

## 8. BEFORE THE KICKOFF

### 8.1 – Before the game – off the field

1. Meet with the other officials at the stadium at the agreed time. This should normally be at least 1½ hours before kickoff time for a regular game, and 2-3 hours for a playoff, international or other important game.
2. As early as possible after arriving at the stadium, inspect the facilities and the playing surface, particularly for hazards and obstructions. Seek the co-operation of game management to rectify any faults.
3. [REFEREE] Lead a thorough pre-game conference to prepare the crew mentally for the game. Ensure that all members of the crew contribute to it. A pre-game conference guide can be found in section 7. [OTHERWISE] Participate in the pre-game conference. If the Referee is delayed for any reason, the conference should be led by the Linesman or the senior official present.
4. [REFEREE] [UMPIRE] Prior to the game visit each team (normally in its changing room at least one hour before kickoff).
  - (a) Identify and introduce yourself to the Head Coach.
  - (b) Verify that each Head Coach provides a roster and signs a Coaches' Certification to confirm that all players have been issued with the mandatory equipment and have been instructed in its use, etc. Confirm the game kickoff time, and any other timing details concerning the teams' arrival on the field of play.
  - (c) Review with the Coach the items listed in section 4.3.
  - (d) Review any unusual game procedures or situations with the Coach. Note any trick plays that may be used.
  - (e) Keep the roster form with you in case of any challenge during the game (Rule 13-8-1-b - BAFA only).
  - (f) [UMPIRE] Spot-check players' equipment and taping. Record numbers of players with illegal equipment or without mandatory equipment so that they can be re-checked when they get out onto the field of play.
5. [OTHERWISE] While the Referee and Umpire are visiting the Head Coaches:
  - (a) If one or both teams are running drills on the field, you may choose to take advantage of this to get into position and (without whistles, flags or overt signals, and without making your presence too obvious) practice your keys, movement and response to the play.
  - (b) The officials responsible for briefing the chain crew and ball boys may go out onto the field and do this.
  - (c) Return to the changing room once you have completed your tasks or the teams have finished their drills.
6. Synchronise your watch with the official who will keep the game clock.
7. Examine the game balls provided. If they are acceptable, mark each ball and pass them to the officials responsible for ensuring that they arrive at the field of play.
8. Complete any pre-game paperwork that is required by the competition or your officiating organisation.
9. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] Before leaving the changing room:
  - (a) Ensure that you have the correct time. Have a countdown stop-watch available and be conversant with its use. Check that another member of the crew is carrying a spare stop-watch in case the primary one becomes defective.
  - (b) Confirm the kickoff time and relay this to the other officials. It is your responsibility to ensure that all officials arrive on the field at the correct time.
10. Check that you and all your colleagues are wearing the correct uniform and are carrying their necessary equipment. The Umpire normally leads on this.

11. Leave the changing room with the other officials in time to arrive at the field 10-20 minutes before the scheduled start time (earlier if the chain crew and/or ball boys still need to be briefed, or the field is some distance away; later if not).
12. Assist if required in conveying the game balls to the field. One official is responsible for ensuring that the game balls are conveyed to the field (seeking the assistance of other officials if necessary). [ON A 4-MAN CREW] This is the Line Judge. [ON A 5/7-MAN CREW] This is the Back Judge. [ON A 6-MAN CREW] This is the Field Judge.

