

## MHSAA 7-Person Mechanics

7-person mechanics are not much different than 5-person mechanics. The nice part is you have a smaller area to view initially. With seven officials (addition of an official on the side line 20 yards downfield) it allows the **L** and the **H** to move at a more deliberate pace and focus on the running game.

### FREE KICKS

#### **REFEREE**

- Initial position is deeper than any receiver- you are responsible for the goal line.
- After ball is caught you are responsible for action between the hash marks to 25 yard line.

#### **UMPIRE**

- Initial Position and responsible for kickers restraining line opposite press box.
- After the ball is kicked move inside to the hash and you are responsible for the actions of the two inside receivers on your sideline (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> player inside from the sideline- FJ/SJ have two outside receivers).

#### **HL / LJ**

- Initial position is on the goal line- cover your pylon if the ball threatens it!
- HL is opposite press box; LJ has press box side.
- After the ball is caught you have forward progress if ball is on your side of the field.
- View blocks in the middle of the field if the ball is on the opposite side.

#### **FJ / SJ**

- Initial position is on R's restraining line. **F** – press box side; **S** – opposite press box.
- After the ball is kicked, view actions of the two widest players on your side of R's restraining line and then view blocking in front of the ball carrier. Try to keep 20 yards between you and your **LOS** partner!

#### **BACK JUDGE**

- Hand ball to kicker and then move to K's restraining line on the press box side.
- After the ball is kicked move inside to the hash and you are responsible for the actions of the two inside receivers on your sideline (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> player inside from the sideline- FJ/SJ have two outside receivers).
- You have the responsibility for the kicker's goal line!

### **ONSIDE KICK ADJUSTMENTS**

**Referee**- moves up to the deepest receiver

**HL/LJ**- Move to the yard line directly between the **U/F** and the **B/S** and be responsible for the actions of the kickers against the receivers (usually the 45 yard line), especially a foul for an early block.

**FJ/SJ**- Responsible for the receivers restraining line and first touching of the ball.

**U/BJ**- No change- officiate K's restraining line.

**FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY**- same as normal free kick coverage.

### **COUNTING PLAYERS**

**REFEREE / UMPIRE-** must count the OFFENSE on every play and will check off with HL and LJ.

**FIELD JUDGE / SIDE JUDGE / BACK JUDGE-** all 3 must count the DEFENSE on every play; if we have a foul, try and shut the play down with a dead ball foul.

### **GAME CLOCK – PLAY CLOCK**

**SIDE JUDGE-** has primary responsibility for the GAME CLOCK.

**BACK JUDGE-** has primary responsibility for the PLAY CLOCK and will signal at :10 left and will visibly count off the last :05 seconds.

### **RUNNING PLAYS**

#### **REFEREE / UMPIRE / HEADLINESMAN / LINE JUDGE / BACK JUDGE**

There is no significant change in how you would cover a running play in 7-person mechanics than you would cover in 5-person mechanics. HL and LJ will take all forward progress unless the FJ and SJ are positioned at the goal line. In the case, the HL and LJ have forward progress to the 2 YARD LINE; FJ and SJ have progress from the 2 yard line to the goal line.

#### **FIELD JUDGE / SIDE JUDGE**

- Your initial position is 20 yards from the LOS – FJ is on the press box side and the SJ is opposite the press box. On running plays, your initial responsibility is the block of your key, the widest receiver to your side. From there, you will move to all blocks in front of the runner. On running plays that end between you and HL/LJ, you should “accordion” in to help players know the play is over. Move in, move back out after all running plays.
- You must be at the goal line....you have progress from the 2 yard line going in to the goal line!
- You should keep 20 yard between you and the LOS official, if possible. FJ/SJ must work hard to stay up field, giving all forward progress to the HL/LJ unless it is from the 2 yard line going in!
- Even though you are keying the widest receiver at the snap, you will **NEVER** throw a flag for a pre-snap foul (false start, for example), even if it appears your man leaves early, jumps, simulates the start of the play, etc. That potential foul is the responsibility of the LOS official on your side!

