



Law 12 Fouls (8 & 9)



U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Program
Grade 9 Referee Course
Small Sided and Recreational Youth Training



Law 12 Overview

The Law 12 is separated into two parts. The **first part is about fouls/offenses** and the second part deals with misconduct.

❖ Fouls

- **Direct free kick fouls (DFK)**
- **Indirect free kick fouls (IFK)**

❖ Misconduct

- **Cautionable offenses**
- **Sending-off offenses**





Part 1 – Fouls





Offenses

If the ball is in-play and a player commits an **offense inside the field-of-play** against:

- an opponent – restart is an IFK, DFK or PK,
- a team-mate, a substitute, a substituted player or any team official – restart is a **DFK or PK**,
- a match official (Referee or AR) – restart is a **DFK or PK**,
- any other person – restart is a dropped ball



Fouls

A **foul** is an unfair or unsafe offense that meets the following criteria:

- Committed by a player
- Occurs on/off the field-of-play
- Occurs while the ball is in play

If these three (3) requirements are not met, the unfair or unsafe offense is not a **foul**, but it may still be **misconduct**.



Types of Fouls

There are two types of free kicks awarded when an offence is committed:

- **Direct Free Kicks (DFK)**
- **Indirect Free Kicks (IFK)**

If an offence involves contact it is penalized by a Direct Free Kick (DFK) or a Penalty Kick (PK), if the offence occurred within the offending team's own penalty area.



Direct Free Kick

The direct free kick (DFK) offenses are separated into a group of seven (7) actions and a group of five (5) actions.



For the first seven (7) of the direct free kick (DFK) offenses , the referee must determine if the action has been committed **Carelessly** or **Recklessly** or with **Excessive Force.**



Direct Free Kick

These seven (7) DFK Offenses - Careless, Reckless or Using Excessive Force:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps At an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles or challenges an opponent

(1) Kicking



Kicking or Attempting to Kick.

(2) Tripping



Tripping or Attempting to Trip.

(3) Jumping At



Jumping At an Opponent.

