



**FIFA**

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## Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct (Part 1 - Fouls)



### Topics

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- Fouls
  - Basis requirements for a foul
  - Direct Free Kick
  - Indirect Free kick
- Careless, reckless, using excessive force
- Charging an opponent
- Holding an opponent
- Handling the ball
- Goalkeeper offences
- Dangerous play
- Impeding an opponent / obstructing
- Preventing the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands



The following conditions must be met for an offence to be considered a foul:

- **it must be committed by a player**
- **it must occur on the field of play**
- **it must occur while the ball is in play**

Remove any one of these conditions and the offence **is not and cannot be** a foul.

If the referee stops play due to an offence committed **outside** the field of play (when the ball is in play), play shall be restarted with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was located. \*

**G**roup of Six:

- **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**



## Fouls – Direct Free Kick

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For this group of six, the referee must consider **how** the action was done:

- **carelessly**
- **recklessly**
- **with excessive force**



## Fouls – Direct Free Kick

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Group of four:

- **tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball**
- **holds an opponent**
- **spits at an opponent**
- **handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)**

For this group of four direct free kick fouls, the referee is concerned only with **whether the action occurred**, not with how it was done.

**F**or fouls in both the group of six and the group of four:

- **restart with a direct free kick for the opposing team where the offence occurred\***
- **exception: if the offence was committed by a defender inside his own penalty area**
  - **penalty kick for the attacking team**

“**Careless**” means that the player has shown a lack of attention or consideration when making his challenge or that he acted without precaution:

- **no further disciplinary sanction is needed if a foul is judged to be careless**

“**Reckless**” means that the player has acted with complete disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, his opponent:

- **a player who plays in a reckless manner shall be cautioned**

“**U**sing excessive force” means that the player has far exceeded the necessary use of force and is in danger of injuring his opponent:

- a player who uses excessive force shall be sent off



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

**I**t is an offence to charge an opponent:

- in a careless manner
- in a reckless manner
- using excessive force

## I Inside the field of play:

- **disciplinary sanctions:**
  - no disciplinary action if careless
  - caution if reckless
  - send off if with excessive force or denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, using a manner considered to be careless or reckless
- **restart of play:**
  - direct free kick from where the offence occurred\*
  - penalty kick (inside own penalty area)

## O Outside the field of play:

- **disciplinary sanctions:**
  - caution if reckless
  - send off if using excessive force
- **restart of Play:**
  - dropped ball from where the ball was located\*



**H**olding an opponent includes the act of preventing him from moving past or around using the hand, the arms or the body.



**R**eferees are reminded to make an early intervention and to deal firmly with holding offences especially inside the penalty area at corner kicks and free kicks.

**T**o deal with these situations, the referee shall:

- **warn any player holding an opponent before the ball is in play**
- **caution the player if the holding continues**
- **award a direct free kick or penalty and caution the player if it happens once the ball is in play**

## Disciplinary sanctions:

- a caution for unsporting behaviour shall be issued when a player holds an opponent to prevent him gaining possession of the ball or taking up an advantageous position
- a player shall be sent off if he denies an obvious goalscoring opportunity by holding an opponent
- no further disciplinary action shall be taken in other situation of holding an opponent

## Restart of play:

- direct free kick from the position where the offence occurred\*
- penalty kick if the offence occurred inside the penalty area
- if a defender starts holding an attacker outside the penalty area but continues holding inside the penalty area, the referee shall award a penalty kick

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

The referee shall take the following into consideration:

- the movement of the hand towards the ball (not the ball towards the hand)
- the distance between the opponent and the ball (unexpected ball)
- position of the hand does not necessarily mean that there is an infringement
- touching the ball with an object held in the hand (clothing, shinguard etc.) counts as an infringement
- hitting the ball with a thrown object (a boot, shinguard etc.) counts as an infringement

## Disciplinary sanctions:

- there are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, e.g. when a player:
  - deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession
  - attempts to score a goal by deliberately handling the ball
- a player is sent off, however, if he prevents a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball. This punishment arises not from the act of the player deliberately handling the ball but from the unacceptable and unfair intervention that prevented a goal being scored

