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Premier League and PGMO Competition Guidance Handbook

Season 2025/26



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Document Key

 Guidance

 Principles

 Considerations

Key information highlighted within the relevant section.

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In the contents, numbers can be
clicked to jump to relevant pages

IFAB

Reference to The International Football Association
Board (IFAB) Laws of the Game for football.

Premier League Principles

- Maintain high threshold for penalising challenges – not every contact is a foul – while protecting player safety
- Maintain high threshold for VAR intervention – ‘Referee’s Call’ will stand unless, in the opinion of the VAR, based upon the evidence readily available, that call is a clear and obvious error
- More efficient application of VAR, including use of Semi-Automated Offside Technology, to reduce VAR delays
- Improved in-stadium VAR experience (VAR announcements)
- Embed robust approach to improving participant behaviour on-field and in technical area, including focus on regulating public comments (*Captains Only Law*)
- Maintain stronger measures to reduce time-wasting and disruption tactics



1

VAR

Refereeing with VAR

Guidance

The 'Referee's Call' will stand unless, in the opinion of the VAR, based upon the evidence readily available, that call is a clear and obvious error

- VAR is not in place to re-referee incidents
- Clear evidence required to meet the high threshold for subjective interventions, taking into account what football expects
- Consistency of VAR is enhanced by applying a high threshold for intervention



Decision making process

**Decision No Goal
Offside**

6 Colwill



On-field decision
'Referee's Call'

Confirmation of
on-field decision

Referee's Call is a
'clear and obvious
error', check APP

VAR check

1. Goals
2. Penalties
3. Red cards
4. Mistaken Identity

Pitch side
monitor used for:
Subjective decisions

Pitch side monitor
not used for:

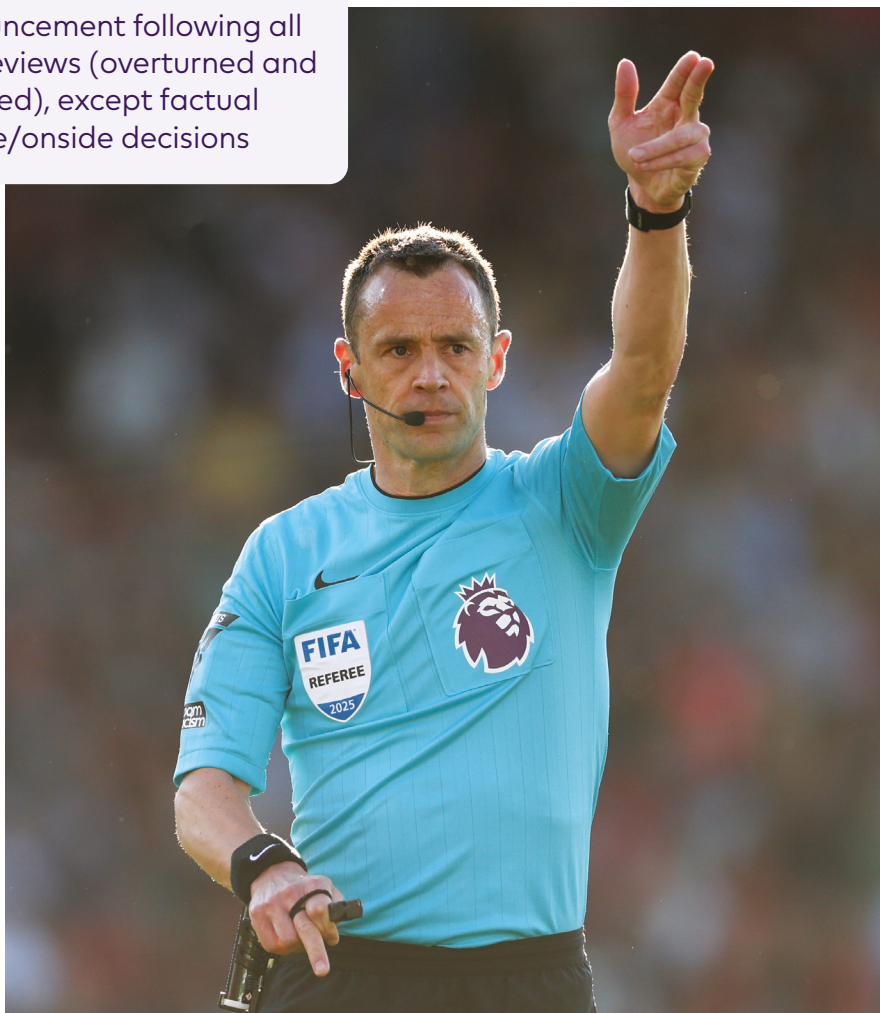
- Factual offsides
- Accidental handball by goal scorer
- Inside/outside penalty area
- Ball out of play
- Goalkeeper movement/encroachment
- Mistaken identity

Referee announces
the final decision
(except for factual
onside/offside)

Referee announcements

Guidance

Referees will make an announcement following all VAR reviews (overturned and retained), except factual offside/onside decisions



Semi-Automated Offside Technology

- Semi-Automated Offside Technology (SAOT) will continue to reduce delays to VAR checks for close onside/offside decisions
- SAOT graphics will be shown on giant screens in stadiums and on broadcast
- SAOT will not be used for clear offside decisions
- The VAR will have the option to manually draw lines as a back-up to the SAOT system if required. This process may be necessary in complex 'edge cases', for example where several players block the view of the ball



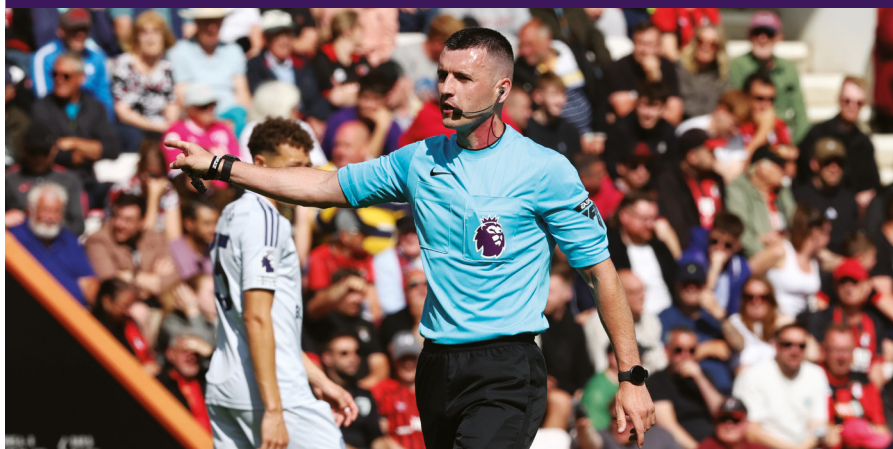


What VAR cannot do

- Achieve decision-making perfection
- Stop the debates about subjective calls
- Check second yellow cards
- Check restarts
- Recommend a review of the referee's decision without checking the attacking possession phase (APP)
- Provide access to the live referee/VAR audio

