

# Procedure for Clock Operators









Each Quarter = **6 minutes/Flag**; **8 minutes/Tackle**  
**Half Time = 8 minutes**








1. On all free kicks, **start the clock** when the ball is legally kicked in the field of play.
2. Under NCAA football playing rules the official who declares the ball dead will be the first official to signal a time out when the team in possession of the ball meets the requirements for first down. Key yourself on him as the clock will usually stop on long gainers.
3. Any official may signal a team time out, so be alert to stop the clock.
4. The clock is not to be stopped on plays near a boundary line unless an official so signals. Many times the ball goes out of bounds after having been declared dead in the field of play and no time out legally occurs. If a pass is touched or caught out of bounds, the incompletion signal will stop the clock.







Note: On some plays near the sideline and in advance of the line to gain, an official may give a winding signal to indicate the ball is inbounds and follow it by a stop the clock signal for an apparent first down. Be alert for both signals.

5. Game officials and clock operators are to be sure that a time out is indicated and **the clock is stopped** under the following circumstances:
  - a. Whenever a team or an official's time out is charged.
  - b. After any score. (Extra point is not timed.)
  - c. When a live ball goes out of bounds.
  - d. On a penalty.
  - e. When either team is awarded a first down.
  - f. Following an incomplete pass.
6. After the clock has been stopped, it will be started again on the Referee's "Start the Clock" signal, or if no such signal is given, the game clock will be **started on the snap.**
7. In case of a pileup anywhere on the field, be alert, an official may stop the clock until the congestion is over. The Referee then may start the clock again before the ready for play signal.
8. When time for half expires, start the field clock on Referee's signal when the field is cleared of players and officials.
9. When the period ends, the Referee will so indicate by holding a ball overhead with one hand and arm extended.
10. Timing errors on the game clock, or by an official, may be corrected by the Referee. Exact information as to the time error must be available from either the electric clock operator or game officials.
11. The electric clock operator is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages accrue when the game clock is not started or stopped promptly. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clock.

**REFEREE SIGNALS AND THEIR MEANING**  
**(Note: The lead referee usually wears white hat while secondary referees wear black hats)**

	<p><b>Start Clock</b>  Resume clock countdown.</p>
	<p><b>Time Out / Stop Clock</b>  Stop clock until referee signals to start it again.</p>
	<p><b>False Start</b>  A false start occurs when an offensive player moves before the ball is snapped. This penalty is not called if a player is in motion, but that player must either be moving parallel to the line of scrimmage (a receiver in motion) or set before the snap to not be in violation. Motion is a common tool used by coaches to try to free up a receiver, or confuse a defense and is simply a player changing their position on the field before the snap. Only receivers, running backs, and the quarterback may be in motion. (5 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>Encroachment / Offside</b>  <i>Encroachment:</i> When the defense comes across the line of scrimmage and actually touches an offensive player before the snap, encroachment is called. (5 yd penalty)   <i>Offside:</i> Each team must be lined up on their line of scrimmage and can not be lined up in the neutral zone when the ball is snapped. The neutral zone is the area between the front and back of the ball. (5 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>First Down</b></p>
	<p><b>Touchdown / Field Goal</b>  Each team may only have eleven men on the field while the play is live.</p>
	<p><b>Incomplete Pass / Penalty Declined</b>  A forward pass that touches the ground before being caught or that is caught while the player is out of bounds.</p>
	<p><b>Defensive holding or illegal use of hands</b>  No defensive player is allowed to hold or push an offensive receiver or back on a passing play past the initial five yard chuck-zone. The first five yards past the line of scrimmage, the defense may jam, hold up, the receiver to keep them from getting by, but after that a penalty is awarded to the offense. Special Notes: Automatic first down awarded to offense. (5 yd penalty)</p>

	<p><b>Delay of game</b> This penalty can be called on either offense or defense, but the foul is most commonly committed by the offense. The penalty occurs on offense when they allow the play clock to run down to zero without snapping the ball. The penalty can be called on the defense if the referees feel that the defense did not allow the offense to get the play off in time for any reason. A similar foul is delay on kickoff. (5 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>Ball Dead</b> Fumbles and bad snaps may not be advanced and are dead when and where they first touch the ground.</p>
	<p><b>Illegal Substitution / Too many players on field</b> A player may only enter the field of play while the ball is dead. They must also only leave crossing their <b>own</b> sideline. Substitutes entering the game must enter the field passed the numerals. Finally, except for the last two minutes of the half, the offense must not rush to the line and hurry up a snap if they are substituting. (5 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>Illegal Shift (2 Hands) / Illegal Motion (1 Hand)</b> SHIFT: A player can not make a motion as if the play were live if they are simply changing their position. Once a player shifts his position he must not make a movement for at least a second before the ball is snapped. More than one player may be shifting at once as long as all get set. (5 yd penalty)  MOTION: Similar to illegal shift except the player does not come to a stop. Also, only one player is allowed in motion and the motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage. (5 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>Flag Guarding</b> When a ball carrier, intentionally or unintentionally, by using their hand or arm interferes with a defensive player's attempt to grab a flag. (10 yd penalty &amp; loss of down.)</p>
	<p><b>Disregard Flag</b> The penalty flag was thrown in error or mistake made.</p>
	<p><b>Sideline Warning</b> Non-loss of yardage penalty against either team due to coaches or players being on the field after the snap.</p>
	<p><b>Personal Foul</b> A flagrant illegal act that is generally deemed to unnecessarily risk the health of other players. (15 yd penalty)</p>

	<p><b>Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Noncontact foul</b>  A dead-ball foul in which a player, in the judgment of the officials, taunts or otherwise acts in an unsportsmanlike manner. (15 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>Forward Pass Interference</b>  Hindering an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept, or bat the ball, even though no contact was made. (10 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>Illegal Pass/Forward Handling</b>  A player can not throw the ball forward once pass the line of scrimmage.  (5 yd penalty &amp; loss of down)   A player can not take the ball passed the line of scrimmage, back behind the line, and then throw the ball forward.</p>
	<p><b>Safety</b>  A two-point score by the defense that occurs when one of its players tackles an opponent in possession of the ball in his own end zone.</p>
	<p><b>Running into/roughing kicker or holder</b>  If a player hits the kicker and does not touch the ball, but the hit is not flagrant, only the five yard penalty is called.  (5 yd penalty)</p>
	<p><b>Loss of Down</b>  The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.</p>