(4) Striking

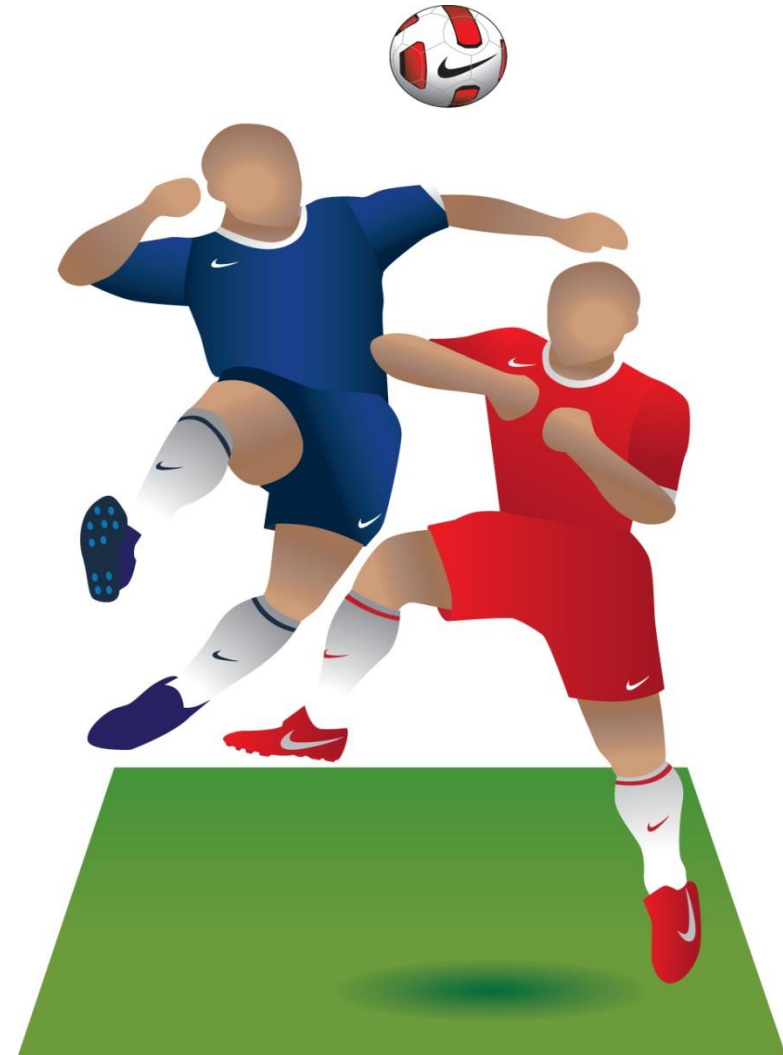


Striking or Attempting to Strike

Striking

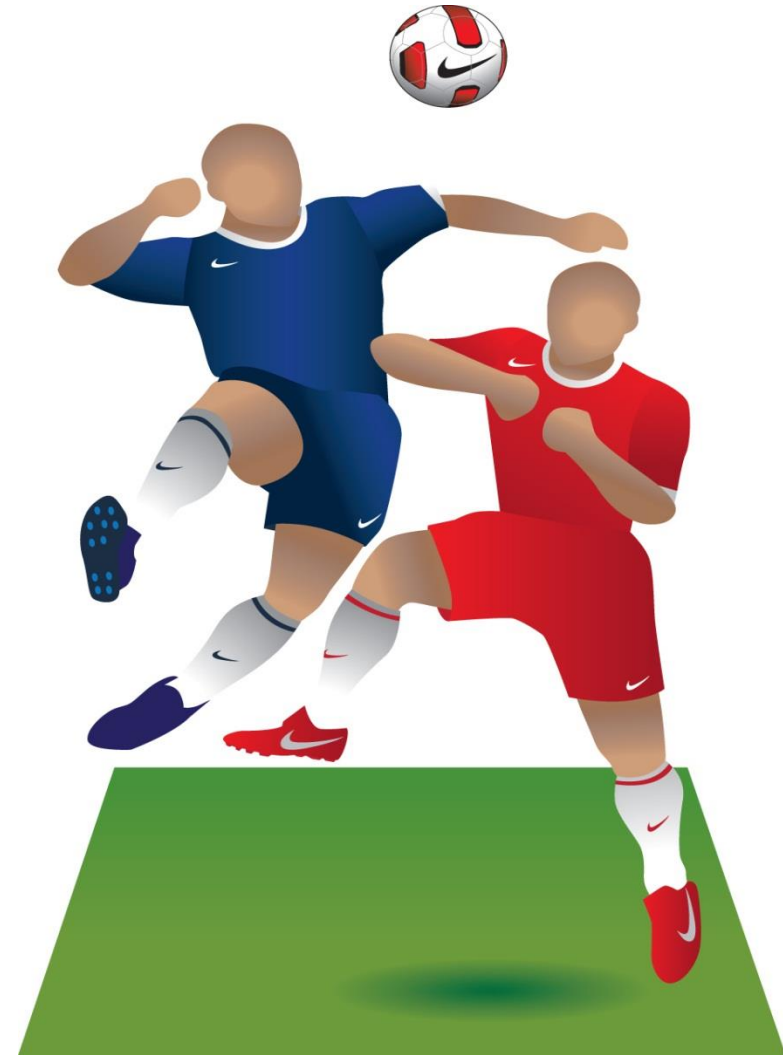
Striking or Attempting to Strike.

Striking can be performed by direct contact using hands, arms, elbows, head, or knees, or by throwing any object, including the ball.



Striking

A striking foul occurs where contact is made with the opponent or where contact would have been made if the attempt to strike is unsuccessful.





(5) Charging



Charging ... not shoulder to shoulder

Charging

Charging:

The act of charging is a challenge for space using physical contact within playing distance of the ball without using arms or elbows.



(6) Pushing



Pushing ... with hands or body

(7) Tackling / Challenging



**Tackling/Challenging for the ball ...
... contact with player before ball**



Careless

It is important to distinguish between the terms careless, reckless, and excessive force when discussing the first seven (7) direct free kick (DFK) fouls.

Careless means that the player has shown a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or that they acted without precaution.

No further disciplinary sanction is needed if a foul is judged to be careless.



Direct Free Kick

Most direct free kick (DFK) offenses committed during small-sided and recreational youth games will qualify as careless.

They are typically the byproduct of players who are still developing and learning the game.

When a player commits one of these seven (7) direct free kick (DFK) offenses carelessly, referees should not hesitate to stop play to promote a safe environment for the players.



Direct Free Kick

Referees must also be aware that certain actions and behaviors should be punished more severely when appropriate.

Typical level of fouls in a small-sided or recreational youth game are:

- **Careless ... Most common**
- **Reckless ... Less common**
- **Excessive force ... Rarely seen**



Reckless

Reckless means that the player has acted with disregard to the danger to their opponent, or consequences for their opponent, when making a challenge for the ball.

A player who plays in a reckless manner must be cautioned and shown a yellow card.



Excessive Force

Using excessive force means that the player has far exceeded the necessary use of force, and has endangered the safety of an opponent when challenging for the ball.

A player who uses excessive force must be sent off and shown a red card.



Direct Free Kick

For the five (5) other direct free kick (DFK) offenses, the referee does not have to determine if the actions were committed carelessly, recklessly or with excessive force



These offenses need only to happen for the referee to take action.



Direct Free Kick

A DFK is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following five (5) offenses:

- Holds an opponent;
- Bites or Spits At **anyone**;
- Handles the ball **deliberately**, except of course by a goalkeeper within their own penalty area;



Direct Free Kick

A DFK is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following five (5) offenses:

- Impedes an opponent **with contact**, sometimes referred to as blocking.
- Throws an object at the ball or hits the ball with a hand-held object.

(8) Holding



Holding ... Includes holding any part of an opponent's body or uniform.

(9) Biting or Spitting At



Biting or Spitting At Anyone (includes opponent, teammate, substitute, match official, coach, spectator, etc.)

(10) Deliberate Handling

Unlike all the other direct free kick (DFK) offenses, note that deliberate handling is committed against the opposing team, not against a specific opposing player.



Deliberate Handling ... with hand or arm



Handling

Handling the ball involves a deliberate act of a player making contact with the ball with their hand or arm.