Attacking Possession Phase (APP)

The APP is limited to the phase of play that leads directly to:



- A goal
- Penalty incident
- Possible red card for a denial of an obvious goal scoring opportunity

Subjective

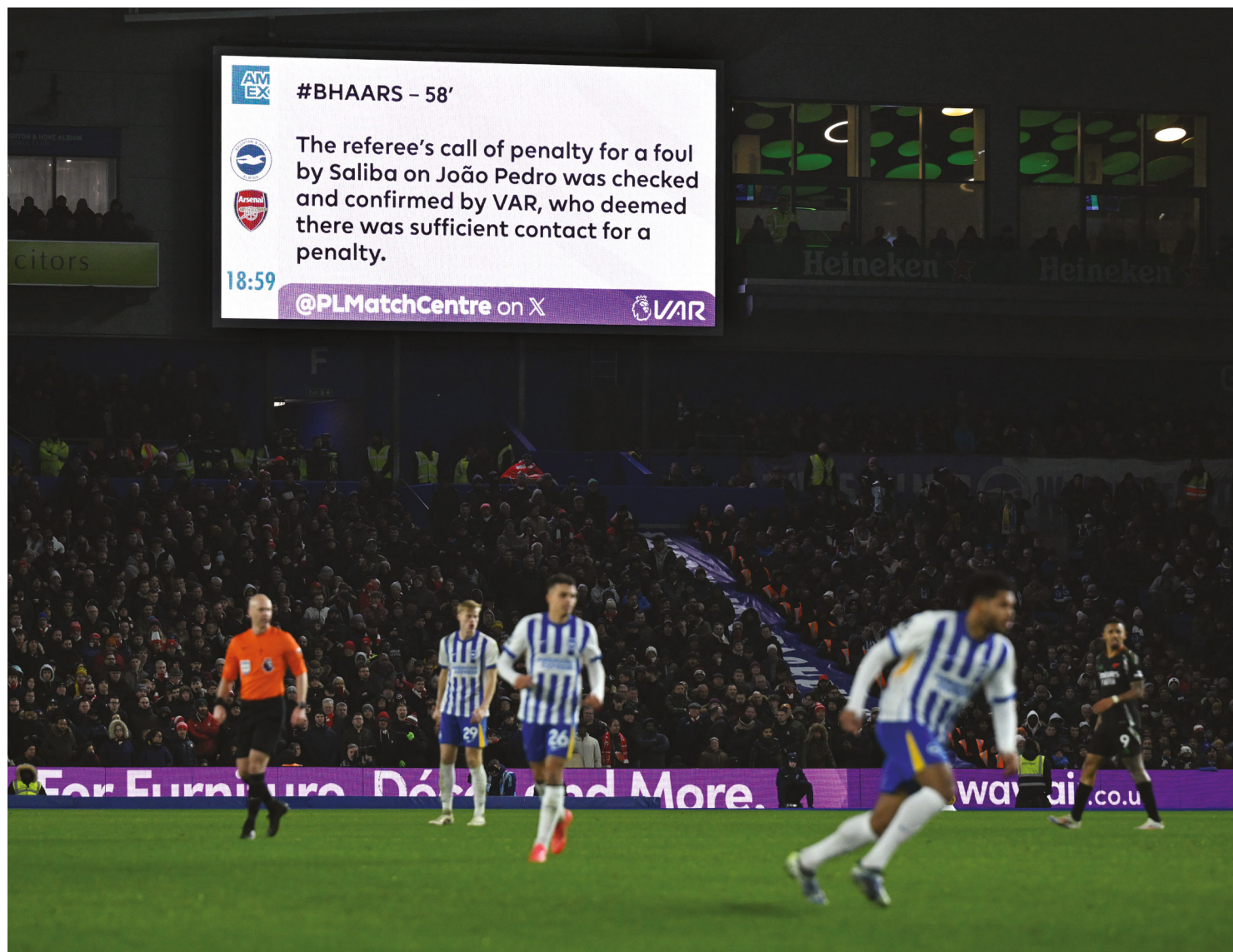
- No time limit or number of passes
- Not necessarily when the attacking team gained possession

Other considerations

- Ability of the defence to reset
- Momentum of the attack



Premier League Match Centre X account



Premier League Match Centre provides factual updates in-match to clarify key incidents, decisions and operational matters via the [@PLMatchCentre](#) account on X.

Posts include factual explanations of refereeing decisions, including the involvement of the VAR in the decision-making process.

[@PLMatchCentre](#) enhances the in-stadium VAR experience, improves fan education and aligns communication to the 'Referee's Call'.

2

Participant Behaviour Charter

Purpose of the Charter

- Shared responsibility across all participants and stakeholders to protect and promote positive image of the game
- To promote positive behaviour, deliver a long-term culture change and proportionately deal with unacceptable behaviour
- Appropriate FA regulatory powers
- Empower Match Officials to take appropriate disciplinary action



Core Principles

Respect

in your every action and interaction

Protect

your reputation, the reputation of your role and the reputation of the game

Fairness

promote positively through your contribution to the game

In practice:

Match Officials

empowered to take a robust approach

Captains

take responsibility for the behaviour of teammates

Scholars

mandatory refereeing courses to improve players' education and insight into officiating

PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOUR CHARTER

CORE PRINCIPLES

RESPECT - IN YOUR EVERY ACTION AND INTERACTION

PROTECT - YOUR REPUTATION, THE REPUTATION OF YOUR ROLE AND THE REPUTATION OF THE GAME

FAIRNESS - PROMOTE POSITIVELY THROUGH YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GAME

FOCUS AREAS

ON-FIELD

'CAPTAINS ONLY' APPROACH

- Recognises the important relationship between the referee and captain
- Additional management tool for referees to explain important decisions
- Captains are responsible for helping to direct their team-mates away from the referee
- Normal interactions between all players and the referee are still allowed

CONFRONTATION

- Running towards a match official to confront
- Confrontation / invasion personal space
- Clearly visible disrespectful action directed towards a match official
- Intrusive physical contact with a match official
- Discriminatory behaviour/language, aggression, offensive language/gestures

SURROUNDING

- Two or more players confronting a match official – yellow card and report to FA

TECHNICAL AREA

PRE-MATCH BRIEFING

- Manager / head coach expected to attend and participate

CONDUCT IN THE TECHNICAL AREA

- Managers, coaches and other technical area occupants must behave in a responsible manner
- Comply with the maximum number of staff and substitutes permitted by the competition
- Must not use technology to challenge any decision by the match officials
- Must remain within your own technical area during the match
- Must not enter the pitch to confront any match official at half-time or full-time

COACHING

- Only one person is permitted to stand at the front of the technical area and coach during the match
- A second person may stand but must remain very close to the technical area seating
- All conversations between the two standing must happen close to the technical area seating
- All other technical area occupants should remain seated



LOVE FOOTBALL. PROTECT THE GAME.

