



**2021 NFHS
FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES**



BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST RULE 2-17-2c (NEW)



In PlayPic A, both players are in the free-blocking zone and on their lines of scrimmage. In PlayPic B, the block is legal because it is in the zone at the time of the snap, is an immediate, initial action following the snap, and both players began the play on their lines of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone.



❖ **Rule Change:**

RULE 2 – SECTION 17 – FREE-BLOCKING ZONE – LEGAL BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST AND LEGAL BLOCK IN THE BACK

ART. 1 . . . The free-blocking zone is a rectangular area extending laterally 4 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage. A player is in the free-blocking zone when any part of his body is in the zone at the snap.

ART. 2 . . . Blocking below the waist is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met:

- a. All players involved in the blocking are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.
- b. The contact is in the zone.
- c. The block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.

❖ **Rationale for Change:**

Further clarified that blocking below the waist now requires the block to begin immediately following the snap.

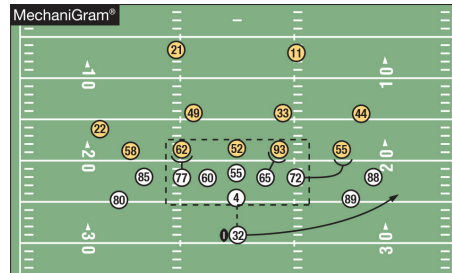
❖ **Comment on Slide:**

Due to the 2021 NFHS change in the blocking below the waist rule, game officials should be aware of the start of the block.

❖ **Case Book:** See SITUATIONS 9.3.2A, 9.3.2B, 9.3.2C, 9.3.2D, 9.3.2E, 9.3.2F, 9.3.2G, 9.3.2H



**BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST
RULES 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 2-17-4**



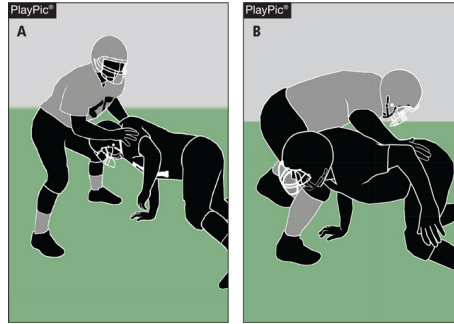
It is legal for offensive linemen to block below the waist in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 77 could only block No. 62 below the waist if the block was immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 65 can block No. 93 below the waist even though No. 93 is playing off his shoulder, if the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 72 could not block No. 55 below the waist at any time during this play.



❖ Comment on Slide:

See comments on slide.

BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST
RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 9-3-2



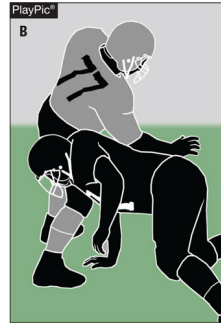
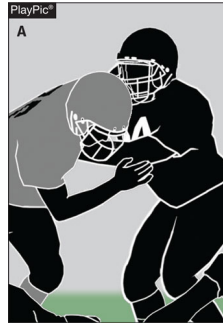
While in the free-blocking zone, the initial contact in PlayPic A is with the hands below the waist. When the blocker finishes the block below the waist as in PlayPic B, it is not a foul. A block below the waist is legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.



❖ Comment on Slide:

See comments on slide.

BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST
RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 9-3-2



The initial contact in PlayPic A is above the waist. In PlayPic B, the blocker then loses contact and the blocker starts a new block below the waist, this is a foul. A block below the waist is legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.



❖ Comment on Slide:

See comments on slide.

BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST
RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-2, 9-3-2



The rules regarding blocking below the waist apply equally to both teams. In the PlayPic, the defender goes below the waist outside the free-blocking zone to take out the lead blocker. This is an illegal block by the defender. A block below the waist is only legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.



❖ Comment on Slide:

See comments on slide.