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Law 5 – The Referee



U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Program
Enter Level Referee Course
Competitive Youth Training
Small Sided and Recreational Youth Training



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Authority

Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.



The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.



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Authority



The referee can correct a mistake, even if play has restarted, if it is done quickly and involves simple errors such as incorrectly announcing which team has a throw-in or which team has committed a foul.



Authority

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Note that decisions about the scoring of a goal or the display of a card, including its color and the player to which it was shown, cannot be changed:

- **once play has been restarted**
- **once the referee signals the end of a period and leaves the field-of-play**
- **Once the referee has terminated the match**





Authority

Referee authority is separated into powers and duties.



Powers are the things referees have the authority to do when they think they are needed.

Duties are the things referees are required to do according to the Laws of the Game.



Powers and Duties

Law 5 lists and describes most of the responsibilities of the referee.



This includes enforcing the Laws of the Game, controlling the match in cooperation with the ARs and fourth official, if applicable, and ensuring that any ball used in the game meets the requirements of Law 2.



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Powers and Duties



The referee also ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4, acts as the timekeeper and keeps a record of the match.



Powers

❖ Powers = Referee's Authority

- Referees can stop, at their discretion, suspend or terminate the match due to any infringements of the Laws of the Game.
- ✓ For example, if a player commits a foul the referee has the authority to stop the match and punish the offender.



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Powers

- The referee can allow play to continue even after a foul has been committed, if they feel that stopping play would unfairly punish the team that was fouled.

✓ This concept is referred to as applying advantage.



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Powers and Duties



The referee allows play to continue when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalizes the original offense, if the anticipated advantage does not develop at that time.



Powers

- ✓ **Because of the experience and skill level of the players, applying advantage may not be appropriate in many small-sided and recreational youth games, but its helpful for referees to understand the concept.**
- ✓ **Remember that powers are the things that the referee can (but doesn't have to) do, so not applying advantage in favor of calling a foul and making sure a youth player is not hurt is very appropriate at this level of play.**



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Powers

- The referee can also stop, suspend or terminate the game due to any outside interference at any time, which includes bad weather.

Remember that player safety is most important for referees.



Powers

- Referees can stop the match if the player is injured, so that the injured player can get medical attention.
- ✓ A referee can also let the game continue until the ball goes out of play, if they believe that a player is only slightly injured.
- ✓ Remember safety - referees working youth games should always be very careful and cautious about injured players. STOP the game whenever a player appears to be hurt.



Powers and Duties

The referee must also stop the match if, in their opinion, a player is seriously injured.



Examples of a serious injury might include an obvious broken bone, loss of consciousness, or possible concussion.

Powers and Duties



Signs of a serious injury can include a player rolling around in agony, blood flowing from an open wound, or a player who is completely unresponsive, dazed, or disoriented.



Powers and Duties

Referees are not empowered by the Laws of the Game to provide medical treatment to an injured player.



The referee should ensure that a player suffering from a serious injury is removed from the field of play by the coach, trainer, parent, or qualified medical personnel.



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Powers and Duties

The referee should allow play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in their opinion, only slightly injured.



Examples of a slight injury might include when a player has muscle cramps or is slow, but able to get up, after a minor collision.



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Powers and Duties

The determination of what constitutes a serious or slight injury must take into account the age of the player.



