

Passing Plays



Dallas Football Officials Association
New Members Training



Objective

The intent of this training session is to help you understand and familiarize you with the rules pertaining to Football.

It's important you also read and study the NCAA Rules, UIL Exceptions and TASO mechanics manuals outside of training sessions to get the best understanding possible on football officiating.

Disclaimer

The information covered has been condensed and paraphrased to help you understand both the intent and the philosophy of the rules. The current NCAA Rule Book & UIL Exceptions are the final authority.

Passes

Let's Recap

PASSING the ball is throwing it. A **PASS** continues to be a **PASS** until it is caught or intercepted by a player or the ball becomes dead.

- A **FORWARD PASS** is determined by where the ball hits something in relation to where it was thrown. When in doubt, it is a **FORWARD PASS**.
- All other passes are **BACKWARD**.
- There is no such thing as a lateral or pitch.
- A snap becomes a **BACKWARD PASS** when the snapper releases the ball.

If a pass isn't forward, it's backward!

Passes (cont'd)

Let's Recap

- The **PASSER** is the player who throws a **FORWARD PASS**.
- **FORWARD PASS** starts with any intentional forward movement of the passer's hand or arm.
- A passer may legally **SPIKE** the ball to conserve time if he throws it to the ground *immediately* after the ball is first controlled after the snap as long as it hasn't touched the ground. Note: At end of a Half – must have 3 or more seconds on game clock at the snap.



Passes (cont'd)

Let's Recap

During a scrimmage down...

- Team A can throw 1 **FORWARD PASS**.
- Team B can never throw a **FORWARD PASS**.
- Team A must have never had the ball beyond the NZ.
 - A passer has crossed the NZ when his entire body is beyond the NZ when the ball is released.
- Team A may not throw a **FORWARD PASS** if there has been a change of possession.

If all conditions above are met it is a **LEGAL FORWARD PASS**

- A **CATCHABLE FORWARD PASS** is an untouched legal forward pass beyond the NZ to an eligible player who has a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball. When in question, a legal forward pass is catchable.

Passes (cont'd)

Let's Recap

- A player is **NOT ELIGIBLE** to catch a **FORWARD PASS** if he is wearing number 50-79 or if he is an interior lineman.
- No originally ineligible receiver shall be or have been more than three yards beyond the neutral zone until a passer throws a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone.
 - **Exception:** If the passer is legally throwing the ball away and the ball lands near or beyond the sideline.
- An eligible receiver that voluntarily runs out of bounds becomes ineligible and may not touch a **PASS** until it has touched an opponent or an official.

Catch, Interception, Recovery *Let's Recap*

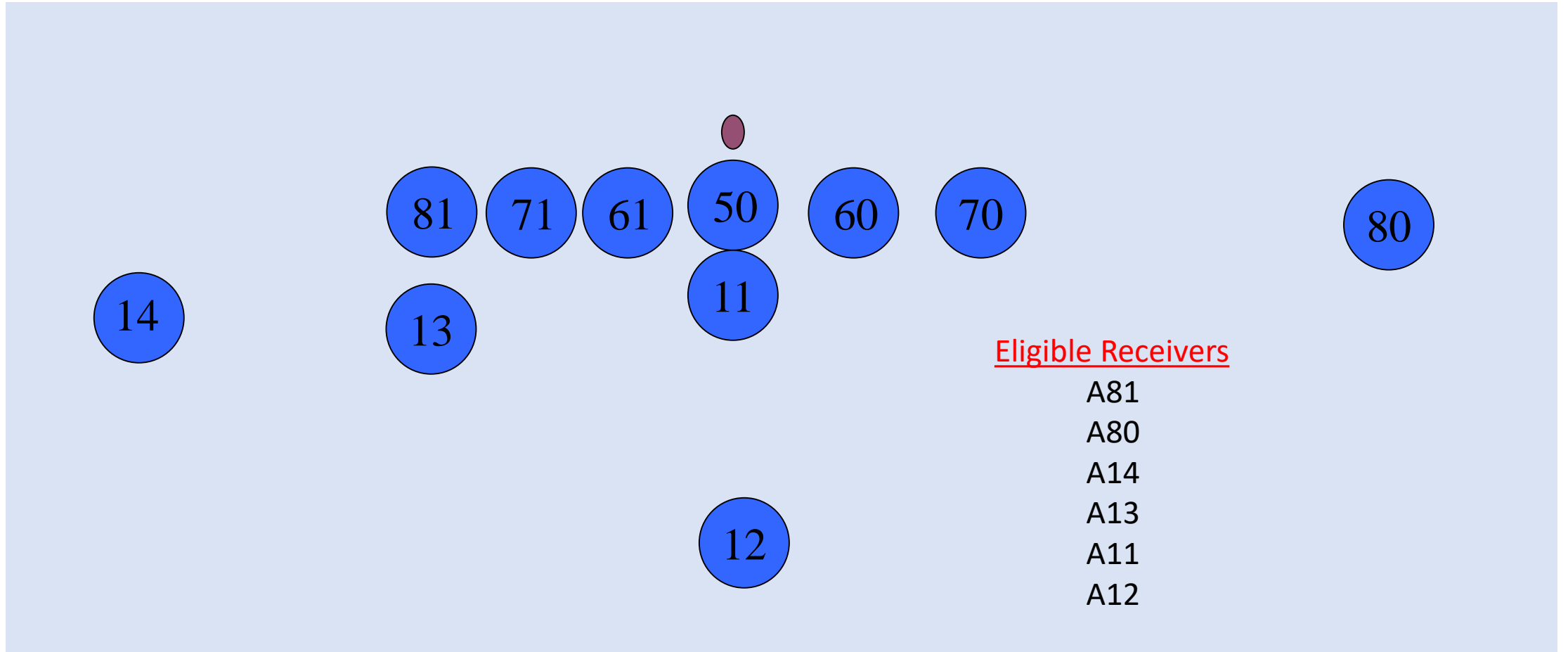
The ground **CAN'T** cause a fumble but it **CAN** cause an incompletion!