### **GOAL LINE COVERAGE – 20 and IN**

When the ball is touching the 20 yard line going in and until it touches the 7 yard line, the FJ and the SJ will be at the goal line. Once the ball touches the 7 yard line – the FJ and SJ will be at the move to the back corner of the end zone on the end line / side line intersection. On any run originating outside of the 7 yard line, the HL and the LJ will give up forward progress to the FJ and SJ when the ball reaches the 2 yard line.

## PASSING PLAYS

The initial positions of all officials remain the same as in a running play! Here are the key differences:

**LJ:** You will NEVER leave the line of scrimmage on a passing play until the ball has crossed the LOS. You are primary in whether or not the passer has crossed the LOS! The one exception is when the ball is snapped inside the 7 yard line...you will now move directly to the goal line and the umpire become primary!

**HL:** You may float slightly downfield when you read pass based on your key. If your key has run a pass route, ease downfield. If not, stay on the LOS with the LJ.

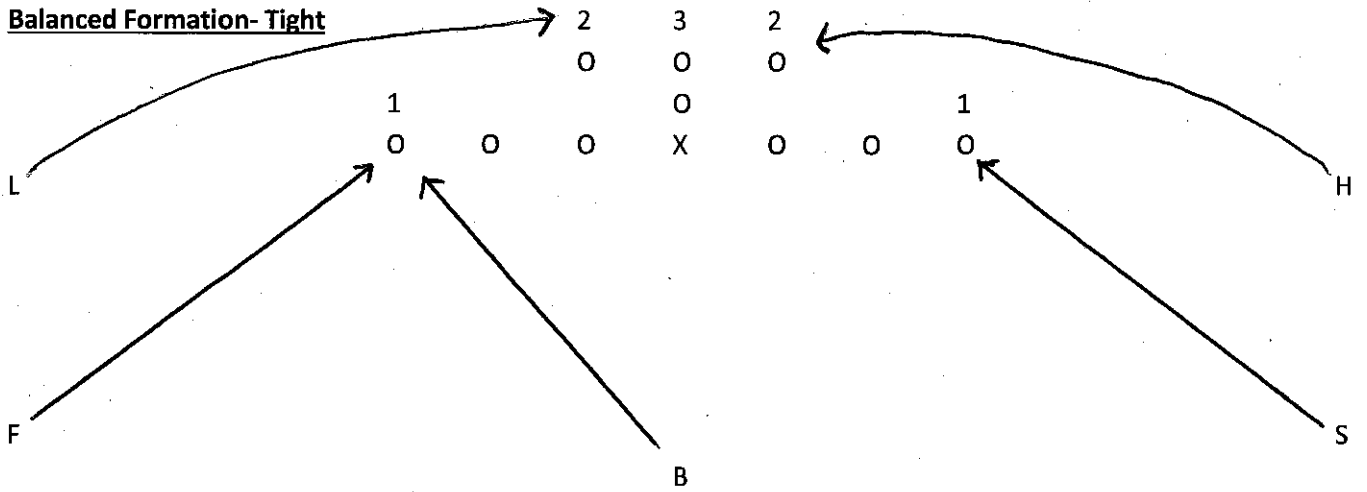
**HEADLINESMAN / LINE JUDGE / FIELD JUDGE / SIDE JUDGE / BACK JUDGE**  
**PASSING GAME KEYS- IMPORTANT!!!**

- **Deep Wings (FJ/SJ)** will always have the widest man to your side (#1).
- **HL and LJ** have the next inside receiver for the most part (#2), unless you have trips to your side. You will then have #3 in trips. Note there will be times that both you and BJ will have #2 to your side!
- **BJ** will generally have the #2 receiver inside to the strong side. If the formation is balanced, **ALWAYS** move to #2 to the PRESS BOX / LJ side of the field!
- **EXCEPTION** is the motion man who is always the responsibility of the **HL/LJ** regardless of where he ends up in the formation.

