

“One Hundred Helpful Hints”

1. The only part of officiating to emphasize is your signaling.
2. Signals should be distinct and deliberate at all times.
3. All officials should pick up time out signals. Only the man (or men) who see a touchdown should signal.
4. All officials should check down and distance on every play. Don't miss a down.
5. Always be sure of a foul. Never guess. There are no phantom fouls.
6. Call fouls immediately. Do not delay or be too late. However, it is better to be right than rapid.
7. Be prepared to work with less than a full crew in emergencies.
8. Special care should be given to ball spotting on "previous spot plays." Do not give yardage or take it away. Spot the ball properly.
9. Be consistent in declaring the ball dead.
10. Be aware of the first down measurement. Don't move the ball too quickly.
11. Be sure there are no more than 22 players on the playing field when the play starts. Never more than 11 players on either team.
12. Be especially alert during a "hurry-up" offense.
13. A time out signal should be given if there is doubt about recovery of a fumble. Team direction can follow when officials are positive which team has the ball.
14. Watch for holding after the initial block.
15. Personal fouls do not include holding, illegal use of the hands, or pass interference.
16. Be alert to a "pick-off" on forward pass plays.
17. Watch for hooking and holding by the defense against potential pass receivers.
18. Officials are never to grasp or hold on the facemask of any player when they attempt to prevent or break up a fight.
19. No disqualification unless necessary. Be sure to see the entire action. Check with other officials to verify what was seen.
20. Questions of judgment on the part of any official are not open to argument, either on the field or after the game.
21. Do not become too familiar with coaches, players or athletic directors.
22. Coaches are not permitted on the playing field during the game without permission. Coaches are not to visit with the officials in their dressing room.
23. Do not blow your whistle in anticipation of a foul.
24. Pick up your flag if you realize the foul wasn't there.
25. Don't try to "run" or "bulldoze" a phantom foul if you know you were wrong or mistaken.
26. Remember the four "W's" in reporting fouls: Who, what, where, when.
27. Be discreet in speaking to the referee if you believe he measured off the wrong yardage. (But speak to him).
28. Officials not involved specifically on a play that is ruled dead should be aware of continuing action fouls. Clean up the play.
29. If number of down is in doubt, call a time out, draw aside and consult. Get it right. That's the only thing that matters in such a situation. Discuss it on the field, not after the game or at half time.
30. Be certain to stop the clock following a 4th down play.
31. Help each other on possible 1st down measurements.
32. All officials should always be aware of the down, the distance, and the spot of the ball.
33. Be watchful for piling on, crackbacks, chop blocks and tripping.
34. All officials should review, in their own minds, basic spots of enforcement as a check on the referee's enforcement of penalty. If he is wrong, speak to him immediately and not later as discussion talk.
35. Review legal and illegal blocks. Be alert for illegal blocking during kick plays.

36. Be sure to call pass interference, if there is a foul, on a completed pass. It might be a question of a 1st down.
37. All officials should be in their designated area at snap.
38. Officials should be alert for pass or run on all plays.
39. On loose balls near a sideline, be aware of who had last possession in case the ball rolls out of bounds.
40. Be especially careful of who touched a ball that goes out of bounds.
41. Be aware of crew mechanics on "hurry-up" offense.
42. Review crowd noise procedures that might delay the game.
43. Know the state of the ball during all fouls- dead, loose or in possession.
44. Be alert to clock status and players actions that involve timing.
45. Keep officiating after you call a foul.
46. Be alert for possible half the distance penalties on fouls.
47. On reporting foul to referee: official should know the location of the foul, whether it was defensive or offensive team, number of player, and status of the ball.
48. Each official shares an equal responsibility for rules interpretation.
49. A quick good review is the Summary of Penalties in the back of the Rule Book.
50. Avoid, if possible, warming up on the field prior to the game. Use the dressing room.
51. Try to have a good mental attitude in all games. All games are important.
52. Hand carry your uniform bag if you're traveling by airplane.
53. Do not discuss controversial calls with anyone after a game unless it is with the referee and a designated press representative. (Not on judgment calls).
54. A majority opinion prevails in a crew conference. Referee's vote counts as one vote only.
55. Try to keep area near ball free of players on a measurement for a first down. This is necessary for spectators and the press visibility.
56. Try to discourage comments and talk between tacklers and ball carriers.
57. Observe players for late action after the ball is declared dead.
58. Officials with the responsibility to count players before snap should do it on every play. (Especially field goals and punts).
59. Pick up time out signals when a runner goes out of bounds.
60. Any official who calls a foul should double check with referee as to proper distance and down.
61. Listen to the referee's option to captains if possible (unobtrusively, of course).
62. Do not move too fast. Most times it is better to let the play come to you.
63. Be sure to see entire situation before disqualifying a player. Check with other officials if necessary.
64. Try to get player's number when you throw your flag, but that is not as important as continuing to officiate.
65. Do not allow yourself to become irritated or annoyed at coaches or players.
66. Give fumbles a good look. Don't be in a hurry to call it.
67. Know the team captains by number.
68. Be decisive in your signaling when you call a foul. Indecisiveness gives the impression of uncertainty.
69. "Out of bounds" spot must be marked by official covering the play.
70. Officials should be aware of their responsibilities on measurements. Let the official on the ball know if it is close to a measurement. Yell "close" or any other signal that you use.
71. Be certain of your responsibility at the end of each period.
72. Know tie-breaker procedures of regular season games and play-off games.
73. Know your position on a free kick in a short kick situation.
74. Watch for deliberately stopping clock to either conserve or consume time.
75. Wear glasses or contacts if you need them. There is no stigma attached.
76. Be aware of the mandatory equipment and uniform code as listed in the Rule Book.
77. On a penalty option, only one captain is permitted to indicate team's penalty option.
78. Time out is not charged to a team when the injured player leaves the game during an injury time out.
79. Record each time out. Check with other officials after each time out as to the number remaining.

80. Notify the Supervisor of Officials (or Commissioner) if you are injured. Don't try to work if you are injured or ill.
81. Be sure to check with crew members regarding the crew's next assignment.
82. Remember that the players are younger and get excited and emotional. An official should not become excited or emotional. Be poised and calm.
83. Never ask for game tickets.
84. Stay in the ball game, no matter how easy the game moves, and be especially alert near the end of the half.
85. Try not to be, or give the appearance of being antagonistic, militaristic, or over-bearing to players or coaches.
86. Allow plenty of time for your game. Don't ever hurry a game to make your next appointment or to catch a plane. It shows in your work.
87. The dressing room is closed to everyone, including friends.
88. Be careful of association with strangers in strange places. Stay aloof.
89. Remember that the fans pay to see players and teams. (Not the officials).
90. Chain men and clock men are local personnel. Don't talk in front of them concerning plays or players or coaches. Talk might be repeated.
91. Cooperate with the coach when penalties are called.
92. Don't become a twelfth man on the field. Don't get too close to the play.
93. Comments of the coaches and players on the sidelines should not influence your decisions and calls.
94. Stay in shape and watch your weight.
95. Don't ever guess on a foul. See it and call it. Don't look for it.
96. Keep remembering to know distance and spot of the ball. Yell it to each other.
97. Be courteous to coaches and players, even if their questions seem to be ridiculous.
98. Don't blow your whistle unless you see the ball.
99. Officials are not rated or ranked on the number of fouls they call. There is no quota, only if the calls are there and called, or not called.
100. Remember with all these things to keep in mind—Have Fun! If you can't have fun officiating maybe you need to look for another avocation.