

CENTRAL VIRGINIA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION STUDY MANUAL

GAME CLOCK OPERATOR

The Game Clock Operator (Electronic Clock Operator or ECO) is an official member of the officiating crew and is expected to attend the pregame meeting and work closely with the crew throughout the assignment. The ECO is considered the alternate official and may become a field official if the situation warrants.

Uniform: The ECO will bring his uniform to the game site. Since the ECO will be sitting in the Press Box to operate the clock at most game sites, the wearing of the uniform is optional and at the discretion of the Referee.

Responsibilities:

1. **Pregame:** Attend the Pregame meeting of the crew. Pay close attention to discussions regarding the starting and stopping of the clock, and any special details regarding the game site clock or game administration. Be prepared to review clock operation and rules pertaining to game timing and scoring. Regardless of whether you wear your uniform, be prepared to take the following with you to the field: a backup game clock that you know how to operate, a whistle which may be used to signal a clock problem, and a list of the crew assigned to the game for use by the PA Announcer if asked. Enter the field with the Crew.
2. Go to the Press Box and introduce yourself to the other game site personnel who will be working in the Press Box such as the PA Announcer, Statisticians, etc. **Ask a School Representative to verify clock operation and then provide you with a review of the operation of the clock to include:**
 - ✍ how to set the clock,
 - ✍ how to start the clock,
 - ✍ how to stop the clock,
 - ✍ how to correct the clock without losing the time,
 - ✍ how to enter the score.

These are your primary responsibilities as the ECO.

At many game sites, another person will be there to assist with the setting of the down, distance, quarter, and possession indicator. If no one is assigned to these functions, you can offer to do what you can ***BUT YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO START AND STOP THE GAME CLOCK PROPERLY.***

3. After reviewing clock operation, practice running the clock. Set the time, start and stop the clock, reset the clock, and repeat until you are SURE you can operate the clock without

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error. Once you have completed your practice, set the clock and prepare for the first quarter to begin.

4. **During the game:** Note the time the game started. Pay attention to the game and pay particular attention to the Referee. The Referee will provide many of the indications for stopping the clock and most of the indications for starting the clock. He is your primary key. Your secondary key is the side official opposite you who will repeat most signals to insure that you have a clear view of the indication. Throughout the game you are to run the clock based on the signals from the field. Do not officiate the game. Allow the field officials to administer the game and follow their instructions as to the stopping and starting of the clock. If the crew makes a mistake and for example allows the clock to run when it should have been stopped, they are responsible for the correction. Do not add to their difficulties by creating a timing problem by not being attentive or failing to react properly to their signals.

Starting the clock:

- ✍ On Free kicks- when the signal is given.
- ✍ On Scrimmage Downs- when the ball is snapped.
- ✍ On the Referee's signal at anytime given.

Stopping the clock:

- ✍ On a score- when the touchdown/field goal signal is given.
- ✍ On a timeout signal by any official, but typically the covering official(s) on the play for a possible firstdown, out of bounds, incomplete pass, change of possession, injured player, penalty enforcement or timeout.

Untimed Downs:

- ✍ Extend a period due to a penalty.
- ✍ Try following a touchdown.

Clock Failure:

- ✍ If the clock fails, you are to attempt to notify the Referee at the first opportunity. This is normally the deadball period at the end of the current play. Use the PA if possible, or the team telephone, or any existing means to communicate to the field. Attempt to provide the referee with the amount of time lost, or game time at the point of failure; whatever is appropriate to reset the game properly to continue. Do not blow your whistle and do not interrupt the liveball play..

Working with the Press Box:

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Be friendly and always be supportive of your fellow officials. Do not interpret rules or discuss the play or calls of the crew with anyone. If asked, you can assist with interpretation of signals with regard to penalties as signalled by the Referee. but do not discuss the play or the administration that is occurring.

At the end of the Quarter:

Reset the clock and prepare for the next quarter.

At the Half:

Reset the clock but do not let it run during the half time period. If possible, join the crew at the sideline and review any situations that occurred during the preceding half.

At the End of the Game :

Note the time the game ended. Join the crew as quickly as possible and leave the field with the crew. Do not discuss any plays or other events that may have occurred during the game until you are in the privacy of the dressing room. Join the crew for the post game review and discuss any plays or events that you observed during the game. Ask for play interpretation or help in understanding anything of interest.