

OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES 2014

SAFETY RELATED to HELMET CONTACT

1. Contact with the helmet in an attempt to punish is always a foul and may result in a disqualification.
2. When a player is contacted by a helmet hit after giving himself up or his progress as a ball carrier has been stopped it is a personal foul.
3. Hit with an arm-shoulder or helmet on a defenseless player above the shoulders is a personal foul and may result in a disqualification., i.e. QB after or in the process of passing, kicker, receiver, player not in the area and not participating, player without a helmet, kick returner in position or attempting to get into a position, players who receive a blind-side block (open-field upright player).

LINE of SCRIMMAGE

1. Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call only when obvious or where repeated warnings are ignored. Don't wait until the 4th quarter to enforce rule.
2. If the offensive lineman is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.
3. Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off the line of scrimmage. Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be ruled on the line of scrimmage and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignments.
4. Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.
5. In order to call Ineligible downfield you must be able to verify that the ineligible player was more than two (2) yards downfield at the time the ball was released. If you do not know the exact location of the ineligible when the ball was released, we will **not** call a foul.

6. A quick or abrupt movement by the offense shall be called a false start. This includes the center - QB, running back or wide receivers. These movements are not illegal shifts or illegal motion. Team B does not have to move into the neutral zone for these to be fouls.

DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

1. We must assume that both the offensive and defensive players have an equal opportunity to catch a forward or backward pass.
2. Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following seven (7) categories:
 - a. Early contact by a defender who is **Not Playing the Ball** is defensive pass interference provided the other requirements for DPI have been met, (make sure the receiver is not a potential blocker) regardless of how deep the pass is to the receiver. Tangled feet while **not playing the ball** will be called a foul.
 - b. **Playing Through the Back** of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
 - c. **Grabbing and Restricting** a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
 - d. Extending an arm across the body (**Arm Bar**) of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of the fact of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball.
 - e. **Cutting Off** or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.
 - f. **Hooking and Restricting** a receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that it causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.
 - g. **Face-guarding**. This is the only non-contact DPI, and it must be a prolonged act of blocking the vision in front of the receivers face while **not** playing the ball. If an opponent raises his hand to place it between or in front of receiver's hands or there is no prolonged act of blocking the vision in front of the receivers face, it is **not** face guarding.

NOT DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

1. When there are tangled feet and both players are looking back at the ball or neither player is looking back at the ball.
2. When either player is making a legitimate play on the ball and there is shoulder to shoulder contact - players coming from different angles.
3. When a defender places a hand on a receivers body but does not initiate a turn or twist - nor a pull or push - this action does not constitute pass interference.

OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

1. Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following four (4) categories:
 - a. Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off, thus **Creating Separation** in an attempt to catch a pass;
 - b. **Pick play** - one receiver blocking a defender downfield to prevent defender from making a play on another receiver;
 - c. **Driving Through** a defender who has established a position on the field;
 - d. **Face-guarding**. See above.

NOT OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

1. Actions that do not constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to:
 - a. OPI will not be called on a screen pass when the ball is overthrown behind the LOS but subsequently lands beyond the LOS and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defensive player from catching the ball;
 - b. It is not OPI if the defensive player initiates contact with the offensive player prior to an attempted pick play.

PASSING SITUATIONS

1. When in doubt on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish, or the contact could have been avoided.
2. If an interception is near the goal line (inside the 1 yard line) and there is a doubt as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, make the play a touchback.
3. Intentional grounding:
 - a. If the passer starts his throwing motion and subsequently is hit, we will **not** have intentional grounding;
 - b. If the passer has been contacted and subsequently throws the ball, intentional grounding can be called - onus is on the passer;
 - c. The Referee will be the only official who calls intentional grounding - the crew shall go to the Referee with information regarding pass direction and eligible receivers being or not being in the vicinity of the pass. The R will then determine all factors and decide if we have a foul.

BLOCKING

1. Takedowns at the POA (point of attack), in the open field and those within the tackle box, and affecting the result of the play create special focus and should be called in these situations.
2. If there is a potential offensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, offensive holding should not be called.
3. If there is a potential for defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, defensive holding should not be called.

