

**2011 GTOA High School
Football Officials Clinic
Broken Arrow High School**



**Greater Tulsa Officials Association
Tulsa, Oklahoma**



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Table of Contents

Special Thanks	4
Welcome	6
Overall Agenda	7
GTOA Clinicians	9
GTOA Basic Game Preparation/Review (Pre & Post)	10
<i>Prior to Game:</i>	10
<i>Pre-Game:</i>	10
<i>Game Time:</i>	12
<i>Half-Time:</i>	12
<i>Game End:</i>	13
<i>Post-Game:</i>	13
GTOA Basic Football Officiating Philosophies	14
1. CREWS.....	14
2. PREVENTATIVE OFFICIATING.....	14
3. ADVANTAGE/DISADVANTAGE.....	14
4. BLOCKING	15
5. DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE.....	15
6. OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE.....	15
7. KICKING.....	16
8. RUNNER DOWN.....	16
9. PERSONAL FOULS	16
10. MISCELLANEOUS.....	16
GTOA Basic Football Mechanics	17
REFEREE.....	17
UMPIRE.....	17
LINE JUDGE.....	18
HEADLINES	Error! Bookmark not defined.
BACK JUDGE	19
Officiating Keynotes	21
The Third Team	22
Why Am I A Football Official?	24
FOCUS.....	26
Dealing with Head Coaches	28
Improving and/or Moving Up	30
NOTES Pages	31
GTOA Sample Forms	39
Clinic Evaluation	End of Packet

Special Thanks

Many hours of preparation and collaboration went into providing this clinic for the area and regional high school football officials. The Clinic Staff would like to thank the following people for their undying efforts and support to improve the overall officiating in NE Oklahoma and the surrounding region:

Broken Arrow Head Coach, Steve Spavital & Athletic Director Ken Ellet



- Coach Spavital and Mr. Ellet were able to again provide the facility for the 2011 GTOA Officials Clinic. The Clinic staff worked with these gentlemen to get classrooms, access to their football field and the necessary equipment to hold the optional on-field simulations/presentations (footballs, chains, etc.).

Andy Turner – Conner & Winters Law Firm



- Andy is a veteran GTOA Referee and his law firm was gracious enough to sponsor and support our 2011 clinic. It is because of officials like Andy, who have the dedication, commitment and drive, along with his firm's generosity, that clinics such as the GTOA's can be successful and allow officials at any level to improve performance and work to advance their officiating skills and knowledge.

Boldt Construction



- Jeff Kusler is a veteran GTOA Umpire and a part of the Senior Staff at Boldt Construction. Jeff and his company provided all of the drinks and ice chests for the entire clinic to include the Friday night social and drinks throughout the day on Saturday. Jeff's gracious donation allowed the Clinic staff to allot more funding for other parts of the clinic costs.

NCAA Clinicians & GTOA Training Crew

- All of our clinicians are volunteering their time for this clinic in an effort to teach, train and learn in this high school clinic environment. Most of our clinicians started officiating in the GTOA and have now moved up to the next level. Their experiences and knowledge of the association will be paramount to its success. The GTOA Training Crew currently develops rookie officials within the association and will provide valuable information to improve all aspects of officiating.

Mike Whaley, OSSAA Director of Officials



- Mike works extremely hard in organizing football officials state-wide. His job is sometimes thankless and he endures many phone calls from coaches, administrators and sometimes family members regarding officiating situations that may have occurred each season. He also is the driver and biggest supporter of OSSAA officiating programs that are set in place to improve officiating in Oklahoma and to make each official better.

Phil Laurie, MIAA Supervisor of Officials



- Mr. Laurie is very well known nation-wide as a master clinician. He offers his services and training to NCAA and high school officials around the country in an effort to improve football officiating across the board and at any level. His knowledge and officiating background that he passes on has groomed many officials who have successfully advanced their careers from high school to the NCAA and to the NFL. He can spot talent immediately and finds officials, as he says, “who can work.”

Erik Herring and his GTOA Crew



- Erik and his crew is serving as the “helper crew” at our clinic. They are assisting with all aspects of the setup/tear down, check-in, field setup, provisioning lunch, ice and drinks, ensuring that each classroom and event is prepared and ready and keeping the clinic on time and moving properly (*Erik Herring, Ethan Rolan, Joe Caywood, Jeff Kusler, Devon Maynard*).

2011 GTOA Clinic Planning Committee

- This year, a Clinic Planning Committee was formed in an effort to provide a more balanced event. Membership was completely voluntary. After reviewing the clinic evaluations from 2010, it was decided that the clinic should be committee-driven and not just the vision of one person. The 2011 Clinic Committee put in endless hours and met many times prior to the clinic to be able to provide a high-quality, off-season training opportunity (*Erik Herring, Ethan Rolan, Joe Caywood, Jeff Kusler, Devon Maynard, Jeremy McCurley, Barry Stearns, Charlie Brown*).

Florine & Kenny Stabler

- The shirts provided this year have the new GTOA logo. Florine and Kenny unselfishly gave of their own time at no cost to embroider the new logo on the clinic staff shirts. Kenny also picked up the cost for digitizing the new logo for monogramming. Florine provides this service to all GTOA officials who would like the logo embroidered on their own clothing, bags or carrying cases. If you would like the new GTOA logo on any of your shirts, jackets or other items, please get in touch with Kenny Stabler for further information.

