



Free Kicks



Dallas Football Officials Association
New Members Training



Objective

The intent of this training session is to help you understand and familiarize you with the rules pertaining to FREE KICKS.

Every rule pertaining to FREE KICKS is not covered in detail so it's important you also read & study the rules outside of training sessions to get the best understanding possible on FREE KICKS.

Disclaimer

The information covered has been condensed and paraphrased to help you understand both the intent and the philosophy of the rules. The current NCAA Rule Book & UIL Exceptions are the final authority.

FREE KICK

Free Kick: A free kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession

- while the ball is positioned on a tee or the ground. It may be controlled by a teammate. A tee can not elevate ball > 1”
- the ball may be positioned on the ground contacting the tee.
- after a safety it can be a punt, drop kick or place kick.

Kickoff: free kick starts each half and follows tries or field goals (Exception: Extra periods). Must be a place kick or a drop kick.

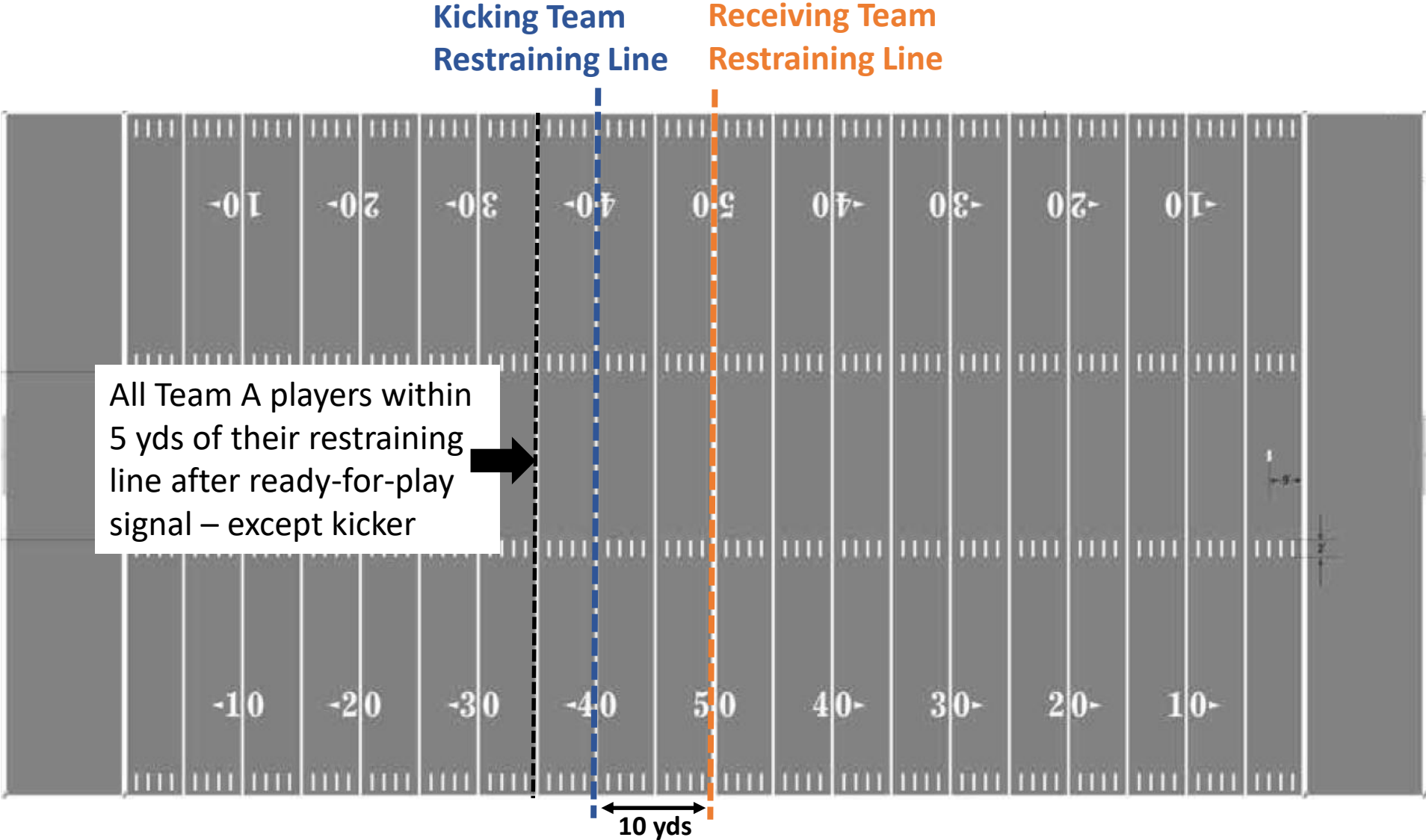
RESTRAINING LINES

- **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE:** the yard line through the most forward point from which the ball shall be kicked
- **RECEIVING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE:** the yard line 10 yards beyond the **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE.**
- Unless relocated by a penalty, the **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE** is its 40-yard line, and after a safety, its 20-yard line.

