



DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS

An Educational Guide on Laws of the Game – Law 12

Fouls and Misconduct

And How They Relate to

Classic League Play - Suspensions, Hearings



THE REFEREE HAS THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE MATCH

Everyone has an opinion of “what happened”. However, the only neutral observers are the officials, the RR (Center Referee), SAR (Senior Assistant Referee), and the JAR (Junior Assistant Referee).

Their report is the OFFICIAL account of the match.

NCYSA receives their report electronically. Based on their statements, the D&A Chairperson will decide whether to open a Discipline and Appeals (D&A) file on the incident.



THE REFEREES ARE HUMAN.

Believe it or not, they want to do the best job they can, with minimal impact on the match.

They must make decisions on the field, on the run, during the game. Often while someone is yelling at them in disagreement.

Civility breeds civility. In soccer, you simply are NOT allowed to scream at the referee. It's called "Dissent" and a person can be cautioned, or possibly ejected from the match, if the outbursts are considered disruptive or abusive.



REFEREES WANT TO BE GOOD TOO.

As a coach, you take education courses and strive to increase your knowledge, and be a better coach. If you make a mistake as a coach, you learn from it and move on.

As a player, you train to minimize mistakes and maximize your talent. Not every touch is perfect, nor every decision clear in a match. But you learn from it and move on.

Referees are NOT different than players and coaches. They can (and will) make a mistake, but they learn from it and move on.

Have coaches and players moved on from the referee's mistake also?



LAW 12. FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

There are no time outs in soccer. No instant replays. The center Referee could run 5-6 miles in a 90-minute match (an AR could run 3-4 miles on a line). All while trying not to disrupt the flow of play.

The referee must officiate the match at real-time speed, making decisions based on the Laws of the Game – specifically Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct.



FOUL OR MISCONDUCT?

In order for an offense to be considered a foul, it must fall into these three categories:

- **A Foul must be committed by a player against an opponent.** *Misconduct can be committed by any individual (coach, player, spectator) against anyone else (teammate, opponent, coach, official, or spectator).*
- **A Foul must occur in the field of play.** *Misconduct can occur in or outside the field of play.*
- **A Foul must be committed while the ball is in play.** *Misconduct can occur while the ball is in or out of play.*



WHAT IS A FOUL?

Remember these three terms. Is it “Careless”, “Reckless”, or “Using Excessive Force”?

- **Careless.** The player has shown a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or that they acted without precaution. *No further disciplinary action is needed if a foul is judged to be careless.*
- **Reckless.** The player has acted with complete disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, his opponent. *The player should be cautioned.*
- **Excessive.** The player has far exceeded the necessary use of force and is in danger of injuring his opponent. *The player should be sent off.*



DIRECT FREE KICK

- 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.

A referee will determine if the definition of “careless, reckless or excessive” applies to these fouls.



DIRECT FREE KICK

- Tackles an opponent. (If in the opinion of the referee, results in a foul.)
- Holds an opponent.
- Spits at an opponent.
- Handles the ball deliberately (with the exception of the goalkeeper within their penalty area).

With these four fouls, the referee is only concerned IF they occurred, not how it was done (careless-reckless-excessive).



FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

There are seven (7) cautionable offenses.

1. **Unsporting Behavior**
2. **Dissent by Word or Action**
3. **Persistently Infringes the Laws of the Game**
4. **Delays the Restart of Play**
5. **Fails to Respect the Required Distance on a Restart**
6. **Enters or Re-Enters the Field of Play Without the Referee's Permission**
7. **Deliberately Leaves the Field of Play Without the Referee's Permission**

*If a player receives four (4) cautions in a seasonal year, they must sit out their next league match, on the bench, in street clothes, **regardless if NCYSA has sent an official notice.***



FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

There are seven (7) send off offenses.

- 1. Guilty of Serious Foul Play.**
- 2. Guilty of Violent Conduct.**
- 3. Spits at an opponent, or any other person.**
- 4. Denies the opponent a goal or a goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (does not pertain to a goalkeeper in their own penalty area).**
- 5. Denies a goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent by an offense punishable by a free kick or penalty kick.**
- 6. Uses offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.**
- 7. Receives a second caution in the same match.**



THE HONOR SYSTEM

When a team plays more than one match in a weekend (Friday-Saturday, Saturday-Sunday, etc.) the coach, players and team are on the HONOR SYSTEM.