Welcome to the 2011 GTOA High School Football Officials Clinic!

The 2011 GTOA High School Football Officials Clinic! We provide this clinic as an annual event so that high school football officials in the Tulsa and surrounding area have an opportunity to improve their officiating skills, mechanics, performance and philosophy.

The purpose of this clinic is to put officials in classroom, film review and optional on-field environments with experienced clinicians to allow discussion of situations and specific officiating challenges, issues and areas where improvements can be made, to include mechanics and game management.

The GTOA's goal is to standardize football operations throughout the organization. This will entail working with all officials and crews to ensure that every aspect of their preparation and game management fall under a single, standard operating procedure. Everything from pre-game to post-game will be covered during this clinic. Not only will this strengthen each official and crew, but will allow pool officials to fill-in on crews without having to quickly master how any particular crew may operate.

As you work through this clinic, suggested philosophies, mechanics and game management procedures will be discussed. Although each crew and official may have variations to what will be covered, we hope that the basic intent of each covered topic will provide a strong foundation for you and your crew's concepts.

One of the issues each season is that coaching staffs are unsure how their game will be officiated by different crews. By putting some basic standards and philosophies in place that each crew can follow, our association will grow stronger and area schools and teams will gain confidence that every crew that is assigned to their game will provide the best possible officiating.

The Clinic Staff hopes that this clinic will be beneficial to you. This is an interactive clinic. Don't hesitate to ask questions, provide situations that you have had, or be involved in any discussion with our clinicians. This is a learning and training event for everyone.

Thank you for being a part of the 2011 GTOA High School Football Officials Clinic! Please be sure to complete the Clinic Evaluation Form at the end of this manual before you leave for the day. This will be an important part of our preparation for next year's clinic.

We hope you enjoy this event!

GTOA Clinic Staff & Clinic Planning Committee

2011 Greater Tulsa Officials Association Football Officials Clinic

Overall Agenda

Friday, May 20th

6:00 – 6:30pm	Check-in (Broken Arrow High School)	
6:30 – 9:30pm	Opening Session	All Officials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome, Clinic Goals, Agenda & Clinician Introduction• Special Guest Speakers<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Mike Whaley, OSSAA Director of Officials</i>○ <i>Phil Laurie, MIAA Supervisor of Officials</i>• GTOA Philosophy Review	Todd Ragsdale Clinic Staff
9:30 – 11:00pm	Official's Social <i>(Snacks & Drinks Provided)</i>	All Officials & Staff
11:00pm	Depart for Evening	

Saturday, May 21st

8:00 – 8:30am	Check-in for those who could not attend on Friday (BAHS)	
8:30 – 9:00am	Overview of Agenda	Todd Ragsdale
9:00 – 10:30am	Pre-Game Breakouts	Designated Clinicians
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officials will be designated to a clinician group by position<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ R, U, L, H, B	
9:00 – 10:30am	New Official Breakout	Todd Ragsdale & Charlie Brown
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New officials will learn the process and requirements to become a successful high school football official	
10:30 – 10:45am	Break	

10:45am – 12:30pm Position Breakouts/Film Review

- Assigned rooms and Clinicians

12:30 – 1:00pm Lunch (Provided by GTOA)

1:00 – 2:30pm Position Breakouts/Film Review (and/or optional field work)

- Assigned rooms & Clinicians
- Clinicians may opt to take group to the field for mechanics review and exercises (**)

*** Clinicians may choose to take their position group to the field to demonstration certain mechanics and positioning. Footballs and chains will be available for the Clinician's use.*

2:30 – 2:45pm Break/Move to Tiger Field

2:45 – 3:20pm End Zone Presentation by Phil Laurie, MIAA Supervisor of Officials

3:20 – 3:30pm Return for Closing Session

3:30 – 4:30pm	Closing Session	All Officials
	Roundtable Q&A	Clinicians
	Clinic Review	Todd Ragsdale
	Getting to the Next Level	NCAA Clinicians
	Upcoming GTOA Events	Todd Ragsdale
	Complete Clinic Evaluations	All Officials

4:30pm End of Clinic

2011 Greater Tulsa Officials Association Football Officials Clinic

GTOA Clinicians

- **Harold Alspaugh – GTOA Referee & Trainer**
 - GTOA Training Crew
 - GTOA Assignment Committee Chair
 - 2010 4A State Championship
- **Chad Bowers – Conference USA Umpire**
 - Former GTOA Official
- **Derick Bowers – NFL Headlines & AFL Referee**
 - Assigned and worked Super Bowl XLIII
 - 2010 Divisional Playoff – Green Bay vs. Atlanta
- **Charlie Brown – GTOA Line Judge (ret.)**
 - 2010 2A State Championship
- **Richard Brown – Big 12 Umpire**
 - Former GTOA Official
- **Chad Craig – Conference USA Umpire & Replay & MIAA Umpire**
 - Former GTOA Official
- **Steve DeVivo – GTOA Line Judge & Trainer**
 - GTOA Training Crew
 - GTOA Assignment Committee Member
 - 2010 4A State Championship
- **Dennis Hartney – GTOA Referee**
 - 2009 Class B State Championship
- **Randy Jeffers – Lone Star Referee**
 - OOA Board Member/GTOA State Representative
 - GTOA Assignment Committee Member & Official
 - 2010 5A State Championship
- **Scott Johnson – MIAA Field Judge**
 - Former GTOA Official
 - Director of Officials for Indian Nations Football Conference (INFC)
- **Bobby Kelley – GTOA Referee**
 - 2009 6A State Championship
- **Clay Martin – Conference USA Headlines**
 - Former GTOA Official
 - Assigned and worked the 2011 New Orleans Bowl
- **Jeremy McCurley – GTOA Back Judge & MIAA Official**
 - Swing Official for MIAA at multiple positions
- **Joe Pester – AFL Referee**
 - Former GTOA Official
- **Jerod Phillips – MIAA Linesman**
 - 2010 Salt City Bowl
- **Lee Ross – MIAA Line Judge**
 - Former KJCCC Official
- **David Sherwood – MIAA Side Judge**
 - Former KJCCC Official
- **Kenny Stabler – GTOA & Great American Conference Back Judge**
 - 2010 5A State Championship
- **Dave Webbert – GTOA Headlines**
 - 2010 5A State Championship