FREE KICK FORMATION

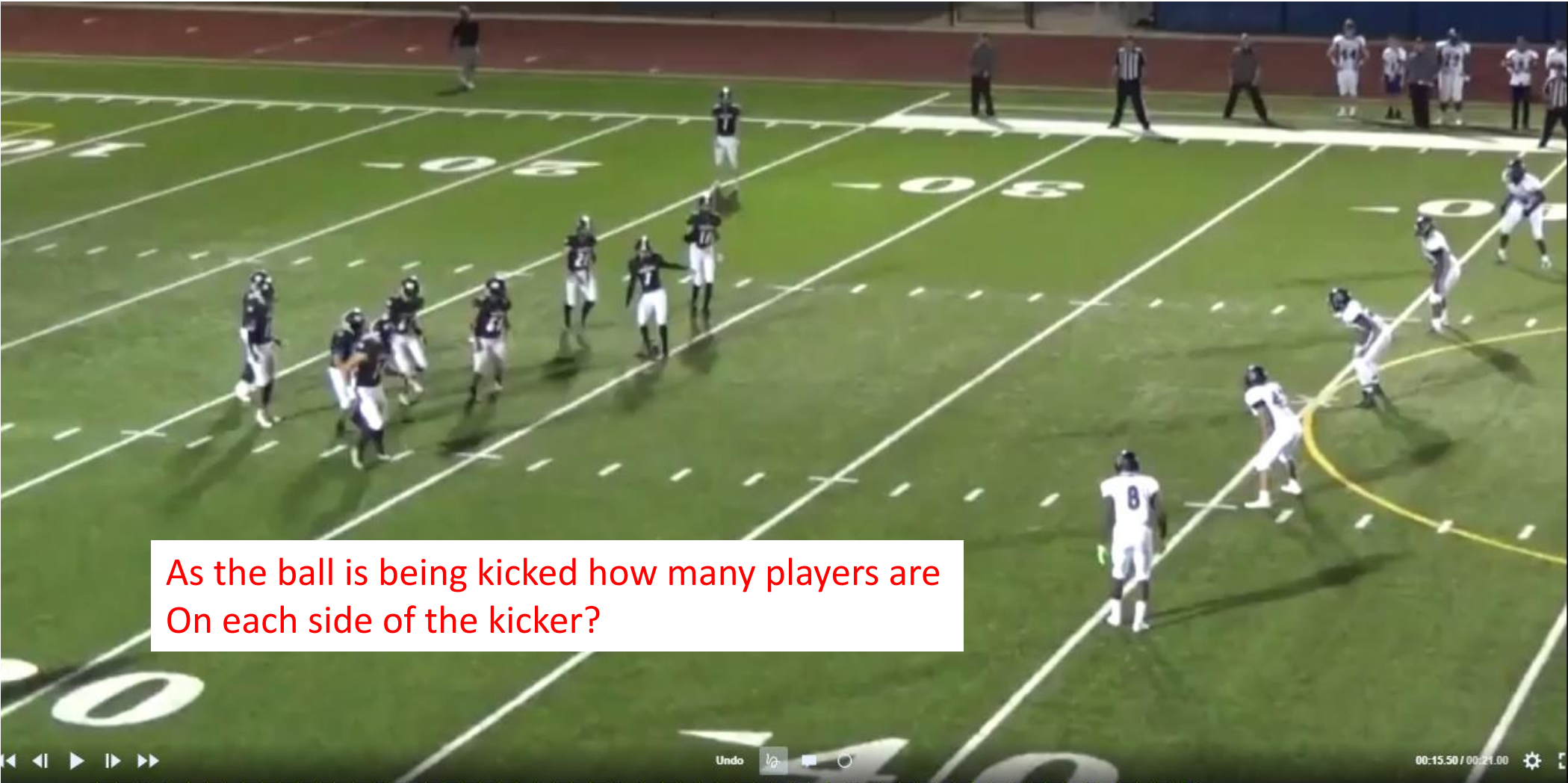
- All **TEAM A** players, except the kicker, must be no more than 5 yards behind their restraining line from the ready-for-play signal until the ball is kicked
- All **TEAM A** players must have been between the nine-yard marks after the ready-for-play signal
- When the ball is kicked **TEAM A**:
 - must have at least 4 players on either side of kicker
 - players must be behind the ball (exception kicker and/or holder)
- Ball can be placed anywhere between hash marks
- All **TEAM B** players must be inbounds and behind their restraining line

FREE KICK



Free Kicks

FREE KICK - Formation



As the ball is being kicked how many players are On each side of the kicker?

FREE KICK - Formation

Are all Team A players within 5yds of their restraining Line?



Player In/Out of Bounds *Let's Recap*

Out of Bounds

- A player is out of bounds when any part of his body touches anything other than another player or a game official on or outside a boundary line.
- An out-of-bounds player who becomes airborne remains out of bounds until he touches the ground in bounds without simultaneously being out of bounds.

InBounds

- An inbounds player is a player who is not out of bounds.
- An inbounds player who becomes airborne remains inbounds until he is out of bounds.

Touching & Recovery - Free Kick

TEAM A can get possession if they catch or recover the kick

- beyond **TEAM B's** restraining line –OR–
- after a **TEAM B** player touches the kick –OR–
- after ball touches ground, official or anything beyond **TEAM B's** restraining line (even if it subsequently bounces back)

Any other touching by **TEAM A** is illegal touching, a violation that, when the ball becomes dead, gives the receiving team the privilege of taking the ball at the spot of the violation.

- If there is an accepted penalty for a live-ball foul by either team, or if there are offsetting fouls, the illegal touching privilege is canceled
- Illegal touching in **TEAM A's** end zone is ignored.

Touching & Recovery - Free Kick (cont'd)

Forced Touching Disregarded

- A player blocked by an opponent into a free kick is not, while inbounds, deemed to have touched the kick.
- An inbounds player touched by a ball either batted or illegally kicked by an opponent is not deemed to have touched the ball.

