



IAFOA mechanics changes 2023 (MOFO 19th edition)

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Editor, Manual of Football Officiating

Introduction

- 19th edition published in January 2023
 - Changes from 18th edition marked in blue text
 - Major changes have a box around them
 - 22 major changes; 470 other changes
- Reminder of change marks
 - ‡ mechanic changed due to CFO change
 - † mechanic changed for better coverage
 - § fill gap in existing mechanic
 - ◇ clarification or enhancement of existing mechanic
 - @ change for better communication
 - ® change due to rule change
 - λ editorial amendment
 - x previous text deleted

Wing officials on pass plays (crew of 4/5/6C)

- We've seen too many examples of wing officials getting themselves into dangerous positions
 - Moving downfield anticipating pass; then play is a run to their side
 - Moving downfield for pass, but pass is completed shorter than them
- NEW (M11.4.b.2)
 - Most passes are short or incomplete; longer passes give more time to move while ball in air
 - **Stay on the LOS until you are confident a pass is being thrown that will cross NZ**
 - Then move downfield appropriately to be in the best position to see end of pass
 - sidestepping for a short pass; turn to sprint if necessary for deep pass
 - Do not get ahead of the intended receiver
 - Much more like role of wing official on crew of 6D/7/8
- Try and keep head still as pass is about to arrive (general point)

Centre judge on field goals

- 8: be wider; mirror position of R (M9.8.b.2.b)
- 6C: be **under the posts** with B (M9.8.b.2.a, etc.)
 - take the press box post
 - better than L under posts
 - experiments show C usually easier/quicker to get there
 - L to posts and C to L would create 2 opportunities for things to go wrong
 - on long attempts (snap outside B-20), can still do "one judge" mechanic

Initial position of deep officials on goal line plays

- Back judge (crew of 7/8) (M15.5.b.2)
 - Snap outside 25 – start on goal line (as before)
 - Snap inside 15 – start on end line (as before)
 - between 25 and 15 – start in end zone and react to play
 - was start on goal line, but sometimes too close
 - if GL is threatened, move up
 - if EL is threatened, move back
- Deep wings (M14.5.b.1)
 - Always be outside the sideline
 - previous text suggested be on sideline

Penalty enforcement (M19.3)

- Going back to previous practice of L holding enforcement spot
 - exceptions:
 - previous spot enforcement on free kicks
 - when L responsible for end of kick (crews of 4/5)
 - checking enforcement is more important than covering flags or talking to coaches
- Confirm enforcement details verbally (U or C or L)
 - distance, enforcement spot, succeeding spot
 - "we're going 10 yards from the 36 to the 26"
 - "half-distance from 8 to 4"
 - either by voice or radio
 - avoid clashing with R's penalty announcements
- Clock options can be considered "obvious"
 - team in lead will want to consume time; team trailing will want to conserve

Coin toss and pregame

- Some competitions are introducing minimum numbers for players (i.e. squad members) and coaches
 - No need to count if it is obvious (M8.2.6)
- Standardising practice to turn on public radio (e.g. stadium or broadcast mic) during coin toss (M8.4.6)
 - Turn it off if you have to resolve a problem
- Standardising procedure for dealing with VIP coin toss (M8.4.11)
 - VIP(s) stick with R
 - Refer to them formally over public radio (if PA doesn't)
 - "Here to toss the coin is the Honourable Archibald Zebra, Mayor of Frumfrum"
- Remember to test radios and liaise with Video Judge during pregame conference (M7.1.9)