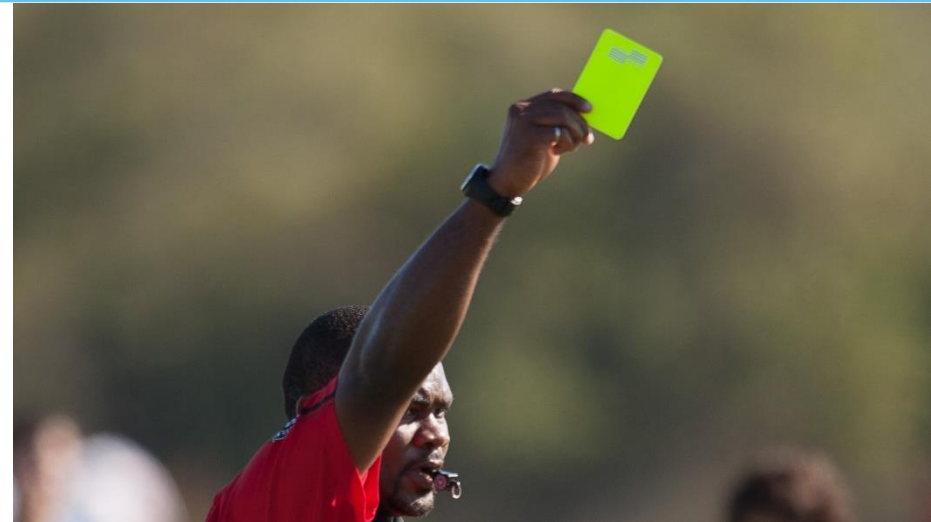
The younger the injured player, the more likely the referee should stop play.

The referee should also ensure that any player who is bleeding or has blood visible on the uniform leaves the field.



Powers and Duties

The referee takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offenses.



A referee is not obliged to take this action immediately, but must do so when the ball next goes out of bounds or play is stopped.



Powers

Taking disciplinary action refers to a referee using yellow and red cards.

- **The referee can stop the game and issue a card whenever needed. But the referee can also allow play to continue and issue a card before play resumes after the following stoppage.**
 - ✓ **If the referee does not deal with this at the next stoppage of play and play is restarted the disciplinary action for that offence is lost.**



Powers and Duties



Referees should:

- act on the advice of the ARs regarding incidents that they have not seen,
- ensure that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play,
- indicate the restart of the match after it has been stopped and
- provide the appropriate authorities with a match report.



Team Officials

Team officials (coaches and any other person in the bench area) must behave responsibly.

- **Referees can take disciplinary action against coaches or any other team official who behaves irresponsibly.**
 - ✓ **The Laws of the Game specify that cards are shown only to players and substitutes.**
 - ✓ **Referees must know the local rules of competition and how to take disciplinary action against team officials.**



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Management

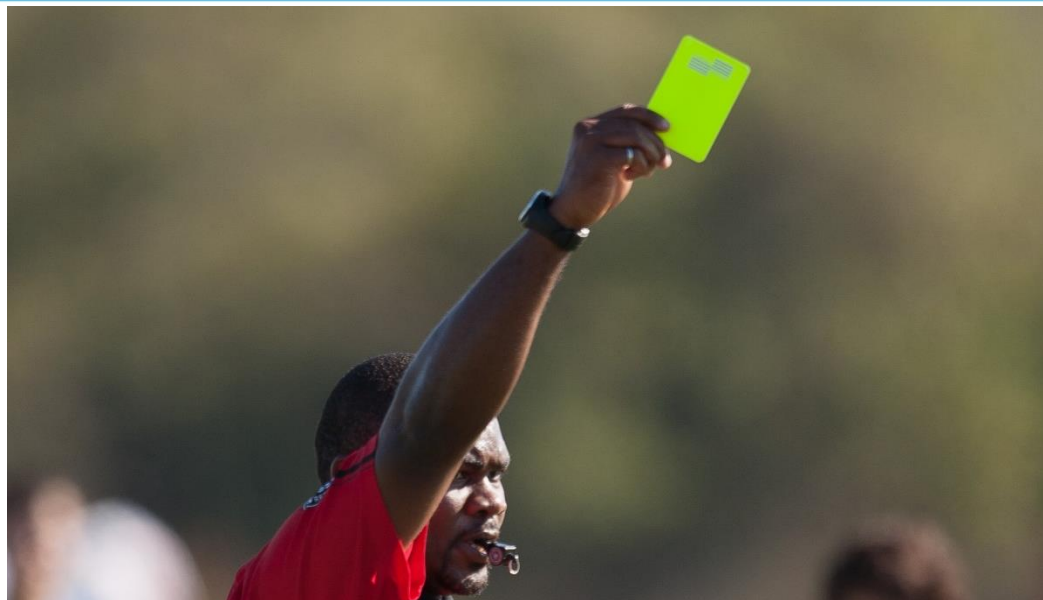
When managing the team areas and dealing with coaches, referees should employ the Ask, Tell, Dismiss approach.

