

CLOCK & TIMING

Wind it, stop it, count it down, and fix it when the scoreboard lies. The white marker is the **Referee**; boxed items are white-hat only.

- R

Referee (white hat)
- U

Umpire
- LM

Linesman (H/DJ)
- LJ

Line Judge
- BJ

Back Judge (5-man)

WIND OR STOP ▶the ball is dead · does the clock run

EVERYONE ON THIS

- The covering official owns it. Wind the index finger twice at shoulder level so the Referee knows; crossed arms if it stays stopped.
- Dead inbounds between the numbers and the sideline: the wing winds twice and the Referee mirrors it.
- Touchdown, touchback, safety and incomplete pass stop the clock by themselves. Never follow one of those with a timeout signal.
- Every official mirrors every timeout signal on every play.

WHITE HAT ONLY

- You wind on the ready facing the press box, or with your press-box-side arm when the snap is imminent and you have to watch it.
- First down: signal it immediately, once, no chopping. Inbounds near a sideline: timeout signal only, do not wind.
- Free kick caught between the hashes, you signal alone. Caught in a side zone, you and the near wing.

CLOCK SIGNALS

Wind it	Index finger twice at shoulder level, so the Referee knows to wind.
Do not wind	Crossed arms.
Ready for play	Referee faces the press box, or uses his press-box-side arm.
Two-minute reminder	Tap the wrist at shoulder level, each play.
Stop sign	Arm out at 90° toward the Referee — injury, a coach, the timer, anything.
First down	Referee signals once, immediately. No chopping.
Out of timeouts	Two tugs on the steamboat whistle facing the press box, then point at that goal line.

WHO OWNS WHAT

- LJ

Primary on the game clock. Talks with the timer before the game, and times halftime, weather delays and the interval before overtime.
- BJ

Signals the Referee whether the clock starts on the ready or the snap — the Line Judge is often busy with a coach or walking off yardage.
- LM / LJ

Timeout signal the moment the runner goes out of bounds — not when you reach the spot.
- Crew of 4: the Referee picks up the Back Judge's clock-status duty.

THE PLAY CLOCK ▶ball is marked ready

EVERYONE ON THIS

- Five seconds left gets an arm up with five fingers, counted down four, three, two, one.
- Reset is an arm over the head, pushed upward twice.
- Wrong down box? The Line Judge points above the Linesman's head, repeatedly. Use a soft whistle only if you have to, and don't draw attention to it.
- The play clock is not a race. Hustle, but don't hurry — the crew goal is that the offense never waits on us.

WHITE HAT ONLY

- In a crew of 5 the Back Judge has it. In a crew of 4 it is yours: announce five, then verbalize four, three, two, one.
- Mark the ball ready only when you're clear of all players, and on a first down only after the down box is set.
- Any official can give you the stop sign for an unusual delay in marking it ready.

CREW OF 5

- BJ

Owens the play clock, with or without a visible one. Resets it when needed.
- R

Marks the ball ready. Back-pedal to your position first if they're already at the line.
- LM / LJ

Substitutes off on your sideline before the snap.

CREW OF 4

- R

The play clock is yours as well as the ready. Say it out loud — five, four, three, two, one.
- U

Counts B and owns B's substitutions.
- LM / LJ

Same as a crew of 5.

TIMEOUTS ▶ a team asks, or the crew needs one

EVERYONE ON THIS

- Calling official: whistle, timeout twice, then point at the team twice.
- All five signal the timeouts remaining for each team to each other, and each of you records it.
- If several of you need to get together and talk, do it — but keep an eye on your team while you do.

CREW OF 5

LM / LJ Tell the head coach when his team is out of timeouts.

BJ Record them, and help the Referee keep the count honest.

U Stay over the ball until the Referee is ready.

R / crew Every official mirrors the timeout signal twice, every time.

TV game: the Line Judge holds the Referee and Umpire with a stop sign until the coordinator says they're ready. The Umpire stays over the ball.

Ⓡ WHITE HAT ONLY

- Signal the timeout twice facing the press box, then turn and point both arms at that team's goal line twice.
- When a team is out of timeouts, two tugs on the steamboat whistle facing the press box, then point at their goal line.
- Check the scoreboard for the correct number of timeouts before you mark the ball ready.

CREW OF 4

R Same, and you keep the count yourself.

LM / LJ Same as a crew of 5.

U Same as a crew of 5.

WHEN THE CLOCK IS WRONG ▶ no scoreboard · or it didn't stop

EVERYONE ON THIS

- Clock broken or turned off: announce the time remaining at nine, six, four and two minutes, in a loud voice. Inside two minutes, after every play if you can.
- Inside two minutes with timeouts live, somebody must actually see the scoreboard stop on an out-of-bounds, an incomplete pass or a timeout. Name who.
- If the clock doesn't start after the signal, every official signals start clock.
- Unusual delay in marking the ball ready — injury, a coach, the timer putting 12:00 up — give the Referee the stop sign and hold it.

CREW OF 5

LJ Talks to the timer before the game. If the scoreboard doesn't restart after the signal, you catch it.

BJ Second set of eyes on the scoreboard and on the clock status.

R / U Announce the remaining time loudly enough for both benches.

Ⓡ WHITE HAT ONLY

- The official facing the scoreboard rules on the snap versus the end of the period — that's you or the Back Judge, not whoever is closest.
- Halftime: wind the clock, then the crew jogs off together.
- End of the game: signal the end of the period, gather as a crew and run off together. Don't stay to visit.

CREW OF 4

LJ Same as a crew of 5, and you are the only clock specialist.

R You and the Line Judge carry the scoreboard between you.

U / LM Announce the time to the near bench.

COIN TOSS AND OVERTIME — twenty minutes before kickoff

- 01 **Positions.** Referee faces the scoreboard at the 50. Linesman and Umpire opposite the press box; Line Judge and Back Judge on the press box side. The other four then move to the 45 with their backs to the scoreboard.
- 02 **Escorts.** Wings bring the captains out and introduce them to the Referee. The press-box side delays until the far side reaches the field numbers. Home is usually the press-box sideline.
- 03 **The toss.** Referee has the officials introduce themselves, asks which captain will call, takes the call and repeats it. Toss at twenty minutes, catch it, then ask the captain to repeat the call. The Umpire steps forward and repeats it too.

- 04 **Options.** Defer, or choose for the first half. If he defers, signal the press box. If he chooses, turn the captains and signal. Then discuss sportsmanship and check the options with the crew — the whole thing should take two or three minutes.
- 05 **Second half and overtime.** One captain each to the centre of the field, secure the options, signal the press box. In overtime, toss, secure the choices, turn the captains and signal by pointing at the goal line.
- 06 **Before you leave the field.** Referee winds the clock at halftime and the crew jogs off together. At the end of the game, signal the period, gather as a crew and run off. Don't stay to visit — it is preventive officiating.

Built from the OHSAA Gold Book *Brief & Concise* mechanics for crews of 5 and 4, which follows the NFHS Officials Manual. Associations amend these, so check Vermont's guidance before teaching it. Print at 100% on Letter, two-sided, flip on the long edge.