'Captains only'

Change to Laws of the Game

Law 3.10 (Team captain)

Only captain approaching the referee

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Principles

Normal interactions between all players and the referee are allowed and remain important

Referee may invite captain and provide an explanation (not justification) for an important decision

Captains are responsible for helping to direct their teammates away from the referee

When the captain is a goalkeeper, a nominated outfield player may be invited by the referee

In Practice



Referee to use clear 'stop' gesture with hand/arm

Referee to invite captain only – gesture to imaginary 'armband'

Referee to explain (not justify) an important decision

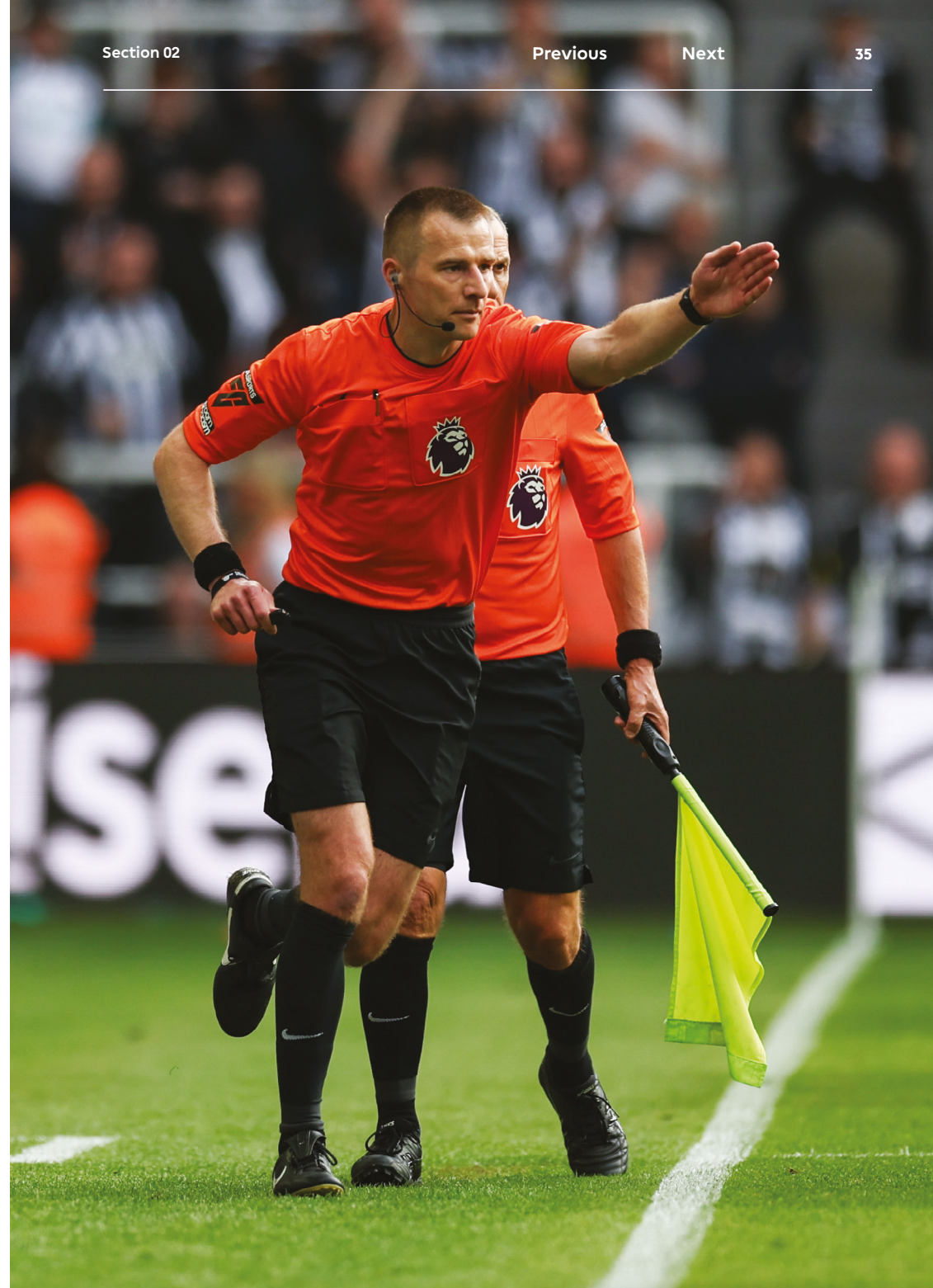
Unacceptable behaviour by players, including the captain, and/or a teammate ignoring a captain's request will continue to be dealt with robustly

Regulatory

- Participant Behaviour Charter replaces Technical Area Code of Conduct
- Dismissed Technical Area occupants not permitted to take a seat in the stand, or return to the field of play post-match, or conduct post-match media obligations
- FA Standard Charges to include touchline bans for confrontational behaviour towards match officials
- Automatic 1 match ban after 3 Technical Area cautions
- Any touchline ban includes prohibition from being on the touchline or field of play before or after the match – but can fulfil media obligations
- Technical Area policy to cover numbers and behaviour – FA E20 charge for non-compliance
- Financial penalties proportionate and reflect financial reality targeting serious and repeat offenders
- Technical Area cautions contribute towards the multi-player misconduct total – 6 or more in one match results in financial penalty
- Mandatory refereeing courses for Scholars to improve players' education and insight into officiating