The referee should take the following factors into consideration to help determine if the handling offense was deliberate:

- **The movement of the hand towards the ball, not the ball towards the hand.**



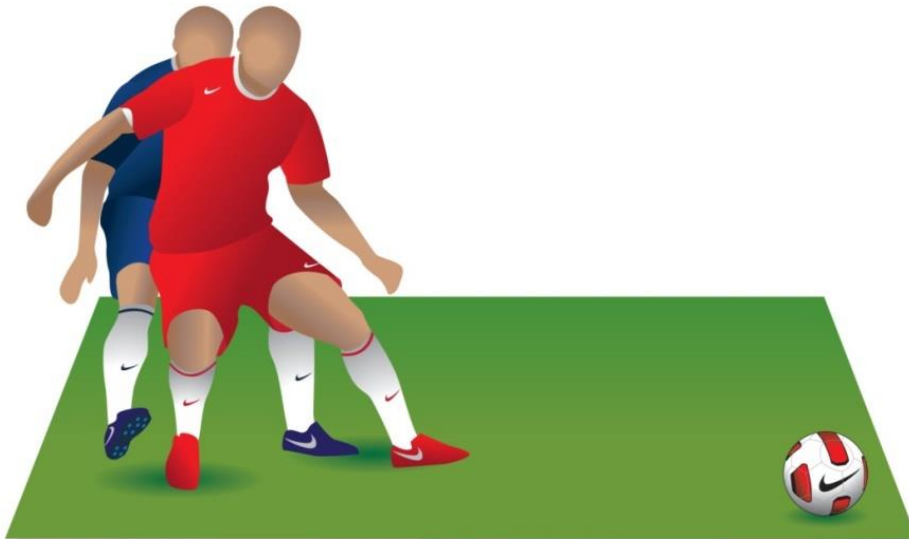
Handling

Additional factors that the referee should take into consideration are:

- **The distance between the opponent and the ball (i.e. an instinctive and protective reflex action is not a handling offense).**
- **The position of the hand, by itself, does not necessarily mean that there is a handling infringement.**



(11) Impeding with Contact



Impeding the progress of an opponent.

If physical contact is made, this results in an offense punishable by a direct free kick (DFK).



(12) Throwing an Object

A DFK (or PK) is taken at the spot where the ball is hit or would have been hit, when an object is thrown by a player at a ball in play.

Touching the ball with an object held in the hand (usually a shoe) is not a handling offense. It is an offense that could be committed by a goalkeeper within their own penalty area.



Location

A DFK is taken from the place where the offense occurred with two exceptions:

- **When a kick is awarded inside a team's own goal area, the DFK may be taken from any point inside the goal area.**
- **When a penalty kick is awarded for a player committing one of the direct free kick (DFK) offenses within their own penalty area.**



Location

A penalty kick is the result a player committing an offense within their own penalty area, regardless of the position of the ball, and providing the ball is in play.

Note that if a player strikes someone by throwing an object, the location of the offense is where the person was struck, not at the location of the person that threw the object.



Indirect Free Kicks





Indirect Free Kick

An IFK is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:



- **Plays in a dangerous manner;**
- **Impedes the progress of an opponent without making contact;**
- **Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from their hands.**



Indirect Free Kick

Indirect free kick (IFK) fouls are also separated into two groups.



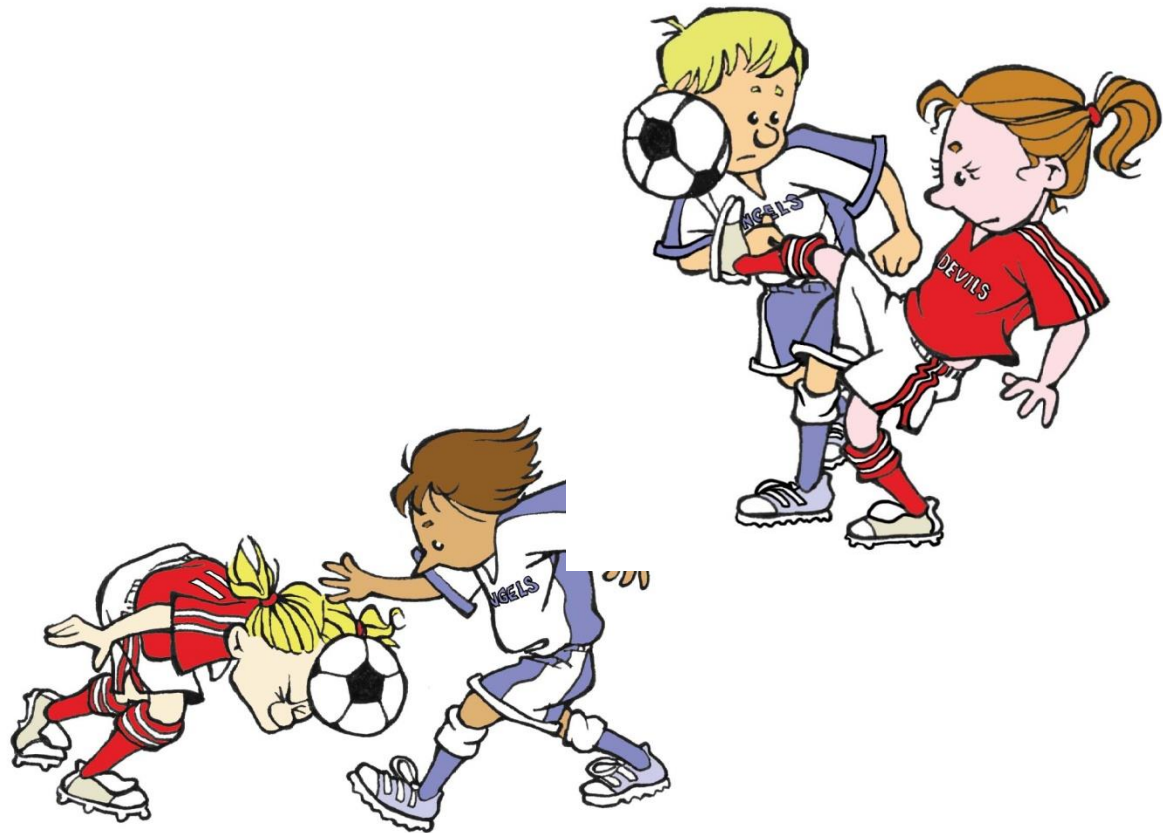
There are four (4) IFK fouls that can only be committed by a goalkeeper and four (4) IFK fouls which can be committed by any player including the goalkeeper.