## 8.2 – Before the game – on the field

1. All officials should arrive at the field no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time. Be earlier than this if you anticipate any difficulties with the teams, chains, chain crew, balls, ball boys, field markings or equipment, or are required to do so by the schedule for pre-game activities.
2. Note the location of the press box. If there is not a formal press box, the side deemed to be the press box is determined solely by the position of (in usual order of priority) the primary TV camera, the announcer/commentator or the majority of spectators, *not* by which side of the field the home team chooses to use.
3. Note the location of the medical facilities.
4. Check that game management has made any necessary changes to rectify faults in the facilities or playing area.
5. [REFEREE]
  - (a) Assist [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] the Line Judge or [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] the Side Judge with re-inspecting the whole of the playing area and its immediate surrounds.
  - (b) Assist the Umpire with spot-checking players' equipment.
  - (c) Check that both teams are at the field and are ready for play.
  - (d) Verify that all the other officials have completed their duties.
6. [UMPIRE] Spot-check player equipment. Get other officials to assist you once they have completed their own duties.
7. [LINESMAN]
  - (a) Locate and check the chain for length, kinks, and knots. You should carry tape or string against which to measure the chain (between the inside edges of the stakes).
  - (b) Mark the mid-point of the chain (5 yards from each end) with a piece of tape or supplementary clip to help determine whether or not a defensive penalty will result in the line to gain being reached.
  - (c) Introduce yourself to the chain crew and brief them in the procedures detailed in section 22.1.
8. [LINE JUDGE]
  - (a) [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] Re-inspect the whole of the playing area and its immediate surrounds. Note any unusual markings and notify other officials. Ensure that game management has rectified any faults.
  - (b) Ensure that the game balls are available.
  - (c) Introduce yourself to the ball persons and brief them in the procedures detailed in section 22.3. Retain possession of the balls until the ball boys are briefed – do not allow players to practice with them.
  - (d) Organise and brief the alternate down box and line-to-gain marker crew (if provided) in the procedures detailed in section 22.2.
9. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER]
  - (a) If a stadium clock is available, brief its operator (in Britain, according to BAFA Rule 13-3-5).

- (b) Instruct the announcer on signals and procedures, and inform him of the names and positions of the officials. Check and confirm with him details of the following:
    - (i) Kickoff time
    - (ii) Pre-game ceremonies (anthems, announcing teams, etc.)
    - (iii) Half-time activities (time to clear field)
  - (c) Discuss with the available medical personnel what signals are to be used to summon them on to the field. Inform the other officials of the agreed signals.
10. [SIDE JUDGE]
- (a) If stadium play clocks are available, brief their operator (in Britain, according to BAFA Rule 13-3-6).
  - (b) Re-inspect the whole of the playing area and its immediate surrounds. Note any unusual markings and notify other officials. Ensure that game management has rectified any faults.
11. [FIELD JUDGE] Assist the Line Judge with identifying and briefing the ball persons in the procedures detailed in section 22.3. Retain possession of the balls until the ball boys are briefed – do not allow players to practice with them.
12. If you have not already done so, identify and introduce yourself to the captains and coaches of the team on your side of the field.
13. [LINESMAN] [LINE JUDGE] Ask the Head Coach to appoint or identify a "get-back coach" to assist you in keeping personnel well clear of the sideline during the game.

### 8.3 – Ceremonies

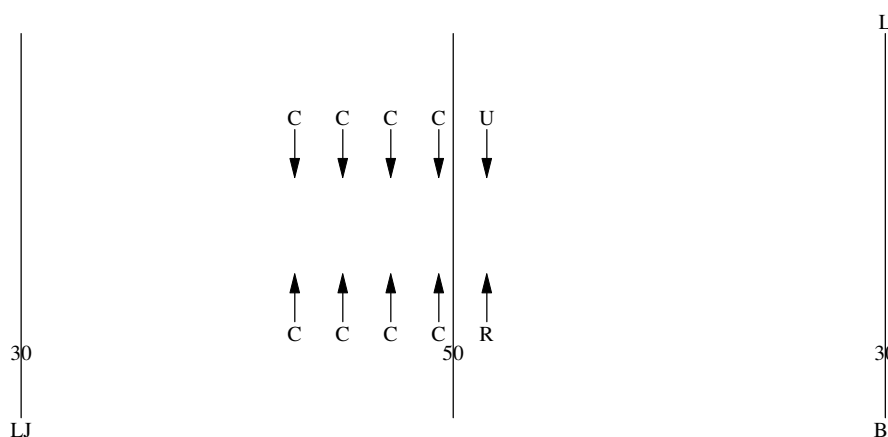
1. There are a number of different formats for ceremonies prior to kickoff. This section attempts to address the officials' roles and responsibilities at these times. Game management may vary the procedure, but equally may seek the officials' advice in how to organise the ceremony.
2. Ceremonies are often used for one or more of the following purposes:
  - (a) to introduce the teams
  - (b) to play the national anthem(s)
  - (c) to observe a minute's silence in respect of someone who has died (this includes Remembrance Sunday in the UK)
  - (d) to involve some important person (e.g. politician or celebrity)