Loss of the ball simultaneous to returning to the ground is not a catch, interception or recovery.



Runner or Receiver?

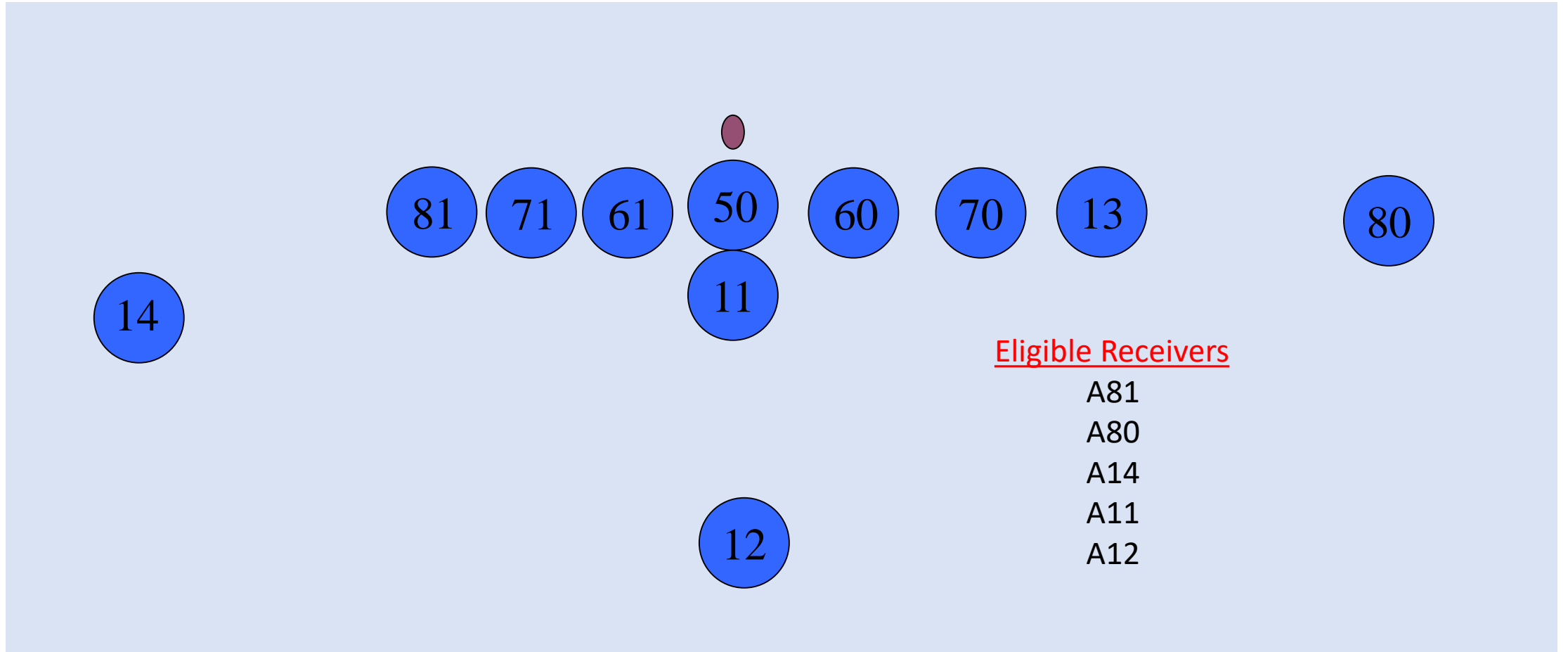
Who are the Eligible Receivers?