Referees are encouraged to deal with any issues right away to make sure the proper expectations are being set and enforced.

Whenever dealing with coaches, referees should always remember to be professional and use a respectful tone regardless of how a team official is behaving.



Powers and Duties



The referee should take action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at their discretion, expel them from the field of play and surrounding area.



Powers

The Ask, Tell, Dismiss approach is a powerful tool referees can use to manage coach behavior.

ASK - When a coach is behaving irresponsibly, ask them to stop.

“Coach, please let me referee the game”

TELL - If the misbehavior continues, the referee should tell them to stop. This is the same as a yellow card.

“Coach, that’s all, no more, or I will have to take further action”

DISMISS - If the coach still continues to misbehave, the referee should dismiss the coach from the game. This is the same as a red card.

“Coach, please leave the field. The match will not continue until you are gone.”



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Powers



**ASK
TELL
DISMISS**



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Powers

If necessary, referees can skip the Ask and / or Tell stages and immediately Dismiss team officials who are behaving in an extremely irresponsible manner.



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Management

If there are issues with spectators, referees should enlist the support of the coaches.

Referees should ask for the appropriate coach to speak with the offending spectators, and let them know that if the behavior continues, the game will not.

If a spectator refuses to change their behavior after taking this first step, referees should request that the coach ask the spectator to leave the area.



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Management

If the spectator doesn't leave as requested, or if there continues to be constant spectator issues, the referee should end the game.

Based on the local rules of competition, referees should report this information and the reason for having to terminate the game to the appropriate competition authorities.



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Powers and Duties



A match report should include information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match

Duties

- ❖ **Duties - Things the referee MUST do.**
 - **The first duty of every referee – they must enforce the Laws of the Game.**
 - ✓ This is important for ensuring the safety of players and that the game is fair and enjoyable.





Duties

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- The referee must ensure that the ball and player's equipment meet the requirements of the Laws 2 and 4 and are safe for play.



Duties

- **When the referee stops the game, they must restart play in accordance with the reason it was stopped.**
- ✓ **This means the referee must indicate and use the correct restart to resume play.**



Duties

- **The referee must also keep time for the match and record all relevant information based on what happens during the game.**
- ✓ **This can include things like who scored goals, times that goals were scored, cautions, send-offs, serious injuries, and any other important information.**





Duties

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Remember - The referee is the official keeper of both the time and the facts associated with the game.

This information is important for any game report required by the local rules of competition.





Duties

- Because SAFETY is the highest priority, the referee must make sure any player that is bleeding or has blood on their uniform leave the field.
- ✓ The referee must also make sure that that bleeding has been stopped and that no blood is on the player's uniform before the player can be allowed to re-enter the game.



Duties

- **If a player commits multiple offenses, the referee must punish the player for the more serious of the offenses.**
- **The final duty of the referee is make sure that only authorized persons enter the field of play.**
 - ✓ **Unless called onto the field by the referee, persons such as substitutes, coaches and spectators cannot enter the field.**

Duties

- **When appropriate, the referee must work with their referee team to make sure the correct decisions are made during the game.**
- ✓ **There may be things that happen during the game that the referee does not see, but an AR does see.**
- ✓ **When this occurs, referees should use the advice provided by their AR.**





Duties

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A good example of teamwork between officials is when the referee stops play after an AR signals for an offside offense.



If a **club linesman** is used instead of an AR, these individuals can only signal for the ball **being in and out of play**. The referee will thus have less assistance in making decisions during the game.



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Duties



Remember, that the referee has the total and final responsibility for the game, so they must ensure all these duties are carried out to their fullest.



Duties - Outside Agents

- If an outside agent enters the field of play during the match and **interferes with play**, the referee must stop the match and remove the outside agent.
- ✓ Outside interference can occur in a number of ways.
- ✓ Some examples at the competitive youth level include situations where an extra ball, animal, or other object enters the field.