If a player receives their fourth (4th) caution on a Saturday, and has another match on Sunday, they must sit out their Sunday match – in street clothes – on the bench. **NOTE: Have the referee note the sit out on the match report!**

The same is true with a Saturday ejection. NCYSA expects the team to honor the sit out on Sunday. If the official report indicates egregious misconduct (fighting, etc.) additional sit out games may be given later.



HOW ARE ADDITIONAL SIT OUTS DETERMINED?

You may refer to the NC Youth Soccer Discipline and Appeals Manual for detailed information on cautions, ejections, and suggested punishments.

Every ejection – whether it's for two-cautions in the same match or a straight send-off will carry an automatic one-game suspension.

The Chairperson of Discipline and Appeals will determine if additional sit-outs are warranted, based on the Official Record of the Match – the referee's match report.



WHAT TYPES OF MISCONDUCT COULD WARRANT ADDITIONAL SIT OUTS?

Additional sit outs are a case-by-case basis, based on the Official Record of the Match. In some instances, additional information is gathered from other individuals (SAR, JAR, coaches, etc.) before a determination is made.

The following are incidents that could warrant additional sit outs:



WHAT TYPES OF MISCONDUCT COULD WARRANT ADDITIONAL SIT OUTS?

- Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.
- Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
- Spitting on or at an opponent.
- Foul and abusive language directed at an individual/individuals.
- Referee abuse and/or assault (carries minimum penalties as determined by USSF).
- Any foul or misconduct in a manner that causes or could cause injury to an opponent.



NOT A DEFENSE FOR ADDITIONAL SIT OUTS

Striking or Attempting to Strike an Opponent

But the player never made contact with the opponent. They missed completely.

Whether a thrown punch connects or not, the intent to injure is the same, therefore could warrant additional sit outs.



NOT A DEFENSE FOR ADDITIONAL SIT OUTS

Kicking or Kicking at an Opponent

But the player never made contact with the opponent. They missed completely.

The same principle as throwing a punch and not making contact. The intent to injure is the same, therefore could warrant additional sit outs.



NOT A DEFENSE FOR ADDITIONAL SIT OUTS

Foul and Abusive Language Directed at an Individual or Individuals

The player was frustrated and just barked the profanity at no one in particular.

Depending on the situation, the loudness (did it carry to other fields, the spectators, etc.), the word that was yelled, and how the player handled the incident – additional sit outs could be given.



NOT A DEFENSE FOR ADDITIONAL SIT OUTS

Any Foul or Misconduct that Causes or Could Cause Injury to an Opponent

The player went to tackle the ball and was just a little late – but they were going for the ball and simply mistimed the tackle.

We understand. But if the Referee writes the report that the tackle was reckless and/or excessive, and it did or could have caused injury, then additional sit outs could be given.



REFEREE ASSAULT – REFEREE ABUSE

USSF Policy 531-9 Mandates Minimum Suspensions for Referee Assault and Referee Abuse. In Addition, a **MANDATORY** Discipline and Appeals Hearing **MUST** be held on the incident.

- Once Assault has been reported, the accused is automatically suspended from all NCYSA activities until the mandatory hearing has taken place. *Minimum Suspension – 3-months.*
- Once Abuse has been reported, the accused is suspended for a minimum of 3-matches. After the mandatory hearing, additional sit outs could be given.



REFEREE ASSAULT – REFEREE ABUSE

- Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee's uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.
- Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.
- Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; spitting at (but not on) the referee; or verbally threatening a referee.
- Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied or direct threat of physical harm. Such remarks as "I'll get you after the game" or "You won't get out of here in one piece" shall be deemed referee abuse.



THE REPORTING PROCESS

- Once the match is played, the referee enters the score into Soccer in College (SiC), along with his comments.
- If cautions or ejections occur, those are also entered into SiC. NCYSA Discipline and Appeals gets an email on every match entered.
- If there is an ejection, the Discipline and Appeals Chairperson will make a ruling on the number of games to sit out.
- If the incident is considered egregious, the Chairperson will gather more information.
- The State Office will send letters to the family of the player, Association President, Association Executive Director, Association Discipline and Appeals Liaison, and DOC.



CONTACT NC YOUTH SOCCER

- Discipline and Appeals Chairperson – M. Keith Price – kprice@ncsoccer.org
- Discipline and Appeals Administration – Mark Moore – mark@ncsoccer.org
- Visit the website – www.ncsoccer.org – Side Link: “D&A”
- Find the Discipline and Appeals Manual online – Side Link: “RULES and MANUALS”