Regulatory Public Comments

- Pre-match comments about Match Officials may be subject to disciplinary action even when the Match Official is not specifically named. This includes references to the VAR
- Post-match comments which criticise or disagree with the decisions of a Match Official are permitted but must be done in a respectful manner. Any comments which are not, or imply bias, question the integrity of a Match Official or are personal or offensive may be subject to disciplinary action
- Personal or offensive comments may include repeated negative or inflammatory comments regarding a Match Official's performance
- The above also applies to social media comments and covers all participants, including Clubs
- Sporting sanctions may apply to players and managers for media comment breaches



3

Updates for Season 2025/26

Goalkeeper 8 Seconds

Law 12.2

A corner kick is awarded if a goalkeeper controls the ball with their hand(s)/arm(s) for more than 8 seconds before releasing it

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Goalkeeper has clear control of ball

A goalkeeper is in control when:

- Holding the ball in hands/arms
- Ball is held between any surface
- Holding the ball on an outstretched open hand(s)
- Bouncing it on the ground
- Throwing it in the air

8-second countdown starts

The referee will countdown from 8 seconds, using a raised hand for the final 5 seconds

Exceeds 8 seconds = Corner kick

If the goalkeeper exceeds 8 seconds, the referee will award a corner kick on the side of the field nearest to the goalkeeper





Goalkeeper 8 Seconds

Refereeing practice

Referee decides when the count starts – sensible application

The count starts when the goalkeeper is in full control of the ball and completely unobstructed by any opponent

If the goalkeeper is starting to release the ball as the countdown ends do not penalise

If during counting process an attacking player pressures or prevents the goalkeeper releasing the ball, an indirect free kick against the attacking player will be awarded

1st offence:
corner kick
only



2nd offence:
corner kick +
warning



3rd offence:
corner kick +
yellow card

Holding

A holding offence occurs only when a player's contact with an opponent's body or equipment impedes the opponent's movement

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Principles

- Referees will continue to consider the nature and impact of the action
- 'Referee's Call' will continue to be used for checks made by VAR

Key terms

- **Material impact**
Opportunity for opponent to challenge for or play the ball
- **Extremeness of action**
Degree to which a holding action is a non-footballing act
- **Non-footballing action**
An action that is clearly not an attempt to challenge for or play the ball
- **Mutual holding**
Players engaged in simultaneous and similar actions – play on is the preferred outcome in most cases

Acts of holding that have clear material impact and/or are extreme non-footballing actions will be penalised.

Examples



- Sustained and/or impactful holding
- Clear impact on the opponent's opportunity to play or challenge for the ball
- Clear (extreme) non-footballing action with impact on the opponent's movement
- Not looking at the ball, only focusing on opponent and not challenging for the ball
- Holding an opponent with both arms



Blocking

Set-piece tactical trends

- Attacker initiating first contact to provoke defender reaction
- Actions to impact the 'offside line'

Considerations

All 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

High threshold for penalising contact (foul)

Clear action and impact required by the attacking player for an offside offence

Simulation

A robust approach to deal with actions intended to deceive the referee.

A player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour if they attempt to deceive the referee, e.g. by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (simulation)

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👉 Simulation considerations:

- A clear attempt to deceive the referee
- Clearly no contact by defender
- Attacker clearly instigates the contact
- Obvious exaggeration of minimal contact
- Clearly feigns injury (to attempt to get opponent a yellow or red card)
- Clearly exaggerates contact (to attempt to get opponent a yellow or red card)
- 'Third option' – play on/no action where there is reasonable doubt



Head Injuries

Guiding principles

- Promote player welfare – to ensure efficient assessment of a potential injury on the pitch and sufficient time is afforded for treatment off the field of play
- To deter players who request attention as a tactic to waste time or break momentum of the game
- To reduce delays to the restart of the game

Process

- For player welfare purposes, where a player has a suspected head injury and the referee stops the match, the referee will immediately signal for the doctor/physio to enter the pitch to assess the player
- The player will then leave the field and remain on the touchline for treatment after the game has restarted
- The player will return when given permission by the referee/fourth official



Inadvertent Interference

Law 9.2

If, without intending to interfere with play unfairly, a team official, substitute, substituted or sent-off player or player who is temporarily off the field of play (injury, adjusting equipment etc.) touches the ball while it is still in play but when it is clearly leaving the field of play, this is penalised with an indirect free kick; there is no sanction

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Inadvertent interference

=

Indirect free kick and no sanction

Clear/deliberate and impactful interference

=

Direct free kick (or penalty kick)
+
Red card if Manager/Head Coach or other technical staff



Dropped ball restarts

Law 8.2

If, when play was stopped:

- The ball was inside the penalty area, the referee drops it for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area
- The ball was outside the penalty area, the referee drops it for one player of the team that has or would have gained possession if this can be determined by the referee; otherwise, it is dropped for one player of the team that last touched it. The ball is dropped at its position when play was stopped

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Play stopped with ball
inside penalty area

=

Dropped ball
to goalkeeper

Play stopped
with ball outside
penalty area

=

Dropped ball, from
stopping point, to
team that has or
would gain possession



'Double touch' penalty kicks

Law 14

If the penalty taker accidentally kicks the ball with both feet simultaneously or accidentally touches the ball twice:

- The penalty is retaken if a goal is scored
- If the kick is unsuccessful an indirect free kick is awarded (unless the referee plays advantage when it clearly benefits the defending team)

If the penalty taker deliberately kicks the ball with both feet simultaneously or deliberately touches it a second time before it has touched another player:

- An indirect free kick is awarded (unless the referee plays advantage when it clearly benefits the defending team)

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Accidental
'double touch'

=

Penalty retaken

Deliberate
'double touch'