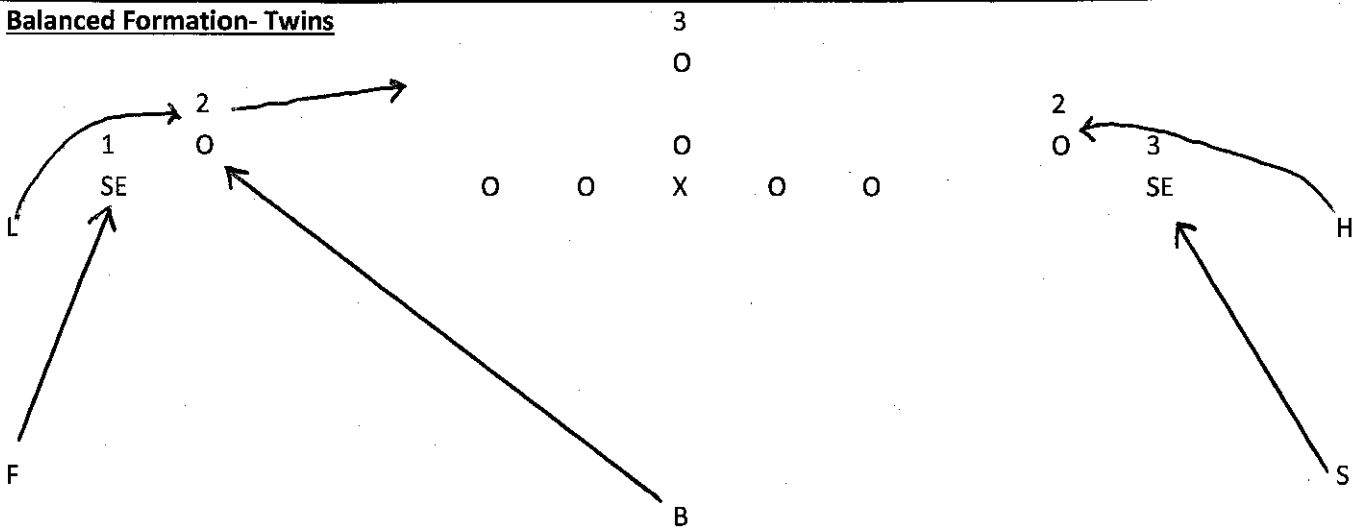
The best explanation of the initial responsibilities is by the following diagrams. Please keep in mind that the initial responsibility is simply a starting point – as the play develops, you should move to covering your zone. Our progression on pass plays is **MAN** (know your receiver at the snap) and you will then move to **ZONE** (once the play develops – go to covering your zone). When the **BALL IS THROWN**, all eyes except that of the R should go to the spot of the pass.