Touching & Recovery - Free Kick (cont'd)

- If a free kick is caught or recovered by the **RECEIVING TEAM**, the ball continues in play.
- If caught or recovered by the **KICKING TEAM**, the ball becomes dead and
 - **RECEIVING TEAM** ball at the dead-ball spot unless the **KICKING TEAM** is in legal possession when the ball is declared dead.
- A kick declared dead in joint possession is awarded to the **RECEIVING TEAM**.
- Free kick untouched by **TEAM B** touches the ground on or behind **TEAM B's** goal becomes dead → touchback for **TEAM B**, 1st down at B-25.
- **Free Kick at Rest:** If a free kick comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, ball becomes dead & belongs to the **RECEIVING TEAM** at the dead-ball spot.

Fouls by Kicking Team

Penalties for all fouls by the **KICKING TEAM** other than kick-catch interference during a free kick play may be enforced at the previous spot with the free kick repeated or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to **TEAM B**, at the option of Team B.

A **TEAM A** player who goes out of bounds during a free kick down may not return inbounds during the down (Exception: if blocked out of bounds and returns immediately).

→ *Live Ball Foul. 5 yds. from previous spot, or succeeding spot where belongs to **TEAM B***

No **TEAM A** player may block an opponent until **TEAM A** is eligible to touch a free-kicked ball.

→ *Live Ball Foul. 5 yds. from previous spot, or succeeding spot where belongs to **TEAM B***

Fouls by Kicking Team (cont'd)

FREE KICK OUT-OF-BOUNDS:

- Penalty for free kick out-of-bounds between goal lines and untouched by inbounds TEAM B player is for **TEAM B** to take the ball
 - 30 yards beyond **KICKING TEAM RESTRAINING LINE**—OR—
 - -5 yards from the previous spot & re-kick —OR—
 - +5 yards from the out-of-bounds spot
- Free kick touched by **TEAM B** player straddling the sideline, or by any out-of-bounds player, the ball becomes dead and foul for free kick out-of-bounds
- No Foul if free kick caught by an airborne “inbounds” **TEAM B** player who lands out-of-bounds

Fouls by Kicking Team (cont'd)

KICK-CATCH-INTERFERENCE: **TEAM B** player in position to catch a kick must be given an unimpeded opportunity to catch it – *when in doubt it is a foul!*

- Foul if, before the receiver touches the ball, a **TEAM A** player enters the area defined by the width of the receiver's shoulders and extending one yard in front of him.
- Foul if, the kicking team contacts the potential receiver before, or simultaneous to, his first touching the ball
- No foul if interference is the result of a player being blocked by an opponent.
- Protection ends when the kick touches the ground or any player of **TEAM B** in the field of play or end zone. Protection continues if when kicked, the ball is immediately driven to the ground, strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of the ball kicked directly off the tee. *Pay attention to how the ball is kicked!*

→ ***Live Ball Foul. 15 yards from the spot of the foul***

Fouls by Receiving Team

ILLEGAL WEDGE: **TEAM B** is prohibited from intentionally aligning three or more players shoulder-to-shoulder for the purpose of blocking

- No foul when the kick is from an obvious onside kick formation or the play results in a touchback.

→ *15 yards, spot of the foul, or 15 yards, spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to **TEAM B** if this is behind the spot of the foul.*

KICKER PROTECTION: The **kicker** of a free kick may not be blocked until he has advanced five yards beyond his restraining line or the kick has touched a player, an official or the ground.

→ *15 yards, previous spot*

Other Common Fouls on Free Kicks

- Blocking Below the Waist
- Illegal Block in the Back
- Offside – most often the kicking team – **make it big; don't be too technical!**
- Face Mask

Fair Catch - Refresher

Only on **Free kicks** OR Scrimmage kicks beyond the NZ

- **Valid** signal gives protection
- **Invalid** signal does not provide protection – KCI rules still apply!
- Any waving signal prevents an advance of the ball by either team.
- If there is an advance, it's a delay of the game. *(Don't be picky!)*
- Shading eyes permissible without waving hand.
- Signaling player may not block if he did not touch ball.
- Completed fair catches inside the B-25 yard line will result in Team B getting ball at the B-25 (unless relocated due to penalties)