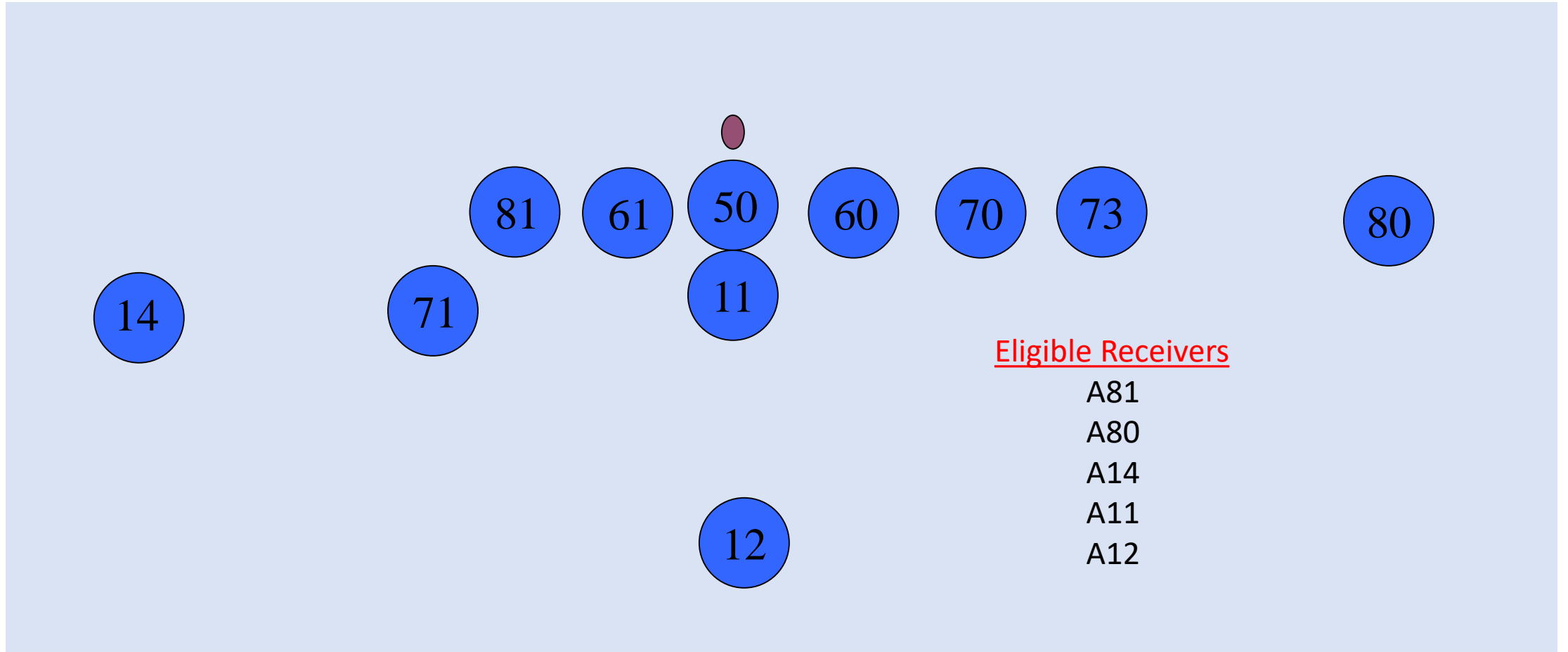
Eligible Receivers

- A81
- A80
- A14
- A13
- A11
- A12

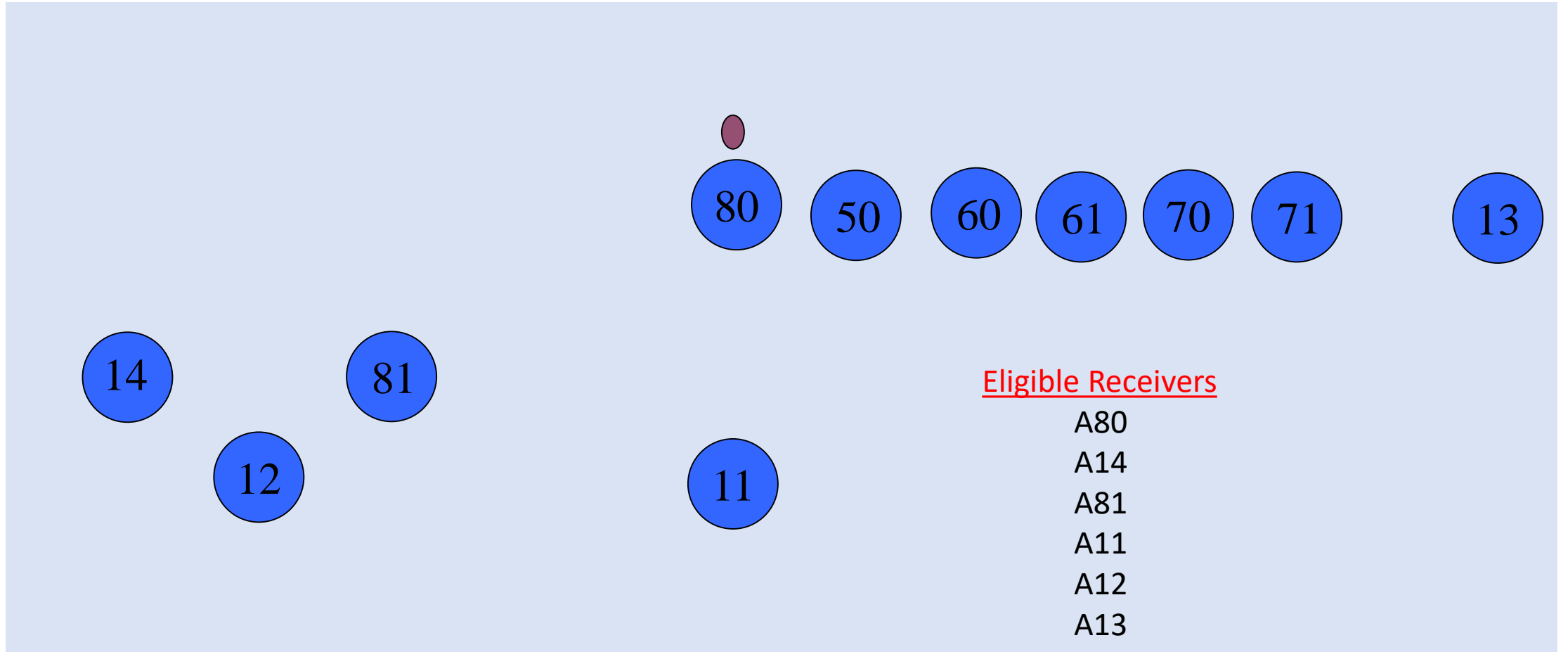
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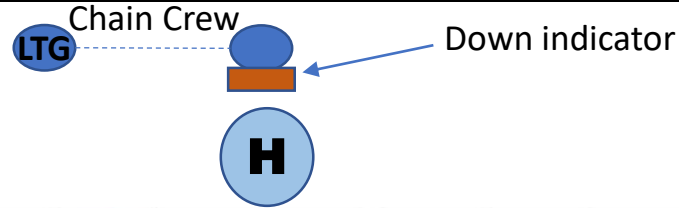
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Who are the Eligible Receivers?



Pre-Snap – Basic Positions(3-Man Crew)



