

# Running Game Mechanics

Marking progress is the most common activity officials perform during a running play. The activities we are observing during a running play are somewhat more simplified as compared to a passing play. During a run we do not worry about offensive pass interference, defensive pass interference, ineligibles, passes crossing the line of scrimmage, when the kick end, etc. Blocking however can predict the success of a running play. Therefore, it is on blocking that most of our play mechanics are focused. All officials watch for illegal action by both A and B during any play. This allows us to concentrate on the 12-15 players involved directly in the play.

- I. When run is read.
  - A. All officials do not move until forced.
  - B. Referee:
    - i. Find point of attack.
      - 1. Know where the ball is.
      - 2. You must always know what is being done with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.
    - ii. Watch the blocking back going into the hole.
    - iii. Watch action of pulling/trapping linemen.
  - C. Umpire:
    - i. Find the point of attack.
    - ii. Watch the 2-3 offensive players at the point of attack.
      - 1. Observe what they do and what is being done to them.
      - 2. You may have to move to avoid pursuing linebackers.
  - D. Linesman and Line Judge:
    - i. Have an idea of where the run is going.
    - ii. Watch men on the end of the line.
    - iii. Watch wide outs going back in to block linebackers.
    - iv. Mark the end of the run.
  - E. Back Judge:
    - i. Find the point of attack.
    - ii. Watch tight end blocking.
    - iii. Help with wide out on linebackers.

This is our basic coverage for all runs as they start out and as they continue up the middle and between the tackles. If the play develops as a run going outside the tackles our focus may change but not necessarily the players we are watching. Depending on the type of run play (pitch sweep, option, trap, etc.) responsibilities are added and/or dropped accordingly.

- II. Runs outside of the tackle
  - A. Referee
    - i. Observe blocking backs and pulling line men and blocks against them
    - ii. Protect the QB after hand off or pitch.
    - iii. Move only to maintain cushion.
  - B. Umpire
    - i. Pivot to point of attack.

- ii. Watch linemen (T-G-C-G-T).
  - iii. Be aware of defensive linemen holding or pulling offensive linemen.
  - iv. Help with backs that come through the hole to block linebackers.
  - v. Focus on traffic inside the runner.
- C. Linesman and Line Judge (runs to your side).
- i. Know status of the ball.
  - ii. Watch tight end and be aware of split receivers blocking back towards the ball.
  - iii. Focus on traffic outside of the runner.
  - iv. As run goes around the end watch the seal block on defensive end and outside linebacker.
  - v. Get progress.
- D. Linesman and Line Judge (runs away from your side).
- i. Watch traffic behind Umpire and Referee as they move away.
  - ii. Maintain distance from play.
  - iii. Be prepared for play to come back to your side.
- E. Back Judge
- i. Watch tight ends or second receiver in or at point of attack.
  - ii. As run goes around the end focus on traffic in front of the runner.
  - iii. Maintain distance from the play.
  - iv. You have goal line responsibility always, unless you started on the back line.

As you can see, the players(s) that each official watches do not really change. Our coverage provides us with 4 sets of eyes around the ball (Wingman, BJ, U, R). As the play progresses down field so should our box. As mentioned above, each official should know the whereabouts of the ball without watching it. There should be only one whistle, primarily, that stops the play for progress and that is the covering wing official's. The Back Judge, Umpire, and off side wingman should never have the first whistle as they should not be aware of the ball being down.