

Football Clock Operators Instructions

- A. The clock operator should report to the officials' dressing room at the stadium at least 45 minutes before game time for the following purposes:
1. To synchronize timer's watch with official game time as established by the official responsible for timing.
 2. To advise officials whether the clock operator will be in the press box or on the sideline. Determine procedure for communication with timer and check this procedure prior to the game.
 3. To discuss coordination of starting, stopping and adjusting the clock in accordance with the playing rules.
- B. The field clock is normally started 30 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will start on the referee's signal when the players and officials leave the field. All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The mandatory three-minute warm-up period will be put on the clock after the intermission time has elapsed.
- C. The electric-clock operator shall have an extra stopwatch available. In case of failure of the game clock, the clock operator shall immediately contact the officials, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The official responsible for timing will then pick up the correct game time on the stopwatch. Should the 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. The public address announcer will indicate the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected and subsequent announcement made on the PA system.
- D. Game procedures:
1. The clock operator is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the game clock is not started or stopped correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clock.
 2. On all free kicks, the nearest officials(s) will signal the legal touching of the ball by indicating that the clock should start.
 3. The official who declares the ball dead will be the first official to signal a time-out when a first down occurs.
 4. Any official may signal a team time-out; therefore, the operator should be alert to stop the clock.
 5. On plays near a boundary line, unless an official so signals, if a pass is caught out of bounds, the incompleteness signal will stop the clock. NOTE: On plays near the out-of-bounds line and in advance of the line-to-gain, an official may give a winding signal to indicate the ball is inbound and follow it by a stop-the-clock signal for an apparent first down. Be alert for both signals.
 6. The clock operator will automatically stop the clock following a touchdown, field goal, touchback or safety after the appropriate signal has been made.
 7. After the clock has been stopped, the referee will start it again on the referee's "start-the-clock" signal and if no such signal is given, the operator 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 :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.