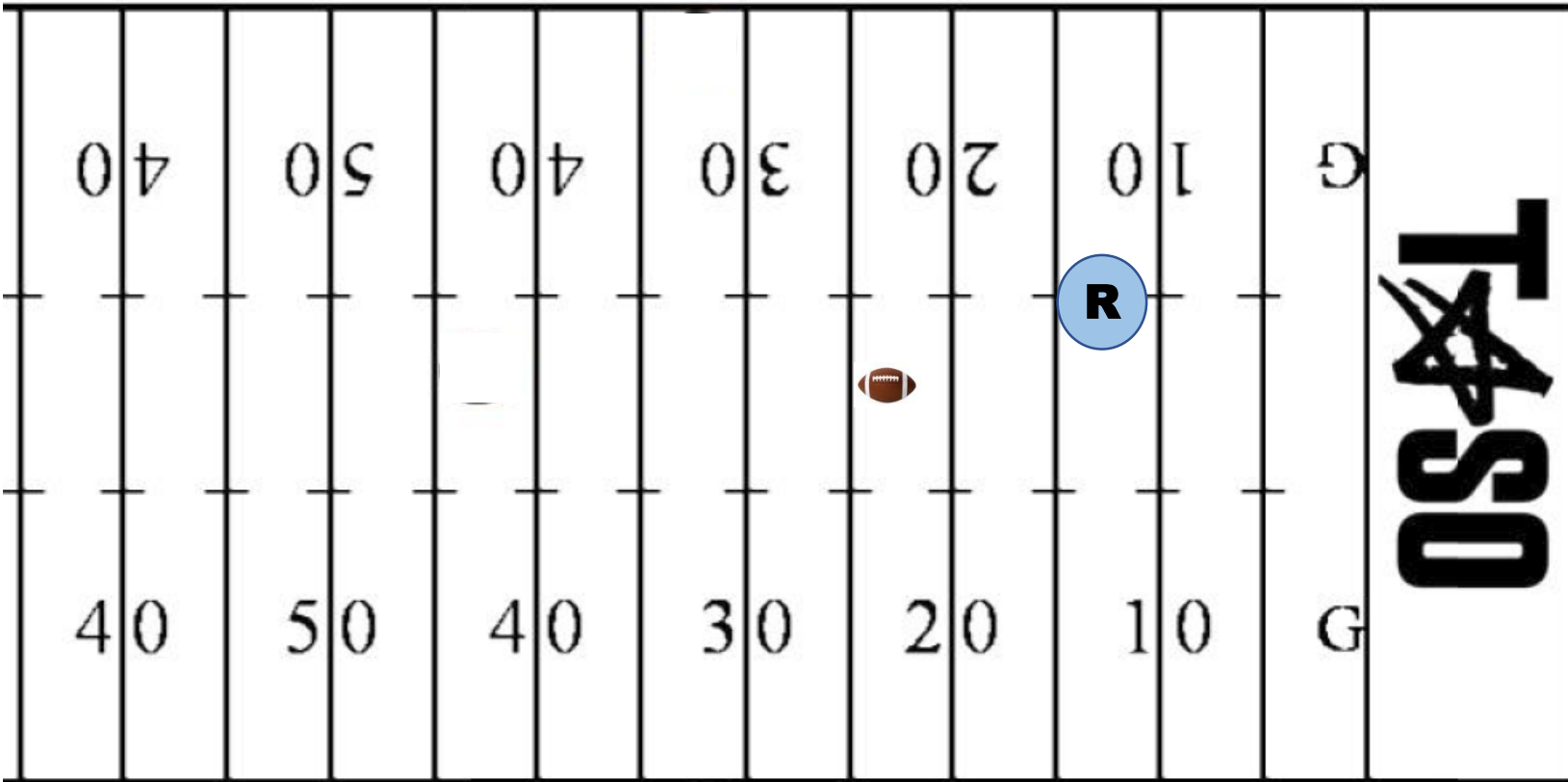
R After making the ball ready for play, be in a position to see the ball and the backs, 11 to 15 yards behind the LOS. Initial position is near the center of the field.

H, L Be on or outside the sideline at LOS. Indicate offensive LOS by an extended foot to wide offensive players.

