

PLAYER SAFETY: THE #1 PRIORITY IN IOWA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Key points for effective, legal and safe shoulder blocking:

- Keep the head and eyes up, back straight and aim for the opponent's numbers
- The forearms cannot extend more than 45 degrees from the body and hands must be closed or cupped, with the palms not facing the opponent.
- Fire off the ball & make first contact with the shoulder and forearms, **NOT** the head.
- Sink the hips & drive through the opponent keeping the feet wide.
- Keep the head between the opponent and the point of attack.
- Turn the opponent away from the point of attack.
- **DO NOT** duck or drop the head when making contact.
- **DO NOT** lead with the head or make 1st contact with the helmet or face mask.
- Coaches, you **CAN NOT** accept abusive or illegal contact at any time.
- Officials, illegal contact must be penalized every time it occurs.
- The hands must be cupped & forearms cannot extend at more than 45 degree angle from the body.

Key points for effective, legal & safe open hand blocking:

- Once the forearms extend beyond 45 degrees, you must contact the opponent with the palms of the hands.
- Make first contact with open hands, **NOT** the head. Fire off the ball keeping the head and eyes up, back straight and aim for the opponent's numbers.
- The hands must be open & within the frame of the opponent's & blocker's bodies when the forearms extend beyond a 45 degree angle.
- Sink the hips & drive through the opponent keeping the feet wide
- Turn the opponent away from the point of attack.
- **DO NOT** duck or drop the head when making contact.
- **DO NOT** lead with the head or make 1st contact with the helmet or face mask. Illegal contact cannot be tolerated at any time and must be penalized.
- The hands must be open and within the frame of the opponent's and blocker's bodies.

Key points for effective, legal and safe tackling:

- Assume good football position with feet apart, butt down, back straight, & head up.
- Make initial contact with the chest, **NOT** the head.
- As a point of emphasis on keeping the head up, tell players to “shoot their eyes to sky” when they make contact.
- Once contact is made, roll the hips through, wrap the arms and drive with the legs.
- **DO NOT** duck or drop the head when making contact.
- **DO NOT** lead with the head or make 1st contact with the head. Making first contact with the helmet or face mask is dangerous and illegal. It cannot be tolerated and must be penalized.

Key points for effectively, legally and safely carrying the football:

- Cover the points of the ball with the armpit and hand or hands.
- Keep the head and eyes up.
- When making contact with an opponent, keep the head up, lean forward, make contact with the shoulder, and keep the feet moving.
- **DO NOT** duck or drop the head when making contact.
- It is dangerous and illegal to lead with the head or make 1st contact with the helmet or face mask.