

RTO Video Clip Observation Notes 10/11/2019

Play #1 The first Observer's Play of Interest is on a PAT attempt. The referee is already in position for the kick try; however, he does not move to the snapper and release the umpire to move under the goal post. Rather, he blows the ready for play whistle when the umpire is only a yard or two removed from the line of scrimmage and just heading back to the goal post. The kick is not successful. Was the position of the umpire not being set a factor? Focus and better awareness on the part of the referee in ensuring that the crew is in place for the PAT is a critical aspect in this situation.

Play #2 This play is a straightforward running play in the red zone. The runner hits the hole quickly on the left side of the line. A key block is made by the running back #36, in motion at the snap. Is this block a hold? The line judge, referee, and umpire all have good looks at this point of attack and no flags were thrown. The line judge stays home to observe the initial blocks, and as the play continues he moves quickly to the goal line. Meanwhile, # 36 holds the block long after the action is past and while grabbing takes the defender hard to the ground well behind the play. No one is really looking at this potential "chicken fight" scenario. The referee appears to have eyes on the ball carrier downfield. The line judge has vacated the area and the umpire is busy with action surrounding him. Good "off-ball" or "backside" officiating should be the focus of the referee on this play.

Play #3 On this passing play, the QB is scrambling from pressure and rolling to his right. One of his receivers breaks off his original route to get into open space. The deepest corner defender comes up quickly and makes contact after the ball gets to the receiver. Does the defender hit the receiver with his shoulder, helmet, or with excessive force to punish? Is the receiver a defenseless player? Is this an illegal blindside block? There was no call on the play and the receiver was injured on this play. Judgement as to the extent of contact (excessive or not) can be a difficult task. Mentally preparing for this possibility is critical to getting it right. The linesman appears to have a good angle and is in the primary position to see the action; however, he is moving rapidly toward the play at the point of contact. Does he really get a good look while he is moving? The line judge at the bottom of the screen maintains good wide vision and focus on his area and also has a good look across the field. Positioning and focus are key factors in these "bang-bang" scenarios. "Head on a swivel" vision can also be more helpful at times than getting closer to the action.

Also, when we have a penalty and an injured player, it is suggested that we wait for the player to clear the field before enforcing the penalty. The attention of the coach is rightly focused on his injured player. By waiting until the injured player has cleared the field, the coaches can devote their attention to the penalty and any decisions needed.

Play #4 On this scrimmage play starting on the 5-yard line, watch as the two wing officials break quickly to the goal line to prepare for a possible TD play. They both move in unison to the pylon

and as the play develops the defense makes a stop back at the 8 yard line. Both wing officials hustle back up the sideline to the dead ball spot on the 8 yard line, square in, give the proper dead ball signal, and bracket the players. The referee, umpire, and back judge move smoothly to box in the action. This is a textbook example of great goal line and side line mechanics by the linesman and the line judge, and great team work by the entire crew.