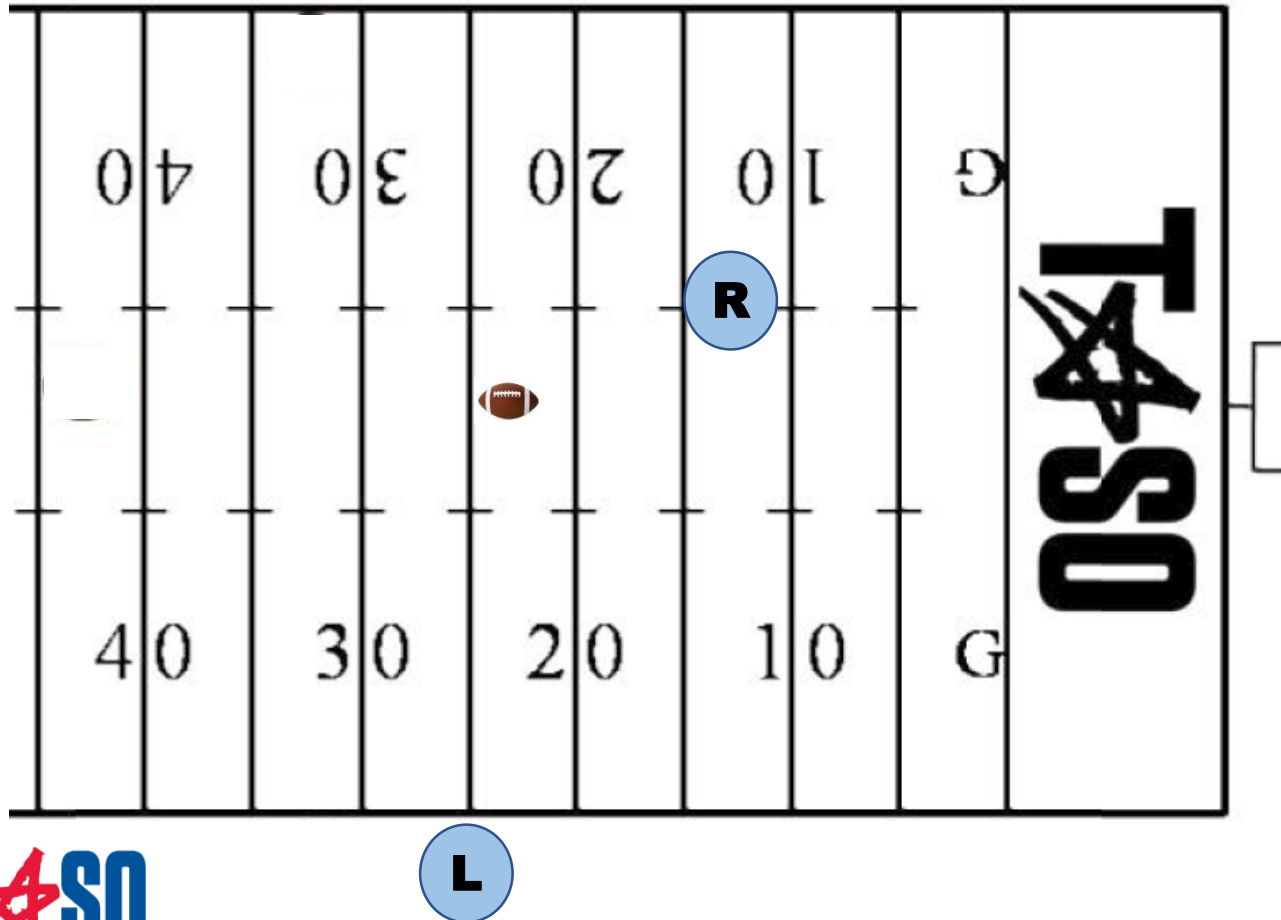
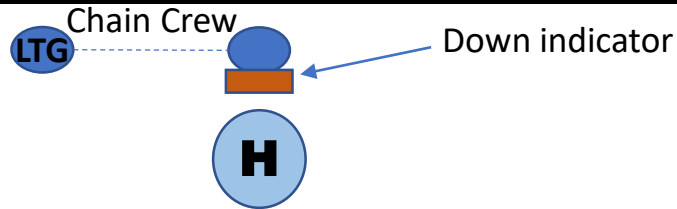
H Be opposite press box, on the LOS. Ensure chain crew is in position.

ALL Check down & distance; verify clock status

- **R** is primary on play clock
- **L** is primary for game clock



Pre-Snap – Routine (3-Man Crew)



H, L Verify legal offensive formation. If wide man nearest you is in the backfield extend arm toward backfield. Know eligible receivers. Responsible for motion man on your side of the snapper. Indicate offensive LOS by an extended foot to offensive players.

L Responsible for the correct number of players on defensive team.

R Verify 5 offensive players on LOS numbered 50-79. Responsible for the correct number of players on the offensive team.

Position yourself where you have continuous view of the ball. Know backs eligible for a forward pass. Responsible for legality of defensive signals.

ALL Ensure clock status is correct. Verify chains. Watch for false starts, illegal shifts & other fouls.

After the Snap - Referee (3-Man Crew)

Referee (R)

- Check legality of offensive interior linemen's numbers.
- Cover line play same as any scrimmage down.
- Watch blockers in backfield protecting passer. Know eligible receivers on your side.
- Check for legality of forward pass. Be ready to rule on direction of quick QB pass.
- Be alert to proper position and coverage should passer decide to run.
- Observe action of players on and directly behind the neutral zone.
- Be alert for runback of interceptions.
- Once ball is dead and it is safe to do so retrieve it for placement at succeeding spot and ready for play— ***don't stop dead ball officiating!***
- **H/L** will place the ball at dead ball spot if in their side zone. If dead ball spot is close to line to gain make ruling if 1st down or not.

Before Pass – H & L (3-Man Crew)

H, L

- Cover line play as in any scrimmage down. Know all eligible pass receivers on your side
- Watch for offensive ends and backs blocking defensive linebackers and halfbacks before ball is thrown.
- Watch for eligible receivers going out of bounds.
- Know ineligible pass receivers on scrimmage line.
- Watch for ineligible players beyond neutral zone.
- Be alert to proper position and coverage should passer decide to run.
- Watch for holding and illegal blocking of eligible receivers by defensive players.
- Be alert for runback of interceptions.

