

New 40 Second Play Clock Rule, Chain Crews & Ball Rotation

The Standard 25 Second play clock will be used:

1. Following a touchback.
2. Following a charged time out by either team.
3. Following a penalty assessment and/or enforcement.
4. Following an official's timeout for an injury to a player or "helmet off". **
5. Following a change of possession.
6. Following a media timeout.
7. Following an official's timeout for a measurement.
8. Following any other official's timeout.
9. Following a touchdown for the Try.
10. At the start of a period or overtime.

** Referee's Discretion, 40 or 25

The New 40 Second play clock will be used:

1. At the end of a running play that ends inbounds or out of bounds.
2. At the end of a pass play, whether the pass is complete or incomplete.
3. Following an official's timeout for an injury to a player or "helmet off". **

** Referee's Discretion, 40 or 25

The 40 second clock shall start as soon as the play ends and the ball is dead. The covering official raises his arm straight up indicating that the ball is dead, which signals for the start of the 40-second play clock.

If the play ends out of bounds, the official will signal to stop the game clock, which will also start the 40-second play clock.

The clock operator (or Back Judge) will immediately start the 40 second clock, unless something else occurs that requires the 25-second play clock to be used. The 40-second play clock will be used most of the time following a play.

If during the play a change of possession occurs, the covering official will not signal to start the 40-second play clock. The timeout signal will stop the game clock and the 25-second play clock will start on the Referee's ready-for-play signal.

On an incomplete pass, the covering official will give the incomplete pass signal, which will also start the 40-second play clock. If the incomplete pass is on fourth down the timeout signal will stop the game clock and the 25-second play clock will start on the Referee's ready-for-play signal.

The signal to reset the play clock to 25 seconds is one arm pumped in the air by the referee or the back judge.

The signal to reset the play clock to 40 seconds is both arms pumped in the air by the referee or the back judge.

It is going to be necessary to have well trained ball personnel on both sides of the field. Each team will need to provide 2 ball persons and 3 game balls for each game. Ball persons should be easily identifiable with vests, t-shirts, etc. that contrast with the team uniforms on their sideline. They should also be old enough to understand and execute the ball rotation system that is used with the new 40/25 play clock rule. (See below)

It is going to be necessary to have well trained chain crew personnel provided by the home team. After every play, the "box" person on the chain crew must hustle (RUN) to the next spot because once the ball is placed on the ground by the umpire and he moves to his position, the ball can be snapped, as the 40 second play clock will already be running.

As soon as a first down is signaled, the "box" person must hustle (RUN) to the next spot, followed immediately by the rest of the chain crew. Stopping the game clock to signal first down will not cause the play clock to reset to 25 seconds - the 40 second play clock will be running.

Using young kids or injured players that cannot execute their responsibilities in a timely manner will create major problems in connection with the 40/25 play clock rule.

It is expected that the ball will be marked ready for play (set on the ground by the umpire) within 8-10 seconds of the end of the play. The umpire will not stand over the ball waiting for the chains to be set when there is a first down. Once the officials are in position to officiate, the umpire will step away from the ball and the ball may be snapped. If they are not in position, the umpire will stand over the ball and prevent it from being snapped until he is released by the referee.

Additionally, if the 40-second play clock is used at the sub-varsity level, a 5-man crew must be used. The mechanics are inoperable with less than 5 crew members.

**** The ball rotation procedure is as follows:**

Both teams will need to provide a minimum of 3 game balls prior to game time.

Start the game with 2 balls from each team on the Home/press box side (4 balls total), and 1 ball from each team on the Visitor's/chains side (2 balls total)

The Home team will provide 2 ball persons for the press box side of the field. One ball person will have 2 home team balls, the other will have 2 visiting team balls.

The Visiting team will provide at least one ball person for the linesman's (chains) side of the field. This ball person will have one home team ball and one visiting team ball. (It is recommended that the visiting team also provide 2 ball persons to maintain consistency - when they are the Home team the following week they will need to have 2 ball persons). If there are 2 ball persons on the Visiting team side, they will each have one game ball.

The game balls need to be clearly marked with the team name. When a new ball needs to come into the game, it's important that we get the right one in the 1st time.

All ball changes when there is a change in team possession come from the Home Team/Press Box side of the field. For example, the Home team is on offense and has a 4th down play coming up. They run the play and are short of the line to gain, so it will now be the Visiting team's turn to be on offense. The old (Home team) ball will be taken off the field to the Press Box side of the field, and the new (Visiting team) ball will come into the game from the Press Box side of the field. This insures that during the game there will always be at least 1 ball from each team on both sidelines. Punts, kickoffs, interceptions and fumble recoveries by the defense are all change of possession plays.

- Pass goes incomplete to the Home team side, rotate a ball in from that side.
- Pass goes incomplete to the Visiting team side, rotate a ball in from that side.
- Pass goes incomplete to the middle - consider using the far hash as the line of demarcation. Anything past the far hash (Visiting team side) rotates in from the Visiting team side. All others are from Home team side.
- Run ends near the sideline, you can spot the current ball and rotate a ball in from the ball boy.
- Ball persons shag the incomplete passes out of bounds after tossing the official a new ball.
- There is more emphasis of rotating balls when teams are throwing a lot. Plays that end inbounds can generally keep the same ball in the game.