The coin toss may take place before, after or during these, provided that Rule 3-1-1 is not infringed.
3. Principles to aim to achieve:
  - (a) If national flags are on formal display (i.e. not just being waved by spectators), it is a good idea to face them during the playing of the national anthem(s).
  - (b) You want to avoid the situation where you are facing one team and have your back to the other. If both teams are lined up together, face the same way as them. If both teams are on/near their sideline facing the middle of the field, it is better to be at one end of the field (e.g. 30-yard line, 20-yard line, goal line or end line) facing the opposite end line, then both teams are in your view.
  - (c) The officials should line up in single file abreast. The Referee should be in the centre of the line, or at one end of it.
  - (d) All officials must remove their cap during the playing of any national anthem or holding a minute's silence. It is a matter of personal taste whether an individual official holds it over their chest, lower down, or at their side.
  - (e) If there is no master-of-ceremonies and/or game management ask the Referee to start the anthem(s) or minute's silence, the Referee will signal the start by taking off his cap. Under these circumstances, the Referee should time the duration of the silence, and signal the end of it by replacing his cap on his head.

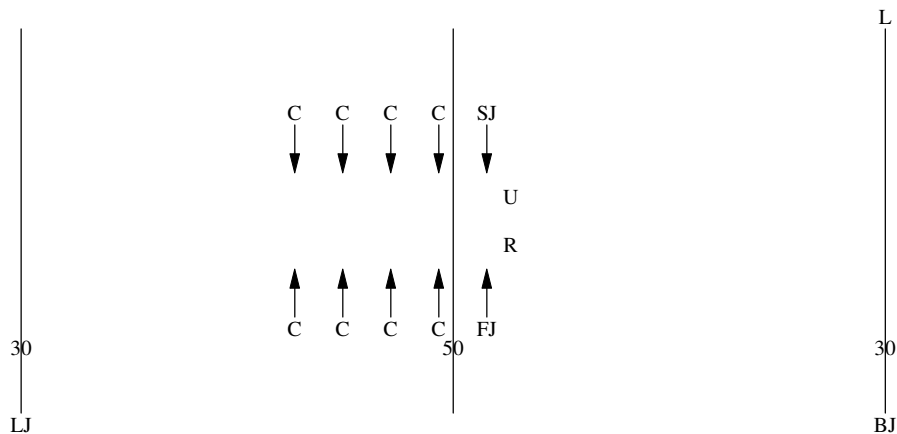
- (f) If the ceremony is entirely under the control of the officials, it is best to do the coin toss first, then play the anthem(s) or have the minute's silence once the captains have returned to their teams on the sideline. In this case the officials should line up as in (b) above.
- (g) If both a minute's silence and national anthem(s) take place, the protocol is for the minute's silence to take place before the playing of any anthem.

### 8.4 – Coin toss

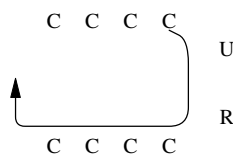
1. After completion of pre-game duties, the Referee, Line Judge, Back Judge and Field Judge go to the press box sideline and the Umpire, Linesman and Side Judge go to the opposite sideline.
2. Get the team captains of the team on your side of the field and have them ready on the sideline 5 minutes before scheduled kickoff time.
  - (a) Ensure that there are no more than four captains (excluding non-playing mascots) and that they are carrying rather than wearing their helmets.
  - (b) The captains should be lined up on the sideline. On the press box sideline, they should be lined up on the left shoulder of the Referee or Field Judge. On the sideline opposite the press box, they should be lined up on the right shoulder of the Umpire or Side Judge.
3. Positions and duties during coin toss ceremony:
  - (a) [ON A 4/5-MAN CREW] On the Referee's signal, the Referee and Umpire shall escort their respective captains to the centre of the field (see diagram below). The Umpire will introduce his captains to the Referee and then step back to a position where he can witness the toss.