Clock Management – Free Kicks

Starting and Stopping the Clock on Free Kicks

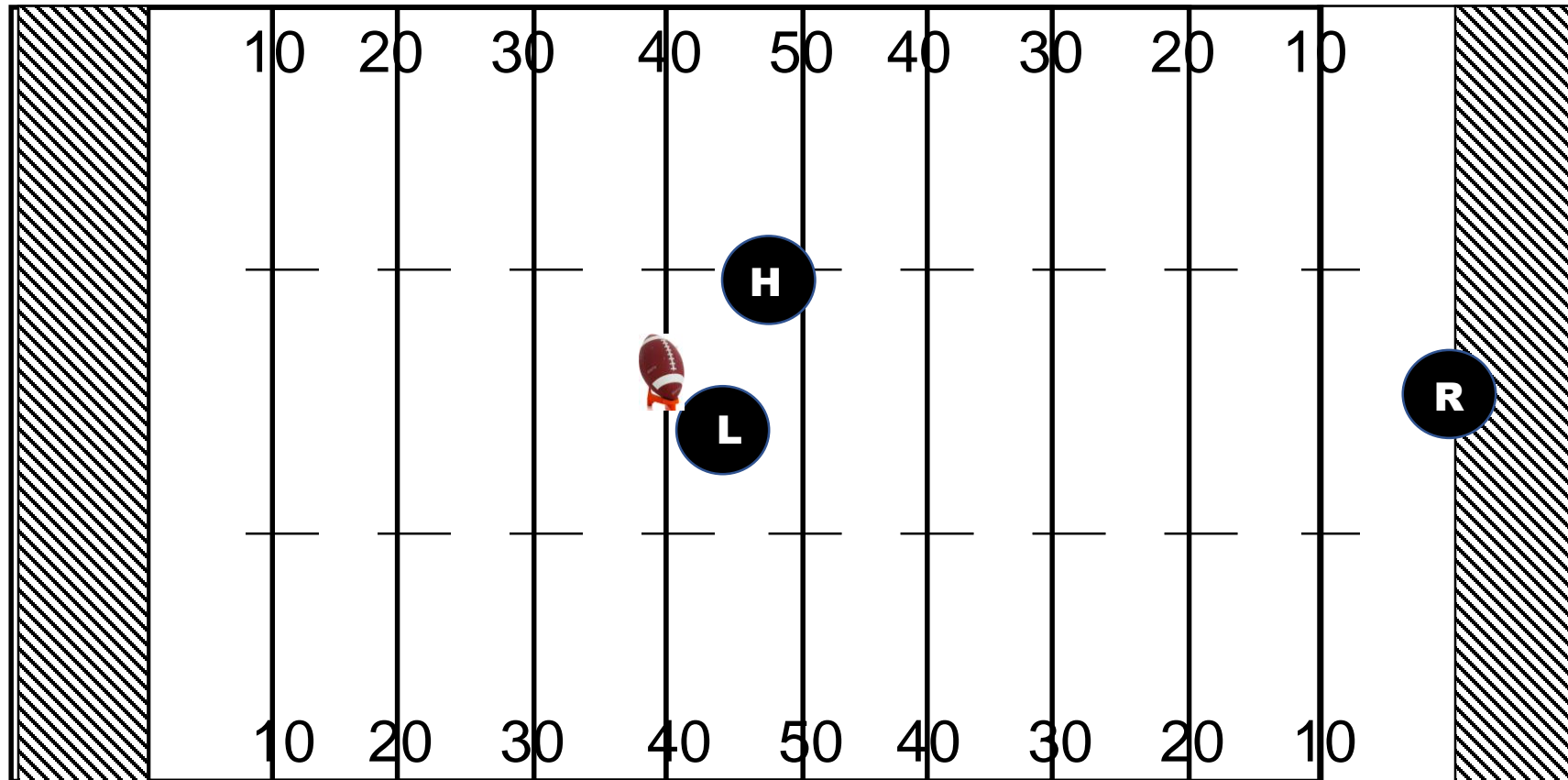
- Game clock started on an official's signal when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, or when it crosses the goal line after being touched legally by **TEAM B** in its end zone.
 - Wind clock when touched by **TEAM B** in field of play or when ball touched/carried by **TEAM B** out of end zone
 - Do not start the clock if **TEAM A** touches the kick
 - Do not start the clock on a fair catch
- Stop game clock when the ball is dead by rule.

Free Kicks – Player Taking a Knee

If **TEAM B** player takes a knee upon catching/recovering the kick he is down → play is over.

- **Simulates taking a knee:** treat this the same way → the player is down. This is not a foul.

Free Kicks – Positions (3-Man)

