



WACO FOOTBALL CHAPTER

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Waco Football Chapter Officiating Philosophies

(Updated 6/13/11)

Changes/Additions are Highlighted

Blocking

1. Take downs at the POA, those in the open field, within the tackle box, and affecting the result of the play create special focus and will be called in these situations.
2. If there is a potential offensive holding but the action occurs away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, offensive holding will not be called.
3. If there is a potential for defensive holding but the action occurs away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, defensive holding will not be called. In most cases there is no advantage to holding an offensive player, so it is not frequently seen. One exception is a receiver such as the tight end, who may be held to disrupt the timing on a pass route.
4. A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet will be defensive holding, and could also be DPI if a legal forward pass has been thrown.
5. Holding can be called even if the quarterback is sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
6. Rarely will 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 question if an illegal block occurs in the EZ or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.
8. Any restriction on the perimeter by the wideouts blocking on the DB's must be called and does not have to be a obvious twist, turn, pull, etc. The wideouts are being coached to engage the DB's by grasping the jersey at the number(s) inside the frame. When the runner commits the DB will attempt to make a move toward him. The wideout sensing this will release him. Often times this restriction is just enough to get the runner by the DB.

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 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. An offensive player who is a wide receiver or a slot back will be given leeway in determining if he is off line of scrimmage. Don't be technical. When in question, it is NOT a foul.
4. Wide receivers that are the end man on the line of scrimmage must be on the line of scrimmage and break the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the snapper when the defensive player is in "press" position or they will be ruled in the backfield.
5. 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.
6. Anytime a defensive player shoots the gap, and there is a question as to contact, err on the side of offside and shut the play down to avoid a free shot on the QB.
7. Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.
8. If the motion man is clearly angling forward while in motion at the snap, this is a live-ball foul unless there is an abrupt forward movement.

Pass Interference

Defensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following six 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 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 playing 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.

Not Defensive Pass Interference

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

1. Incidental contact by a defender's hands, arm or body when both players are competing for the ball or neither player is looking for the ball. If there is any question whether contact is incidental the ruling shall be no interference.
2. Inadvertent tangling of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.
3. Contact that would normally be considered pass interference, but the pass is clearly uncatchable.
4. Laying a hand on a receiver that does not restrict the receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
5. Contact must be clear and obvious on a "Hail Mary" pass to rule pass interference. The contact must be **BIG**.

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 **with extended elbows** thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
2. Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.
3. OPI for blocking downfield will not be called if the passer is legally grounding the ball out of bounds or into an area where there is no player.

Not Offensive Pass Interference

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

1. Inadvertent tangling of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.

2. OPI will not be called on a screen pass where the ball is overthrown behind the LOS but subsequently lands beyond the LOS (up to 3 yds.) and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.

Passing Situations

1. Neutral zone will be expanded one yard when determining if a pass (untouched) is beyond the line, however, don't be technical on this.
2. For the official to rule an illegal forward pass the passer's entire body must be beyond the neutral zone when he releases the ball.
3. When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
4. If the quarterback is outside the frame of the body of the normal tackle position and is throwing the ball away to avoid a sack, when in question as to whether the ball is beyond the neutral zone (within one yard of the line of scrimmage) – **IT IS. Don't be too technical.**
5. If an interception is near the goal line (inside the 1-yard line) try and make the play a touchback. Drop a bean bag in the end zone.
6. Be definite on catch before giving catch-fumble ruling. If there is any question, rule incomplete.
7. On passes behind the line of scrimmage, when in question, they are forward passes.
8. If the passer is legally throwing the ball beyond the line to save a loss of yardage, do not penalize the offense for having ineligible receivers down field.
9. On the bang-bang pass plays when the ball comes loose rule incomplete. The receiver must do something with the ball that pertains to football.
10. On a look-in pass where both the defender and receiver occupy the same yard line it is not DPI (shoulder to shoulder contact).

Runner Down

1. The ground cannot cause a fumble but it can cause an incompleteness.
2. If the runner is being engaged by only one player, let it play; if he is engaged by two or more players, rule forward progress stopped **when the pile starts moving backwards.**

Personal Fouls

1. Contact with the helmet in an attempt to punish is always a foul whether by offense or defense.
2. For late hits away from the ball near the end of the play, lean towards dead-ball foul rather than live-ball foul.
3. When a runner is pushed OB and continues to run but it is obvious he has given himself up, a foul is warranted if contact is made by the defense. If runner has not given himself up, we could have fouls by the runner for DOG and by the defense for dead ball late hit OB. Both fouls would be enforced.
4. Fouls on the runner after the touchdown that are obviously late must be called.
5. A runner must have two feet in the white for a dead ball late hit OB to be called.
6. When in question, a kicker has protection if he is near the edge of the tackle box (Rule 2-34 new for 2009).
7. Horse Collar – Rule 9-1-2p – Substitute the word **subsequently** for **immediately**. If the defender grabs the inside back collar of the shoulder pads or jersey or the inside collar of the side of the shoulder pads or jersey and subsequently pulling the runner down, we have a foul. The key words are **subsequently** and **pulling**. In order to have a horse collar, the runner does not have to go down to the ground **immediately**. It is possible a strong runner could continue to advance. The tackler also must pull the runner toward him and not simply drag him down. If one potential tackler has grabbed the shoulder pads or collar of the runner, but the runner is brought down by another defender with a conventional tackle, there is no foul.
Note: This is the NFHS definition of a horse collar. We will officiate this rule accordingly.

