

Instructions for Ball Persons – NY State

Prior to the start of both the game and the 2nd half, the officials need to secure 3 game balls from each team and give them to the appropriate ball persons. Before the game starts, a pre-game conference is conducted with them by the Back Judge, Line Judge & Head Linesman that thoroughly explains their duties and responsibilities.

When each half ends, the officials on each sideline need to retrieve all 3 game balls and get them to the appropriate team. DO NOT leave the balls with the ball persons. Arranging this procedure ahead of time with an assistant coach is recommended.

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.

Ball persons need to keep their concentration throughout the game. Problems with getting a new ball into the game in a timely fashion will seriously hamper utilization of the new 40 second play clock rule.

Ball persons should start each play from scrimmage about 10 yards downfield from the yard line where the ball is being snapped. Ball persons must be located outside the restricted white area. They may adjust their positioning as the play develops by moving upfield or downfield (still outside the restricted white area) towards the direction of the action – they need to move **CAUTIOUSLY** – **THE BALL PERSONS SHOULD NEVER BE ON THE FIELD WHILE A PLAY IS BEING RUN AND THE BALL IS LIVE.** Care should also be taken not to interfere with the coaches, players or chain crew as they move up or down the sideline.

When a play ends near the sideline either in or out of bounds, or after an incomplete pass downfield, the ball person with the appropriate team ball will move to the sideline or even a few steps out onto the field with a raised arm holding the new ball in their hand. This will gain the attention of the officials. The ball should be tossed underhand to the official that is asking for the new ball. The official should be yelling the name of the team to the ball person when asking for a new ball. “Ball – East High ball!”

Once the new ball is in the game, the ball person will retrieve the old ball from wherever it may be. If the old ball was downfield and in the middle, the Back Judge will help retrieve it and get it to the ball person.

When there is a kick try for a point after a touchdown, the ball person from the Press Box (Home) side of the field will place a kicking-team ball behind the goal post for the officials to use for the subsequent kickoff. The ball person will then retrieve the ball that is being kicked for the try.

**** 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.