GTOA Basic Game Preparation/Review (Pre & Post)

Prior to Game:

- 1. Contact Head Coach or Athletic Director on Monday prior to game**
 - a. Confirm game time, location, arrival time and parking area
 - b. Ask for the game administrator's name and information (get a phone number in case you should need to contact him/her on game day)
 - c. If you need directions to the facility, ask for them to be provided
 - d. Should you have a change with your crew, be sure to inform the Coach/AD so that checks or payment can be completed properly
- 2. Contact each crew member and confirm game information**
 - a. Meeting times & locations
 - b. Travel arrangements
 - c. Dress (both travel and uniform)
- 3. If your crew has a detailed pre-game discussion, assign topics to crew members for preparation and discussion**
- 4. Review rules, cases or situations that you may have had in previous games or feel you need improvement on**
- 5. OPTIONAL** – Research both teams and look at stats, trends, records and quality players as this will give you a preview of what may come during the game. And you will leave a good impression with coaches and players if you come to the game knowing details about their teams.

Pre-Game:

- 1. ARRIVE ON TIME (at least 1 ½ hours before game time – 6:00pm for a 7:30pm game)**
 - a. If there is an issue with not arriving on time, contact the game administrator and inform him/her of your situation and give an ETA for arrival
 - b. If your crew has a detailed pre-game discussion, you may choose to arrive earlier than 1 ½ hours so as not to rush through the discussion topics
- 2. Once settled in the locker room or dressing facility, begin your pre-game discussions**
- 3. Referee/Umpire – locate coaches and have pre-game conference (*make every effort to NOT interfere with their pre-game preparation or coaching responsibilities*)**
 - a. Introductions, provide crew listing
 - b. Player equipment issues, injuries (casts/splints)
 - c. Sportsmanship statements
 - d. Special plays or situations
 - e. Game equipment
 - f. Half-time activities and length
 - g. Get "Gold Card" signed
 - h. Coin Toss option (between Coaches or held on field)

- i. If TV game, discuss timeouts and communication
 - i. Talk with Producer/Field Liaison
 - ii. Test microphone
 - iii. Determine signaling
 - j. Optionally, you can discuss what will occur if a player has signs or symptoms of a concussion
- 4. Referee/Umpire return to locker room**
- a. Continue dressing with crew and with pre-game discussion
 - b. Cover any pertinent information from Coach Conference
 - c. Prepare to leave for the field
- 5. Field Inspection**
- a. Don't congregate (R/L walk home side, U/H/L walk visitor side)
 - b. Walk the field and determine any issues
 - i. Goal post padding, safety padding or items/equipment on field
 - ii. Note any poor field conditions that may exist
 - c. Watch the players and look over their equipment
 - i. Proper padding
 - ii. Proper Uniforms
 - iii. Pants over knees
 - iv. No jewelry or elastic-type wrist bands
 - v. No shaded eye shields
 - vi. No arm bands (must be at the wrist and sweat band-type)
 - d. Check game balls and talk with ball personnel (discuss game operations)
 - e. Check/set pylons
 - f. H check chains (10 yard distance, 5 yard middle chain mark)
- 6. Wing officials, find Head Coach and introduce yourself**
- 7. Headlines – check your chains, find the chain crew, introduce yourself and discuss game procedures with them and how you would like them to operate**
- 8. Return to locker room if time permits and teams leave field**

NOTE: It is suggested to be on the field 30 minutes prior to game time to inspect/review team activities. However, many teams are on the field well before 7:00pm to complete warm-up activities and then other activities begin at 7:00pm (i.e. – bands, cheerleaders, dance squads, homecoming, Senior Night, etc.). It may be necessary to get to the field between 6:30pm and 6:45pm in order to look at the teams and their activities, as many teams leave the field at 7:00pm.