End of period duties

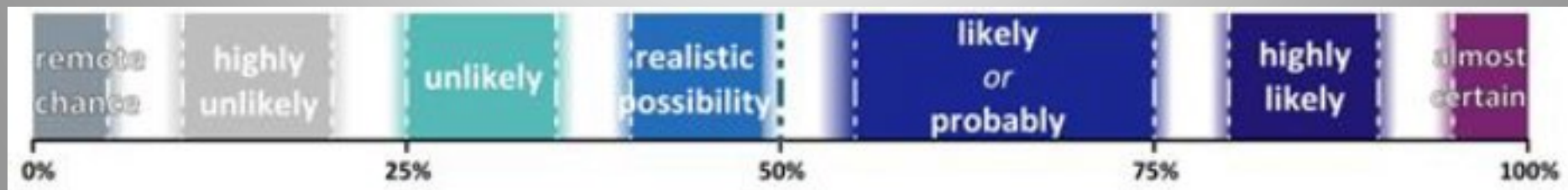
- Consistent communication (M20.3.2)
 - R should use public radio to announce time ...
 - whenever clock stops after 2 minutes in each half ...
 - if no visible game clock
- At end of 1st and 3rd quarters ... (M20.4.2)
 - Too many mistakes being made
 - R, U, C, H, S: do not move from succeeding spot yard line until you agree you have all recorded the correct info

New rule interpretations

- Clarified what is flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct (M3.5.3)
 - existing
 - spitting
 - aggravated abusive language (race, sexual orientation, etc.)
 - new
 - extreme
 - more likely if directed at officials rather than players
- Clarified what rule to apply if a player "strikes" an opponent (M3.5.7)
 - personal foul – typical for live-ball action
 - unsportsmanlike conduct – typical for dead-ball action
 - fighting – reserve for more serious, prolonged action

Dealing with uncertainty (M6.1)

- We need a more mature approach to "when in doubt" situations
 - Too many officials use WID as a crutch for ignorance
- Uncertainty should trigger attempt to get more information:
 - adjusting position
 - talking to colleagues about what they saw
 - seeing reaction of players
- Certainty/uncertainty has to be proportionate to the action
 - we don't want to disqualify someone if there is only a possibility that they committed targeting (for example)
- Helps if we can quantify uncertainty. Use standard terms:



Video review (M24.6)

- We are slowly gaining more experience with video review
- Communication between on-field officials and VJ can pose a problem
 - Need clear communication of decisions
 - Need to separately identify information gathering
- Introduced a series of "key phrases" for everyone to use:
 - "Stop the game"
 - "The video shows ..."
 - "I cannot tell ..."
 - "X, please tell me what you saw relating to ..."
 - "I have made my decision"
 - "I believe we have a consensus"
 - "The next play will be ..."

Other changes

- When in doubt on pass or fumble (M6.2.18):
 - hit from blind-side? see empty hand? => fumble
 - otherwise => pass
- Feet first slides (M5.7.7)
 - Can assume dead-ball spot was 2 yards behind where ball carrier touched ground
- Ready for play signals (M9.9.c.12.b.ii)
 - If 40-second clock not running:
 - Blow whistle, signal RFP [S1]
 - Then wind clock [S2] if necessary

New points of emphasis (M1.3)

- Wing official coverage on pass plays
- Process at end of 1st and 3rd quarters
- Terminology on uncertainty and video review
- Speeding up free kicks
 - All officials should jog to free kick positions
 - U hands ball to kicker or leaves it near spot
 - Once officials in position, U signals to R
 - R declares ball ready for play
 - **Does not require waiting for kicking team to be ready**
 - They have 25 seconds from RFP

Hurry up situations (M5.3.9)

- New paragraphs in the section on tempo (M5.3)
- Lists characteristics of hurry-up plays
 - Team A wants to score; Team B wants to slow the game; high pressure
- U (or C) must go get ball, place it at succeeding spot and leave it
 - no ball relays
- Everyone must quickly be in position for next down
 - don't pinch in; anticipate timeout requests
- Anticipate what sort of play Team A might choose
 - passing, spiking, getting out of bounds, quick field goal
- Anticipate some fouls are more likely to occur
 - ILF, ILS, SUB, OFH, deliberate fouls to stop clock

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THANK YOU