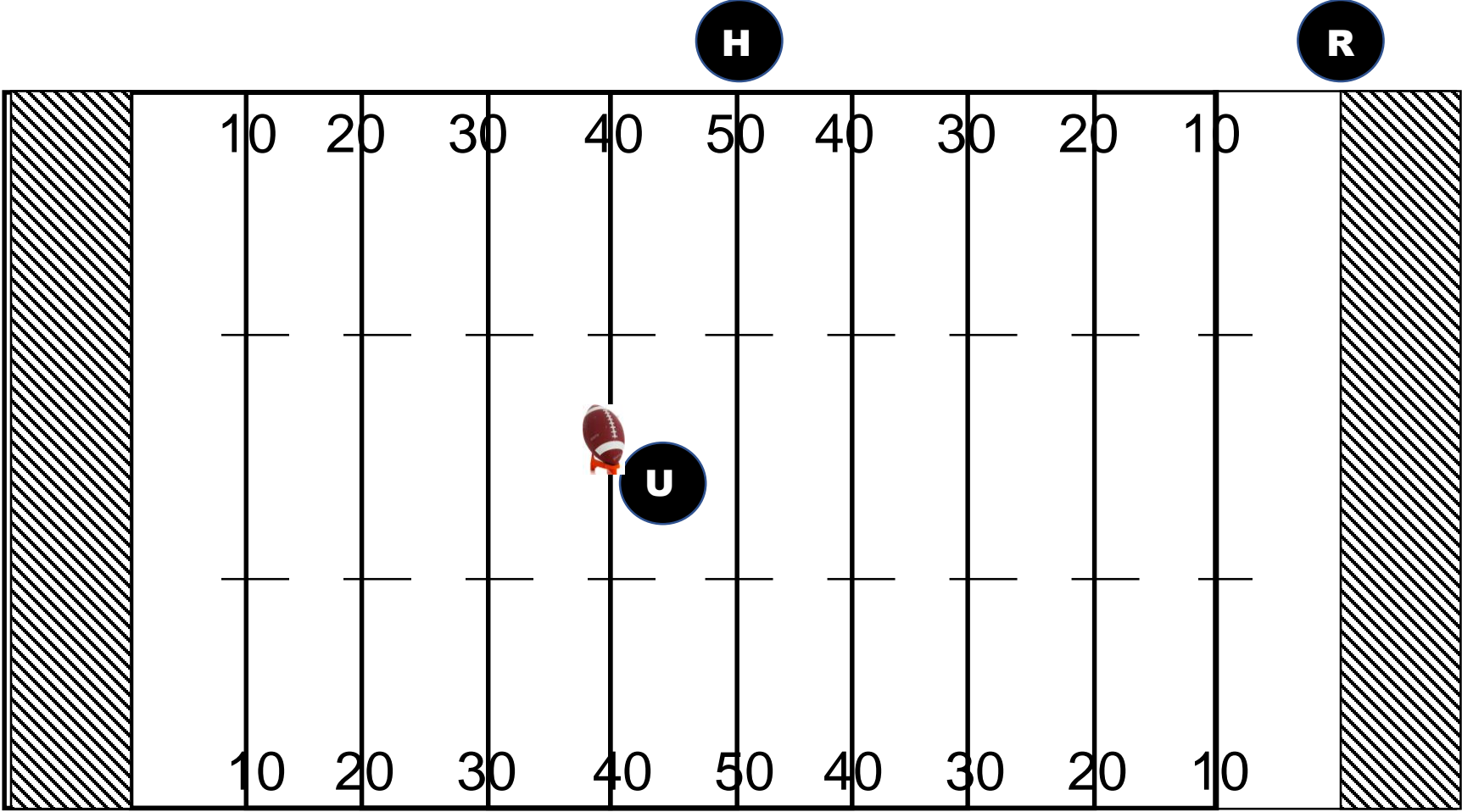


Line Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

Free Kicks

Free Kicks – Positions (4-Man)



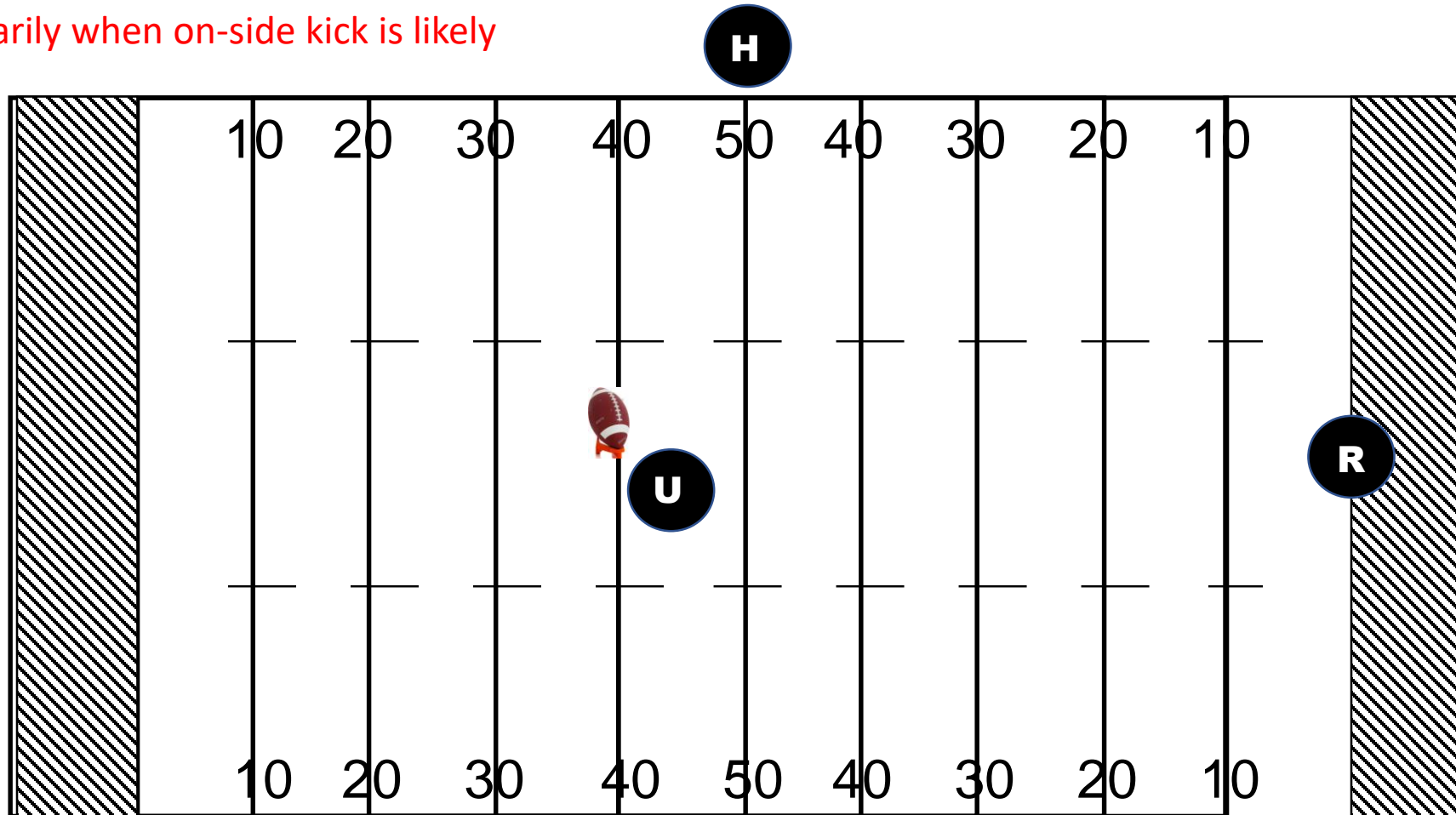
Umpire provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