Indirect Free Kick



The first group of four (4) indirect free kick (IFK) fouls can be committed by any field player including the goalkeeper

(1) Dangerous Play



Playing in a dangerous or unsafe manner.



Dangerous Play

Playing Dangerously.

An action is considered dangerous play when an opponent is adversely or unfairly affected, usually by the opponent ceasing to challenge for the ball in order to avoid receiving or causing injury as a result of the action.





Dangerous Play

When determining dangerous play, referees should also take into account the experience and skill level of the players.

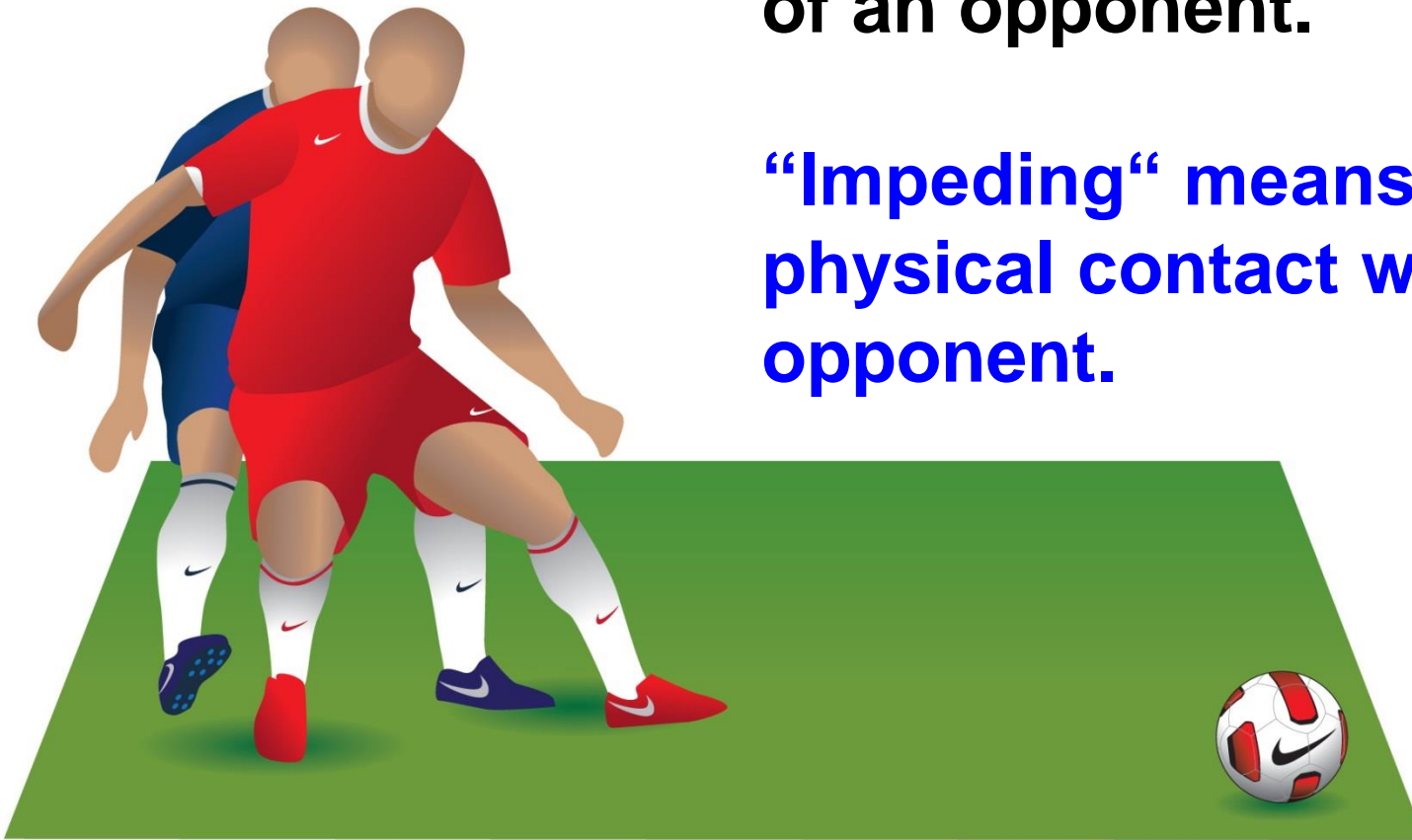


Competitive youth players, who are more skilled and experienced, may be more likely to accept the danger of an act and continue playing compared to younger players at the small-sided and recreational level.