Game Time:

- 1. Get captains with 5:00 minutes on clock (B – Visitors, L – Home)**
 - a. Referee – take position on Home side of field, 50-yard line
 - i. Face the clock
 - b. Umpire/Headlines – take position on Visitor side of field, 50-yard line
 - c. The National Anthem should be played near the 7:00 minute mark prior to game time, but you may need to adjust if it is played later.
 - d. After captains are brought to field, Line Judge will take position with Referee and Back Judge will take position with Umpire and Headlines
- 2. Referee & Umpire - Introduce yourself to the captains on sideline**
 - a. Line them up properly with the speaking captain on the Referee side
- 3. Referee and Umpire signal when ready (near the 3:00 minute mark)**
- 4. Walk captains to center of field (4-maximum)**
 - a. H, L, B and other honorary captains hold at hash marks
- 5. Have captains introduce themselves and shake hands**
- 6. Umpire – introduce Referee**
- 7. Referee – introduce other officials**
- 8. Give sportsmanship and game conduct statements**
- 9. Hold coin toss**
 - a. If coin toss was completed prior to game with Coaches, your action will be a mock coin toss
- 10. Signal to Press Box coin toss results**
- 11. Line up captains on their respective ends of the field**
- 12. Complete a final handshake between captains**
- 13. Prepare for kickoff**
 - a. Officials may meet in the middle of the field and then hustle to their positions, or immediately after the coin toss, move to their respective positions

Half-Time:

- 1. When half is completed, ensure both teams have left the field and are in or near their locker room**
 - a. If locker rooms are in close proximity, one or more officials may escort the teams to their locker rooms to prevent any confrontations
- 2. When field is clear, and 20:00 minutes is showing on the clock, Referee will wind the clock**
 - a. All officials will leave the field

- 3. With 7:00 minutes remaining for the half-time, L and B will notify teams of the clock status**
 - a. This will give the teams ample notification time to complete half-time adjustments and prepare to return to the field for the mandatory 3 minute warm-up
- 4. With 5:00 minutes remaining in the half-time, all officials arrive on field**
 - a. All officials will begin to take their positions on the field and prepare for kickoff
 - b. Appropriate Wing official will notify his coach of the second half option choice
- 5. When 20:00 minute clock expires for half-time, the 3 minute mandatory warm-up period will begin**
 - a. If there are activities continuing on the field at this time, you may need to adjust the warm-up period and if excessive, the OSSAA may need to be notified
- 6. When 3:00 minute warm-up period has completed, all officials will be in position and prepared for kickoff**

Game End:

- 1. When game has been completed, all officials will immediately and quickly leave the field together and return to locker room**
 - a. Wing officials may briefly speak with Head Coaches and/or shake their hands, if appropriate
 - b. Do not speak with any Media personnel
 - c. Do not speak with fans or confront them

Post-Game:

- 1. Discuss overall game management (this should occur as a half-time discussion as well)**
 - a. Situations that may have arisen, including mechanics
 - b. Penalty administration issues
 - c. Sideline issues
 - d. Tough plays or tight calls
- 2. Review fouls and penalties**
- 3. Perform an honest crew and individual self-evaluation**
- 4. Critique each crew member's performance**
- 5. Discuss next weeks' game and preparation**
- 6. Ensure the dressing facility/locker room is clean and organized before departure**

GTOA Basic Football Officiating Philosophies

The key to any successful officiating association is a strong foundation. Fundamental philosophies must be in place to allow officials some groundwork to build their crew concepts. The following *GTOA Basic Officiating Philosophies* will provide information and guidelines on particular aspects of the high school football game that, as an association, we would like to implement throughout the organization. These fundamental aspects can transcend to every official and be adopted by other associations as well.

Again, these are *basic guidelines* that you can build a crew concept upon. Variations will certainly be made crew-by-crew and official-by-official, but if the basic fundamental intent of each philosophy is kept intact, each crew will become stronger which will strengthen the overall association as a whole, and standardize our officiating practices.

1. CREWS

- a. The GTOA, as well as many other associations work on a crew concept. This means that officials combine to create a crew and the crew is assigned to a game versus an assigner selecting 5 different officials for each game (staff concept). When selecting crew members, it is imperative that the cohesiveness of the crew be solid. Your crew will become part of your extended family. You must be able to be open and honest with each other and not be personally offended when criticism is placed. When crew issues arise, a resolution should be able to be agreed upon by the entire crew and particular aspects of officiating and game management must be developed as a unit. This will allow you to improve as a crew and garner better assignments and playoff selections.

2. PREVENTATIVE OFFICIATING

- b. All officials should be proactive when working with coaches and players
- c. Talk to players about near infractions that might cost them later and let that serve as a warning for subsequent plays and actions
- d. Keep coaches informed of actions or issues that you see on the field and allow them to deal with it appropriately
- e. Let the athletes decide the game and do what you can to keep them legal and from letting a burst of emotion penalize the team

3. ADVANTAGE/DISADVANTAGE

- a. When ruling on any particular call, understand that any foul must create an advantage or disadvantage for either team. If a foul is clearly away from the play and has no effect, use preventative officiating to stop any recurrence.

4. BLOCKING

- a. Focus on the point of attack, rarely will an illegal block or action (other than a personal foul) away from the point of attack have an effect on the play
- b. Be aware of defensive holding on PATs and FGs. Do not let a defensive player pull an offensive player out of the way for a rushing linebacker to shoot the gap.
- c. For blocks in the back, be sure that you see the entire play. If the defensive player turns on the offensive player that has already engaged him, it is not a block in the back. If the block is from the side this as well, is not a block in the back. If you see a player in chase mode, this will require concentration to see the complete action. A block from the side can propel the player forward and be a legal block.
- d. A grab of the jersey that removes the feet of any player is always holding
- e. Know the spot of any holding foul and if the hold is near the end zone, be absolutely sure where the hold occurred. If it began in the field of play and ended in the end zone, then put the spot outside of the EZ, otherwise you must rule safety.
- f. On chop blocks, if the second engaging player makes contact at the hip or above, this will not constitute a chop block. The second player engagement MUST be at the thigh or below.

5. DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

- a. Know your keys and watch both players, not the ball
- b. When both players are playing the ball, and there is slight contact before the ball arrives, this is not defensive pass interference
- c. When the offensive and defensive players inadvertently get their feet tangled, this is not defensive pass interference
- d. Know the status of the ball when the foul occurs – ball in the air or not in the air – if the foul occurs before the pass has been thrown, it might not be defensive pass interference on a receiver
- e. A tipped pass alleviates any type of defensive pass interference

6. OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

- a. When the offensive receiver creates separation by pushing off the defender, this is offensive pass interference
- b. Blocking downfield by a receiver while the pass is in the air will be offensive pass interference
- c. Offensive pass interference will not be called on a pass behind the line of scrimmage (swing pass, screen pass)

7. KICKING

- a.** Two types of kickoff mechanics are acceptable
 - i.** Standard KO mechanic
 - ii.** Modified KO mechanic (R/U on goal line, H/L at receivers restraining line)
- b.** When a probable or obvious on-side kick is determined, all officials will move up in position for coverage

8. RUNNER DOWN

- a.** If there is a question as to whether or not the runner was down or fumbled the ball, make the call a fumble
- b.** If there is a question as to whether there is a touchdown or the runner is short, make it a touchdown
- c.** If you are unsure whether the runner stepped out of bounds or not, he did not step out of bounds

9. PERSONAL FOULS

- a.** For late hits near the end of the play or away from the play, consider making these dead ball fouls
- b.** If you DQ a player for fighting, be sure there was “fighting”. If a player pushes, shoves, or slaps another player, that is a personal foul and would not DQ the player. Many player actions can be determined as personal fouls and not disqualify them. Be sure the player action falls under the guidelines for disqualification.
- c.** If the tackling action near a sideline begins in the field of play, and continues past the sideline, no late hit will be called

10. MISCELLANEOUS

- a.** Place the ball on a yard line to start every new series (1st down). On other downs, place the ball where it is. An exception to this would be on an unsuccessful 4th down and a change of possession occurs, you would leave the ball where it is.
- b.** When marking forward progress, give the player everything he earned. The forward progress is where the ball is when the runner is down, not where his body, other than hand or foot, touched the ground.

GTOA Basic Football Mechanics

From a mechanics point of view, each official and crew have variations on how they work field mechanics. Several options for how each specific mechanic should be worked are defined in the NFHS mechanics manual and some crews adopt mechanics that best suit their needs on different situations. The best advice regarding mechanics is to get input from several officials and determine what works best for you at your position so that you are comfortable seeing and managing all aspects of the game. Below, are some suggested general mechanics. This is not an all-inclusive list. These are the basic position mechanics that every official should know and understand.

REFEREE

- At the snap, be 12-18 yards deep, and at least outside of the guard and at most outside the TE, on the passing side of the QB
- Count the offense and signal to Umpire every play
- QB and off-side tackle are main keys at the snap
- Follow the QB wherever he goes, especially to the sideline
- Trail all sweep plays in clean up mode
- Know the status of the ball after every play (Umpire will help you with this)
- If you give preliminary signals, give them every time
- When getting a foul report from an official, get all of the information you need
 - If there are multiple flags, let the calling officials work it out and come to you
- Confirm every penalty administration with the Umpire
- Speak clearly if you have a stadium and/or TV mic and give explanations for difficult or unusual calls
- Give clear, crisp signals
- Be a calming presence on the field, especially during a coach/referee conference
- Listen to the coaches and be empathetic, provide the details, end the conversation and return to the game
- If there is a conflict in ruling, you have the final say
- Constantly communicate with your crew

UMPIRE

- At the snap, be 5-7 yards off of the ball
- Count the offensive players every play and signal to Referee
- Try not to be outside of the guards or in front of the linebackers
- Keys at the snap are guard-center-guard and tackle on Referee's side
- Ensure there is a clean snap
- Read run or pass when the ball is snapped

- Be mobile and have the ability to stay out of the play
- Find/feel the open spaces while focusing on your keys
- Work your progressions as the play develops
- Spot the ball after the play
- Know where the ball should be laterally on the field
- Retrieve the ball from the wings or Back Judge (triangle when possible)
- You can move outside of the hashes if necessary to retrieve the ball
- Be a good dead ball official
- If you read pass, step to the LOS and rule on ineligible receiver or illegal forward pass
- On wide runs, maintain positioning on inside working out to achieve boxed in coverage
- You are in control of the middle of the field, continually talk to the players (your known presence will be part of preventative officiating)

LINE JUDGE

- Know your keys at the snap (they may change as the play develops)
- Count the defensive players
- Determine who is on/off the LOS should you have wideouts
 - You can chuck when players are off the line, but all signaling should be worked out with the H
- Key on the tackle & tight end, and players outside of the tight end at the snap
- Be stationary until you read the play (don't leave too soon)
 - If pass is determined, then hustle to cover at the proper angle
- Let any play continue in front of you (never be in front of any play)
- Start on the sideline and move back if play comes your way
 - On goal line situations, you can pinch in for coverage
- Trail plays and square in at the spot with the appropriate signals
- When plays are close to the sideline, work inside-out
 - Wind the clock if runner is down in the field of play
 - Wind, then stop the clock if runner is down and in the field of play and has reached the line to gain
- Keep control of your sideline
- Communicate with Coaches
 - If questions are asked about calls on the opposite side of the field, tell the coach you will find out what happened and get back to him at the next dead ball period
- Be a good dead ball official
 - When a play takes players into the bench area, go with them
- Communicate with all officials

