

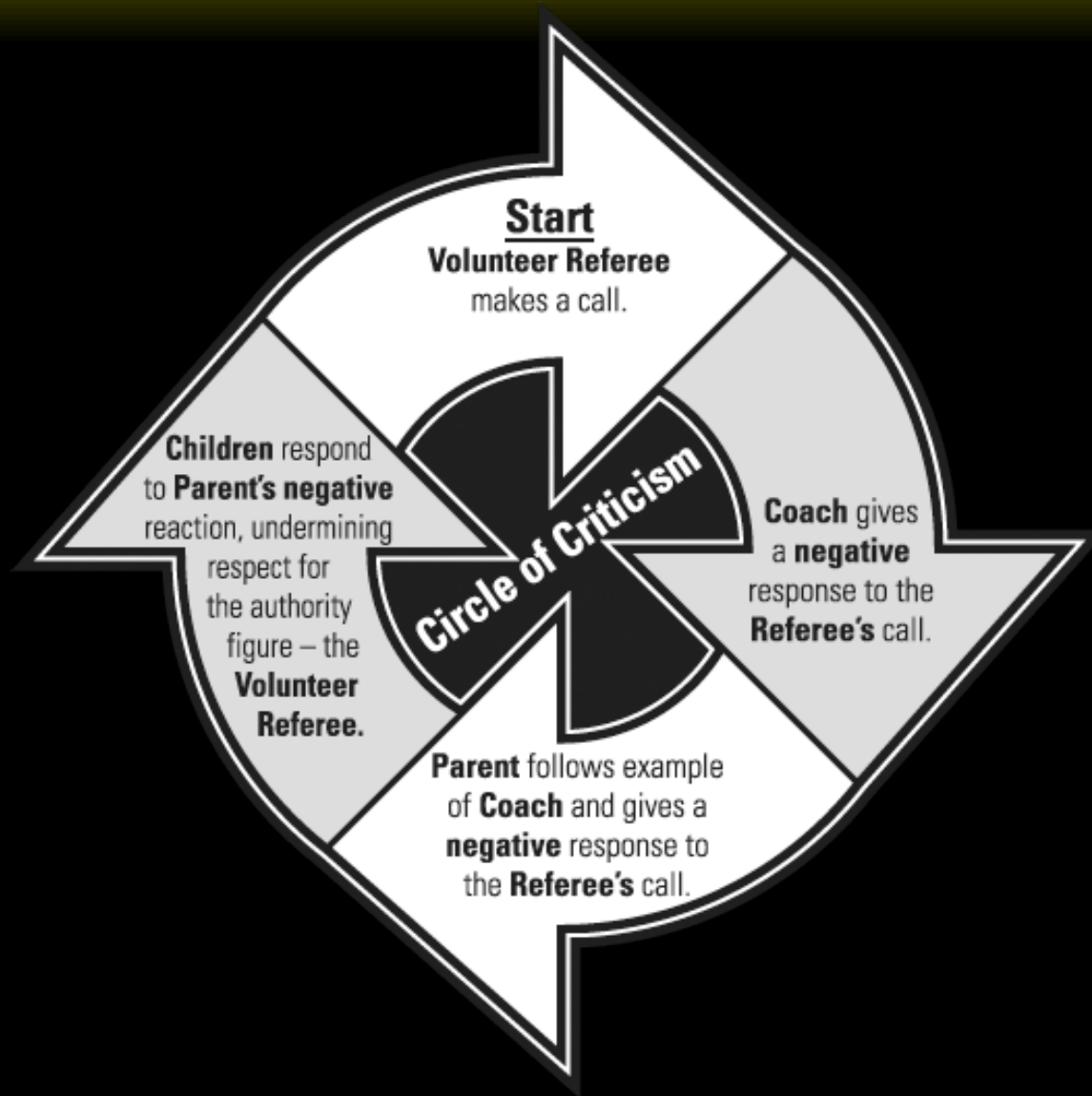
**Farmington Valley  
NFL Flag Football  
Coach and Referee Training**

