

## TARGETING AND DEFENSELESS PLAYER

Here is a guideline to Rule 2-20-2 (Targeting) and 2-32-16 (Defenseless Player)

**TARGETING:** Targeting is an act of taking aim and INITIATING contact to an opponent (so this means offense and defense – K and R) above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulders. The penalty for targeting is 15 yards. The offending player **MAY** be disqualified (here is where you must judge intent) if the foul is deemed to be flagrant.

**DEFENSELESS PLAYER:** A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. Additional rules coverage is provided in Rule 9-3-3i(3)

It is critical that all game officials in a contest be aware of the actions of the players who may not be near the football. You could also have a situation where you could have Targeting and a Defenseless Player situation with the same foul.

Examples of defenseless players include, but are not limited to:

1. A quarterback moving down the line who has handed or pitched the ball to a teammate, and then makes no attempt to participate further in the play. (The judgment here may be if the QB is carrying out a fake, because this makes him participating in the play)
2. A kicker who is in the act of kicking the ball, or has not had a reasonable amount of time to regain his balance after the kick. (We still have running into the kicker...again here is where judgment comes into play)
3. A passer who is in the act of throwing the ball, or who has not had a reasonable length of time to participate in the play again after releasing the ball.
4. A pass receiver whose concentration is on the ball and the contact by the defender is unrelated to the receiver attempting to catch the ball.
5. A pass receiver who has clearly relaxed when he has missed the pass or feel he can no longer catch the pass.
6. A kick returner attempting to catch a kick.
7. A kick receiver who is IMMEDIATELY contacted after touching the ball. (Completing the catch is a different story, as long as it is not Targeting).
8. A player on the ground.
9. ANY player who has relaxed once the ball has become dead.
10. A player who receives a blind-side block.
11. A ball carrier already in the grasp of an opponent and whose forward progress has been stopped. (It is very important to kill this play earlier than we have in the past)
12. Any player who is obviously out of the play.

This is going to put more importance to us, as officials, to officiate our games how we are training. This means that we cannot have 5 set of eyes on the ball (that makes you a spectator...not an official). If you will use the simple concept that I have discussed repeatedly in meetings... **Triangle Principle**...one set of eyes in advance...one on the ball...and one behind. Combine this with the other two officials to continue to officiate and not take time off (Off-Ball Officiating)...and then all 5 officials continuing to officiate when the ball is dead; we should be able to be successful in seeing these types of fouls.