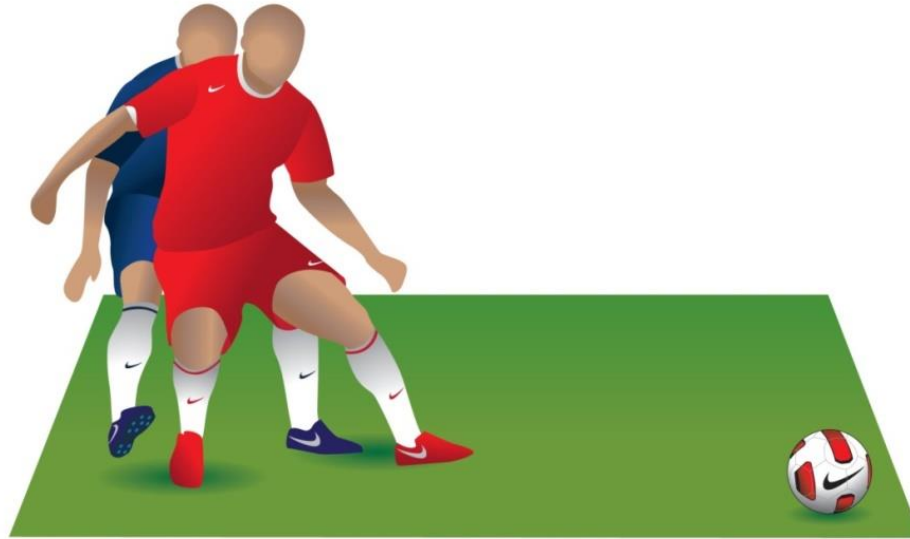
(2) Impeding

Impeding the progress of an opponent.

“Impeding“ means without physical contact with an opponent.



Impeding



Impeding the progress of an opponent means moving into the opponents path to obstruct, block, slow down, or force a change in direction when the ball is not within playing distance of either player.

(3) Preventing



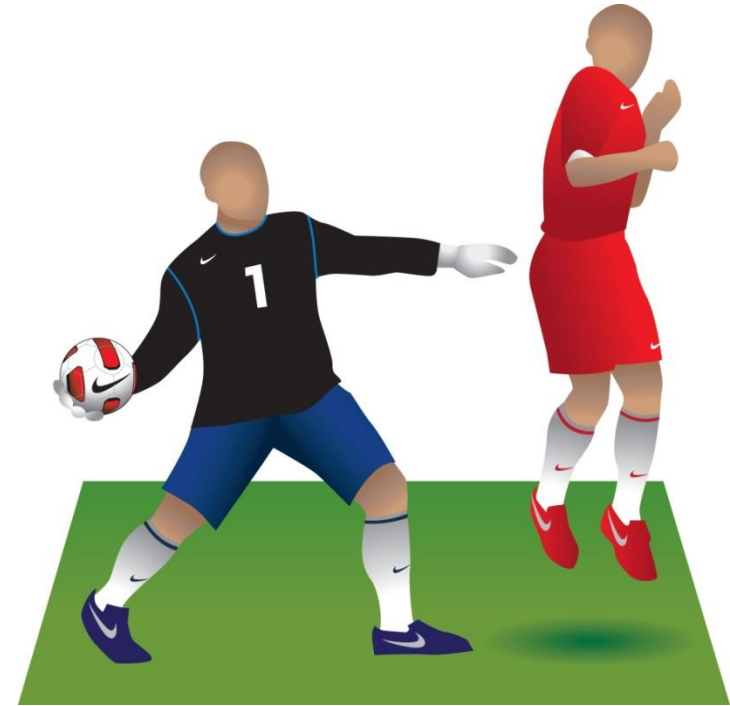
**Preventing or hindering the
goalkeeper from releasing the ball
back into play**



Preventing

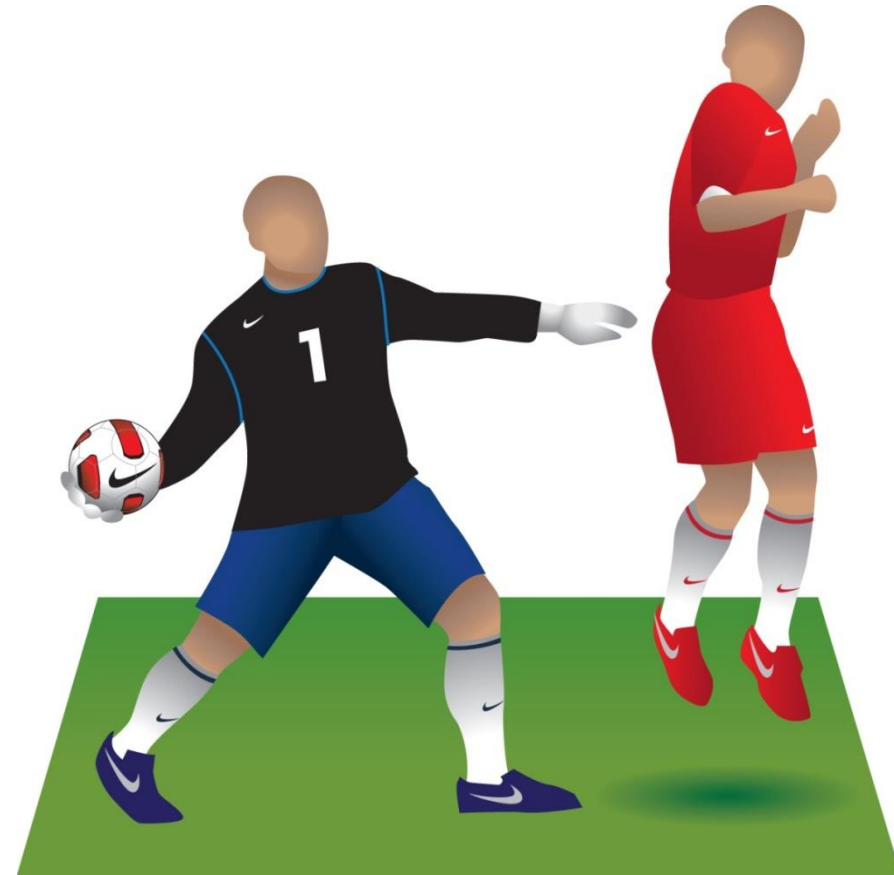
Preventing the goalkeeper from releasing the ball with their hands.

