

MTFOA OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES

Line of Scrimmage

- Officials will work to keep interior linemen legal and will call only when obvious or where repeated warnings are ignored. Don't wait until the fourth quarter to enforce rule.
- If the interior offensive player is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear-end of the snapper or clearly beyond the neutral zone, a foul will be called without a warning.
- 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.
- 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.
- Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.

Defense Pass Interference

- Early contact by a defender who is not playing the ball is defensive pass interference provided the other requirements for defensive pass interference have been met.
- Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
- Grabbing and restricting a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
- 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.
- "Face guarding " and not playing the ball
- Cutting off or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.
- 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.

Offensive Pass Interference

- Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following categories:
 - Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off thus creating separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
 - Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.

Not Offensive Pass Interference

- Offensive pass interference will not be called on a screen pass when the ball is overthrown behind the line of scrimmage but subsequently lands beyond the expanded line of scrimmage (up to three yards) and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.

- It is not offensive pass interference 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.

Passing Situations

- The neutral zone will be expanded one yard when determining if a pass (untouched) is beyond the line.
- When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
- If an interception is near the goal line (inside the one 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.
- When in question on quarterback pass/fumble, rule pass.

Blocking

- Takedowns at the point of attack, those in the open field, within the tackle box and affecting the result of the play create special focus and should be called in those situations.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
- A slight jersey pull does not necessarily mean that offensive holding should be called, restricting an opponent is necessary for there to be a foul.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- When in question if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.

Kicking

- The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs 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 offside. For deep kickoffs, we will also use a plane, but do not be technical.

Runner Down

- When in question, the runner fumbled the ball and was **not** down If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, legal hit.
- Runner continuing down sideline: If whistle has blown and player has eased up, it is a foul. Be alert and be sure any action is not part of the initial play before calling a foul.
- When in question, the runner did not step out of bounds.

Personal Fouls & Unsportsmanlike

- If action is deemed to be "fighting" then the player must be disqualified. When in question, the player is not fighting.
- For late hits away from the ball near the end of the play, when in question lean toward dead-ball foul rather than live-ball foul.
- Spitting on an opponent requires disqualification.

Other Discussion Items

- Player Equipment
- Eye shields
- Towels
- Sweat bands
- Coaches in white
- 3 allowed
- 25 Second count
- BJ marks last 5 seconds
- Encourage "Ready-Ref"
- Administrative
- Chains 2 yards off sideline
- 3 minute warm-up at halftime
- Go get teams before game and at halftime
- Heat & humidity time outs
- Ball boys - on other team's side
- Lightning