Duties - Outside Agents

If there is interference

- Play is stopped
- Outside agent is removed
- Play must be restarted with a dropped ball from the point where the interference occurred
- If play is stopped inside the goal area, the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the interference occurred.



Duties - Outside Agents



If there is interference by an outside agent and the ball is going into the goal, a goal is awarded even when contact is made with the ball, but:

- only if the ball enters the goal
- only if the interference does not prevent a defending player from playing the ball
- only if the ball does not enter the opponent's goal



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Duties - Outside Agents



If there is no interference

- The referee must allow play to continue
- Remove the outside agent at the earliest possible opportunity.



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Advantage

Advantage allows play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage.

The referee can penalizes the original offense if the anticipated advantage does not develop at that time.



Advantage

The referee may play advantage whenever an infringement or offense occurs. The referee should consider the following circumstances in deciding whether to apply the advantage or stop play:

- **Severity of offense**
- **Location of offense**
- **Chances of an immediate, promising attack**
- **Atmosphere of match**



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Advantage

If the severity of the offence warrants a send-off, the referee must stop play and send-off the player unless there is an immediate opportunity to score a goal.

The location of the offense, for example the closer to the opponent's goal, the more effective applying advantage can be.

The chances of an immediate, promising attack, the more likely advantage should be applied.



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Advantage

The decision to penalize the original offense or to apply the advantage must be taken within a few seconds.

If advantage is applied and the offence warrants a caution, it must be issued at the next stoppage. If the caution is not issued at the next stoppage, it cannot be shown later.



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Duties - Multiple Offenses

At times, more than one offense will occur at the same time.

The referee must restart play according to the more serious offence committed, in terms of sanction (i.e. no card, yellow card or red card), restart (i.e. PK, DFK or IFK), physical severity and tactical impact.

The most serious offense should be penalized whether players involved are from the same team or different teams.



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Decisions

Referees make lots of decisions during a game.



These decisions will determine the facts of the game. This is why the referee must keep an accurate record of the game.



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Decisions

Referees, just like players and coaches, are not perfect and will make mistakes.



It is important for referees to remember that they can change an incorrect decision, so long as they have not yet restarted the game.



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Decisions

A good example of this is when a referee signals in the wrong direction for a throw-in.

If the referee realizes this (or perhaps the referee is reminded by an AR), they can correct the direction of the throw-in, as long as the throw-in has yet to be taken.

When the referee changes a decision, it's important they explain and make it clear to all the players a correction has been made.



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Positioning

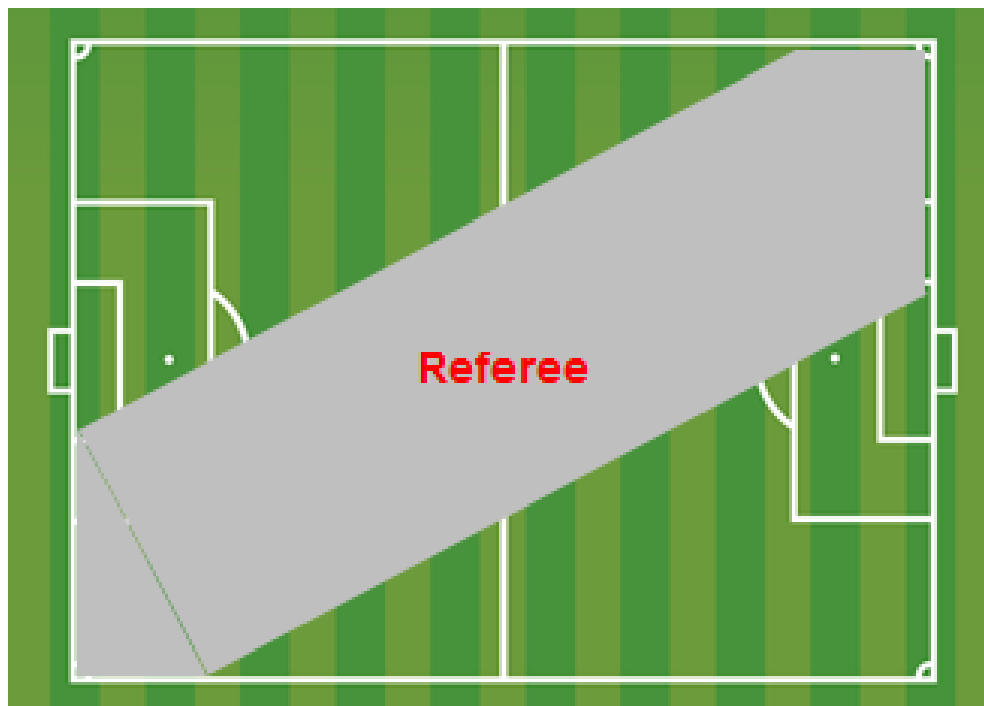
The referee must be in the best position and close to play to make the correct decision.

