



Colorado Football Officials Association
TARGETING GUIDELINES
(Rules 2-20-2, 9-4-3m)

1. Targeting is an act of taking aim and initiating contact to an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulders. "Taking aim" implies intent to inflict punishment that goes beyond making a normal football play. To determine if illegal helmet contact occurs, officials must note how a blow is delivered and where on the opponent's body it is delivered. No player may initiate contact against an opponent with the crown of their helmet. All players are protected from blows above the shoulders. Accidental and inadvertent helmet contact, especially slight contact, will occur and is not a foul.

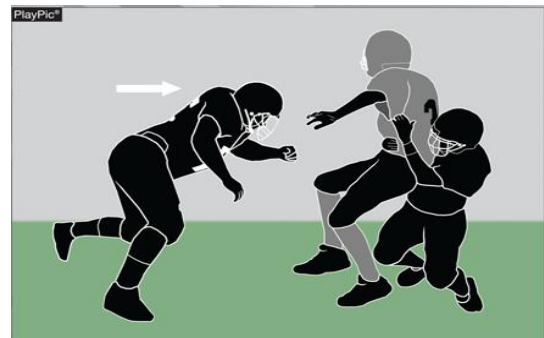
2. Targeting is a foul that is difficult to call correctly because it is highly dependent on the viewing angle. Sometimes it appears to be head contact but shoulder contact occurs first and the head misses. In other cases, the shoulder and head make contact simultaneously. Furthermore, straight-lined officials cannot see the point of contact. It is essential that all officials who had a view of the play discuss their observations before a targeting foul is reported to the referee.



3. There are often clues that precede targeting. Officials should look for launching – leaving the feet to deliver a blow or a crouch followed by an upward and forward thrust to attack (see picture).

4. A player who attempts a heads up tackle or approaches the runner with outstretched arms to make a conventional tackle should receive the benefit of doubt when helmet contact results.

5. The runner is the last player on the field to be considered a defenseless player (he can be when he is held upright after his forward progress is stopped – see picture) because he is expecting a tackle. Many tackles will have incidental head contact. Severity of contact is a factor, but never excuse a tackler who leads with his head regardless of the degree of contact. Otherwise there is likely no foul on runners.



6. In order to "aim" for the head, the perpetrator must know where the head is or will be. Please think twice about situations where the recipient moves his head in a manner which cannot reasonably be anticipated. Going for a loose ball is a football play and a prime example of unanticipated head location.

7. Targeting fouls, especially those against a defenseless player may be judged to be flagrant and thus require disqualification; that will be a rare event. When in doubt, targeting should be called, but if there is any doubt, an ejection is not warranted. A flagrant foul will be obvious and blatant. It should not be called unless you're absolutely certain there was malicious intent. 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.