After the Pass - Referee (3-Man Crew)

• Referee (R)

- Protect the passer before and after the ball is thrown.
- Determine if pass is forward or backward.
- Determine if pass is legal or illegal and if forward pass crosses the neutral zone.
- Assist on passes thrown behind the line and in the flat, when possible.
- Has sole responsibility for intentional grounding of a pass.
- Verbally alert defenders when passer releases the ball.

After the Pass – H/L (3-Man Crew)

H, L

- Cover long passes and flat passes down your side of field.
- Watch for offensive players blocking defenders before pass is touched.
- Always be prepared and be in position to cover any pass near sideline, caught inbounds or out of bounds.
- While pass is in flight, move to the most advantageous position to judge the play.
- You have entire sideline on your side. Cover short receiver over the middle.
- The covering official, toward whom the ball is thrown, should signal, by extending one arm horizontally in the direction of the passing team's goal line, if the pass is ruled backward.

After the Play (3-Man Crew)

- **H** and **L**, do not jump over players as you mark progress with downfield out thrust foot (unobtrusively, not making a production of it). If necessary, come into the field (“pinch in”) as necessary. Hold spot with foot until you are sure **R** or other official has spot.
- **R** should go quickly to the approximate position of the dead ball spot, check the down and distance with the **H** and **L** and announce and indicate the new down.
- **R** is primarily responsible for lateral placement of the ball at the previous spot after an incomplete pass, penalty, etc. **H** and **L** should assist with relaying ball as much as possible.
- **H** - ensure chains & down-box are moved to correct position. Other officials should verify a well.
- If the play clock is to be started on **R**'s signal, **R** should declare the ball ready for play by blowing his whistle and giving ready signal (or wind the clock). Under unusual circumstances this procedure may vary and require discretionary action by **R**.
- If the game clock should be started after **TEAM A** is awarded a first down, **R** will start the clock with a winding signal when the point of the new series of downs has been established by **H**.

Recap – Plays from Scrimmage (3-Man Crew)

R

- Counts offense
- Responsible for play clock

L

- Counts defense
- Responsible for game clock

H

- Not primary for counting players or for either clock
- But you can help, don't ignore it. You can be a crew saver.

Counting Players

- If you have 11 players on team you are counting. extend arm to side with **closed fist**
- If you have less than 11, then extend arm to side with **open hand**
- If you have 12 or more players, then be prepared to rule on if it is a foul. Remember, in some cases team can correct before the snap.

Common Live Ball Fouls – Pass Plays

- Pass Interference
- Intentional Grounding
- Roughing the Passer
- Ineligible Downfield
- Defensive Holding
- Illegal Forward Pass
- Illegal Touching

**Throw flag and continue to officiate.
Stop clock at end of play if running.**



Common “After the Play” Dead Ball Fouls

- Late Hit
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- Personal Foul – Unnecessary Roughness

**Throw flag.
Stop game clock if running.**

Defensive Pass Interference

DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE (DPI)

1. Contact! Contact!! Contact!!!
2. ...that is beyond the neutral zone.
3. There is an intent to impede the receiver.
4. The intent is obvious.
5. Catchable forward pass beyond the NZ.

YOU MUST HAVE ALL 5.

Note: Pass interference rules do not apply after the pass has been touched anywhere inbounds by an inbounds player or an official.



Pass interference

Defensive Pass Interference (cont'd)

DPI Categories

1. Arm Bar
2. Cut-Off
3. Hook and Turn
4. Not Playing the Ball/Early Contact
5. Playing Through the Opponent's back
6. Grab and Restrict

Offensive Pass Interference

OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE (OPI)

- Offensive player's responsibility to avoid the defender.
- Contact must be beyond the NZ.
- The catchable pass must cross the NZ.
- All bets are off once the pass touches any player or an official!
- Receiver and defender have equal opportunity to ball

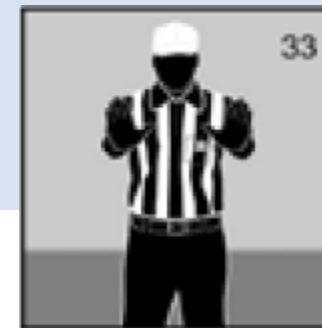


Pass interference

Pass Interference (cont'd)

OPI – WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Receiver creating space by contact
- Driving through the defender
- Blocking downfield during the pass (pass must go beyond NZ)
- Picking off the defender
- Remember: Receiver and defender have equal opportunity to ball



Pass interference

Pass Interference (cont'd)

WHAT'S NOT DPI NOR OPI:

- Slight or incidental contact
- Inadvertent tangling of feet (defender playing the ball)
- Pass was clearly uncatchable
- Blocking downfield and pass is legally grounded
- Lineman blocking beyond NZ on an overthrown screen pass



Pass interference

Intentional Grounding

- **INTENTIONAL GROUNDING** is throwing a pass into an area where there is NOT an eligible **Team A** receiver. Does not have to be “catchable”.
 - **EXCEPTION:** If the passer is or has been outside the tackle box, he may throw the ball so that it crosses or lands beyond the neutral zone or neutral zone extended. This applies only to the player who controls the snap and does not relinquish possession.