# REFS: Communicating with Coaches

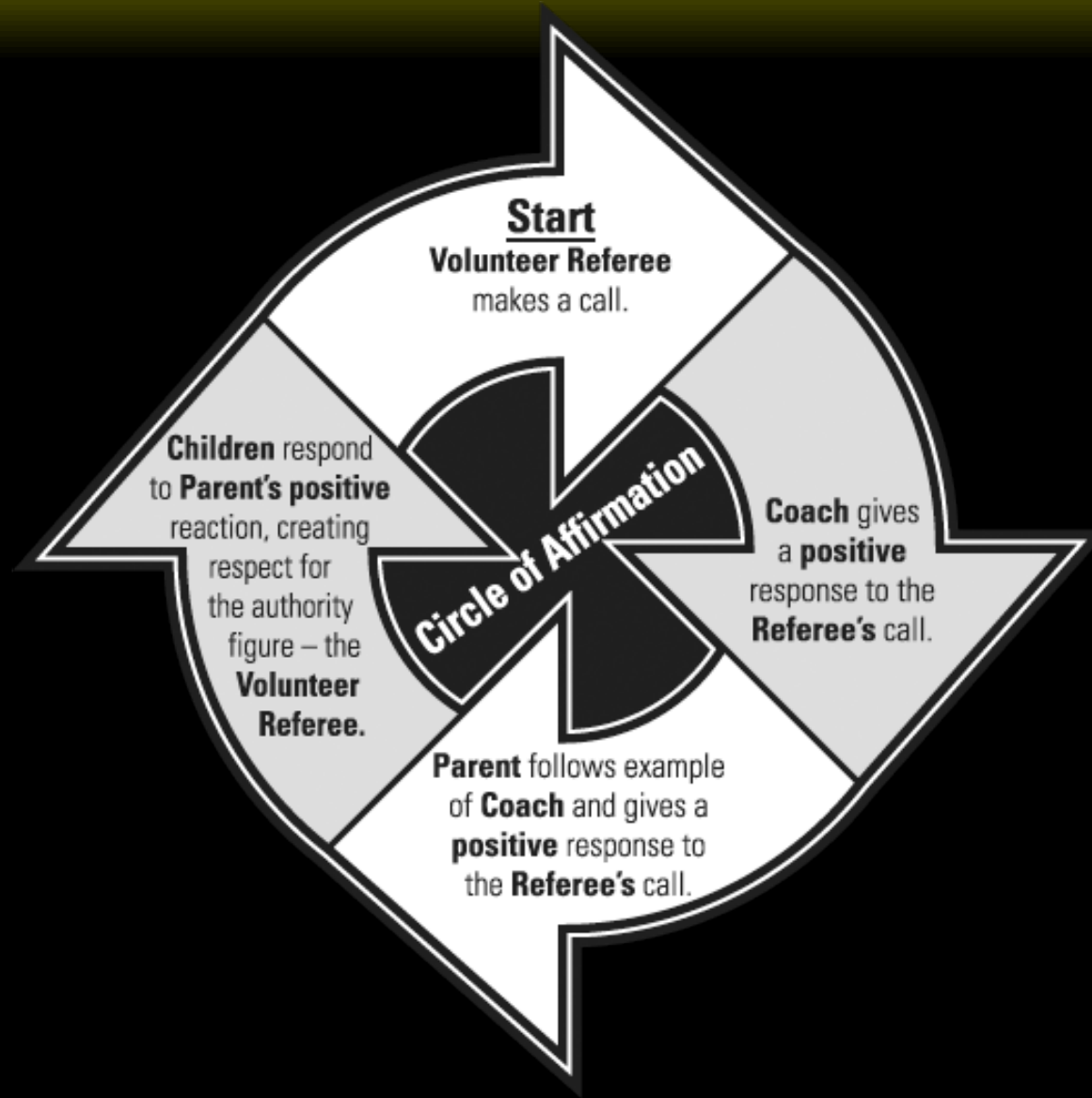
Being an effective referee means being an effective communicator. Here are a few tips about communicating with coaches:

- Introduce yourself at pregame.
- Clearly communicate penalties and give the proper hand signals.
- Communicate at halftime about the first half and what you will be looking for in the second half.

# Circle of Criticism



# Circle of Affirmation



# Communicating with Players

The referee sets the tone for the game

*Be sure to encourage players. This will go a long way toward building the players' self-esteem.*

# General Officiating Guidelines

- Don't be afraid to tell a coach or captain that you did not see what they saw
- Be sure to tell the coach what the penalty was and who it was on
- Echo every whistle you hear, even if it is inadvertent
- Try not to focus just on the ball-carrier, but on the whole play
- Misses can be explained, but never guesses.
- No chatting with coaches, players, or fans even if you are family friends

# **General Officiating Guidelines**

- **Plan on being criticized, it is a part of it, but know how to deal with it**
- **Present the proper image of confidence in your calls, but not cockiness**
- **Answer reasonable questions. If asked politely, then answer politely. If you are being yelled at or barked at ignore them or get the ref supervisor**
- **Stay cool and collected, do not try to resolve issues with coaches or players. Just inform them of your decision**

# Officiating Mechanics

- **Whistle, use it only when necessary. Remember that every time you blow your whistle during the last minute of the game the clock stops**
- **Voice, strong, pleasant, firm and controlled**
- **Talk, too much talk leads to trouble. Be brief, but courteous to players and coaches requests**
- **Calls, make sure you know exactly what penalty you are calling.**
- **Position, there is no magic spot, get to the best possible spot to make the call or no-call. This requires good teamwork**