This includes if an opponent kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing the ball.



Preventing

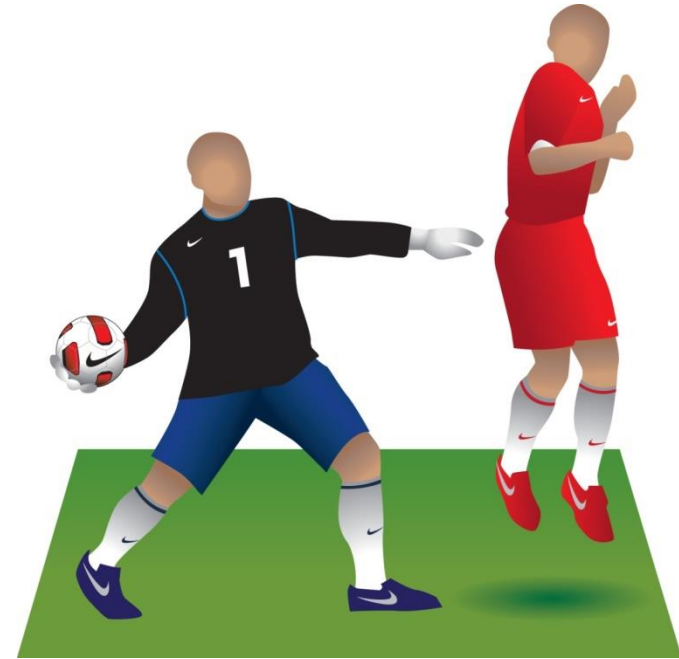
Also includes interfering with a goalkeeper punting or attempting to punt the ball into play.





Preventing

A goalkeeper cannot be challenged for the ball by an opponent when in control of the ball with their hands.



NOTE: A goalkeeper's hand is defined as any part of the hand (this may be the entire hand or just a single finger) or any part of the arm.



Preventing

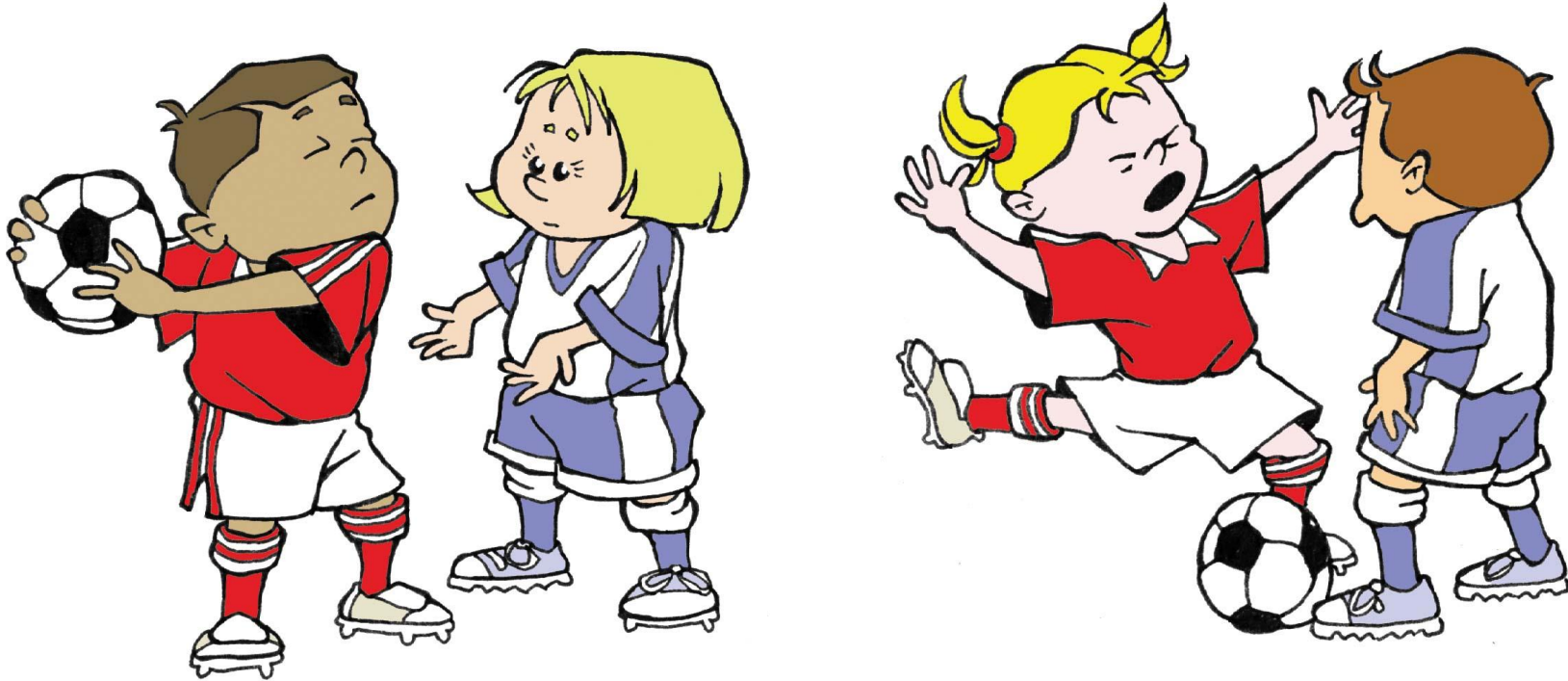
A goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball when:

- **the ball is between their hands or between the hand and any surface.**

Examples of this would be between a single hand and the ground or between a single hand and any part of their body;

- **holding the ball in the outstretched hand;**
- **bouncing the ball on the ground or throwing it in the air to themselves.**

(4) Other Offenses



Committing any offense not specifically listed in Law 12.

