

# PROTOCOLS AND PROCESSES FOR USAGE OF HEADSETS (O2O)

The following are the basic protocols which CCFOA officials will utilize when using the communication headsets during games.

## General

- ❖ All headsets MUST be charged PRIOR to arrival at the game site.
- ❖ All officials on the crew must use the headsets. If any member(s) of the crew do not have operable headsets with them, no one will use them. This also references situations which may occur during the game where a headset becomes inoperable for a reason.
- ❖ ALL officials will purchase and use the same headset vendor and model as outlined in the contract earlier this year.

## Game Day – On Field

When entering field prior to the game, crew should separate a distance of 15-20 feet, then R will start an individual contact with each position. The person contacted will then respond. All officials in the group should each individual query from the R and the response from the official.

Upon testing, IF there are issues such as “feedback” or other electronic interference, PRIMARY designees to work through the issue on the crew’s behalf will be the FJ and LJ. ALL OTHER OFFICIALS will continue with their assigned pre-game meetings with clock operators, chain personnel etc. We want to avoid 5 or 6 guys running around focusing on headset issues and failing to complete pre-game rules.

MINIMIZE the frequency and situations in which the headsets are used:

**When R is discussing penalty options with captains or making foul announcements over the field microphone, NO OTHER discussions will occur between the remaining members of the crew during this period.**

During the game, verbiage between crew members is to be limited by both subject matter and who will be designated in certain situations to be verbalize situations.

## Game and Play Clock Status

Status of **game clock** will be announced primarily by the **SJ** with FJ as backup. SJ will inform R clock status IF R has not reacted to the game clock with simple language prior to when ball would be marked ready for play. The simple language will be:

- **“Hot, Hot”** (game clock should start) or
- **“Dead, Dead”** (game clock starts at snap)

This communication will be especially crucial related to the game clock coming out of

- penalty enforcements,
- injury timeouts
- ten second clock reduction situations
- equipment violations such as helmet
- under two minute or one-minute clock situations in second and fourth quarter

Status of **play clock** will be announced primarily by the **BJ** with LJ as back-up. BJ will inform R clock status IF R has not reacted to issues with the play clock with simple language prior to when ball would be marked ready for play. If play clock needs to reset, the BJ will simply announce “Play Clock Reset to...”

### **Substitutions**

The deep side official on Team A’s sideline should be aware of Team A substitution activity as soon as the down ends and players separate. The deep official should FIRST determine if R is in position to see the potential subs coming onto the field. This situational awareness can potentially minimize the number of announcements on incoming subs is required. If R is looking toward the bench area, or starting to raise his arms to acknowledge the substitution, no comment is required. However, if R is not aware, the deep side official will announce:

- **“Sub, Sub”**,
- **“Late sub, Late sub”** (if another sub(s) enter after the substitution has occurred).

For the deep official on Team B’s sideline, if B delays or responds to second group of Team A changes, and R is not looking in that direction or moving to release the umpire, then the deep official on that sideline will announce:

- **“Match up, match up”** or
- **“Late match up, late match up”**

Other officials should be cognizant of substitutions and match ups by Team B, but unless there has been no announcement by the designated officials and it appears that the crew is about to miss the situation, then that official should react.

What we DO NOT want is 3 or 4 guys announcing subs or match up on every play. Generally, R will have situational awareness, see anticipate this action and will be implementing the proper signals. IF not, this will be the back-up process!

### **Injury**

When the down ends, the covering or ruling official will stop the game clock for an injured player. Subsequent to that, if it is not apparent why you are stopping the clock to the other officials simply announce:

- **“Injured player down”**

Normally there won't be an announcement required, as we have been in numerous situations where the down ends and we hear an official blow his whistle, observe him stopping the clock, and when we look closer in that direction we see a player on the ground. Announcements for injured player normally should be minimal.

## Announcing Fouls

If you have a foul at the end of a down, we

- WILL NOT stand over our flag and try to announce the penalty. As in the past you will run into the referee and conference.

If you have a foul prior to the snap, and only one official or one team obviously committed the foul (BJ with delay of game, Team A obvious false start, Team B offside with contact), as in the past

- you should move toward R, give a preliminary signal, and then announce the offending player's number.

IF we have **multiple** officials down with flags, or a situation where there could be multiple potential fouls (Team B in neutral zone, and A false starting),

- the officials will conference in the same manner as before, then the proper official will move in and inform the referee of the situation – unlikely there will be an announcement using the official's headset

Two things to remember when there are fouls:

We DO NOT want to stand over our flags or stay outside and try to simply “phone in” our foul.

1. This gives the perception to the stakeholders (coaches, fans, administrators), that you are lazy or too tired to hustle – they are used to seeing officials move in and conference, they are not used to seeing guys just stand there and talk or give preliminary signal – we want to avoid feeding the negative perception, as irrational or misinformed as that perception maybe.
2. If it is windy, you are jogging, or your transmission is jumbled due to technical issues, the referee or “other” official may not hear you, or may misunderstand what you say, react incorrectly, causing further delay as we scramble to try and correct the miscommunication.
3. Jogging into report to the referee provides the calling official time to “sort out” what he needs to report on his way to the conference, whereas if immediately after the call you try to “phone in” your call, you may not have parsed the play thoroughly creating the wrong or incomplete information being sent to R.
4. By jogging in to R, if another member of your crew has a question or different call, he can run to you and confer with you before you get to R, whereas if you start announcing you foul right away, the crewmate would have to get on the mike and talk over you, then we just have a lot of verbal confusion.

## **Avoid**

We will not question or discuss prior to the snap:

- If back is outside the tackle in a formation;
- If the end on other side of formation is on the LOS;
- Asking to recount for 11 players on the field;

Try to be aware of your vocal tone/delivery. If you are trying to talk while running, or are really excited, your voice can come across shrill or very “tinny” sounding, which can make you sound more like a high pitched dog whistle and very difficult to understand.

Be aware that you can't start talking the moment you push you talk button – often there is a delay in transmission, and you may be on the fourth word of your explanation, but the other official may only be hearing the fourth word because the first three did not get transmitted cleanly.

This outline is developed from many situations and processes that we have developed the last 4 years from on field experiences that we have encountered and many times made mistakes as the result of.