Intentional grounding

Spiking the Ball

- A passer may legally **SPIKE** the ball to conserve time if he throws it to the ground immediately after the ball is first controlled after the snap as long as it hasn't touched the ground.
 - At the end of a Half – there must be ≥ 3 seconds on game clock. Otherwise the half is over if they spike it.

Roughing the Passer

- No defensive player shall charge into a passer or throw him to the ground when it is obvious the ball has been thrown.
 - *Exception:* A defensive player who is blocked by a **TEAM A** player[s] with a force so that he has no opportunity to avoid contact with the passer.
- When an offensive player is in a passing posture with one or both feet on the ground, no defensive player rushing unabated shall hit him forcibly at the knee area or below. The defensive player also may not initiate a roll or lunge and forcibly hit this opponent in the knee area or below.
 - *Exceptions:*
 - 1) It is not a foul if the offensive player is a runner not in a passing posture, either inside or outside the tackle box.
 - 2) It is not a foul if the defender grabs or wraps this opponent in an attempt to make a conventional tackle without making forcible contact with the head or shoulder.
 - 3) It is not a foul if the defender is not rushing unabated or is blocked or fouled into this opponent.



Roughing the passer

Ineligible Receiver Downfield

- No originally ineligible receiver shall be or have been more than three yards beyond the NZ until a passer throws a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone.
 - **Exception**: If the passer is legally throwing the ball away and the ball lands near or beyond the sideline.
- A player is in violation of this rule if any part of his body is beyond the three-yard limit



Ineligible downfield
on pass

Defensive Holding

- Defensive players may not use hands and arms to tackle, hold or otherwise illegally obstruct opponent other than a runner.
 - *However, Defensive players may ward off or legally block an eligible pass receiver until that player occupies the same yard line as the defender or until the opponent could not possibly block him. Continuous contact is illegal.*
- During a legal forward pass play in which the pass crosses the NZ, if before the pass is touched there is a contact foul by Team B beyond the neutral zone against an eligible receiver (other than pass interference), the penalty includes an automatic first down.

If warranted, it could be a personal foul!

Illegal Forward Pass

A **FORWARD PASS** is **illegal** if:

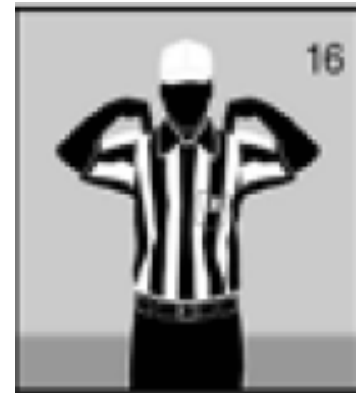
- a. It is thrown by a **TEAM A** player whose entire body is beyond the NZ when he releases the ball.
- b. It is thrown by a **TEAM B** player.
- c. It is thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- d. It is the second forward pass during the same down.
- e. It is thrown from in or behind the NZ after a ball carrier's entire body and the ball have been beyond the neutral zone.



Illegal pass
Illegal forward handing
Note: Face press box
when giving signal.

Illegal Touching

- No originally ineligible player while inbounds may intentionally touch a legal forward pass until it has touched an opponent or an official.
- No eligible offensive receiver who goes out of bounds and returns in bounds during a down shall touch a legal forward pass while in the field of play or end zones or while airborne until it has been touched by an opponent or official.
 - Exception: This does not apply to an originally eligible offensive player who immediately returns inbounds after going out of bounds due to contact by an opponent. If he touches the pass before returning in bounds, it is an incomplete pass (Rule 7-3-7) and not a foul for illegal touching.



Illegal touching

Mechanics

It is not possible to cover all mechanics in this session it is important for you to continue to read & study the following:

- TASO Mechanics for 3-Man crews
- TASO Mechanics for 4-Man crews
- TASO Mechanics for 5-Man crews
- No need to review 7-Man crew mechanics as you will not work them your first year
- UIL/TAPPS exceptions
- NCAA Rules