

## 2024 IHSAA Football Mechanics Check List - Observer Form

### REFEREE

1. Counts players and communicate to crew every play.  
S    NI    U
2. At the snap, is 12-15 yards deep and at least outside the tackle and at most 2 yards outside where the TE would be, on the passing side of the QB.  
S    NI    U
3. Follows the QB wherever he goes, especially to the sidelines. S    NI    U
4. Trails all sweep plays in clean-up mode.  
S    NI    U
5. Gives clear NFHS-approved hand signals when communicating. S    NI    U
6. Announces the number of the player who fouled when making your announcement.  
S    NI    U
7. Does not wind the clock on a kickoff return, the covering wing official will wind the clock.  
S    NI    U
8. Does not wind the clock to start the play after a play out of bounds, change of possession, incomplete pass, TO, etc. The clock will start on the snap in those situations and the clock operator knows that.  
S    NI    U
9. Winds the clock on ready for play after a first down inbounds or after a foul and by rule the clock starts on the ready for play. S    NI    U

### UMPIRE

1. On kickoffs, starts on R's restraining line, diagonal into the field of play about 5 yards downfield and to the hash. Hold your location letting the players pass you like on a regular scrimmage play, then slowly trail the play. S    NI    U
2. Counts the players every play and communicate to the crew. S    NI    U
3. At the snap, is 5-7 yards from the LOS, in position to see the ball at the snap, between the tackles, and never in front of the LB's. S    NI    U
4. Knows where the ball should be laterally on the field.  
S    NI    U
5. After reading pass, moves toward the LOS to help determine ineligible receiver and/or illegal forward pass. S    NI    U
6. On wide runs, pivots to watch blocks on the backside as the play flows toward the sideline. Slowly trail the play downfield if needed. S    NI    U
7. Marks off penalties with the H and L to confirm the proper yardage is marked off. S    NI    U
8. On punt plays, starts just behind the LB's and after the punt, step up toward the LOS even more and after the 2nd wave passes you, pivot and watch blocks by the by those players in the middle of the field. S    NI    U

### LINE JUDGE

1. Keeps your sideline area clean.  
S    NI    U
2. Determines who is on/off the LOS should you have wideouts. S    NI    U
3. Winds, then stops clock if runner is down close to the sideline and in the field of play if they reached the line to gain. S    NI    U
4. On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> down plays between the tackles, holds at the LOS until the runner gets 3-4 yards downfield, then trail the play, and square in at the dead ball spot with appropriate signals. S    NI    U
5. On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> down plays coming towards the sideline (quick pass, sweep, pitch, option) steps 3-5 yards backwards into the offensive backfield and open up to watch blocks in front of the runner until he is threatened by a defender. Then trail the play, and square in at the dead ball spot with appropriate signals. S    NI    U
6. On 3<sup>rd</sup> down plays, flows to the line to gain, only stopping momentarily if it is a quick pass to be able to rule if the pass is forward or backward, and then continue to the line to gain. "3<sup>rd</sup> down flow"  
S    NI    U
7. On 4<sup>th</sup> down plays, goes immediately to the line to gain at the snap, beating any runner there. "4<sup>th</sup> down go" S    NI    U
8. On punt plays, releases hard downfield at the snap, watching the gunners (1<sup>st</sup> couple of players) on your side of the field for holds and illegal blocks in the back. Do **NOT** watch the ball and do **NOT** watch the return man while the ball is in the air.  
S    NI    U
9. Goal line going in (goal line mechanics) - When the ball is at or inside the opponent's 10-yard line, both wing officials should make an immediate movement toward the goal line at the snap (in anticipation of a TD). If the play ends in the field of play, move back to the dead ball spot and square in appropriately. If the line to gain is between the line of scrimmage and the goal line, stop their first, then continue to the GL after the LTG has been reached.  
S    NI    U
10. Goal line going out (reverse goal line mechanics)- When the snap is between the 5 and 10-yard line going out, the L should read the play, and if he thinks the GL may be threatened for a potential safety, he should go to the GL. If the play ends in the field of play, move back to the dead ball spot and square in appropriately. When the snap is between the 5-yard line and the GL, both the L and the H both should make an immediate movement toward the goal line at the snap (in anticipation of a safety). If the play ends in the field of play, move back to the dead ball spot and square in appropriately.  
S    NI    U

