

General Principles of Pass Interference (PI) - Rule 7-5-10

Pass Interference by either team is an act by a player more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage that significantly hinders an eligible player's opportunity to catch a legal forward pass. The foul can only occur when a forward pass is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage and is in the air.

- **Key Criterion:** The defining factor for pass interference is a "restriction" of a player's movement, not simply contact. Two players "banging arms" while both are making a bona fide effort to reach the ball **is not** a foul.
- **"Suspect" Indicators:** Two situations make a PI call more likely:
 1. **Bite:** A player who "bites" on a move, such as a hook 'n' go, and has to recover will often resort to illegal contact.
 2. **Chase:** A player who is beaten and is chasing an opponent is more likely to commit a foul in an attempt to catch up.
- **Location:** PI almost always occurs from the waist up. Tangled feet are not a foul unless there is an obvious intent to impede.

Defensive Pass Interference (DPI)

DPI is committed by a defensive player against an eligible offensive receiver. The rules for DPI apply from the time the ball is thrown until it is touched.

Six Categories of DPI:

1. **Arm Bar:** An arm is placed across the receiver's body, restricting their movement.
2. **Hold:** The defender grasps an opponent, particularly their arm, to prevent them from reaching a pass.
3. **Not Playing the Ball:** The defender does not make a bona fide effort to reach the pass (often by not looking back for the ball) and contacts the opponent, restricting their movement or knocking them off their path to the ball.
4. **Playing Through the Back:** The defender contacts the opponent's back before touching the ball.
5. **Hook and Twist:** An arm is hooked around the opponent's waist or shoulders, and a twisting motion restricts them from their effort to touch the pass.
6. **Cutoff:** Even when looking back for the ball, a defender cannot position themselves to prevent an opponent from moving toward a pass.

Face Guarding in NFHS Rules: A key difference in high school rules is the handling of "face guarding." In NFHS rules, a defender can hinder a receiver's vision without making contact as long as they are making an effort to get to the ball. This is no longer a foul in NFHS as long as there is no contact.

Penalty for DPI (NFHS):

- 15-yard penalty from the previous spot.
- The down is replayed.
- Signal 33.

*Note - There can be illegal contact with a Team A player that is not pass interference. An example is grab of the receiver's jersey which materially restricts the receiver and takes away their feet. That could either occur before a pass is thrown or against a receiver to whom the pass is not thrown. The penalty for illegal use of hands and defensive holding is 10 yards from the previous spot.

Offensive Pass Interference (OPI)

OPI is committed by an offensive player against a defensive player. The rules for OPI apply from the time the ball is snapped until it is touched. This means OPI can be called even before the ball is thrown.

Three Categories of OPI:

1. **Blocking Downfield Before the Ball Has Been Touched:** This is the common "pick play." An offensive player blocks a defender to create an advantage for a teammate to catch a pass. This is illegal if the block occurs more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. **Shoving or Pushing Off and Creating Separation:** This is the most common type of OPI. A receiver shoves or pushes a defender away to get open for a pass.
3. **Driving Through a Defender Who Had Established Position:** An offensive player runs through a defender who has established a position, illegally displacing them and preventing them from making a play on the ball.

Penalty for OPI (NFHS):

- 15-yard penalty from the previous spot.
- The down is replayed.
- Signal 33.