

PASS INTERFERENCE CATEGORIES

Quick Reference

OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE (OPI)

What did the receiver do to gain an unfair advantage?

1. Playing Through the Back

The receiver initiates contact through the defender's back to reach the ball.

Look for: The defender establishes position first; the receiver drives through the defender and gains an advantage.

2. Creating Separation

The receiver pushes off or extends an arm to create space.

Look for: An extended arm, shove, or sudden separation created by contact immediately before the catch.

3. Downfield Blocking

The receiver blocks an opponent before a legal forward pass is touched.

Look for: Early engagement or sustained blocking while the pass is in flight. For a pass near the neutral zone, assume it was behind the neutral zone unless a wing official communicates that it was beyond.

4. Pick Play

A receiver intentionally obstructs a defender to free another receiver.

Look for: Crossing or rub routes where the receiver is not running a legitimate route and contact prevents the defender from covering another receiver.

DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE (DPI)

What did the defender do to restrict the receiver's opportunity?

1. Playing Through the Back

The defender contacts the receiver through the back before playing the ball.

Look for: Contact before the ball arrives that prevents the receiver from completing the catch opportunity.

2. Hook and Twist

The defender hooks an arm or the body and turns the receiver.

Look for: An arm around the waist or shoulder and visible rotation of the receiver's body.

3. Grab and Restrict

The defender grabs the receiver and restricts movement.

Look for: Jersey stretch or a grab of an arm, shoulder, or body that reduces the ability to reach the ball.

4. Cut Off

The defender moves into the receiver's path and restricts access to the ball.

Look for: The defender blocks the route without a legitimate attempt to play the pass.

5. Not Playing the Ball

The defender contacts and restricts the receiver without attempting to play the ball.

Look for: Eyes remain on the receiver and significant early contact affects the catch opportunity.

6. Arm Bar

The defender places an arm across the receiver's body and restricts the catch attempt.

Look for: An arm across the chest or pinning an arm so the receiver cannot extend toward the ball.

BEFORE THE THROW

Know the key. Is the key pressed? Is a pick or rub developing?
Maintain cushion.

BALL IN FLIGHT

Who initiated the contact? Did contact create an advantage or restriction? Did it affect the opportunity to catch the pass?

REPORT THE FOUL

State the full category: Offensive Pass Interference (OPI) or Defensive Pass Interference (DPI), the player number, and what occurred.

Do not look for pass interference. Look for advantage or restriction, classify what you see, and make it be there.