Free Kicks

Free Kicks – Positions (4-Man) Short Kick

Used primarily when on-side kick is likely

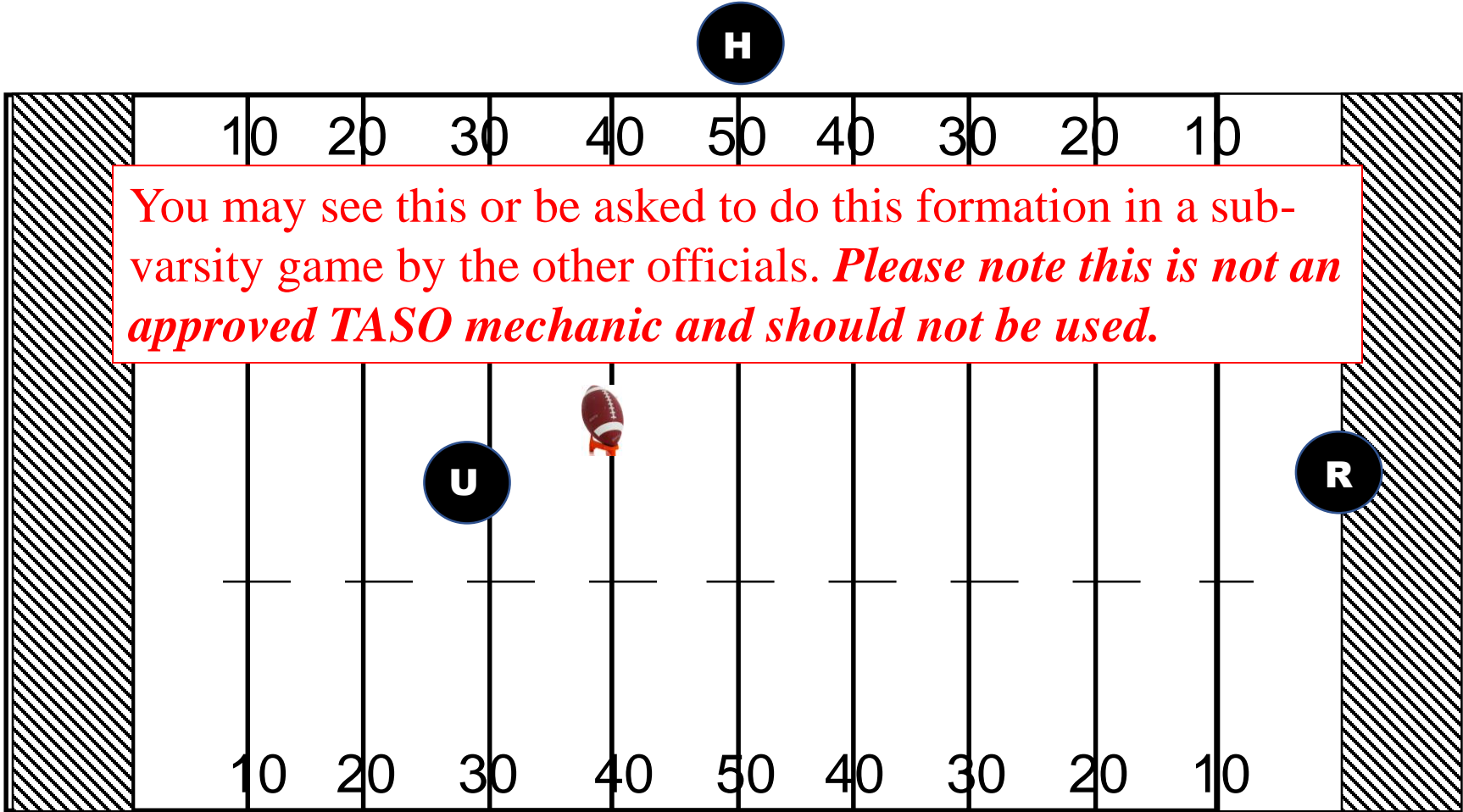


Umpire provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

Free Kicks

Free Kicks – Positions (4-Man) “Diamond”



You may see this or be asked to do this formation in a sub-varsity game by the other officials. *Please note this is not an approved TASO mechanic and should not be used.*

