



Linesperson's Pursuit of Play: Covering for the referee

There is a second ability that a linesperson must have when pursuing the play to the other end zone: the ability to identify situations where he will cover for the referee then execute coverage when needed.

The first part of this skill is identifying when the referee is unable to reach the far end zone at the appropriate time. Here are three situations to watch for:

- The game has involved many ice-long-back-and-forth transitions with few whistles and the referee is becoming tired. An experienced referee will tell his linespeople that he is tired and they need to cover, but a lineman also needs to be aware of the referee's needs when the referee is tired.
- The referee is occupied in the end zone behind the play. He may have fallen down or is tied up with players.
- There is a long stretch pass that creates a scoring opportunity and the referee is unable to be in position to see a goal.

The second part of covering for the referee is execution. Here are the four steps after you identify that the referee needs coverage:

1. You will commit to entering the zone. Once you decide to cover, always go to the cone system, do not hesitate, go to the cone then decide if you will stay deep or exit the zone. Do not stop at the top of the circles.
2. Once you are in cone, use standard end zone positioning.
3. Make a decision about a goal:
 - a. If a goal is scored, make a goal point. Do not blow your whistle the referee will do that.
 - b. If no goal is scored, do not use a wash out. Your only signal is the goal point if a goal is scored.
4. When the referee arrives in position, return to home base, then exit the zone safely.
 - a. If the linesperson is on the opposite side of the ice from the referee then this exit is simple; return to home base then exit when safe to do.
 - b. If the linesperson is on the same side of the ice as the referee then the linesperson needs to give the referee the piston positions. Therefore, the linesperson should return to the boards below home base then exit the zone when safe to do so.