

Clarification of Pass Interference Rules

Pass Interference by Either Team

- During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone, it is pass interference by either team when any player movement beyond the line of scrimmage significantly hinders the progress of an eligible player's opportunity to catch the ball. Offensive pass interference rules apply from time the ball is snapped until the ball touched. Defensive pass interference rules apply from the time the pass is thrown until the ball touched.

Defensive Pass Interference

- Contact by a defender who is not playing the ball and such contact restricts the receiver's opportunity to make the catch.
- Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
- Grabbing a receiver's arm(s) in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.

Defensive Pass

Interference

- Extending an arm across the body 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.
- Cutting of the path of receiver by making contact with him without playing the ball.
- Hooking a receiver in an attempt to get 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:

- 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.
- Inadvertent tangling of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.
- Contact that would normally be considered pass interference, but the pass is *clearly* uncatchable by the involved players.
- Laying a hand on a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball that does not restrict the receiver.
- Contact by a defender who has gained position on a receiver in an attempt to catch the ball.

Pass Interference Notes

- Note 1: If there is any question whether player contact is incidental, the ruling should be no interference.
- Note 2: Defensive players have as much right to the path of the ball as eligible offensive players.
- Note 3: Pass interference for both teams ends when the pass is touched.
- Note 4: There can be no pass interference at or behind the line of scrimmage or if the pass does not cross the neutral zone, but defensive actions such as tackling a receiver can still result in a penalty for defensive holding.