For a referee to be in the best position and close enough to play to make the correct decision, they need to be flexible and vary their position by using the Diagonal System of Control (DSC).



Positioning

The DSC allows a referee to keep play between them and the ARs because two perspectives on the same play is better than one.





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Positioning

Here are some recommendations to help the referees be in the best position.

- The referee should be close enough to see play without being in the play.**
- Play and the ball should be between the referee and the lead AR.**
- The referee should be able to look through play and see their lead AR.**
- The referee should stay wide enough in the DSC system to keep play and the lead AR always within their field of vision.**



Positioning

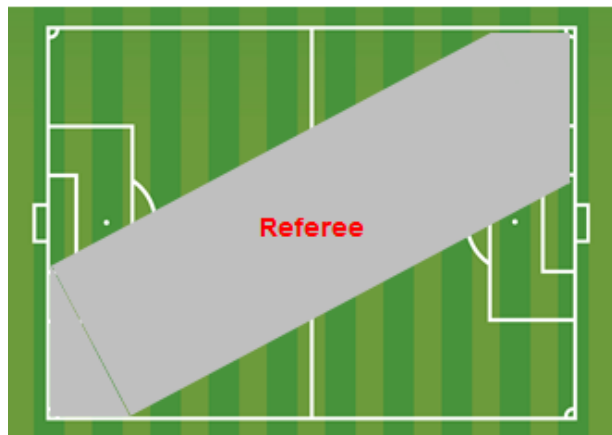
- ❖ **Be mindful of surroundings**
- ❖ **What needs to be seen**
 - ✓ **Is not always near the play**
- ❖ **Pay attention to:**
 - ✓ **aggressive player confrontations off the ball**
 - ✓ **possible offenses in area towards which play is heading**
 - ✓ **offenses occurring after ball is played away**



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Positioning



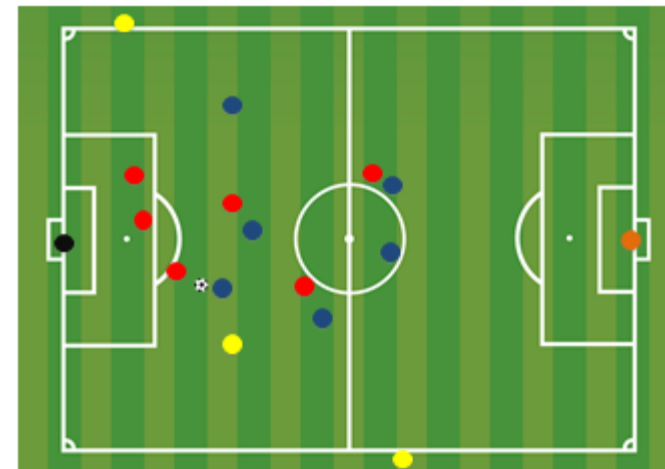
Because the ARs should be keeping in line with the second-to-last defender or the ball, depending on which is closer to the goal line, there is a limited area of the field they can supervise.

However, these areas are important for the ARs to monitor so that the referee can focus on a more manageable amount of space to cover.



Positioning

Note that the diagonal path of the referee is not rigid and should change constantly based on the flow of play.