# Officiating Mechanics

- **Anticipation, be ready for a change of direction or a penalty at all times**
- **Appearance, always look alert. Don't stand with your hands in your pockets or on your hips.**
- **Hustle, there is no excuse for lack of hustle.**
- **Your partner, communicate with your partner. If a rule needs interpretation, consult each other and then the ref supervisor as last resort.**

# Game Worksheet

## - Pre game

- o Do I meet with team captains prior to game
- o Do I confer with the timer before the game
- o Do I know who has ball for the second half
- o Do I start my game on time
- o Do I check player equipment before game
- o Do I set-up the playing field

# Game Worksheet

**- After the game**

**o Do I make sure I have all the equipment**

**o Do I sign out to get credit for the games and to get paid**

**o Do I and my fellow refs discuss any possible problems or concerns that occurred during the game**

**o If necessary, do I pick up endzones**

# Responsibilities of a FVFFL Referee

Each game will require three referees. The JR Ref will be in charge of the “rush line”, while the 2 SR Refs will be on the “line of scrimmage”

# JR Ref

## Primary responsibilities:

- Watch for penalties down field
- In charge of watching rush line
- Mark the rush line after each play

# SR Ref 1

## Primary responsibilities:

- Move the down cone and keep track of down
- Play clock and rush clock
- Watch line of scrimmage and call penalties

# SR Ref 2

## Primary responsibilities:

- Keep game clock
- Mark spot of the ball
- Call penalties

# Controlling the Game

The referee must keep the game under control. The referee's whistle is the main factor in doing this. Anytime a play ends, all referees should blow their whistles and spot the ball.



# Clock Management

Managing the clock is an important function for the referees. You will monitor two clocks throughout the game: the game clock and the play clock.

# **Game Clock Management**

**The game clock is managed by SR Ref 2. FVFFL has two 22-minute halves. Other than timeouts, the game clock only stops in the following instances with less than two minute before halftime or two minute before the end of the game:**

- After an incomplete pass**
- After the ball carrier goes out of bounds**
- Touchdowns and extra-point attempt**
- Administering a penalty**
- On a change of possession**

# **Game Clock Management**

## **Other things to note**

- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion**
- Each team has one 60-second timeout per half**
- In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field**
- If the score is tied at the end of the game during the regular season it is a tie**

# Game Clock Management

## Overtime (Playoffs Only)

- Each team is given opportunity to score from the 20 yard line (5 yards closer than midfield)
- Coin toss determines first possession (choice)
- Loser of coin toss determines which goal to defend
- Each team is required to score in the same direction
- Team that scores more points in a particular round wins

# Play Clock Management

The play clock is managed by SR Ref 1. An offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball after the referee has declared it ready for play.

If the 30 seconds expires before a play is executed, a delay of game penalty will be administered after one warning.

**Note:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade leagues have 40 seconds to snap the ball

# Calling the Game

Referees will call all penalties. When a penalty is committed, the referee should throw a penalty flag in the direction of the penalty. Don't blow the whistle unless it is a dead-ball penalty before the snap (illegal motion or delay of game).

For penalties during play, the referee should throw the flag to mark where the penalty was committed and let the play continue. After the play is over, the referee should address the penalty.

*To promote proper football skills and understanding of the game, referees should call all penalties. Failing to do so creates confusion among players and hinders their understanding of the game.*

# Calling the Game

In communicating the call, the referee should:

- Quickly explain the penalty to the players by telling them how it can avoided and the result of the penalty.
- Ask the non-offended team if they wish to accept or decline the penalty.
- Let the coach and fans know the reason and consequence of the penalty.

# Penalties

*If a penalty happens near the end zone where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.*

## Defense

- **Offsides**: The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
- **Illegal rushing** (enforced when players start rushing from inside the 10-yard rush line): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
- **Defensive Pass Interference**: SPOT FOUL and an automatic first down.
- **Roughing the Passer**: The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- **Illegal flag pull** (before the receiver catches the football): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.



# Penalties

*If a penalty happens near the end zone where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.*

## Defense: continued

- **Taunting**: The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
- **Holding**: SPOT FOUL, The penalty is 5 yards from the infraction and automatic first down.
- **Stripping**: SPOT FOUL, the penalty is 10 yards from the infraction and an automatic first down.
- **Unnecessary Roughness**: SPOT FOUL, The penalty is 10 yards from the infraction and an automatic first down.
- **Illegal flag pull** (before the receiver catches the football): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.

# Penalties

## Offense

- **Illegal motion** (more than one person moving): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal formation** (false start, not enough men on the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal pass** (a pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage or thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- **Delay of game**: The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.