LINESMAN

- Know your keys at the snap (they may change as the play develops)
- Be aware of your chains
 - Know where the first down is and don't look back to "check" if line to gain was reached
 - The Line Judge should communicate to you that the LTG was made
 - Be aware of the down box and ensure that it is at the proper down each play
- Determine who is on/off the LOS should you have wideouts
 - You can chuck when players are off the line, but all signaling should be worked out with the L
- Key on the tackle & tight end, and players outside of the tight end at the snap
- Be stationary until you read the play (don't leave too soon)
 - If pass is determined, then hustle to cover at the proper angle
- Let any play continue in front of you (never be in front of any play)
- Start on the sideline and move back if play comes your way
 - On goal line situations, you can pinch in for coverage
- Trail plays and square in at the spot with the appropriate signals
- When plays are close to the sideline, work inside-out
 - Wind the clock if runner is down in the field of play
 - Wind, then stop the clock if runner is down and in the field of play and has reached the line to gain
- Keep control of your sideline
- Communicate with Coaches
 - If questions are asked about calls on the opposite side of the field, tell the coach you will find out what happened and get back to him at the next dead ball period
- Be a good dead ball official
 - When a play takes players into the bench area, go with them
- Communicate with all officials

BACK JUDGE

- Determine your keys at the snap (they may change as the play develops)
- Be 20-22 yards from the LOS at the snap
- Have good vision of the field
- Count the defensive players
- Be sure you can see the play clock (or use ReadyRef timer if no play clock)
 - You are solely responsible for delay of game
- Read the play before you move
 - You should never be moving toward the LOS when a pass is thrown
 - If you read pass, your first step should be back

- On runs to either side of the field, move so runner is between you and either linesman or line judge in front of the runner
- Do not chase a football
 - If deep, incomplete pass, throw the ball out, wings will bring in a new ball
- Assist with ball relay
 - On medium/long run to side zone, retrieve ball from wing and relay to Umpire
 - On deep pass outside of hash marks, spot ball, then relay to Umpire when he arrives at inbounds spot
 - On deep pass inside hash marks, spot ball and wait for Umpire to arrive
- Assist ball personnel with retrieval of their footballs when they end up on the opponents sideline
- Be a good dead ball official
 - Assist wing officials with sideline clean up when players are out of bounds
- Communicate with all officials and stay focused

Again, the listed mechanics are not all inclusive and are the very basics for you to build upon. You must *know* the basic mechanics for the position that you work and have a good understanding of *every* position's mechanics. Each official and crew may have variations to their mechanics, but most will be founded on this set of basics. As you gain more experience on the field and work with several different officials or crews, you will be able to develop your mechanics and fine tune every aspect.

Other mechanics that you need to develop, and were not specifically listed:

- Kickoff (Standard or Modified)
- Punt
- Field Goal/PAT
- Measurements
- Reverse mechanics
- Inclement weather



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2011 GTOA High School Football Officials Clinic

Officiating Keynotes



The Third Team

Officials often talk about being the third team on the field. And though we post no score after a game, when we're truly honest with ourselves during our postgame debriefing, we know how successful we were.

NFL referee Walt Coleman described the seven characteristics of a successful crew. The characteristics shouldn't be unfamiliar to us. They simply combine individual and team preparation with people skills and a positive attitude.

- 1. Have a clear mission.** Before you attempt anything worthwhile in life, you must clearly see the goal you want to achieve. Our mission must be to officiate the best game possible. We're not there to throw flags, make friends or get other assignments. We are the facilitators of the game.

Officials in any sport bring integrity to the game. Without us, it would be just another sandlot game. Before a season and before every game, write down your goals as an official and as a crew, and then work to achieve them.

- 2. Stick together.** Officiating requires confidence. Unfortunately, officiating is full of opportunities to find the worst in people. Do what you can to boost the confidence of everyone on your crew. Find the best in your crewmates.

Build relationships with each other off the field. Include the families. After all, officiating too frequently takes us away from our loved ones. Then operate as a unit and carry that togetherness onto the field.

- 3. Encourage everyone's contribution.** Everyone is an equal on and off the field. Allow each official to contribute to the pregame. The days of dictatorial crew chiefs who lecture their crews before games should be long gone.

If each of you knows only 85 percent of the rules, there'll come a time when you'll stare blankly at each other. Don't let that happen.

Most of all respect each crewmember's ability and let each do his or her job. When you peek to see what's going on elsewhere on the field, you miss what's happening right in front of you.

- 4. Put your team first.** Be prepared for your game before you arrive at the site. Doing so enables each of the crew to contribute to the pregame, and the pregame itself will be much more effective.

The acronym TEAM (Together Everyone Accomplishes More) is just as applicable for officials as for the players. When the crew works together and achieves its goals, it's very likely that the individuals on the crew will each achieve their goals.

- 5. Provide individual competence.** You must be ready every play to rule on that one scenario that you thought would never happen.

We can always be better than we are. How do you receive input from others? Readily accepting input from others improves your individual competence.

- 6. Engage in open, honest communications.** Officiating is built on personal relationships. Personal relationships are built on open, honest communications. Open, honest communications grow from trust. Successful crews trust each other.