This allows for the referee to get close to the action or to stay out of the players space and passing lanes.

The DSC relies on communication between the referee and the ARs.



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Positioning

In general, referees should work to keep play between them and the ARs.

Referees should also keep an appropriate distance from play that balances the need to make a decision without interfering with the movement of the players and the ball.

Proper positioning is something that can take time to develop. Referees should be mindful of these basic guidelines, as they work to gain more experience.

Referee Signals

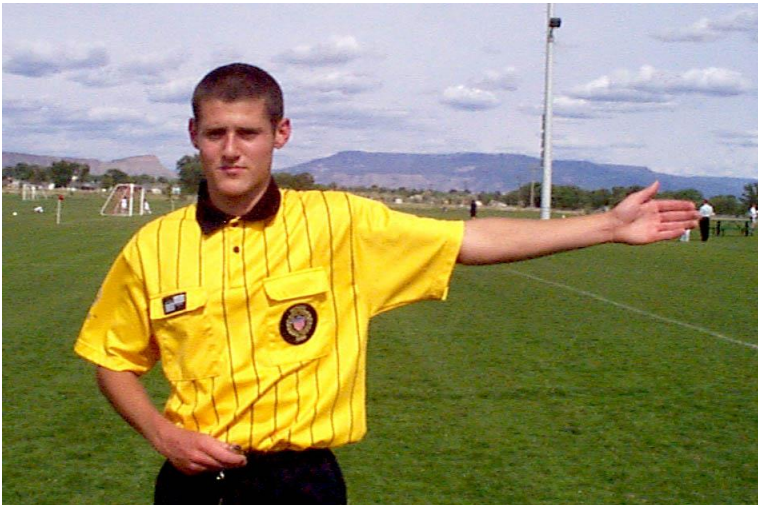
DFK – Direct Free Kick



IFK – Indirect Free Kick



Referee Signals



**Direct Free Kick
(DFK)**



**Indirect Free Kick
(IFK)**



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Referee Signals



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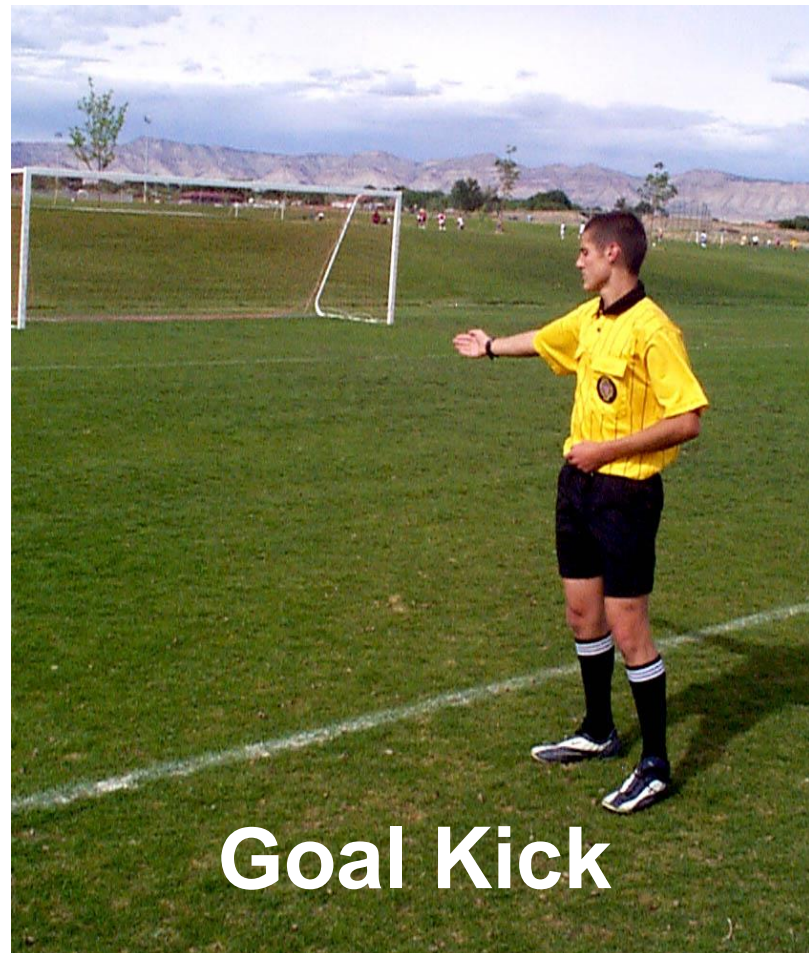
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Referee Signals



