

## 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. If there are multiple clocks that are not in synchrony, only one or more that are in synchrony will be used and others must be switched off.
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 hash marks. If not, the stadium play clocks will not be used.
3. In most circumstances, the stadium clock operator(s) should start and stop the clock more accurately than anyone on the crew. 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 five seconds per minute remaining in the quarter should be ignored (e.g. an error of 25 seconds can be ignored if there are more than five minutes remaining). A correction should be **announced [USING PUBLIC RADIO OR OTHERWISE]**<sup>@</sup> if it is significant enough to deserve explanation to spectators and teams. This is most likely to be the case within the last two minutes of a half. Otherwise, a correction may be made [USING O2O/CREW RADIO] if the clock operator is able to hear it.
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]<sup>§</sup>
  - (a) Warn your colleagues that the two-minute warning is approaching and might occur before the ball is snapped. The earliest this is needed is at 2'40 remaining in the half.
  - (b) At 2'00 remaining in the half, or later when the ball is dead, blow your whistle, stop your watch and signal timeout [S3]. (**Exception:** If a touchdown has been scored on the previous play the two-minute warning will be given after the try.)
  - (c) [USING O2O/CREW RADIO OR OTHERWISE] Inform colleagues of the exact time remaining. Remember to do this every time the clock stops for the rest of the half.
2. [REFEREE] [USING PUBLIC RADIO OR OTHERWISE] Announce the two-minute warning and signal it to both sidelines using the two-minute warning signal [Sup45] (Rule 3-3-5-a). 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.
3. [DOWN JUDGE, LINE JUDGE, FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE] If you are nearest to them, inform the Head Coach of the exact time remaining (if there is no visible game clock) and the number of timeouts remaining for their team.<sup>§</sup>

### 20.3 - Each period

1. When communicating the time to fellow officials, players, coaches or spectators, to increase the likelihood it will be received clearly, say the time twice in two different formats, e.g. "1 minute 34 seconds" and "1, 3, 4".<sup>@</sup>
2. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] Near the end of each half, whenever the clock stops, [USING O2O/CREW RADIO OR OTHERWISE] ensure 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, check that the on-field captain and Head Coach of each team is informed of the exact time remaining each time the clock is stopped (Rule 3-3-9-b). **If there is a visible clock, confirm that it is accurate.**
3. [REFEREE] [USING PUBLIC RADIO OR OTHERWISE] If there is no visible game clock, announce the time remaining whenever the clock stops after the two-minute warning. This should be done from your current position and not take up more time than it takes to say the words.

4. Since there is a possibility that the penalty for infractions of Rule 3-5-3-b after the two-minute warning might include resetting the game clock to the time of the snap, the crew needs to note the time of the last snap.<sup>®</sup>
  - (a) When there are visible game clocks, all officials who have sight of a game clock (without turning their head) share this responsibility.
  - (b) For plays where the clock starts on the snap, all members on the crew share this responsibility, since the time will have just been notified to everyone.
  - (c) [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] When there are no visible clocks, or the clock was running at the snap, you have this responsibility. It is acceptable for this to be an estimate, particularly when the Line Judge is the timekeeper.
5. 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 their watch does not have an audible or vibration alert, they should raise it in front of their eyes so that they 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.
6. When time expires:<sup>§</sup>
  - (a) [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] If the ball is dead, immediately blow your whistle and signal stop the clock [S3]. If the ball is not dead, do this immediately after the play ends. [USING O2O/CREW RADIO OR OTHERWISE] Inform other officials that time has expired.
  - (b) [REFEREE] Signal the end of the quarter [S14]. [USING PUBLIC RADIO OR OTHERWISE] Announce that time has expired in the quarter/half/game. Don't delay doing this just because you don't have a ball in your hand.
  - (c) [OTHER OFFICIALS] Assist in relaying a ball to the Referee.

## 20.4 - First and third periods

1. [UMPIRE] Time the intermission between periods.
2. Once the period has ended:
  - (a) [REFEREE] [UMPIRE OR CENTRE JUDGE] 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.
  - (b) [DOWN JUDGE] [SIDE JUDGE] 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.
  - (c) [REFEREE] [UMPIRE OR CENTRE JUDGE] [DOWN JUDGE] [SIDE JUDGE] Do not move from the succeeding spot yard line until you have agreed with each other that you have recorded the correct information.
  - (d) [OTHERWISE] Record the yard line of the ball and the down and distance.
  - (e) [LINE JUDGE] Also record the lateral position of the ball.
3. [UMPIRE OR CENTRE JUDGE] If you are the one with the ball, once you and the Referee have recorded the details and confirmed they are correct, accompanied by the Referee, take the ball across midfield to its new location and re-spot it. [IN 3xx FORMATION (CREW OF 6C/8)] If you don't have the ball, monitor the players as they move to the new location.
4. [LINE JUDGE] Once you have recorded the details, 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.
5. [IN xx2/xx3 FORMATION (CREW OF 6D/7/8)] [FIELD JUDGE]  
[IN xx0/xx1 FORMATION (CREW OF 4/5/6C)] [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.
6. [DOWN JUDGE] Once you have confirmed all details are recorded correctly, 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] [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. This is a "rest" period for the teams and its length should not be varied significantly.

## 20.5 - Half-time intermission

### 1. × Half-time notifications:

- (a) [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] Confirm to the Referee the duration of the intermission, the correct time of day, and the correct time that the second half will commence.