Have each person describe something positive that occurred in last week's game. When you do, you have the opportunity to learn even more about the people on your crew.

- 7. Have a winning attitude.** Mental preparation is as important as physical preparation. When you think about your upcoming game, imagine positive situations that happen.

Positive reinforcement before (and after) the wheels begin to wobble goes a long way to keeping each crewmember focused. If an official makes a tight call, or something goes awry on the field for one of the crew, a verbal pat on the back can keep your crew from working one official short for part of the game.

Coleman's seven characteristics of a successful crew are just as applicable to life. Make them part of your life on and off the field.

Why Am I A Football Official?

It's standing on the field listening to the National Anthem with your eyes closed and your hat over your heart, thanking God for your life and your country.

It's walking onto the field and seeing the relieved look on the face of a coach that knows he's got a great crew tonight.

It's the long drive to the game reviewing every detail of rules and mechanics and yet having time for a joke or two. It's every story that begins with, "remember when."

It's the genuine look of concern on your crewmates faces when one of your brothers has fallen, and the round of laughter shortly thereafter when it's obvious he's alright.

It's officiating a game shortly before and after your father dies because he taught you what honor is and to always do your duty.

It's sitting silently at the association meeting listening to others figure out a complicated ruling and then having them turn to you and ask - is that right?

It's leaving your family for a 3 day clinic, and your wife supporting you in that decision and your dream, because she understands that if "it's not good for me, then it's not good for us."

It's bringing an extra pair of socks along just in case somebody forgets theirs.

It's meeting someone and finding out he's an official and immediately becoming good friends because of that fact.

It's working through the sore muscles, bad knees and the smell of "Ben-Gay."

It's lost job wages, small game fees, and that smile on your face when someone says, "you're just doing this for the money."

It's the feel of your heart pounding before the coin toss as you reach into your pocket for the coin that isn't there.

It's finishing a 3rd grade game and having a 9 year old run up to you and sincerely say, "Thank you Mr. Official".

It's hearing that a coach was putting you down behind your back, and that another official defended you by saying "he's the best official in the state."

It's having to "buy the first round" because you're the first to get dirt on your knickers during the game.

It's that "one play" that happened years ago that your crew keeps talking about. You all know the one.

It's the 8 x 8 foot dressing room they give you with a shower head that barely works. It's leading by the example of hard work, and sportsmanship, and hoping some of that will rub off on players, coaches, fans, and other officials.

It's knowing that no matter what happens during the game, you'll get it right.

It's also knowing that the greatest sign of wisdom is realizing that you don't know everything.

It's Snickers bars, beef jerky and sodas made from fermented grains.

It's rule books, discussion boards, countless emails and good friends whose faces you have yet to see.

It's striving to be both a scholar of the rules, and a philosopher of the spirit of the game.

It's being perfect the first day and working to improve everyday thereafter.

It's knowing that you're a part of a tradition of honorable men, names of whom are mostly forgotten or weren't really known to begin with. But who still did their thankless jobs for the love of the game, and because it was the right thing to do.

It's all of these things, and many, many more I'm sure, that keep all of us coming back for more, year after year, and wondering why. But then you step on the field again...take a deep breath...and ask yourself, "where would I rather be than right here right now?"

FOCUS

I WILL FOCUS ON:

- Commitment
- Preparation
- Understanding the league and crew philosophy
- Dead ball officiating
- Watching game film every week, finding what I can work on – not just what I am doing right
- Bring three things to each game that I can do better than the week before
- My responsibilities to the crew:
 - Positive, yet corrective criticism
 - Good communicator, on and off of the field
 - Be involved
 - Be on time
 - Be there for my crew mates in a time of need – On and off of the field
 - Be fair
 - Be consistent
- My responsibilities to my position:
 - Study every week
 - Be diligent with my pre game
 - Follow GDP
 - Excellent pre snap – every snap (you have to put a whole lot right here to be focused)
 - Excellent post snap – every snap
 - Feeling the whole game
 - Communication
 - Work relaxed
 - Be consistent

I WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH NOT TO LOSE FOCUS ON:

- Others – officials, coaches, players and fans
- Stopping to officiate after a flag
- Getting stuck after a tough call/no call
- Lack of confidence/knowledge on a particular play/question
- Inadequate chain crew/ball boys/clock operators
- Excessive heat, cold or rain
- Pre-game preparation because you were asked to get out of your comfort zone
- Penalty enforcement and communication
- Getting the number of the player who fouled

WE WILL FOCUS ON:

- Being the best
- Offering complete support to each other
- Learning from each other
- Creating a positive perception at all times and events
- Owning the game by owning our own positions
- Positive crew environment
- Excellence
- Setting an example

WE WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH NOT TO LOSE FOCUS ON:

- Other crews
- Lack of support before, during and after by schools
- Issues we can't control (ex: car trouble)
- Rumors
- The last three weeks
- The end of the season
- Travel
- The level of competition that we are working
- Angry coaches or players
- A poor call
- Distractions outside of football

