

E. Play Clock Procedures

1. The following set of instructions is for the play clock operators to assist with the 2019 NFHS football rule change to the play clock that now involves a 40-second or 25-second possibility for a delay of game. The following are the instructions for the 40-second and the 25-second play clock, to be used **IF visible play clocks are available to be used. The 40/25 Play Clock Operator must meet with the officials 1 hour prior to the contest or the visible clock will not be used.**
2. Note to the Play Clock Operator: **The 40 second play clock will be started after counting “one-thousand one” after the covering official signals the end of the down using Signal #3 (time-out) or Signal #7 (dead ball with one arm straight up) or Signal #10 (incomplete pass). These are the only three signals you should expect at the end of a down prior to the 40-second play clock starting.**
3. The following addresses the play situations that require the 40-second option:
 - (a) The Team A (offense) runner is stopped inbounds short of a first down. The game clock continues to run and the 40-second play clock is started immediately except at the end of a 4th down.
 - (b) The Team A (offense) runner is stopped inbounds beyond the line-to-gain (first down). The game clock is stopped for the first down and the 40-second play clock is started immediately. The referee will then restart (wind) the game clock (no whistle involved) as quickly as the football is placed on the ground and ready for play.
 - (c) The Team A (offense) runner or a Team A fumble or a Team A backward pass goes out of bounds. The game clock is stopped and the 40-second play clock is started immediately. The game clock will not start again until the next legal snap.
 - (d) A Team A (offense) legal forward pass is incomplete. The game clock is stopped and the 40-second play clock is started immediately. The game clock will not start again until the next legal snap.
 - (e) A double change of possession during the down occurs resulting in Team A in possession at the end of the down. The game clock is stopped for a first down and the 40-second play clock is started immediately. The game clock may then be restarted (wind with no whistle) or not depending on whether out of bounds was a factor. (Example: Team A’s forward pass is intercepted and Team B then fumbles during its return and Team A recovers.)
4. There is no signal/whistle from the referee during the 40 seconds except to restart the game clock following a first down inbounds. It is important to note that none of the situations listed above involve an administrative stop/interruption in play. All of those possibilities are addressed in the next section.
5. **Administrative Stoppages/Interruptions:** It is always possible for the situations that are listed below to occur during the game that are administrative issues/interruptions to the normal flow of play. This list does not necessarily include every possibility.
6. Note to the Play Clock Operator: Every situation listed below will result in a 25-second play clock that is not started immediately at any time, but you will wait until the situation has been addressed and the referee will then utilize Signal #1 which is the very common ready-for-play (with the whistle sounded) or Signal #2 (wind) which restarts both clocks (with the whistle sounded).

Game Situations:

- (a) any foul occurs;
- (b) play is stopped for an injured player;
- (c) any down that involves a score;
- (d) either team is granted a time-out;
- (e) a player’s helmet has come completely off;
- (f) any down that includes a legal kick;
- (g) a measurement for a first down;
- (h) team possession changes during or after a down;
- (i) the beginning of any period;
- (j) an inadvertent whistle; and
- (k) an untimed down.

This list includes most 25-second play clock situations, but an extremely rare situation is also a possibility (a dog runs across the field; the lights go out; weather conditions).

7. General Statements

- (a) Always set the play clock back to 40 during a down in progress. You will have plenty of time to change it back to 25 at the end of the down if necessary.

(b) The common ready-for-play whistle/signal is not used for a 40-second play clock.

(c) It is very important that the same individual in the press box is not responsible for both clocks. An official on the field will be responsible for the play clock if and when visible play clocks are not available to be used.

(d) The game clock operator must always be ready for the referee to wind/start the game clock when it is stopped. The game clock will always start on a legal snap if it is not already started/running prior to the legal snap.

(e) Make certain that you always run the 25-second play clock prior to an extra point try, prior to a kickoff and prior to the kick following a safety.

8. Finally, the play clock operator must always be ready for the referee to reset the 40-second clock to 25 seconds if and when the 40 seconds has run down past and below 25 seconds and the football is still not yet on the ground ready for the next down. The referee's signal for this is a pumping motion with one hand up and down near his head.