**Corner
Kick**



Goal Kick



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Referee Signals



Throw-In



Advantage



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Referee Signals



In addition to the two-armed signal, a single one-armed signal is also permitted, as it is not always easy for referees to run with both arms extended.

ADVANTAGE



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Referee Signals

CAUTION



SEND-OFF



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Referee Signals



Caution
(Yellow Card)



Send-off
(Red Card)

Referee Signals



**First Show
Yellow Card**

**Second
Cautionable
Offense**



**Then Show
Red Card.**



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Whistle

In addition to signaling, referees must also use their whistle to communicate to the players during the game.

Referees are required to whistle before every kick-off, penalty kick and free kicks where the referee has delayed the restart.

The referee does not have to whistle for a free kick restart unless they have involved themselves in the restart



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Whistle

The whistle must also be used to restart play anytime following a yellow card or red card for misconduct, an injury or a substitution.

A whistle is not needed to restart play from a throw-in, goal kick or corner kick.

Also note that a whistle is not needed when performing a dropped ball restart.



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Whistle

The referee is also required to blow the whistle to stop play for a free kick, a penalty kick, when a period of play has ended, and for a game that is suspended or abandoned.

The whistle is not needed to stop play for a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick or when a goal is scored.



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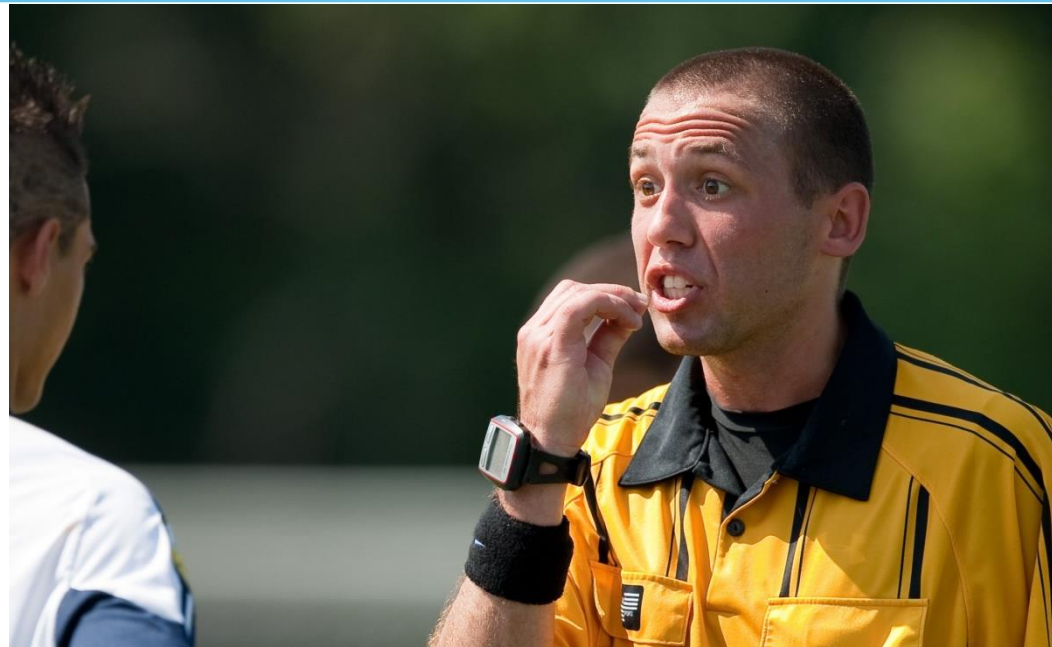
Whistle

Except where required, whistling should be held to a minimum so that, when it is truly needed to gain the attention of players, the whistle is more likely to have the desired impact.