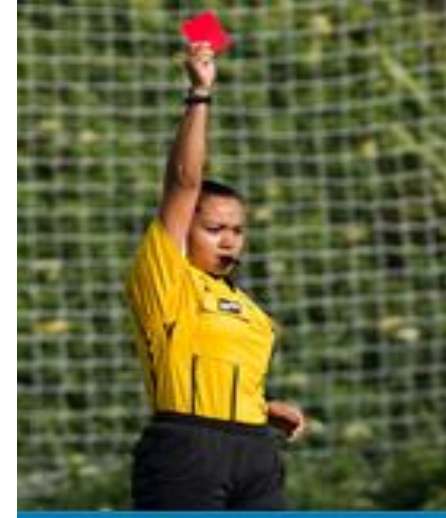


(4) Other Offenses

Is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures or other verbal offenses

Commits any other offense, not mentioned in the Laws, for which play is stopped to caution or send-off a player

(4) Other Offenses



If play is stopped solely for misconduct for which a yellow or red card will be given, the restart is an IFK provided the misconduct was committed by a player on the field during play.

Indirect Free Kick



The second group of four (4) indirect free kick (IFK) fouls are specific to the goalkeeper

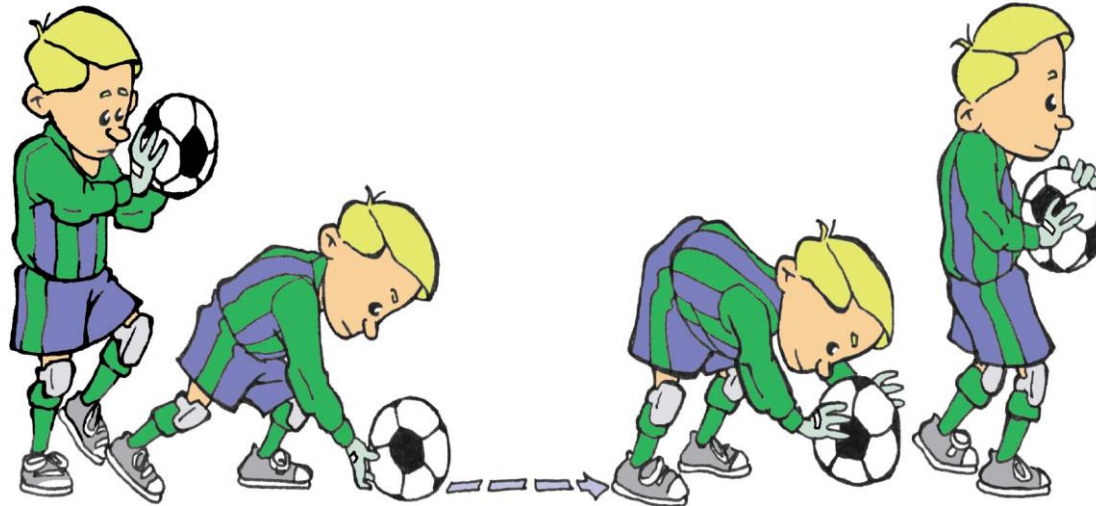
(5) 6-Seconds

Holding the ball with their hands for longer than six (6) seconds before releasing it.



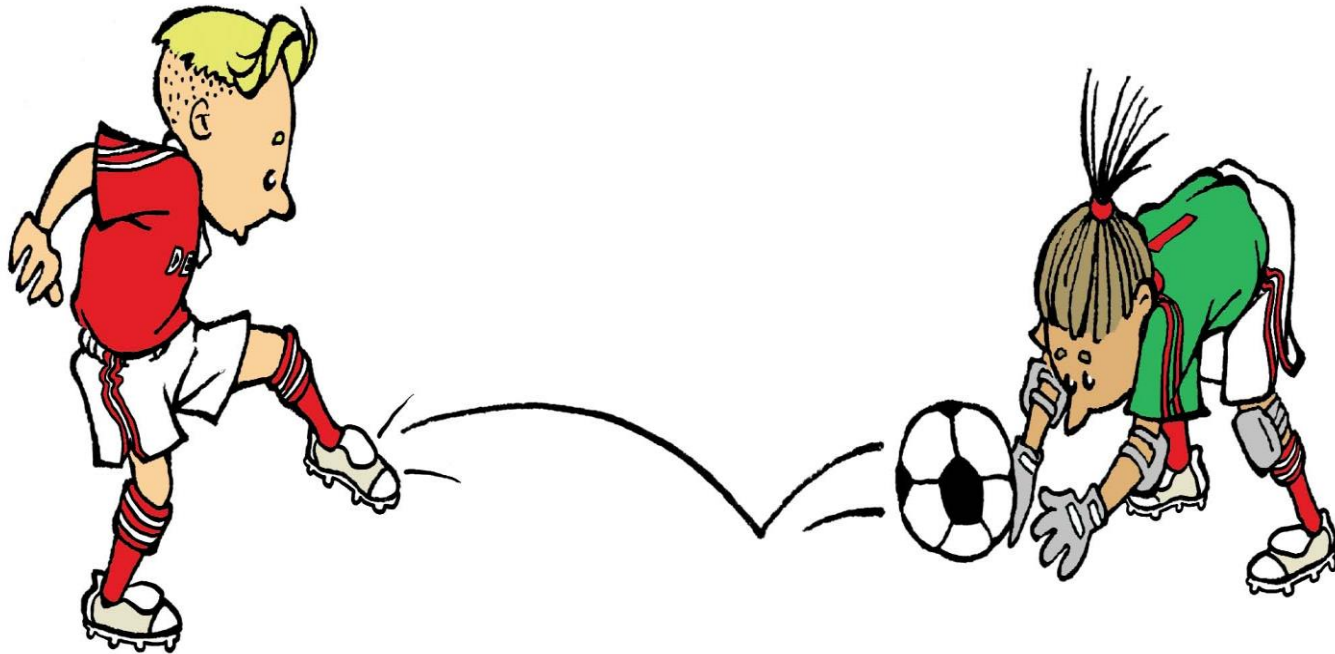
Note that because many small-sided and recreational games don't have goalkeepers or have players with no specific goalkeeper training, referees should only enforce this in instances of blatant time wasting.

