

## **2015 Colorado Experimental Rule Blindside Blocks**

### 1. The Rule.

It is illegal (excessive contact) to contact a blind-sided player below the head and neck area with any body part other than open hands outside the free blocking zone. Note: If the initial contact is with open hands followed by contact with the torso, it is a legal block.

A blindside block is any block when the blocker approaches the opponent from any direction and the player being blocked does not see the blocker approach.

2. Background. Players need to have respect for the game and their opponents. Any action which includes identifying and taking aim on an opponent who is not aware of any pending contact increases the potential for serious injury to one or both of the players and must be avoided. Game officials need to be aware of situations that are likely to produce unnecessary or excessive contact. Blindside blocks often times provide windows of opportunity for these potentially dangerous contact situations to occur.

While the NFHS Football Rules now expressly preclude conduct that is “excessive” and “unnecessary,” the rules have always barred efforts to injure or “take out” an opponent. Situations involving contact that exceed what is usual, normal or proper must to be eliminated from the game. Considering this potential for serious injury, it is critical that those situations involving unnecessary or excessive contact on players are eliminated whether or not that contact is otherwise deemed legal. While unnecessary or excessive contact can occur between any players, special attention must be given to those players whose focus of concentration makes them especially vulnerable to injury. The “glamour” associated with these types of hits must be removed in order to minimize risk for all participants. Because an open-hand blindside block will almost always achieve the same effect as a shoulder block, any shoulder block in that situation is to be judged excessive.

### 3. Case Plays:

#### **PLAY SITUATION 1**

B30 is pursuing runner A22 at the B-40. A80 runs roughly parallel to the B-40, blocks B30 with his shoulder. At the time of the block B30 (a) was focused on A22 and did not see the block coming, or (b) saw the block coming and tried to ward it off.

**RULING:** A foul for excessive contact in (a) because B30’s focus was on the runner and he could not have reasonably seen A80 approach. A legal block in (b).

**COMMENT:** It is a foul for excessive contact only if B30 was focused on the runner and he could not see the contact coming and attempt to ward off the block. If a player can see the contact coming he can prepare for the contact.

## **PLAY SITUATION 2**

First and 10 at the A-40. A12 throws a screen pass to A22 at the A-38. A22 is at the A-42 and line backer B55 is pursuing across field. A80 has gone five yards downfield, reverses direction, approaches B55 and blocks him at the A-43 yard line with (a) his shoulder, or (b) open hands, knocking B55 to the ground.

**RULING:** A foul for excessive contact in (a) and a legal block in (b). The fact that a player is knocked to the ground does not necessarily make the contact excessive.

**COMMENT:** It is critical that officials observe the entire blocking action before ruling on illegal contact fouls. Just because the blocked player ends up on the ground is NOT a factor in determining if the block was legal. Additionally, contact away from the play may still be judged as unnecessary or excessive if the action is not near the point of attack and the player blocked had no chance of influencing the play.