## Restart of play:



- direct free kick from the position where the offence occurred\* or penalty kick
- outside his own penalty area, the goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as does any other player
- inside his own penalty area, the goalkeeper cannot be guilty of a handling offence incurring a direct free kick or any misconduct related to handling the ball. He can, however, be guilty of several offences that incur an indirect free kick

## Four examples:



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- **attacker or defender handles the ball to gain control**
  - foul, no misconduct
- **defender handles the ball to break up attacking play**
  - foul, misconduct (caution for unsporting behaviour)
- **attacker handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal**
  - foul, misconduct (caution for unsporting behaviour)
- **defender handles the ball to prevent a goal**
  - foul, misconduct (send off for preventing the goal)
- **in all cases, direct free kick restart if outside own penalty area, penalty kick if inside**

There are four offences for which an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following offences:

- **takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it from his possession**
- **touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player**
- **touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate**
- **touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate**

**T**here four offences for which an indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

- **plays in a dangerous manner**
- **impedes the progress of an opponent**
- **prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands**
- **commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player**

**R**estart of play:

- **where the offence occurred\***
- **exception: if the offence was committed by a defender or an attacker inside the goal areas**



**G**oalkeepers are not permitted to keep possession of the ball in their hands for more than six seconds. The goalkeeper is considered to be in possession of the ball:

- while the ball is between his hands or between his hand and any surface (e.g., ground, own body) or
- while holding the ball in his outstretched open hand
- while in the act of bouncing it on the ground or tossing it into the air

**W**hen a goalkeeper has gained possession of the ball with his hands, it cannot be challenged by an opponent.

**R**estart of play:

- indirect free kick from where the offence occurred\*

**G**oalkeepers are not permitted to touch the ball with his hand inside his own penalty area in the following circumstances:

- if he handles the ball again after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player
  - the goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his hands or arms except if the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after he has made a save
  - possession of the ball includes the goalkeeper deliberately parrying the ball
- if he touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
- if he touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a thrown-in taken by a team-mate

**R**estart of play:

- indirect free kick from the position where the offence occurred\*



It is an offence for a player to prevent a goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands:

- a player must be penalised for playing in a dangerous manner if he kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- referees should make every effort to anticipate this offence, which tends to cause bad feelings and lead to retaliation, and to prevent its occurrence

It is an offence to restrict the movement of the goalkeeper by unfairly impeding him, e.g. at the taking of a corner kick.



Playing in a dangerous manner is defined as any action that, while trying to play the ball, threatens injury to someone (including the player himself)

It is committed with an opponent nearby and prevents the opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury.

The action becomes an offence only when an opponent is adversely affected.

A scissors or bicycle kick is permissible provided that, in the opinion of the referee, it is not dangerous to an opponent.



**P**laying in a dangerous manner involves no physical contact between the players.

**I**f there is a physical contact, the action becomes an offence punishable with a direct free kick or penalty kick.

**I**n case of physical contact, the referee should carefully consider the high probability that misconduct has also been committed.

**D**isciplinary sanctions:

- if a player plays in a dangerous manner in a "normal" challenge, the referee should not take any disciplinary action
- if the action is made with obvious risk of injury the referee should caution the player
- if a player denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity playing in a dangerous manner the referee should send off the player

**R**estart of play:

- indirect free kick from the position where the offence occurred\*
- if there is contact, a different offence has been committed, punishable by a direct free kick



## Impeding the Progress of an Opponent

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

**A**ll players have a right to their position on the field of play, being in the way of an opponent is not the same as moving into the way of an opponent.



## Impeding the Progress of an Opponent

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**S**hielding the ball is permitted.

**A** player who places himself between an opponent and the ball for tactical reasons has not committed an offence as long as the ball is kept in playing distance and the player does not hold off the opponent with his arms or body.

**I**f the ball is within playing distance, the player may be fairly charged by an opponent.



**I**nside the field of play:

- **disciplinary sanctions:**
  - send off if the action denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity
- **restart of play:**
  - indirect free kick from where the offence occurred\*

**O**utside the field of play:

- **disciplinary sanctions**
- **restart of play:**
  - dropped ball from where the ball was located\*



**I**f unfair physical contact between the player and the opponent occurs, the referee may consider two possibilities:

- **a holding offence, limiting the movement of an opponent by the defender (DFK)**
- **unfair charging offence, committed by the attacker (DFK)**