Kicking Game

1. Normal Kickoffs – Kicking team player (other than the kicker and holder) must have foot/feet touching the turf beyond the restraining line for offsides to be called. **Make it a quality call!**
2. On-Side Kicks & Short Pooch Kicks – The restraining line will be officiated as a plane and any kicking team player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked will be called for offsides. **Zero tolerance on the restraining line for on-side kicks.**
3. Punts (Valid fair catch signal) – If the receiver makes a valid signal for a fair catch and a kick coverage team member runs at him and veers off or is in close proximity

(no contact) to the receiver but the receiver completes the catch – **no harm, no foul, no flag**. If the receiver does not catch the ball cleanly (muffs it or is interfered with by close proximity), flag it for interference with opportunity to catch.

4. Punts (No fair catch signal) – If we do not have a fair catch signal and we have close proximity by the kicking team it would be a flag because the kick coverage player did not give the receiver the opportunity to become a runner. If we have no fair catch signal and the kick coverage player runs at the receiver and veers off, if the receiver catches the ball cleanly – **no harm, no foul, no flag**.
5. Short Punts – If the receiver is moving up field in attempt to catch a short punt and he goes around a kick coverage player in attempting to catch the ball and there is no contact – there is no foul. No flag unless there is contact with a kick coverage player.
6. The referee will determine if the R & LJ will make any adjustments as how deep they line up on kickoffs. If we are working mostly pooch kicks this is permissible. We still want to work with the R & LJ taking 2/3 and 1/3 respectively and have a presence in the middle of the field. Our basic positions will remain on the pylons but if we have adjusted up field we want to be sure and use good judgment and common sense if the kick goes deep and the goal line or pylons are threatened. When in question on a kick threatening the pylon, rule the same as we do now when we are lined up on the pylon and the kick goes directly over your head – **TOUCHBACK**. If the goal line is threatened by the kick, try to make it a touchback if there is any question.

Miscellaneous

1. Incorporate some discussion of chapter philosophies in every pre-game conference. A copy of chapter philosophies NCAA rule book, and mechanics manual should be brought by every official to the pre-game.
2. Side officials don't blow whistles on plays up the middle.
3. If it is close enough to shut it down – **measure it!**
4. Courtesy Measurement – If we have these conditions – crucial drive late in the game, ball has not been moved from the subsequent dead ball spot, and the clock is dead as a result of a time out by either team – if team A requests a measurement even though we started on a line and know it is short – grant the courtesy time out.
5. Only the covering officials wind the clock on free kicks.
6. Throw a flag for sideline interference (delay of game). Call sideline interference at the end of a down without causing an interruption, but be sure the Head Coach has had a prior verbal warning. First and second warnings (delay of game) 5 yard penalty. Third and subsequent infractions (unsportsmanlike conduct) 15 yard penalty.
7. Teams must be kept between the numbers, the sidelines and the 25-yard lines during timeouts.

8. 4/4 axiom: In order to adjust the game clock when it has been running, there must be more than a 4 second differential if there is more than 4 minutes remaining in either half. Any time lost due to the clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead ball foul is called, clock must be adjusted. The classic example of this is when we have just started a quarter – 12:00 on the clock – and we have a dead ball false start. We lose time on the clock – it goes to 11:56. The clock must be adjusted in this case. The 4/4 axiom is replaced by common sense on the above example. All of the above can be corrected very easily if the R is miked which is the ideal situation. If we have to go through the coaches' headset to communicate with the timer, this is not an ideal situation but could be very necessary if we have a close game and we are dealing with the 4/4 axiom. The 4/4 axiom should take care of us during the 2 minute offense/hurry up and the situation where the wind is a factor and team B uses a timeout to force team A to punt the ball late in the 2nd or 4th quarter.

In Summary:

- a. *More than 4 minutes remaining in the 2nd or 4th quarter and we lose more than 4 seconds – adjust the clock.*
 - b. *4 minutes or less in the 2nd or 4th quarter and we lose **any** time – adjust the clock.*
 - c. *On any dead ball situation where we lose time we must **adjust the clock**.*
 - d. *Be aware, late in the 2nd or the 4th quarter if the wind is a factor the team B coach may call a time out to force team A to punt against the wind. Here again, we would use the 4/4 axiom above in **a and b** because the team B coach is going to be concerned with the time factor.*
9. With 4 minutes or less remaining in the 4th quarter, team A is ahead in the score and is penalized for delay of game – start clock on snap regardless of the score. In all other delay of game situations it will be the R's discretion.
10. If you think it is a foul, it is NOT, except against the QB.
11. Umpire if you clearly see the runner in end zone grasp lanyard and turn toward L/LJ. Don't make us dig if you are 110% sure.
12. Place the ball on a yard line on a change of possession, which includes kick offs, punts, fumbles, INT's. Also, on long runs inbounds or OB and we have an obvious 1st down. The only exception is from 10 yd line going in.
13. Motion – Wing men you are responsible for the motion man on your side of the ball regardless of his direction.
14. **FUMBLE/INCOMPLETE** – If the passer's hand comes forward and is empty (without the ball), we are working fumble. If the passer's hand comes forward with the ball which subsequently gets on the ground, we have an incomplete pass.