Body Language

Body language is a tool that referees can use to control the match, to show authority and self-control.



These non-verbal tools can have positive or negative effects with players and coaches depending on how the referee utilizes body language.



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Body Language

Referees should work to keep their body language positive by maintaining good posture, keeping



their head held high, looking others in the eyes when addressing them and not showing visible signs of physical or mental fatigue.



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Pre-game Conference



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Pre-game Conference



Conducting a pre-game conference with the ARs is a very important responsibility of the referee.



The pre-game conference is essential to ensure the ARs know exactly how they are to work with the referee. This is especially important when the referee crew has not worked together before.

Uniform



Perception is reality, so a professional appearance is very important for referees at all levels.



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Uniform



The most common uniform shirt color is yellow and each official should have their shirt tucked in at all times.

Shorts should be solid black.



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Uniform

There are two different styles of approved socks.



One style has three white stripes at the top and the other has the Official Sports logo in the middle.



Socks should be pulled all the way up at all times.



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Uniform



Yellow is the primary uniform color, but there are four other acceptable uniform colors that referees can wear in the event of a color conflict with the teams.



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Uniform



These other colors, in no particular order, are black, blue, red and green.

Regardless of the uniform color, only the current year's badge should be worn on the left breast pocket of the uniform.



Equipment

In addition to having all the required uniform elements, referees should also be sure to have the appropriate additional equipment needed for the competitive youth game.

- Whistle(s)
- Watch
- Pen or pencil
- Notebook
- Yellow and red cards
- Coin
- Assistant referee flags
- Bag



Equipment

In addition to having all the required uniform elements, referees should also be sure to have the appropriate additional equipment needed for the competitive youth game.

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- Watch
- Pen or pencil
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- Yellow and red cards
- Coin
- Assistant referee flags
- Bag



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Equipment

Referees are athletes too, so they should have fluids and snacks to make sure they are properly hydrated and prepared for the game.



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Review Question

18. Which restart requires the referee to use their whistle before resuming play?

- A. Corner kick
- B. Dropped ball
- C. Kick-off
- D. Goal kick



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Review Question

19. Do the Laws of the Game provide referees with certain powers and duties?

A. Yes

B. No



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Review Question

20. Do referees have the authority to deal with coaches and other team officials who behave in an irresponsible manner?

- A. Yes
- B. No



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Review Question

21. What should the referee do, if in their opinion, a player is seriously injured?

- A. Allow the game to continue
- B. Stop the game immediately
- C. Stop the game when the ball next goes out-of-play, and then the player can get medical attention



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Review Question

22. Do referees have the authority to suspend or terminate a game because of infringements of the Laws of the Game?

A. Yes

B. No



Review Question

23. What should the referee do if a spectator is bothering one of the assistant referees?

- A. Ask the coaches to help deal with the spectator
- B. Show the spectator a red card



Review Question

24. A dog runs out onto the field and knocks a ball away and wide of the goal. The ball was about to go into the goal when the dog interfered. Since it was going to be a sure goal, the goal should be awarded.

- A. True
- B. False



Review Question

25. What position should referees work to maintain during the game?

- A. One that will allow them to make the correct decision
- B. One that always keeps them in front of the play
- C. One that always keeps them within 2-yards of the play



Review Question

26. What is the referee's primary responsibility?

- A. Making sure the game is safe for the players
- B. Making sure the players have fun
- C. Making sure the players and coaches are obeying the Laws



Review Question

27. What approach should referees use when dealing with unacceptable behavior from team officials?

- A. Warn, Tell, Eject
- B. Caution, Tell, Expel
- C. Ask, Tell, Remove
- D. Ask, Tell, Dismiss



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Review Question

28. When the referee applies _____, he or she allows play to continue when the team who was fouled with benefit.

- A. Offside
- B. Advantage
- C. Caution
- D. Misconduct