

7.7 – Returns

1. Reverse mechanics
2. Boxing the play in
3. Goal line responsibilities

7.8 – Punts

1. Positions
2. Coverage of kicker – running into/roughing
3. Coverage of snapper
4. Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage – ball beyond/behind neutral zone
5. Kick catch interference
6. Fair catch
7. Untouched in end zone
8. Out of bounds – marking spot
9. Illegal touching
10. Coverage of runback – ball carrier, other action, blocking below waist
11. Fakes

7.9 – Field goals & try attempts

1. Positions
2. Coverage of posts
3. Coverage of kicker/holder – running into/roughing
4. Coverage of snapper
5. Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage – ball beyond/behind neutral zone
6. Fakes
7. Coverage when defense gain possession

7.10 – General duties

1. Fumble pile-ups
2. Ball relay

7.11 – End of quarter duties

1. 1st & 3rd
2. Half
3. End of game
4. End of period ruling (if stadium clock(s))
5. Extra periods

7.12 – Timeouts

1. Records
2. Positions

7.13 – Measurements

1. Duties of each official

7.14 – Fouls & enforcement

1. Reporting – who, what, where, when
2. Recording fouls
3. Options
4. Signals
5. Enforcement

7.15 – Reserve positions in case of injury

1. If one official is hurt
2. If two officials are hurt