- (b) [ON A 6/7-MAN CREW] The Referee and Umpire shall take up position in the centre of the field. The Field Judge and Side Judge shall escort their respective captains on to the field and introduce them to the Referee (see diagram below). Once they have done this they should retreat to join the remaining officials.



- (c) The remaining officials should monitor the players in the team area on their side of the field.
- At least one official should be positioned on or near each 30-yard line. (They may need to be on the 25-yard line during the coin toss in order to be able to monitor the entire team.)
  - If the players enter the field, go with them and ensure that they stop at or before the 9-yard marks.
  - If one or more of the remaining officials is still carrying out their pre-game duties (such as briefing the chain crew), that takes precedence over this ceremonial duty.
  - One official will be holding the ball for the kickoff. [ON A 5/7-MAN CREW] This is the Back Judge. [ON A 4/6-MAN CREW] This is the Line Judge.
- (d) During the toss ceremony, only those participating in the ceremony should be inside the 9-yard lines. All other players, coaches, etc. should be in the team area or outside the 9-yard lines (Rule 3-1-1).
- The Referee shall introduce himself to the captains. It is not necessary for the Referee to introduce the other officials.
  - The Referee will introduce the captains to each other. Have the home team stay still and have the visiting team come round and shake hands with them (see diagram below).



- The Referee shall:
  - show the speaking captains both sides of the coin, and clarify any doubt there may be as to which side is heads and which side is tails;
  - ask the visiting captain to call the toss clearly (ask him again if his call is not clear);
  - toss the coin and either catch it or let it drop to the ground in view of the captains;
  - indicate the winning captain by placing a hand on or near his shoulder;
  - explain the winning captain's options.
- The winning captain can choose to:
  - defer his options to the second half;
  - kick off;
  - receive the ball;
  - defend either goal.

If the captain's option is unusual, confirm that you heard his choice correctly.

8. If the winning captain elects to defer his options to the second half, the Referee should, after placing a hand on or near the captain's shoulder, step well clear and give the option deferred signal (S10) towards the press box. The losing captain should then be given the remaining options.
9. The captains shall then be instructed to face each other with their backs to the goal which they will be defending.
10. The Referee will step back to be in front of the captains of the team that had the options for the half, ensuring that his position is not obscured from the press box.
  - (a) The Referee should signal the choice by making a kicking or catching motion while facing the same direction as the captains.
  - (b) There is no need to give the opposite signal for the other team.
  - (c) If the captain elects to defend a goal, point with both arms towards the goal line and then give an appropriate signal for the choice of the other captain.
11. **Summary:**
  - (a) indicate the team that has won the toss, and if they have deferred their options;
  - (b) determine who is going to receive, and at which end;
  - (c) move the captains (this tells everyone which goal each team is defending);
  - (d) indicate *either* who is receiving *or* who is kicking off, but *not* both;
  - (e) it is not necessary for spectators to be told which option each captain has chosen other than in the case of a deferral.
12. Unless there is a national anthem/minute's silence ceremony, the officials should go directly to their kickoff positions after the coin toss ceremony has been completed.
13. Before going to his position, [ON A 5/7-MAN CREW] the Back Judge, [ON A 4/6-MAN CREW] the Line Judge will bring the ball for the kickoff on to the field and pass it to the Umpire.
14. At the request of game management, the toss of the coin may be performed by an individual or attended by a small group of persons. Such persons shall not, however, be permitted to perform the kickoff.