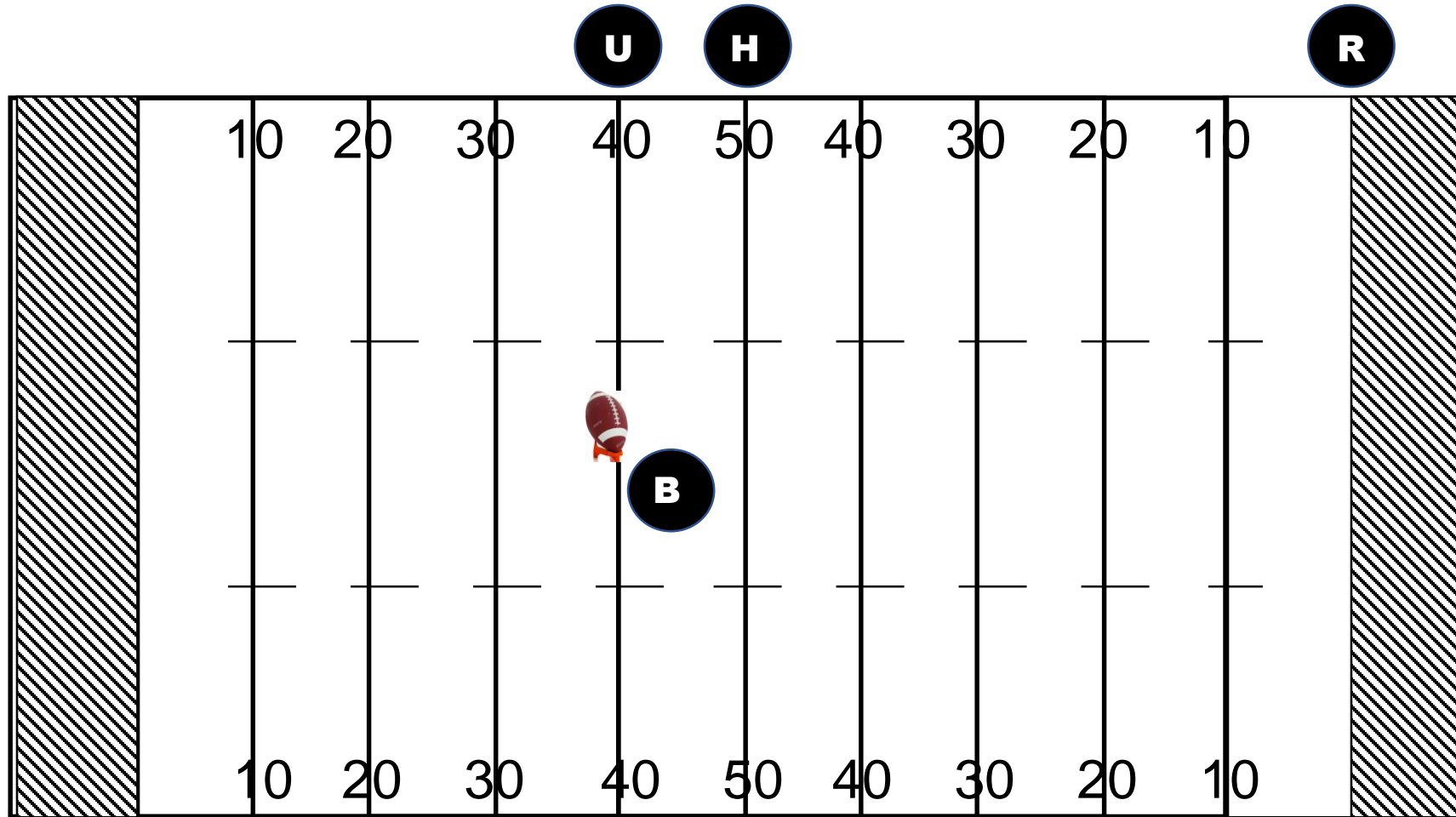
Umpire provides ball & instructions to Kicker

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Press Box

Free Kicks

Free Kicks – Positions (5-Man)



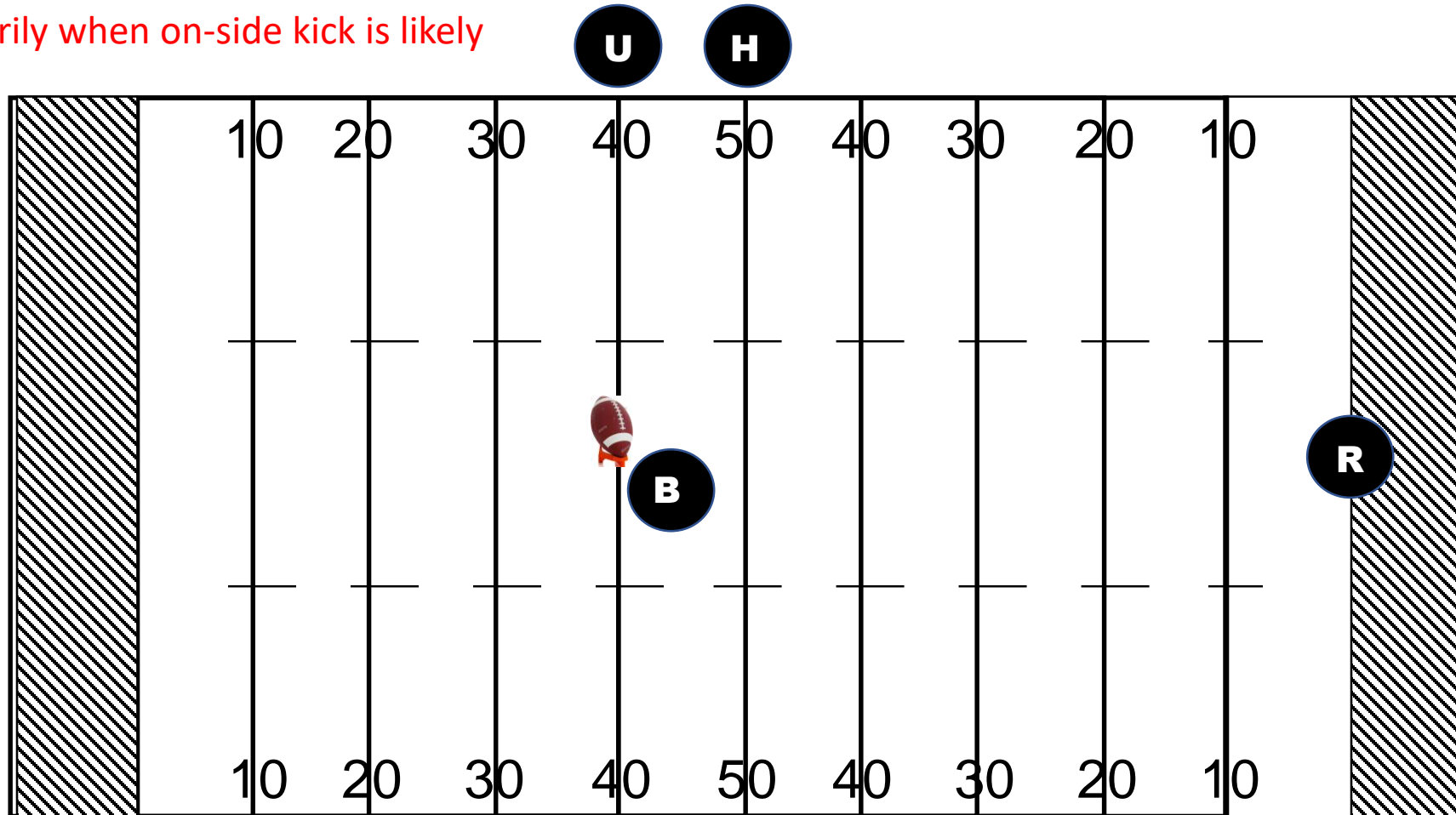
Back Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