4. For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back. The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner. The entire action must be seen by the official. The initial force must be from the side and we must see the direction of both the blocker and the player being blocked - if the direction is from the side we will not have an illegal block.
5. A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met, or could be DPI.
6. Rarely should you have a hold on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.
7. When in doubt if an illegal block occurs in the EZ or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.
8. In shotgun formation, Free Blocking Zone (FBZ) legal blocks must be initiated immediately with the snap. In order for the offensive lineman to legally block below the waist in shotgun formation the player must be in a 3- or 4-point stance with hands below the knees. Linemen in a 2-point stance, or any hesitation in the 3- or 4-point stance to initiate contact, will be ruled illegal as the ball is to be considered as having left the zone.

KICKING

1. The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kick-offs should be officiated as a plane and any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called encroachment.
2. For deep kick-offs, the kicking teams foot should be on the ground and beyond the line to be called.
3. When in doubt as it relates to the receiver's goal line; regarding a touchback vs. allowing the runner to return the kick; a touchback should be called.

4. Punts or Kick-offs - A receiver moving into position or in position to make a catch must not be contacted or diverted until he has had an opportunity to complete the catch. Contact is not necessary for KCI. Flagrant fouls shall cause ejection.
5. Punts - Roughing shall be called when there is noticeable contact to the punters plant leg or severe contact to the body or kicking leg, which carries a 15-yard penalty and automatic first down. Contact with the kicking leg or body shall result in running into the kicker if a foul is deemed appropriate and results in a 5-yard penalty.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. The act of making a catch is a process that includes maintaining control of the ball throughout the entire act. If a player has control of the ball but in the act of making the catch goes to the ground and loses control, it will be considered incomplete if the ball touches the ground. If the receiver is upright and is contacted immediately, he must maintain control of the ball or the ruling shall be incomplete. The time period for judgment shall be considered making a football act - including that the receiver could have - run with the ball - passed the ball backward etc....In the defender's end zone, the act of securing the ball is sufficient for a football act as the ball becomes dead by rule.
2. If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, it is a legal hit.
3. Runner continuing down sideline: If whistle has blown and player has eased up then this is a foul. Be alert and be sure any action is not part of the initial play before calling a foul.
4. A non-airborne runner crossing the goal inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended is a touchdown.
5. When in doubt, the runner did not step out of bounds.
6. Do throw a flag for sideline warning. Call sideline warning at the end of a down without causing an interruption, but be sure the Head Coach has had a prior verbal warning.
7. 5-yard facemask fouls are rare but if it is a grasp and then let go, it can be called. When in doubt it is a 15-yard foul.

8. The ball can be placed on a yard line to begin the next possession. At all other times, the ball is placed where it is. (**Exception: If the change of possession occurs on a 4th down, running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead ball spot to begin the next series.**)
9. 5/5 axiom: In order to adjust the game clock when it has been running, there must be more than a 5 second differential if there is more than 5 minutes remaining in either half. Any time loss due to the clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead ball foul is called, the clock must be adjusted.
10. For late hits away from the ball near the end of the play, when in doubt lean towards dead-ball foul rather than live-ball foul.
11. Spitting on an opponent requires disqualification.
12. Using a player or non-player in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or quickly prior to a snap, or free kick is a foul (UNS). If there is some confusion you may hold the snap until corrected and the team causing confusion will be responsible for a Delay of Game foul.
13. We do not send out a player for any reason outside what is prescribed in the rulebook - helmet off, injury or equipment. Any other reason is not in our jurisdiction—i.e. player who is borderline committing a personal foul or UNS foul. We shall inform the head coach-authorized assistant coach and/or team captain. It is up to the team to remedy the situation. If the player subsequently commits a foul we shall call the appropriate penalty.
14. When in doubt during a non-passer pitch play, the pitch is to be ruled as **backward** rather than forward.
15. When in doubt, call a PERSONAL FOUL instead of fighting. You must be 100% sure before disqualifying a player.

When in Doubt

1. Passer pass vs. fumble—Pass
2. Passer pass forward vs. backward—Forward
3. Non passer forward vs. backward (pitch play)—Backward
4. Block in the back or side block—Side block
5. Fighting/Flagrant act vs. Personal foul—Personal foul (unless helmet contact is involved)
6. Runner down vs. Fumble—Fumble