

**ILLEGAL CONTACT**

One of the big changes in the 2023 NFHS rules is there is now a definition of what constitutes legal contact to a defenseless receiver.

It is the responsibility of the defensive player to make legal contact with a defenseless player, especially a defenseless receiver.

Rule 9-4-3g prohibits a non-player or player from making contact with an opponent including a defenseless player (as in 2-32-26) which is deemed unnecessary or excessive or incites roughness.

Whether contact was unnecessary or excessive has always been left to the judgment of the individual official.

The new rule 2-32-16d defines what contact constitutes legal contact to a defenseless receiver.

A defenseless receiver is defined by rule. Examples of defenseless players include:

* 2-32-16b - A receiver attempting to catch a pass who has not had time to clearly become a runner.
* 2-32-16c - The intended receiver of a pass in the action during or immediately following an interception or potential interception.

\*\*\*NEW\*\*\* 2-32-16d - this new rule adds another example of a defenseless player; more specifically, a defenseless receiver.

* 2-32-16d - A receiver in (b) and (c) above, including the person intercepting the pass, who is forcefully contacted by an opponent and that contact is not:

1. Incidental contact as a result of making a play on the ball;
2. Initiated with open hands; or
3. An attempt to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.

It is a foul when an intended receiver, including a person intercepting a pass, is defenseless and he is forcefully contacted by an opponent, and that forceful contact is not the result of:

1. incidental contact as a result of making a play on the ball.
2. forceful contact that is initiated with open hands. This is the same type of legal forceful contact that constitutes illegal blindside block, the arms of the defender are extended and the hands are open when the forceful contact is made.
3. the forceful contact is the result of the defender making an attempt to tackle the defenseless receiver by wrapping their arm(s) around the defenseless receiver.

If the forceful contact to a defenseless receiver is not the result of one of the three types of legal forceful contact above, then it is a violation of rule 9-4-3g and results in a personal foul.