

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOTBALL CLOCK OPERATORS



- A. Electronic clock operator (ECO) shall report to officials' dressing room at the stadium at least 2 hours before game time (or as designated by the Referee), and will:
1. **Dress in full uniform.** Referee may direct ECO to come on the field in event of malfunction of game clock or injury to field official.
 2. Synchronize ECO's watch with official game time.
 3. Determine procedure for communication between ECO & field officials.
 4. Discuss rules of starting, stopping, and adjusting the clock.
 5. Discuss signals that will stop the clock (timeout, incomplete, TD, touchback, safety).
 6. Discuss with the Referee other pre-game duties (e.g. checking teams for illegal equipment); coin toss, pre-kickoff, and scrimmage down positions; and any other responsibilities.
- (**Note:** All clocks should be operated on the field/sideline, not in the press box – scrimmage down position is Line Judge's side of field standing opposite of the down indicator).
- B. Field clock is normally started 30 minutes before game time. Halftime intermission (15-minute or 20-minute) will start on Referee's signal when the players & officials leave the field. All pregame & halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The mandatory 3-minute warm-up period will be put on the clock after the intermission time has elapsed (and shall be started immediately).
- C. ECO shall have a stopwatch available. In case of failure of game clock, ECO shall immediately contact the Referee, giving correct game time. ECO will then report to the field & pick up the correct game time on the stopwatch. Should field clock become inoperative and subsequently repaired, it will not be used again until the next period or when the Referee determines it is operational. (Note: The public-address announcer should indicate the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected & subsequent announcement made on the PA system).
- D. As official game timer, its essential to always know the correct time remaining in any period. It is recommended that the stop watch be used in conjunction with game clock so there is always an accurate record of the time remaining in the event of a clock outage.
- E. Game procedures:
1. ECO is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when game clock is not started correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clock.
 2. On free kicks, the nearest official(s) will signal legal touching of the ball by indicating that the clock should start.
 3. Any official may signal a team time-out; therefore, ECO must be alert to stop the clock. (**Note:** All officials should echo the time-out signal).
 4. On plays near a boundary line, ECO must be alert for an incompleteness or stop-the-clock signal.
 5. After the appropriate signal has been made, ECO will automatically stop the clock following a touchdown, field goal, touchback, safety, or incomplete pass (the incompleteness signal will stop the clock).
 6. The clock will be stopped when: (a) official's time-out is called (injury; first down; change of team possession; or to dry or change the game ball); (b) charged time-out is called; (c) ball is declared dead out-of-bounds; (d) end of a period, or; (e) score occurs.
 7. After the clock has been stopped, including for first down or penalty, the Referee will start it again with the start-the-clock signal and if no such signal is given, the clock will start it on the snap.
 8. The Referee may start the clock again before the ready-for-play signal.
 9. The try is not a timed down.
 10. There are instances when a period shall be extended by an untimed down. During these extensions, leave the clock at 0:00. Do not reset the clock for the next period until the Referee declares the period over by facing the press box and holding the ball overhead.
 11. There is no clock utilized in overtime. ECO should report to the Line Judge's side of field and stand opposite of the down indicator (normal pre-snap position).
 12. There is a running clock if, during the second half, one team gains a 30-point advantage. Running clock continues except for (a) timeout taken by team or official; (b) injury; (c) score; or (d) the score differential drops below 30 points. Clock starts on the ready signal after an official's timeout and to start a quarter, and starts on the kick on the kickoff. The try will always be an untimed down.