**Keys at the Snap (Press Box is to the LJ/FJ Side- Left Side of the Page)**

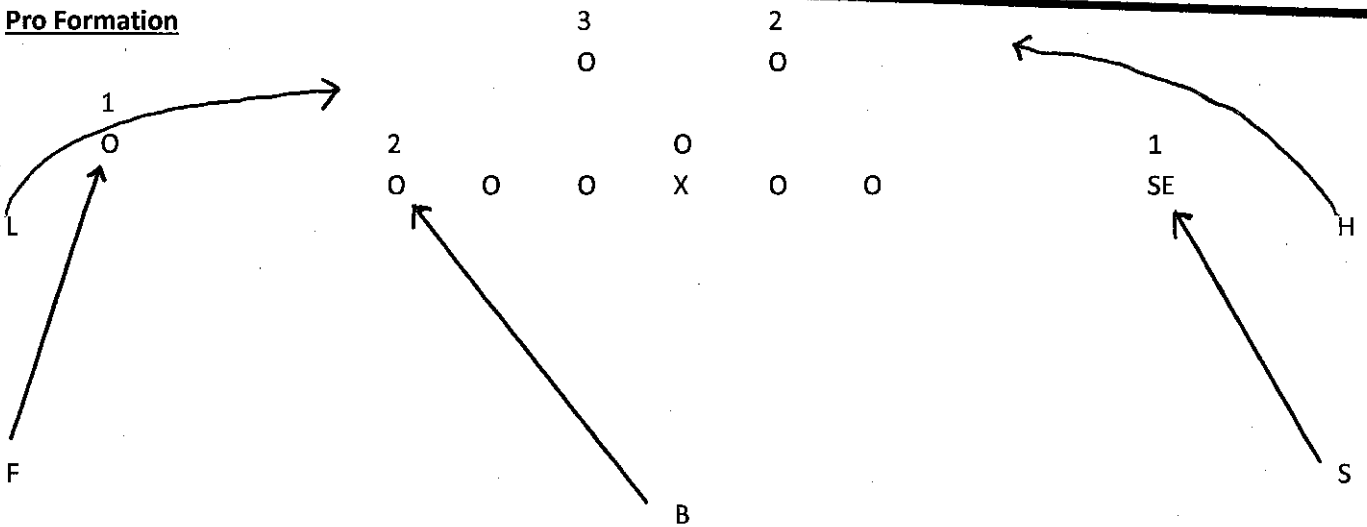
**Balanced Formation- Tight**



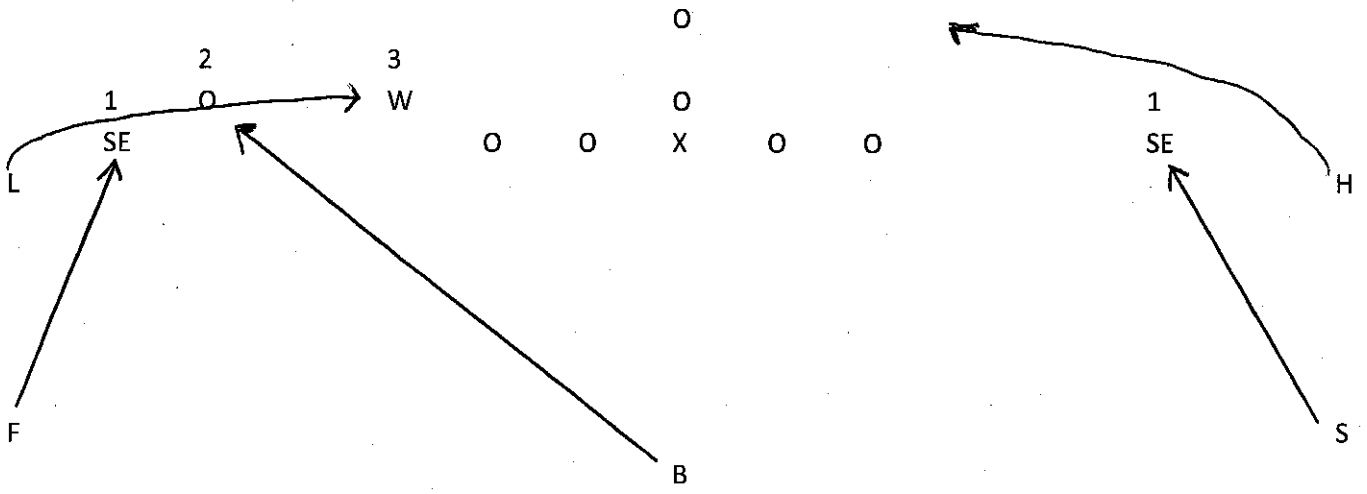
**Balanced Formation- Twins**



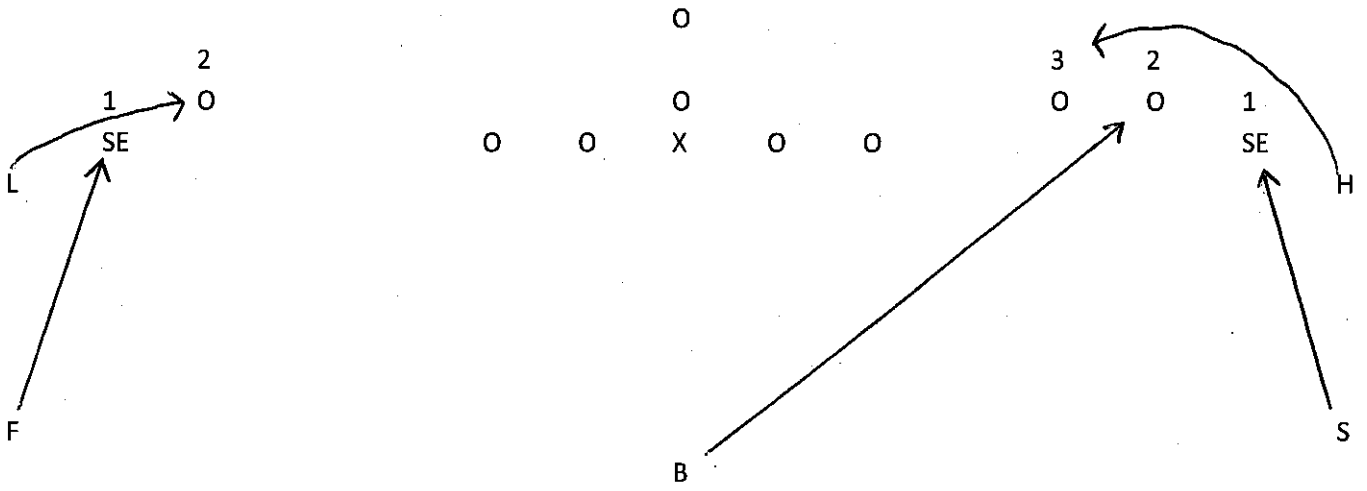
**Pro Formation**



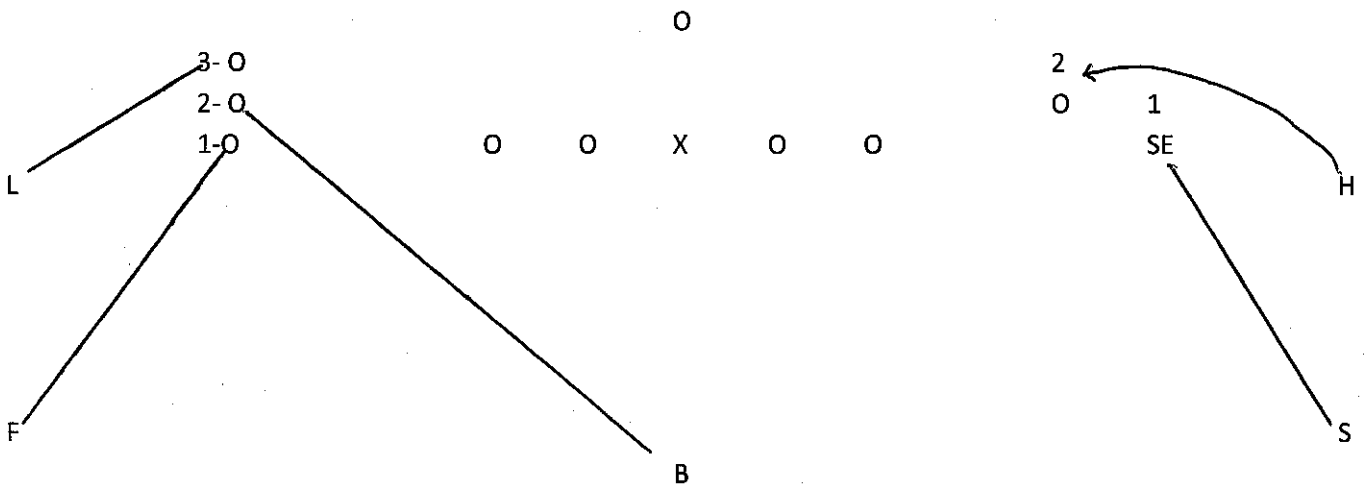
**Spread**



**Trips**



**Stack**



## SCRIMMAGE KICKS – PUNTS

### HL/LJ

- Both officials should hold until the ball crosses the LOS. If the ball is snapped over the punter's head, the R and line of scrimmage official the R is facing will go with the ball. If R's back is to you, HOLD the LOS until the ball has crossed it!
- Both are responsible for the secondary flow of players / blocking and both move about 10-15 yards downfield and then prepare to retreat as the play comes at you.
- The **FJ** and **SJ** have forward progress on all returns and you want to keep a 20 yard distance between you and the **FJ/SJ**. We refer to this as reverse mechanics during all returns (punts and turnovers) as the FJ/SJ have forward progress to the 2 yard line, and now the HL/LJ will have the runner from the 2 yard line to the goal line.
- If the play goes to the goal line you should be straddling the pylon!

