



Procedure for keeping the 25-second count

Purpose: Until now, the NHFOA had a mechanics exception that utilized the referee to time the 25-second clock. This exception was not consistent with the NHFS game official's manual and through much discussion the mechanics committee has decided to eliminate that exception. The purpose of the mechanics requiring the back judge to maintain the 25-second clock is to ensure that game tempo is established and to provide a visual signal to enable teams to better manage the game clock. It is important that this rule is applied properly and fairly and that officials are consistent in the administration of the rule. Consistency in mechanics is our mantra this year and it is very important that we apply consistency to the administration of the 25-second clock rule.

Intent: To allow players and coaches the opportunity to utilize a signal given by the back judge for clock management. Clock management is a vital part of football and can be critical in a close game.

Procedure: The ball is marked ready for play when, after it has been placed for a down, the referee gives the ready-for-play signal.

1. The 25-second count shall then begin.
2. The back judge will time the 25-second count.
3. If the ball has not been snapped within 20-seconds of the ready for play signal (i.e., with 5-seconds remaining on the 25-second count) the back judge will raise his arm vertically over their head and will keep it raised until the ball is snapped or the 25-second clock expires.
 - It is important that the back judge be positioned in full view of the quarterback during this procedure.
4. When the 25-second clock has expired and the team in possession has failed to snap the ball, the back judge will sound his whistle and toss a flag.
5. The back judge will then give the delay of game signal to the referee to notify him of the infraction.
6. The referee will then enforce the penalty by rule.

Consistency in Mechanics

In the event that there is no game clock or the game clock malfunctions, the game will be timed by the line judge. The back judge will continue to keep the 25-second clock. **In the spirit of fairness and sportsmanship the line judge will not directly communicate the game time to the coach or team members on their sideline.** If this situation arises, the **line judge will communicate the time to other officials** who will announce the time to both teams. It is very important to adhere to this policy to eliminate any potential advantage or appearance of unfairness.

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