Dealing with Head Coaches

1. Make eye contact. A coach wants to be assured that he has your attention. Don't act distracted.
2. Never call coaches by their first names. They'll feel most comfortable, particularly in front of their players, simply by being called "coach." If you know their last name, it is all right to say mister.
3. Show respect to get respect. That means using formal language, keeping communication brief, adopting a neutral tone and avoiding any personal remarks. Stick to the issue at hand in a straightforward way.
4. Ask them to deal with problem players. Be sure to identify the problem in explicit terms, without making the player to be an evil person. Sometimes that is hard to do, but can be accomplished with a careful choice of language.
5. Remain calm under all circumstances. If a coach moves toward you to "get in your face", pivot sideways so that you are shoulder-to-shoulder. It is hard for someone to speak in an aggressive, confrontational way when the proximity between parties is side-by-side.
6. Let coaches have their say. When a coach approaches to protest or argue, adopt an instant "listening mode" and let the aggrieved individual finish his remarks. Do not interrupt.
7. Use non-confrontational body language. To be aware of body posture, facial expression, head tilt and arm position, one must say, "I am going to appear receptive and contemplative. I can think best and measure my words that way. I am determined to not escalate the problem."
8. If you make a mistake, admit it. A simple apology is sufficient; do not elaborate or rationalize (i.e., make excuses).
9. When coaches raise their voice, lower yours. A soft voice has a way of triggering a reciprocal soft reply.
10. Get both coaches together. Sometimes there is a need to reach a uniform agreement in a joint consultation. Weather problems in an outdoor situation are examples. Other issues could include clock problems or difficulties with game equipment.
11. Support fellow officials. Never betray partners by showing that you doubt their judgment. Instead indicate faith in someone else's decision by saying the partner had a better view of a more favorable angle than the responding official or protester.

12. Acknowledge the coach: "I hear what you're saying." "I understand" or "I see what you mean" are equally effective. If the next sensible step is to confer with a partner over a controversy, make that next move firmly.
13. Give praises when proper; promote sportsmanship. When a coach makes a gesture of consideration for the opponents or toward the officials, be sure to acknowledge it. Sometimes a smile and a nod of the head are enough.
14. Determine from where the coach is coming. Put yourself in their shoes just as you would in trying to understand a player's viewpoint. That means having some insight about a coach's motivation and overall goal. Sometimes how the coach will be viewed in the eyes of players and team supporters is the primary stimulus for behavior.
15. Keep your ego under control. Often a mere glance will carry a significant message, whether it's negative or positive, whether it is meant to curtail dialogue or to encourage it. A quizzical expression can signal a desire for additional input, whereas a frown may denote closure.
16. Give the coach the benefit of the doubt, but be sure there is doubt. If you are uncertain about the accuracy of a ruling, make a decision and tell the coach what you believe is correct. Avoid being too adamant about a rule interpretation. Someone has defined the word positive as "being wrong at the top of your voice."
17. Permit the coach to disengage. Recognize (through facial expression, body language, and terminating vocal patterns) when it is time to cease a dialogue. Nothing is gained by insisting on the last word.
18. Don't use your hands when talking to a coach. Your gestures will reveal more than you'll want to convey.

Remember that a coach's job depends on many factors and doing your best is one of them. He prepares hard for many hours, so you should work hard in being consistent and fair. Help the coach to be a better coach by allowing him to coach and not be overly concerned with officiating. Listen to him, answer his questions honestly, and provide him the respect that he deserves, within the spirit and intent of the rules, and you will reduce his anxieties about the one aspect of the game that he cannot control and should not be focused on – officiating. Refereeing a game is not brain surgery, but managing people in a highly emotional environment takes constant awareness and skills. The most successful officials have these skills. Practice the above skills and take the time use them every game when an opportunity arises. You'll be surprised at the results.

Improving and/or Moving Up – A Positive Attitude Helps

P - Plan	Develop a plan of where you want to be next year, two years, five years, etc. from now and what you need to get there.
O - Objectives	Develop some short and long term objectives - short term from game to game -long term from current level to higher level.
S - Self-confidence	Have confidence in yourself and your abilities
I - Introspect	Be honest with yourself. You should know what kind of game you worked without being told.
T - Time	Do you have the time? It takes a lot of time away from your family, your Job, school, etc.
I - Industrious	Be hardworking. Work as much as you can. Study training tapes. Be study session leaders.
V -Veterans	Learn from veteran officials. Listen to what they say. Model from the good ones.
E - Enthusiasm	Be enthusiastic. Enjoy what you are doing.
A - Attitude	Develop a positive attitude. Do not be a complainer. Congratulate others when they deserve it.
T - Temperament	Have a good temperament. Be able to accept criticism. Coaches and players show emotion. We need to stay under control.
T - Timing	Know when you are at the right place at the right time or are taking advantage of breaks.
I - Initiative	Make your own breaks. Let people know what you want from officiating and what your goals are.
T - Trust	Develop a sense of trust with your fellow officials. Let them know if they can depend on you for the tough calls.
U - Understanding	Have a thorough understanding of the rules, mechanics, league pecking order of the group.
D - Determination	Go after what you want from officiating. Always work toward your goals. Don't give up or get discouraged.
E - Enjoyment	Officiating is a lot of work, but you need to enjoy it. If you don't enjoy officiating, it is time to get out.
H - Humility	Be humble. Be confident but don't let it go to your head. Admit when you make a mistake.
E - Evaluations	Don't blame others for your own failure. Ask to be evaluated. Improve on the areas where you were marked down.
L - Loyalty	Be loyal to your fellow officials. Remember how you got to where you are now.
P - Patience	Be patient. Don't get discouraged. Good things will happen if you continue to work to become a better official.
S - Success	If you maintain a positive attitude you will be successful. Have fun.

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GTOA Sample Forms