# Penalties continued

## Offense Continued

- **Shielding** (a non-contact block that impedes a defender from making a tackle): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
- **Illegal run** (a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Intentional grounding**: The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- **Offensive pass interference** (illegal pick play, pushing a defender): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

# Hand Signals

- **Touchdown:** Extend arms straight above head.



- **Safety:** Put palms together above head



# Hand Signals

- **First Down:** Point with right arm at shoulder length toward the defensive team's goal.



- **Third Down:** Raise one arm above head with hand in a closed fist.



# Hand Signals

- **Completed Pass:** Place hands in front of face, elbows bent. Pulling elbows down, clench hands to form fists.



- **Delay of Game:** Fold arms in front of chest



# Hand Signals

- **False Start or Illegal Formation:** Rotate forearms over and over in front of body.



- **Illegal Use of Hands:** Grab one wrist and extend the open hand of that arm forward in front of chest



# Hand Signals

- **Incomplete Pass:** Shift arms in a horizontal fashion in front of body



- **Interference:** With open hands vertical to the ground, extend arms forward from shoulders





# Hand Signals

- **Illegal Motion:** Flatten out hand and make a horizontal arc with it.



# Field Diagram and Field Rules

- The offensive team is awarded a first down when it crosses the midfield line.
- The lines 5 yards from each end zone and on both sides of the midfield line are no-run zones. No-run zones do not apply to the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade division.
- The offensive team begins each possession (except after interceptions) by taking the ball at its 5-yard line.

# Field Diagram



# Down Format

- The offensive team has three plays to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown.
- If the team fails to cross midfield in three downs or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession on its own 5-yard line.
- Note: 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade league has 4 downs

# Game Format

- The visiting team (wearing the lighter-colored jerseys) calls the coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss may choose to play offense or defense first or choose which goal to defend. The other team has the choice (possession or end to defend) not made by the team winning the toss. The team that plays defense first will play offense first to start the second half.
- Teams will switch ends of the field at the half

## Game Format Continued

- Coaches are allowed on the field in Leagues 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, but must be off the field prior to the snap for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> may stay on field but not interfere with the play)
- Each team will have five players on the field at a time.

# Fair Play Rules

This system is designed to provide every player an equal opportunity for improvement. The fair play system ensures that:

- Every child starts on either offense or defense
- Every player that appears in a game must be on the field for at least 50% of the time
- If a team has seven or more players on its roster for a particular game, then no one player is allowed to play every down and the ball should be distributed fairly among players
- Lopsided game scores of 25 points or more should be avoided at all times in any game. Teams must limit the use of 'stronger' players in key positions once a lopsided score is reached

# Scoring

**Touchdown:** 6 points

**Extra point:** 1 point (played from the 5-yard line with a pass)  
or 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run or pass)

**Safety:** 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line



# Offensive Basics

- A minimum of one player must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap.
- Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped. Must be parallel with the line of scrimmage
- Ball may be snapped in any form (through the legs, side toss, shotgun, etc), but must always start on the ground

# Running the Football

- The quarterback cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage.
- The person who receives the snap from the center (under-center or shot-gun) is considered the quarterback and cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage.
- Laterals and pitches for forbidden
- The ball may be handed off multiple times in the backfield (hand-off nullifies rush line)
- The ball is spotted where the runners feet are when their flag is pulled or they go out of bounds
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
- The runner may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding (spinning is allowed).

## Running the Football Continued

- Flag Obstruction – All jersey must be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
- No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier

# Receiving the Football

- All five players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff)
- A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football while having at least one foot in bounds.
- If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense

# Passing the Football

- All forward passes must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage. Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball. The defender must avoid contact with the receiver.
- The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff will end the 7-second pass count.
- Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

# Dead Balls

Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out.
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- The ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- A touchdown or safety is scored.
- A pass falls incomplete.

# Defensive Basics

- Teams may run man-to-man, zone defenses or a combination of both.
- Interceptions may be returned, except on extra point attempts
- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time

## Rushing the Passer

- All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 10-yard rush line.
- Once the ball is handed off, the 10-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier.
- Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage.
- Early rushes or failure to line up behind the 'rush line' will result in a penalty being called by the JR Ref



## ii. Spot Fouls

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down
Holding	+5 yards & Automatic First Down
Stripping	+ 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+ 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier	- 5 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards & Loss of Down

### iii. Defensive Penalties

Offside	+ 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 10-yard marker)	+ 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+ 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Roughing the Passer	+ 10 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Taunting	+ 10 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Defensive Pass Interference	SPOT FOUL, Automatic First Down
Holding	SPOT FOUL, + 5 yards & Automatic First Down
Stripping	SPOT FOUL + 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	SPOT FOUL + 10 yards & Automatic First Down

#### iv. Offensive Penalties

Offside / False Start	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Delay of Game	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier	SPOT FOUL, - 5 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & Loss of Down

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