

## **INSTRUCTIONS TO FOOTBALL CHAIN CREWS**

The following standard set of instructions to boxmen and chain crews has been adopted so that all crews will operate under the same set of procedures in North Central Conference football games. Top performances by boxmen and chain crew members is essential to the administration and conduct of games, and all shall carefully observe these instructions.

### **Pre-Game Duties**

1. Home management is to appoint the boxmen and chain crews. They will wear uniforms designated by the home school, with contrasting slip over jackets to distinguish them from game officials and other sideline occupants. They should be mature people and hopefully as experienced as possible. If you plan to use anyone younger than college age you must get approval from the commissioner.
2. Chain crew personnel shall report to the linesman on the field no later than 20 minute before game time. The linesman shall then make certain that the chains and the official down box have been placed on the sideline opposite the press box, with the alternate down box on the other side of the field, and that all are in good working condition. A spare set of chains should be located on the linesman side of the field.
3. Chainmen and boxmen shall meet the linesman on the sideline opposite the press box five minutes before game time and also five minutes before the end of the half time intermission. The final meeting will assure that everyone is ready at game time.

### **Game Procedures**

1. Members of the chain crew must act only on the linesman's instructions, not moving until signaled to do so by the linesman, and then moving quickly to new positions.
2. When a runner or pass receiver is going out of bounds in his (their) immediate vicinity, the involved chainman (and/or boxman) should move backward taking the stake (or box) out of the area to prevent possible injury to players. The chainman away from the play should hold his spot if possible.
3. The lineman will personally set the spot of all first downs by going to the sideline and marking, while facing the field of play, the exact spot where the rear stake will be set. The forward chainman will then be sure the chain is extended to its full length before setting his stake.
4. The boxman (chain side) on every new series of downs will set the box at, and in front of, the rear chain stake and then place a snap on the chain at the point where

the nearest five yard line intersects the chain. The box must be held at all times in an upright position with the down correctly shown. Where possible the chain will be placed six feet outside the sideline.

5. The boxman is to show the number of the down just completed and shall not indicate the new down until so notified by the linesman. On instruction from the linesman, he will move the box to the new position with the marker placed at the forward point of the ball and then change to the correct down.
6. On all measurements for a first down when the chains are moved onto the field, the boxman (chain side) is to place his box in the spot of the front stake until a new series of downs has been declared or the chain is returned to its previous position. If a penalty was called on the previous play, the box must remain at the previous spot.
7. The position of the alternate boxman (when available – I urge its use) on the press box side of the field is not official and he will set his down box so that it agrees with the official indicator after there is not a chance that the previous spot is needed. The alternate boxman is to delay moving until after the chains have been set and the ready for play signal is given by the Referee. It is important that the boxman on the side opposite the chain crew hold the previous spot on all long passes, runs and kicks so that this spot will be available in case of need to return to it. The chain crew will, therefore, move immediately on the linesman's signal, with the boxman on the opposite side of the field delaying until the ready for play signal is given and he is sure no foul has been called on the previous play. He will continue to indicate the number of the previous down until he moves. An unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain indicator may be used also on the press box side.
8. The boxmen are to place their markers on the line of scrimmage on all try for point situations. This will aid players and officials in determining the line of scrimmage on all plays toward the sidelines. The chains will not be placed on a PAT.
9. Whenever a first down is established inside the opponents' ten yard line, the forward stake will be placed in the end zone and held upright throughout the series of downs.
10. If the sidelines become crowded and the chain crew does not have room to efficiently discharge its duties, the crew is to notify the linesman immediately so that he may call a time out and clear the sidelines before allowing the game to proceed.
11. If the game is delayed for any reason, the chain crew will remain with the officials.

12. Football is a game of “inches”, and the complete concentration of the chain crew is absolutely necessary if it is to discharge its duties efficiently. The chain crew must refrain from showing any reaction to the events taking place on the playing field. It must be prepared to act immediately to instructions of the linesman so that players, coaches, writers, commentators, and statisticians will know the exact situation concerning down and line-to-gain.

Unofficial red or orange line-to-gain ground markers may be positioned off the sidelines on both sides of the field.