

## NNFOA - OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES

### LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

1. Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call illegal formation only when obvious or where repeated warnings are ignored. Don't wait till the 4th qtr 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 and the formation is legal.
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 covering up the tight end.
5. Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.

### PASS INTERFERENCE

#### 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, regardless of how deep the pass is thrown to the receiver.
2. Playing Through the Back (early contact) 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 causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.

7. Face Guarding even without contact. A trailing defender is not automatically face guarding but is highly suspect.

## 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 through a defender who has established a position on the field.
3. Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing the defender to free another eligible receiver from coverage (blocking downfield).

## 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 expanded LOS (up to 3 yds) 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 and the offensive player doesn't make a separate action.
3. It is not OPI if actions that would otherwise constitute OPI but the ball is thrown to the other side of the field.

## PASSING SITUATIONS

1. Neutral zone will be expanded one yard when determining if a pass (untouched) is beyond the line.
2. Neutral zone will be expanded one yard when determining ineligible receivers.
3. When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
4. 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, 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.

Example: A defensive back on the opposite side of the field holding a wide receiver on a designed run play to the other side.

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 or prevents him from making the play. If the force is clearly on the side, it is not a foul. If the blocker is in a “chase mode” all the action must be on the side.
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 still be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made or the touchback occurs and contact is slight (personal foul type actions should always be called).
8. Blocks in the back that are personal foul in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to a fair catch or runner being tackled.
9. 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.
10. 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 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 for encroachment. For deep kick-offs, we will also use a plane, but do not be technical. A good indicator is a full foot down in advance of the restraining line prior to the ball

being kicked.

## RUNNER DOWN

1. When in question, the runner fumbled the ball and was NOT down.
2. If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out-of-bounds, 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. When in question, the runner did not step out of bounds.
5. A higher degree of scrutiny should be applied if the runner is a quarterback scrambling out of bounds behind the line of scrimmage.

## PERSONAL FOULS

1. If action is deemed to be “fighting”, then the player must be disqualified. When in question of such actions, the player is not fighting and it was a football act.
2. 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.
3. Spitting on an opponent always requires disqualification.

## MISCELLANEOUS

1. **BALL PLACEMENT:** 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 4<sup>th</sup> down, running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead ball spot to begin the next series and the chains set accordingly.)
2. **QB FUMBLE:** When in question on QB pass/fumble, we will rule forward pass/incomplete pass. The arm was moving forward.
3. When in question on whether a pass is forward or backward pass – it is a forward pass.
4. **GAME CLOCK:** 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 always be adjusted.