- (b) [REFEREE AND/OR CENTRE JUDGE] Remind the offensive team/captain how long the halftime interval is and what time kickoff will be.
  - (c) [UMPIRE AND/OR BACK JUDGE] Remind the defensive team/captain how long the halftime interval is and what time kickoff will be.
  - (d) [DOWN JUDGE, LINE JUDGE, FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE] Remind the head coach on your side of the field how long the halftime interval is and what time kickoff will be.
2. [REFEREE] Do not agree to shorten the intermission between halves unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Remember that half-time is an important rest period for players, coaches, officials and others. Any decision to shorten it must include a risk assessment of its impact on participant safety.
  3. [REFEREE] 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 intermission.
  4. Maintain possession of the game balls during the intermission.
  5. Second half options:
    - (a) [REFEREE] [UMPIRE] Not more than five minutes before the end of the intermission, visit each team (in the place where they have spent the intermission, if necessary) and establish the options for the second half. *If the team you visit first does not have first choice of options, ask what they want to do assuming the other team will receive.*
    - (b) [DOWN JUDGE, LINE JUDGE, FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE] If the teams are on the field and you are the official nearest to the Head Coach, assist in this by speaking to them and relaying their decision to the Referee [USING O2O/CREW RADIO OR OTHERWISE]
    - (c) [REFEREE] Ensure that both teams know who is kicking off and which goal each team is defending.
  6. The other officials should go directly to the field and ensure that the chain crew, alternate crew and ball persons are present. The responsible official(s) shall ensure that the game balls are taken back to the field.
  7. [IN xx0 FORMATION (CREW OF 4)] [LINE JUDGE]  
 [IN xx1/xx3 FORMATION (CREW OF 5/6C/7/8)] [BACK JUDGE]  
 [IN xx2 FORMATION (CREW OF 6D)] [FIELD JUDGE] Make sure that a ball is available for the kickoff.

## 20.6 - End of game

1. × [DOWN JUDGE] Recover your chain clip.
2. [UMPIRE] Recover the game ball last used.
3. [DOWN JUDGE, LINE JUDGE, FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE] Recover the spare game balls from the ball persons.
4. 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, they should ensure they are 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. (**Exception:** if you have been requested to remain for a post-game presentation ceremony.)
5. 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. (See also Section 5.3.)<sup>◇</sup>
6. All officials should complete any administrative duties required of them. This includes resolving the correct foul associated with any disqualification that occurred.
7. Officials are responsible after the game to ensure that the balls and any other equipment are returned to game management.

## 20.7 - Additional duties for live broadcast games

These duties only apply if the game is being broadcast live and the timings of the game need to be synchronised with the broadcast director.

1. All officials should wear a watch. These should be synchronised to the correct time of day during the pre-game conference. [ON-FIELD TIMEKEEPER] [ON-FIELD PLAY CLOCK OPERATOR] Consider carrying a spare watch.
2. Particularly in live broadcast games, it is important that the kickoff is not early and the length of half-time is correct. All officials are responsible for knowing the correct kickoff time, the current time of day and how long remains in half-time.<sup>§</sup>
3. [IN xx1/xx3 FORMATION (CREW OF 5/6C/7/8)] [BACK JUDGE]  
 [IN xx2 FORMATION (CREW OF 6D)] [FIELD JUDGE]  
 [IN xx0 FORMATION (CREW OF 4)] [REFEREE] During any timeout or the interval before the start of any period, if there is a TV liaison person near the press box sideline ("red hat" or "orange sleeves"):  
  - (a) Stand next to them during the interval until 30 seconds remain. The liaison person may come a few yards on to the field during the interval so that they can be more clearly seen.
  - (b) During each interval, confirm the number of timeouts taken and remaining in the half.

- (c) If it is permitted by the Competition Authority that media timeouts can be granted, the following additional procedure will be used.
    - (i) The number of media timeouts will be agreed at a meeting between the Referee, a game management representative, the TV liaison person and the TV director/producer. This meeting should take place at least two hours before kickoff.
    - (ii) Media timeouts are only granted at the Referee's discretion. However, the Referee must ensure that the agreed number are granted during the game.
    - (iii) During the game, TV liaison can request a media timeout by crossing both arms across their chest.
    - (iv) The Referee will acknowledge that they intend to grant the request by pointing to the ground. The duration of the interval starts when the Referee subsequently gives the TV timeout signal [S4].
    - (v) Media timeouts can only be granted when there is a timeout due to:
      - (1) a charged team timeout, coach's conference or video review;
      - (2) an injury timeout or the Referee suspends the game under Rule 3-3-3;
      - (3) × the end of a period;
      - (4) a score (other than a touchdown – wait until after the try) or an unsuccessful field goal attempt;
      - (5) a change in team possession but not when the ball has been returned to a point on or inside Team A's 20-yard line, or a similar momentum-changing play.
  - (d) Return to your onfield position when there are 30 seconds remaining in the timeout. At the same time, TV liaison will extend their left arm down to their side at a 45-degree angle. These each indicate to everyone that the timeout is near to conclusion.
  - (e) When there are 15 seconds remaining in the media timeout, TV liaison will raise their right hand above their head to signal that the timeout is concluding. The officials near the teams will inform the Head Coach and encourage the teams to get into position and ready to play.
  - (f) At the end of the timeout, TV liaison will drop their arm and point to the Referee.
4. [REFEREE] Do not signal the ready for play until: (i) TV liaison or the Back Judge (or Field Judge) informs you that TV is ready to proceed; and (ii) all officials are in position.