Free Kicks

Free Kicks – Positions (5-Man) Short Kick

Used primarily when on-side kick is likely



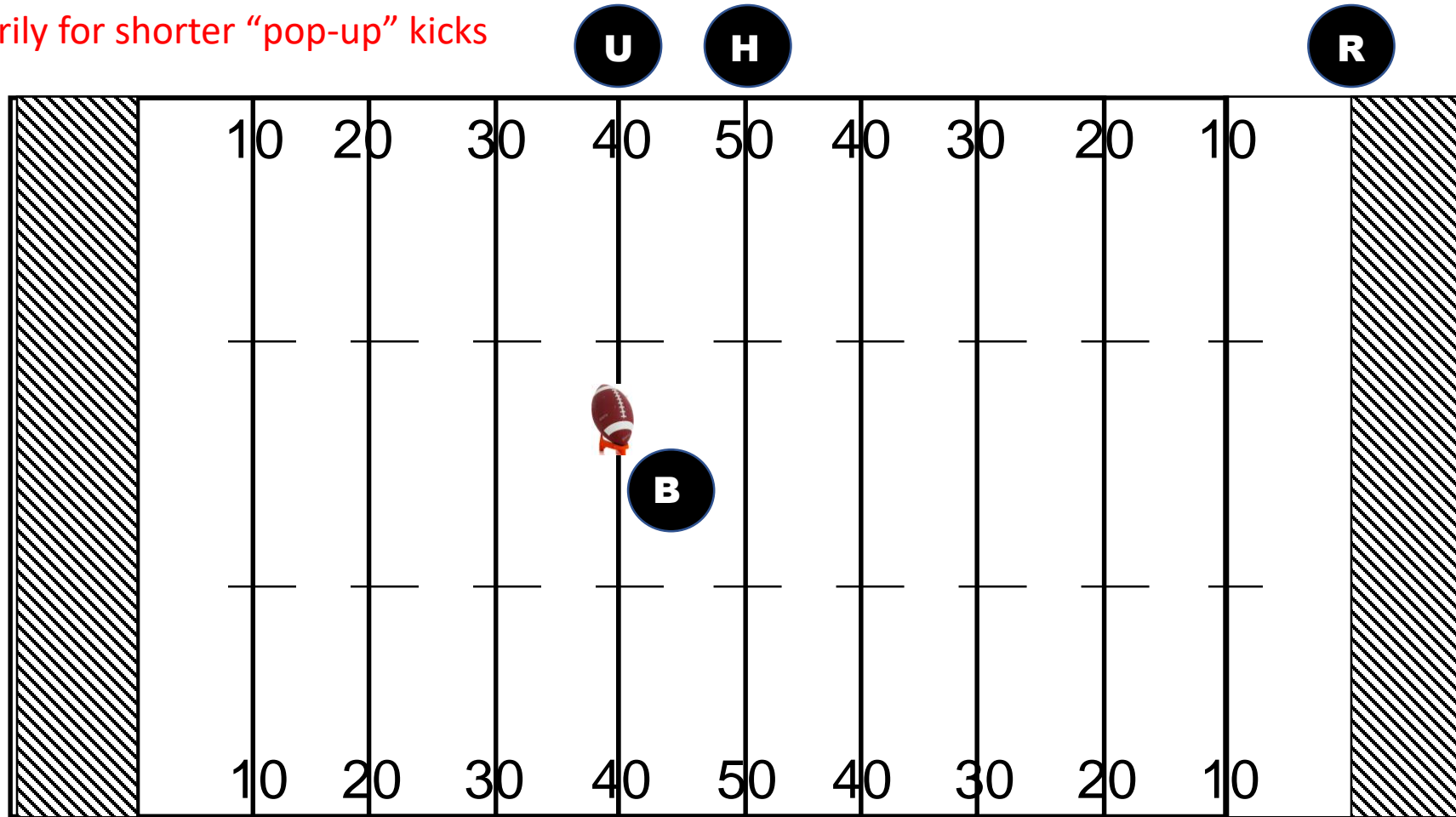
Back Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

Free Kicks

Free Kicks – Positions (5-Man) Alternate Short Kick

Used primarily for shorter “pop-up” kicks



Back Judge provides ball & instructions to Kicker

Press Box

Free Kicks