



Colorado Football Officials Association
FIGHTING GUIDELINES
(Rules 2-11, 9-4-1)

1. The definition of fighting is broad and subject to judgment and to the discretion of the covering official(s). It is important this rule be administered consistently throughout the state and players are disqualified only when they have clearly violated the rule. Fighting can be easily confused with other dead-ball personal fouls, especially unnecessary roughness (9-4-3g).
2. Fighting is defined as: “any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage a player or nonplayer in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.”
3. Further specificity is contained in Rule 9-4-3j: “Strike an opponent with his fist, locked hands, forearm or elbow, nor kick or knee him.”
4. Live-ball fouls: An essential element of fighting is for the blow to be delivered in a manner *unrelated to football*. An illegal blocking technique is a football related act, thus only in extreme cases would an illegal block be considered fighting. Hands to the face, head slaps, etc. are personal fouls and not fighting. A punch at the ball intended to knock it loose is not fighting. It is possible for such fouls to be flagrant and thus deserving of disqualification, but officials should avoid placing the fighting label on live-ball fouls.
5. Dead-ball fouls: Contacting an opponent while the ball is dead is likely unrelated to football because football is not being played at that time; however, continuing action immediately after the ball becomes dead is football related, therefore late hits are usually not fighting.
6. The following are the most common examples of fighting: Striking with a closed fist, kicking, stomping, delivering a roundhouse blow to the head and grabbing the face mask and shaking the opponent.
7. The following are not considered acts of fighting: Shoving an opponent and opponents who have a mutual hold on each other (“wrestling match”). Also, “chicken fighting” is not “fighting.” Officials must be careful to not penalize a “victim” who is simply taking action to defend himself. The victim may have been knocked down and appear to be delivering blows to protect himself. A victim who chases after his assailant and initiates further contact is no longer innocent and guilty of retaliation.
8. As described in Chapter 22 of the CFOA Mechanics Manual, no one is to be disqualified from the game prior to consultation with the Referee. The matter should be discussed among all officials who observed the incident.