(6) Release and Handle



Touching the ball again with their hands after having deliberately released the ball into play and before it has touched another player

(7) Kick by Teammate



Touching the ball with their hands after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate.

(8) Throw-in by Teammate



Touching the ball with their hands after it has been deliberately thrown-in to them by a teammate.



Free Kick Location

An IFK is taken from the place where the offense occurred, but there are two exceptions:

An IFK that is awarded to the defending team inside their own goal area may be taken from any point inside the goal area.

An IFK that is awarded to the attacking team for an offense committed inside the opponents' goal area is taken from the nearest point on the goal area line that is parallel to the goal line where the offense occurred.



Concussion Initiative

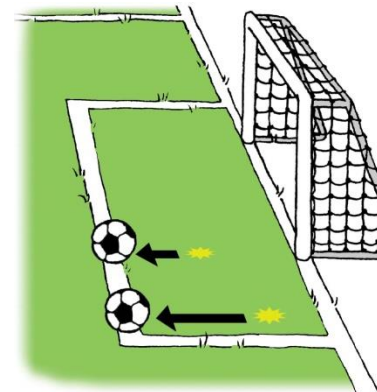
As part of the USSoccer Concussion Initiative, it is recommended that players 10-years old and younger not head the ball.



Concussion Initiative

If a player in a 11-U (9v9 or 7v7) or younger age group match **deliberately** heads the ball in a game with any portion of their head, an indirect free kick (IFK) is to be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the infraction.

If the heading occurs within the goal area, the IFK should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line (6-yds. away) at the point nearest to where the heading occurred.





Concussion Initiative

- Heading of the ball is allowed in 12-U and older age group matches without limitations.
- Referees are to enforce the heading restrictions by age group of the team in accordance with these specified rules.
- Referees will not be assessing the age of individual players on the field ... they will only enforce the rules for the age group.



Concussion Initiative

- If the ball makes contact with a player's head and the player has **not deliberately** played or attempted to play the ball, then play should continue as no infraction has occurred.
- *As a referee or an AR you must determine if ball and head contact was a **deliberate** act by the player.*
 - Ball to head ... not deliberate*
 - Head to ball ... deliberate*



Concussion Initiative

- A player shall **not** be cautioned nor sent-off for persistent infringement, as a result of a heading infraction.
- A player shall **not** be cautioned nor sent-off for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity, as a result of a heading infraction.



Concussion Initiative

- Advantage should not be implemented when a heading infraction occurs.
- This rule is primarily a **SAFETY** issue, which needs to be addressed immediately, such that it does not occur again.
- This is not an infraction where the player needs to be punished, i.e. with a caution or send-off. Again, it is a self-inflicted safety issue.



REVIEW QUESTIONS



Review Question

64. How should the referee restart play if a player carelessly kicks at an opponent in the center circle?

- A. Dropped ball
- B. Indirect free kick
- C. Direct free kick
- D. Penalty kick



Review Question

65. How should the referee restart play if a player commits a careless tackle on their own penalty area line?

- A. Dropped ball
- B. Indirect free kick
- C. Direct free kick
- D. Penalty kick



Review Question

66. How should the referee restart play if a goalkeeper plays the ball with their hands in the penalty area after it has been deliberately kicked by a teammate?

- A. Dropped ball
- B. Indirect free kick
- C. Direct free kick
- D. Penalty kick



Review Question

67. How should the referee restart play if a goalkeeper's hands cross the penalty area line into the penalty arc while holding the ball?

- A. Dropped ball
- B. Indirect free kick
- C. Direct free kick
- D. Penalty kick



Review Question

68. How should the referee restart play if a player commits an impeding offense inside their own penalty area?

- A. Dropped ball
- B. Indirect free kick
- C. Direct free kick
- D. Penalty kick



Review Question

69. What are the requirements of a DFK offense?

- A. Action committed by a player against an opponent or opposing team
- B. Action committed on the field of play
- C. Action committed while the ball is in play
- D. All of the above



Review Question

70. What is the correct restart if a player trips an opponent?

- A. Indirect free kick
- B. Direct free kick



Review Question

71. What is the correct restart if a player kicks an opponent?

- A. Indirect free kick
- B. Direct free kick



Review Question

72. What is the correct restart if a player pushes an opponent?

- A. Indirect free kick
- B. Direct free kick



Review Question

73. What is the correct restart if a player commits dangerous play?

- A. Indirect free kick
- B. Direct free kick