=

Indirect free kick

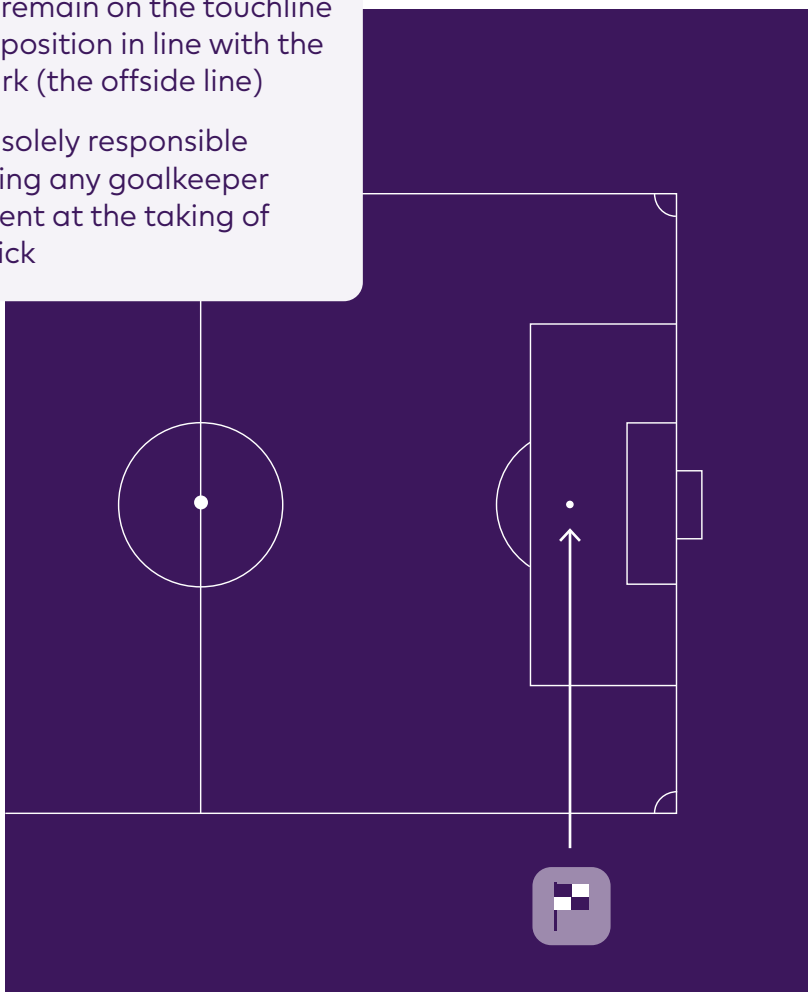


Assistant referee positioning at penalty kicks

Guidance

At a penalty kick the assistant referee will remain on the touchline and take a position in line with the penalty mark (the offside line)

VAR will be solely responsible for monitoring any goalkeeper encroachment at the taking of a penalty kick



4

Additional Guidance

Decision-making principles

Guiding principles

- Contact is an acceptable part of football – not every contact is a foul
- The level of contact and its impact
- Consider the defender's actions and attacker's actions (motivation)
- Emphasis of protecting player safety

Considerations

- Does the defender make a challenge?
- Is the ball played? By whom?
- Who makes the contact?
- Does the attacker instigate contact?

Actions of defender

Actions (motivation) of attacker

Degree of contact

Consequence of contact



Second yellow cards

- Following a first yellow card any subsequent foul will not always result in a second caution
- Referees should judge each foul following a caution independently, whilst also considering whether the player is persistently offending
- Clear yellow card offences should be sanctioned on-field, no matter whether the player is already cautioned



Effective playing time

Allowance for time lost

Allowance is made by the referee in each half for all playing time lost in that half through:



Substitutions

Assessment and/or removal of injured players

Wasting time

Disciplinary sanctions

Medical stoppages permitted by competition rules, e.g. 'drinks' breaks (which should not exceed one minute) and 'cooling' breaks (ninety seconds to three minutes)

Delays relating to VAR 'checks' and 'reviews'

Goal celebrations

Any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart (e.g. due to interference by an outside agent)

Calculation of additional time

More accurate calculation of additional time in line with IFAB guidance to enhance effective playing time.

Incident	2025/26 approach
Goal	Added time clock to start after 30 secs
Substitution	Exact time (play stopped to restart)
Injury	Exact time (play stopped to restart)
Penalty kick	Exact time (award to restart)
Delaying restart/time wasting (e.g. 'ceremonial' free kicks, goal kicks)	Referee to make allowance based on match events
Red card	Exact time (red card shown to restart)
VAR check/review delays restart	Exact time

Note: No double counting of time from a VAR Check/Review

Effective playing time

Delaying the restart

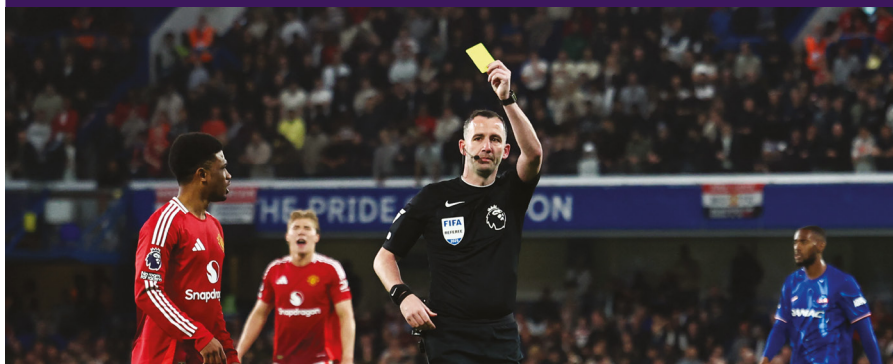
Caution (yellow cards)

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

- Delaying the restart of play
- Failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a dropped ball, corner kick, free kick or throw-in

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Threshold for a yellow card



Referees will be empowered by the game to take a more robust approach to dealing with clear/deliberate actions that are impactful in delaying the restart of play, e.g. interfering with the ball which clearly delays the restart of play or taking excessive time to restart play with a goal kick



Effective playing time

Managing Momentum



Players who require assessment on the pitch for a potential injury will receive treatment off the field of play – apart from in certain circumstances laid out in the Laws of the Game



After the restart of play, a period of time will be afforded for the player to be treated. The player will not return to the pitch before this



This approach promotes player safety, minimises any delay to the restart of the game and creates a deterrent to players who request attention as a tactic to waste time or break the momentum of the game



Return to the pitch requires the referee's permission. Return to the pitch may be delayed if the phase of play is in the vicinity of the player who is returning



In circumstances where the player declines the doctor/physio, if the player or teammate clearly delays or refuses to restart the game they will be issued a yellow card