### FJ/SJ

- Initial position is 3 yard deeper than the deepest receiver/ punt returner.
- You are responsible for the "Flyer" on your side of the field on the way down.
- On punts that go out of bounds, you are responsible for the spot. If it is badly kicked or shanked, work with the R to determine the spot where the ball went out of bounds.
- Once the ball is caught – if the ball comes toward you – you have forward progress. If it goes away from you, take blocking in the middle of the field.

### BJ

- Initial position is 3-5 yards behind the deepest receiver / punt returner in a position to see the ball caught. This will require you to adjust your position based on the flight of the ball. Your position should never be outside of the hash marks.
- You are responsible for any signal by the receiver and whether he catches the ball or not. Once the punt is caught, you **MUST** drop a bean bag at the spot where the kick has ended (PSK enforcement).
- Once the ball is caught, you are responsible for blocks in the middle and just ahead of the runner. You will box-in the play with the **FJ and SJ**.

**40 and In Coverage** – Initial Position by the **BJ/FJ/SJ** when the ball is kicked from the "40 Yard Line and In" is on the goal line. You can adjust off the goal line once you have read the ball will **NOT** threaten the goal line.

## SCRIMMAGE KICKS – FIELD GOAL AND TRY

**REFEREE**- Take your normal position 5 yards over and 5 yards deep while facing the holder.

**UMPIRE**- Initial position is more towards the press box than normal as you have the **SJ** moving in as the double umpire. The SJ will align to the HL side of the field. You are

responsible for the snap and the action against the snapper, as well as blocking on your side of the formation that includes the Center, Guard and Tackle to your side!

**SIDE JUDGE-** Initial position is as the double **Umpire** on the opposite side of the Center from the Umpire. You will be at the same depth as the Umpire, and you are responsible for the blocks of the Guard and Tackle to your side. The Umpire has the snapper.

**HL/LJ-** You both will stay on the LOS until the ball is kicked - then move downfield. You are both responsible for the ball crossing LOS on any field goal.

**FJ/BJ-** Initial positions are under the goal posts with the BJ opposite the press box upright and FJ having the press box side upright. The BJ is responsible for his upright on his side and the cross bar; the FJ has his upright, only. **The BJ has the whistle on all FIELD GOALS. The HL has the whistle on all PAT's.**

**Field goal blocked or short of the goal line** - The **BJ** should remain at the end line if the kick is blocked and there is a possibility of a pass. If the kick has crossed the LOS then he should move to the goal line (if he can remain clear of players while moving up – when in doubt, stay on the end line). The **FJ** should move immediately to the goal line, but safely and under control remaining clear of players. It is not necessary to get to the side line – just get to the Goal Line. **HL** and **LJ** move to cover the ball and potential advance to the opposite goal line. **U** should move up to cover the ball/passers crossing the LOS.

NOTE: A try down ends when the ball is kicked- HL has the whistle!

**Try – Swinging Gate Coverage** – you must start in your normal “inside the 5 yard line” positions. In this case the **U** will move to a position in the center of the 6 other down Linemen. The **R** will have to view the action by and against the snapper. When they return to a normal try formation – the **SJ**, **BJ** and **FJ** will need to hustle into their normal Try positions.

**Free Kick (Field Goal) after a Fair or Awarded Fair Catch** – Initial positions are the same as a normal Free Kick – exceptions are with the **R** and the **HL**. They will be positioned under the goal posts – **R** has one upright and the crossbar, **HL** has one upright. Should the attempt be short, officiate the ball as you would normally do in a free kick situation.

## **MEASUREMENTS**

### **REFEREE / UMPIRE / HEAD LINESMAN / LINE JUDGE / BACK JUDGE**

- No change from 5 Person Mechanics

**FJ-** Will have a new ball to be used for placement after the measurement

**SJ-** Will have the spot where the chains will next be set