

OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES

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 player 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. When in question, it is NOT a foul.
4. 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. If in question, he is not covered up.
5. Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.

Defensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following seven categories:

1. 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.
2. **Playing Through the Back** of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
3. **Grabbing and Restricting** a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
4. 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.
5. **Cutting Off** or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.

6. **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.
7. **Face-guarding.**

Offensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following three categories:

1. Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off, thus **Creating Separation** in an attempt to catch a pass.
2. **Driving Thru** a defender who has established a position on the field.
3. **Face-guarding.**

Not Offensive Pass Interference

Actions that do not constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to:

1. OPI will not be called on a screen pass where 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.
2. It is not OPI on a pick play if the defensive player is blocking the offensive player when the pick occurs.
3. It is not OPI after the ball has been touched by B beyond the NZ or during any play in which B touches the ball in or behind the NZ.

Passing Situations

1. When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
2. If an interception is near the goal line (inside the 1-yard line) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, make the play a touchback.

Blocking

1. Takedowns at the POA, those in the open field, point of attack, 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.
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, and could also be DPI.
6. Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
7. Illegal block in the back can be called on fair catches only if point of attack is involved or personal foul.
8. 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.
9. When in question if an illegal block occurs in the EZ or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.

Kicking

1. The kicker's restraining line one 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 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; a touchback vs. allowing the runner to return the kick; allow the return.

Runner Down

1. When in doubt, the runner fumbled the ball and was not down.
2. When in doubt, the pass is incomplete vs. the ball caught and then fumbled.
3. If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out-of-bounds, legal hit.
4. 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.
5. A non-airborne runner crossing the goal inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended is a touchdown.
6. When in question, the runner did not step out of bounds.

Miscellaneous

1. 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.
2. 5-yard facemask fouls are rare but if it is a grasp and then let go, it can be called. When in question it is a 15-yard foul.
3. 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.)
4. 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.
5. If action is deemed to be “fighting”, then the player must be disqualified. When in question, the player is not fighting.
6. For late hits away from the ball near the end of the play, when in question lean towards dead-ball foul rather than live-ball foul.
7. Roughing the kicker: 15 yards on plant leg, 5 yards on kicking leg and upper body unless flagrant.
8. Spitting on an opponent requires disqualification.