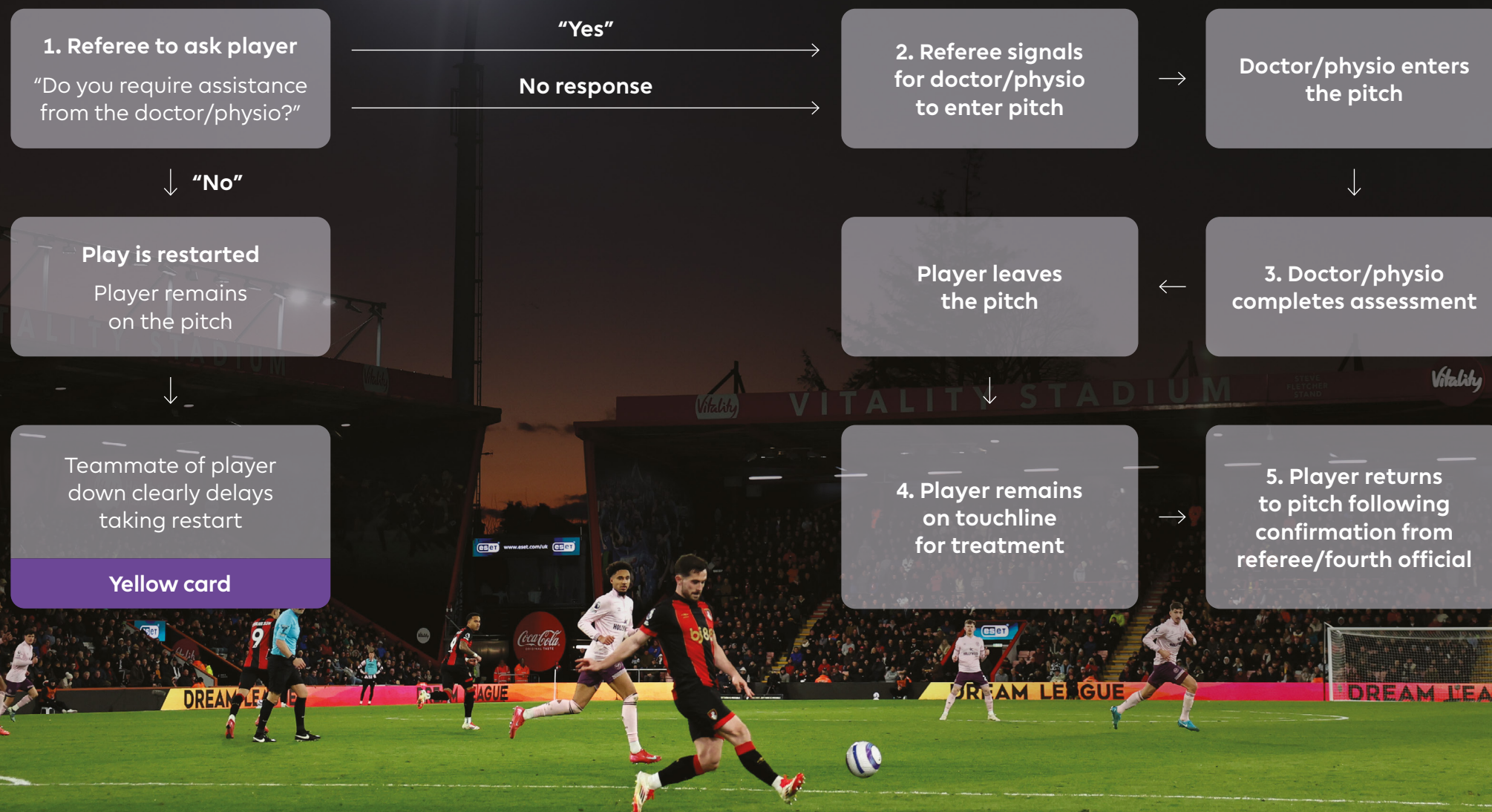
Exceptions



- A goalkeeper is injured
- A player is injured as the result of a physical offence for which the opponent is cautioned or sent off (e.g. reckless or serious foul challenge)
- A penalty has been awarded and the injured player will be the taker
- A goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need attention
- Players from the same team have collided and need attention

Effective playing time

Managing Momentum



Principle

Following their removal from the pitch and after the restart of play, a period of time will be afforded for the player to be treated.

Return to the pitch requires the referee's permission.

Handball

Interpretation

Principles

- Not every touch of a player's hand/arm with the ball is an offence
- Hand/arm position should be judged in relation to body movement in that particular situation
- Players are not expected to move with their arms by their side or behind their back



Interpretation

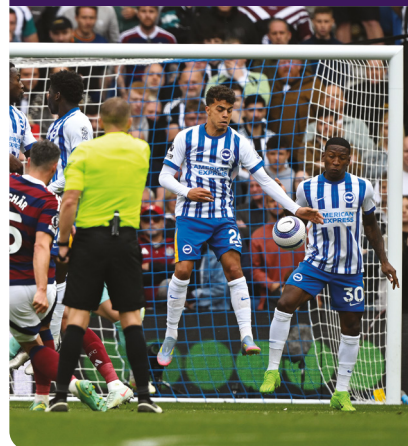
- A very clear deflection that results in a significant change in trajectory of the ball should carry greater weight than arm position when considering a handball offence
- However, touching another body part before contact with the arm does not automatically mean a handball cannot be penalised

No handball offence:

- Justifiable position/action
- Supporting arm
- Player plays ball onto own arm
- Clear change of direction when touched by same player
- Played by a teammate
- Close proximity



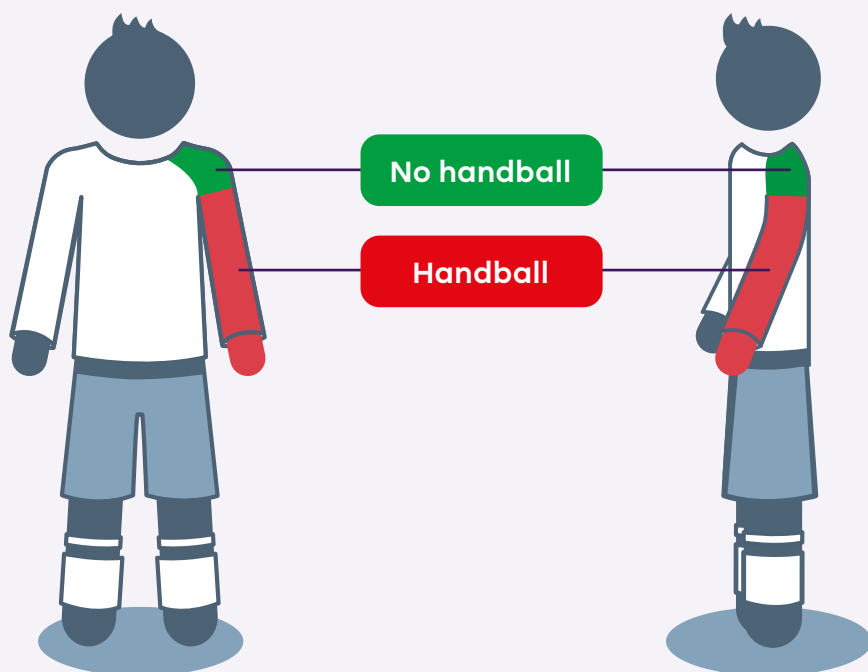
Handball offence:



- Deliberate movement of arm away from body
- Clear additional arm movement
- Arm position makes body bigger and is unjustifiable

Handball

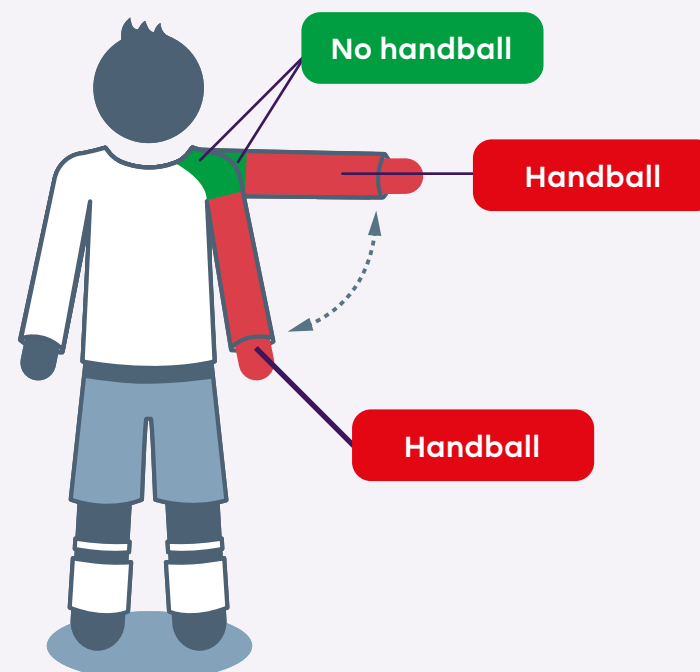
Definition



Definition of the hand/arm

For the purposes of determining handball offences, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit

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Handball

Accidental handball

It is an offence if a player scores in the opponents' goal:

- Directly from their hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper
- Immediately after the ball has touched their hand/arm, even if accidental

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Mitigating factors

- Goal not immediate
- Goal scored by a teammate
- Ball not entering goal; however action of a defender results in an 'own goal'



Offside

Delaying the flag

Delaying the flag/whistle for an offence is only permissible in a very clear attacking situation when a player is about to score or has a clear run into/towards the opponents' penalty area.

If the assistant referee delays a flag for an offence, they must raise the flag if the attacking team scores a goal,

is awarded a penalty kick, free kick, corner kick or throw-in, or retains possession of the ball after the initial attack has ended.

In all other situations, the assistant referee should decide whether or not to raise the flag, depending on the requirements of the game.

Delay

Clear opportunity to score or very obvious attacking phase and tight judgement for onside/offside



No delay



- Play clearly going out to the wing
- Possible attack - not a clear and immediate one
- Assistant referee is certain that attacker is clearly in an offside position, and they could not call it incorrectly

Offside

Deliberate play

IFAB and FIFA guidelines for distinguishing between 'deliberate play' and 'deflection':

'**Deliberate play**' is when a player has control of the ball with the possibility of:

Passing the ball to a teammate; or

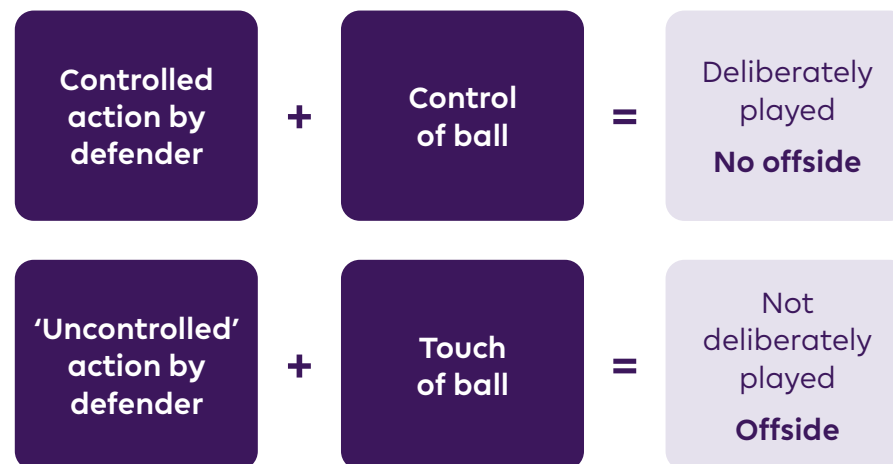
Gaining possession of the ball; or

Clearing the ball (e.g. by kicking or heading it)

If the pass, attempt to gain possession or clearance by the player in control of the ball is inaccurate or unsuccessful, this does not negate the fact that the player 'deliberately played' the ball

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Practical interpretation – 'deliberately played'