### HEADLINESMAN

1. Keeps your sideline area clean.  
S NI U
2. Determines who is on/off the LOS should you have wideouts. S NI U
3. Winds, then stop clock if runner is down close to the sideline and in the field of play if has reached the line to gain. S NI U
4. On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> down plays between the tackles, holds at the LOS until the runner gets 3-4 yards downfield, then trail the play, and square in at the dead ball spot with appropriate signals.  
S NI U
5. On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> down plays coming towards the sideline (quick pass, sweep, pitch, option) steps 3-5 yards backwards into the offensive backfield and open up to watch blocks in front of the runner until he is threatened by a defender. Then trail the play, and square in at the dead ball spot with appropriate signals. S NI U
6. On 3<sup>rd</sup> down plays, flows to the line to gain, only stopping momentarily if it is a quick pass to be able to rule if the pass is forward or backward, and then continue to the line to gain. "3<sup>rd</sup> down flow"  
S NI U
7. On 4<sup>th</sup> down plays, goes immediately to the line to gain at the snap, beating any runner there. "4<sup>th</sup> down go"  
S NI U
8. On punt plays, releases hard downfield as soon as the ball is kicked, watching the gunners (1<sup>st</sup> couple of players) on your side of the field for holds and illegal blocks in the back. Do **NOT** watch the ball and do **NOT** watch the return man while the ball is in the air.  
S NI U
9. Goal line going in (goal line mechanics) - When the ball is at or inside the opponent's 10-yard line, both wing officials should make an immediate movement toward the goal line at the snap (in anticipation of a TD). If the play ends in the field of play, move back to the dead ball spot and square in appropriately. If the line to gain is between the line of scrimmage and

the goal line, stop their first, then continue to the GL after the LTG has been reached.

S NI U

10. Goal line going out (reverse goal line mechanics)- When the snap is between the 5 and 10-yard line going out, the H should go should go to the GL. If the play ends in the field of play, move back to the dead ball spot and square in appropriately. When the snap is between the 5-yard line and the GL, both the H and the L both should make an immediate movement toward the goal line at the snap (in anticipation of a safety). If the play ends in the field of play, move back to the dead ball spot and square in appropriately. S NI U

### BACK JUDGE

1. On kick offs, starts on K's restraining line, diagonal into the field of play about 10 yards to the 50. Be ready to retreat on a long run as you have GL responsibilities. S NI U
2. Counts the defensive players. S NI U
3. Is 25 yards from the LOS at the snap and always in the middle of the field. If you read pass, start to backpedal and keep all players in front of you. You should beat any players to the GL.  
S NI U
4. Can see the play clock or be responsible for the delay of game. S NI U
5. On runs between the tackles, observes blocks **in front** of the runner against the second level defensive players, usually the linebacker or strong safety. S NI U
6. On runs to either side of the field, observes blocks **in front** of runner at the point of attack.  
S NI U
7. Cleans up on out-of-bounds plays when necessary.  
S NI U
8. On punt plays, start out right behind the return man, move opposite of him to be about 5-7 yards wide and 5-7 deeper than the returner on the catch. Watch the return man for a valid or invalid fair catch signal until he possesses the ball. Do **NOT** watch the ball in the air. S NI U

Above, are listed mechanics specific to each position in a 5-man football crew. Please check the box for each mechanic witnessed during the contest. For a reference, Satisfactory would be considered if an item is completed more than 90% of the time while Unacceptable would be considered if an item is completed less than 60% of the time.