

CENTRAL VIRGINIA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

STUDY MANUAL

HEAD LINESMAN

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHAIN CREWS

The Officiating Crew is assisted by the Chain and Down Marker Crew in the administration of the Game. As such these individuals are members of the officiating staff for the contest, and, they must be briefed on their responsibilities during the pregame activities of the crew. This is the responsibility of the Head Linesman.

1. **Equipment-** The down marker must be inspected to insure it is operable and uses materials that are not dangerous to the players. This includes the use of a soft material on the bottom of the stakes. The chains must be separated, distance checked against field markings, and examined for dangerous or loose fittings and a tape marker at the center point of the chain. If other types of devices are used, they must be verified as acceptable and accurate.

2. **Chain Crew-** The Crew should consist of the following members, each with their assigned responsibilities. The Head Linesman shall coordinate with the home team management to determine who has been designated by them to handle these duties. He shall ask that these individuals report to the side lines near the 20 yard line at least 20 minutes prior to kickoff to review procedures and equipment operation. Once assembled, the Head Linesman shall assign crew responsibilities. To assist in their identification during the game, game management is encouraged to provide all crew members with distinctive vests or uniforms. Although appointed by the home team management, the members of the crew serve at the pleasure of the Head Linesman and if they fail to perform as requested, the Head Linesman may advise the Referee who will request home team management provide acceptable replacements.

✍ **Chains-** 2 individuals each to maintain responsibility for the position of one end of the chain marker.

✍ **Downmarker (Box) Operator-** 1 individual to maintain the correct down number and the proper spot of the foremost point of the football. In a three member crew, this individual shall also assume the clip duties.

✍ **Clip -** 1 individual to locate and maintain the position of the clip and assist when the chains are moved. This individual shall place the clip on the chain at the yard line designated by the Head Linesman (usually the first yard line crossed moving from the rear stake toward the next line to gain). The clip is usually located at the center of the yard line.

3. **Instructions to the Crew-** The Head Linesman shall instruct the crew to insure that all members are aware of their responsibilities as members of the officiating crew and protecting the safety of the players.

✍ **Actions and Comments-** As members of the officiating crew they are not to comment to players, coaches, or anyone who may be on or near

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the sideline; nor, are they to react to the actions of players or officials during the course of the contest.

- ✍ **Safety-** During any play that results in players approaching the location of the chain crew, the crew should without hesitation back away from the side line a safe distance, taking the chains and down marker with them. In the event, the equipment can not be moved, it must be laid on the ground to reduce contact potential.
- ✍ **Authority-** All actions taken by the chain crew are authorized by the Head Linesman. ***The crew is not to move, change down, or take any other actions until the Head Linesman directs or authorizes the action.***
- ✍ **Setting the succeeding spot-** The Downmarker will be set at the farther most point of the ball after each down. The spot shall be established by the Head Linesman and the DownMarker shall be located based on the reference provided.
- ✍ **Establishing the Down-** The Downmarker shall not be advanced to the next down until the Head Linesman turns to the Downmarker and indicates the number of the down. The Downmarker shall be advanced to that indication. If the Crew believes this may be incorrect, they should hold the down and request the Head Linesman check the number.
- ✍ **Movement of the Downmarker or Chains-** The crew shall ***never move without checking the field of play for any foul markers.*** If any flags are observed, the crew shall ***NOT*** move until, the administration of all fouls is completed.
- ✍ **Setting the Line to Gain-** The Head Linesman shall designate the spot for the back stake at the current location of the foremost point of the ball and the direction for the next line to gain. The rear stake shall be set at that spot and the chain shall be pulled taut establishing the new line to gain. The clip shall then be located at the nearest yard line to the rear stake by clipping it to the chain at the center point of the yard line.
- ✍ **During change of possessions or long gains-** The Head Linesman shall direct the crew to move to the new spot and place the chains with the line to gain in the proper direction, having provided the spot for the back stake to be located at the foremost point of the ball. The relocation shall be in two sets. Initially, the chains shall relocate to the new spot, however, the Downmarker shall remain at the previous spot until the last possible moment to provide a reference point in case the previous down must be replayed.
- ✍ **Measurement-** When instructed, the Head Linesman shall come to the sideline and grasping the chains at the clip, direct the chain crew to move onto the field toward the location of the ball. Before moving the chains, the downmarker shall be placed at the current line to gain with current down indicated to provide a reference for the respotting of the chains. When the chain crew arrives at the ball, the Head Linesman shall locate the clip on the appropriate yard line and the foremost stake shall be handed to the Umpire. The chain crew shall remain close by but not interfere with the actual measurement. If a new series of downs is awarded, the spotting of the rear stake

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may be directed by the Back Judge who will move to the sideline while the measurement is being accomplished.

- ✍ **End of Quarter** - At the end of the first and third quarters, the teams will exchange ends of the field. To accomplish this, the Head Linesman shall grasp the chains at the clip and announcement loudly to the entire crew, the yard line of the clip, the down, and the distance to the line to gain. The Head Linesman will then instruct the rear stake to pickup and move past him going toward the opposite end of the field. After the rear stake passes, he shall direct the front stake to pickup and follow. They shall proceed to the new yard line and locate the chains. After locating the clip, the chain shall be pulled taut from the clip in each direction. Once the chain is located, the Downmarker shall be directed to relocate at the new spot of the ball. All crew members shall review the field position before any movement takes place, and shall verify location after movement.
 - ✍ **Ball spotted within 10 yards of the Goal Line-** When the line to gain extends into the end zone, the chains shall be established temporarily so that the clip can be set at the goal line after the rear stake has been placed at the foremost point fo the ball for the new series of downs. Then, the chains are to be removed from the side line leaving only the Downmarker.
 - ✍ **Free Kicks-** Remove all equipment from the side line until a new series of downs is established.
 - ✍ **Point After Touchdown-** Downmarker is placed at the foremost point of the ball for the Try. The chains are to be removed from the side line.
4. **End of Game** - Thank crew for their efforts and cooperation in the administration of the game. Pickup clip if provided by the Head Limesman.