



Procedure for taking a knee

Purpose: To outline the proper mechanics to use when a quarterback informs the officials he is going to take a knee. This is usually done to end the game or second quarter but may be used at anytime during the game. Teams usually will utilize this type of play to run time off the game clock without risking turning over the football or risking unnecessary injury to players.

Intent: As officials, we must administer the rules and consistent mechanics, and it is important that we officiate and not become coaches of the game. Our role is to administer the game fairly and at the same time prohibit unnecessary roughness, unfair tactics, and unsportsmanlike conduct. In light of these facts, preventive officiating is important and can help maintain a safe and competitive game. Using the correct mechanics will enable officials to prevent actions and certain fouls from occurring.

Procedure: The rules of the game do not change in respect to starting a scrimmage down.

Facts:

- The ball must be legally snapped, and the down is ended when the ball next becomes dead.
 - The ball becomes dead when the ball carrier touches the ground with any part of his body other than his hand or foot.
1. All officials shall take their normal positions for scrimmage plays.
 2. The referee, after being told by the quarterback he is going to take a knee, will communicate this to the umpire: **(example “Joe, the quarterback is going to take a knee.”)**
 3. The umpire will confirm this by repeating loud enough so the referee can hear **“The quarterback is taking a knee; linemen protect yourselves.”**)
 4. The referee, as soon as the ball has been cleanly snapped, and the ball carrier touches the ground with anything other than a hand or foot, shall immediately blow his whistle, and end the down.
 5. The umpire shall move toward the line of scrimmage and announce the down is over, observing for late hit personal fouls.
 6. All officials should be prepared for a muffed snap and the ensuing play.
 7. No official shall instruct a team to take a knee or place a hand on a player or interfere with the play.

If you are on the wings, and a coach or player informs you that the quarterback is going to take a knee, let him know that the quarterback needs to inform the referee.

If the team on offense, after declaring the intention to take a knee, does not take a knee, or tries to run a play (meaning they begin to run with the ball, hand the ball or throw the ball), they shall be flagged for an unsportsmanlike foul.

Consistency in Mechanics

It is important we are consistent with this procedure to prevent confusion among players, coaches, and fans from one game to the next.

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