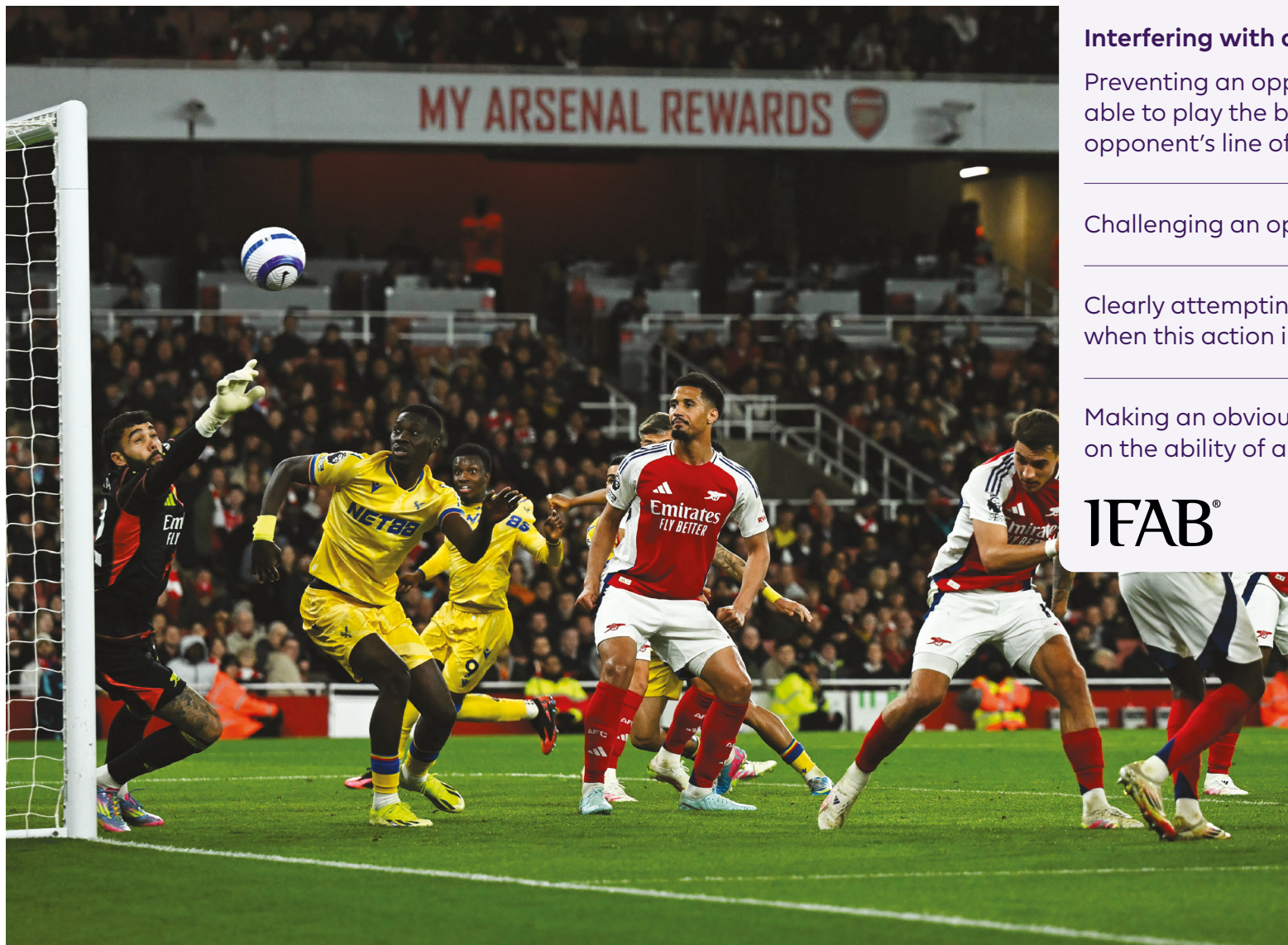


Considerations for determining 'uncontrolled action' (not deliberate play)

- The ball travelled from short distance and/or the player does not have a clear view of it
- The ball was moving quickly
- The direction of the ball was unexpected
- The player had limited or no time to coordinate their body movement, i.e. clearly a case of instinctive stretching or jumping, or a movement that achieved limited contact/control

Offside

Interference



A player in an offside position at the moment the ball is played or touched by a teammate is only penalised on becoming involved in active play by:

Interfering with an opponent by:

Preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or

Challenging an opponent for the ball or

Clearly attempting to play a ball which is close when this action impacts on an opponent or

Making an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball

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Serious foul play

Serious foul play is punishable by red card

A tackle or challenge that endangers the safety of an opponent or uses excessive force or brutality must be sanctioned as serious foul play.

Any player who lunges at an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, from the side or from behind using one or both legs, with excessive force or endangers the safety of an opponent is guilty of serious foul play.

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Considerations

- Speed
- Force
- Intensity (combination of both speed and force)
- Control
- Point of contact
- Extent of contact – full/limited, studs/side/top of boot

'Careless' challenge

Lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution

Foul



'Reckless' challenge

Disregards the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent

Yellow card

'Dangerous' challenge

Excessive force – using more force than is necessary

Red card



Serious foul play

Considerations for contact on the Achilles



- Full/direct contact on Achilles
- High intensity and/or high degree of danger
- High force and/or speed
- Excessive force and/or endangers safety

Considerations when contact is made after playing the ball



- Controlled action to play the ball
- Whether challenge is clearly reckless or involves excessive force/endangers safety
- Available space into which challenge is made
- Awareness of and consideration for opponent

High foot challenges

A high foot challenge may be considered:



Careless

- Limited (indirect) contact
- Low force
- Low speed
- Low awareness of opponent
- Low degree of danger
- High degree of control
- Sudden drop in height by opponent

Free kick only

Reckless

- Limited or partial contact
- Low/medium force
- Low/medium speed
- Limited awareness of opponent
- Sudden drop in height by opponent
- High degree of control
- Low/medium degree of danger

Yellow card

Excessive force

- Full contact
- High force
- High speed
- High point of contact
- Clear line of sight to opponent
- Fully extended leading leg
- High degree of danger

Red card

Contact after pass or shot towards goal



Considerations

- Where there is contact following an attacker either passing the ball or taking a shot at goal, where this contact is inevitable or a consequence of momentum, play should typically be allowed to continue
- Where the contact is either clearly reckless (yellow card) or serious foul play (red card) then a penalty kick and appropriate sanction is the expected outcome

Stopping a promising attack

Considerations

Speed

Player(s) clearly moving forwards with pace in their attack

Space

Clear 'green space' in front of attacker with the ball to progress into, pass or shoot, and/or 'green space' in front of other attackers who would likely receive a pass

Options/opportunity

Player with the ball has options to take on defender or has teammates to clearly pass the ball to

Yellow card

- Clear possibility of becoming a goal-scoring opportunity, and not simply every forward movement
- Blatant/cynical offences
- Possible DOGSO with consideration(s) missing



Denying a goal or an obvious a goal scoring opportunity

Considerations for DOGSO



- Distance between the offence and the goal
- Likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
- General direction of the play
- Location and number of defenders

Offence committed outside the penalty area:

Red card

Offence committed inside the penalty area:

'Non-deliberate' foul
(if the offence was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball)

=

Penalty kick
+
Yellow card

'Non-deliberate' handball
(e.g. 'unnaturally bigger')

=

Penalty kick
+
Yellow card

'Deliberate' foul
(e.g. holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball etc.)

=

Penalty kick
+
Red card

'Deliberate' handball

=

Penalty kick
+
Red card

Violent conduct

Considerations

A player when not challenging for the ball will be sent off if they:

Use or attempt to use excessive force or brutality against an opponent, teammate, team official, match official, spectator or any other person, regardless of whether contact is made

Deliberately strike an opponent or any other person on the head or face with their hand or arm, unless the force used was negligible

Make a clear forward movement with their head resulting in forceful contact with the head or face of an opponent or any other person, unless the force used was negligible

Clearly make forceful contact by holding or grabbing the throat/neck area, or gouges the eye of an opponent or any other person

Clearly pulling the hair of an opponent with force



Challenges on goalkeepers

Guiding principles

- All 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
- High threshold for penalising contact (foul)
- Clear action and impact required for a foul

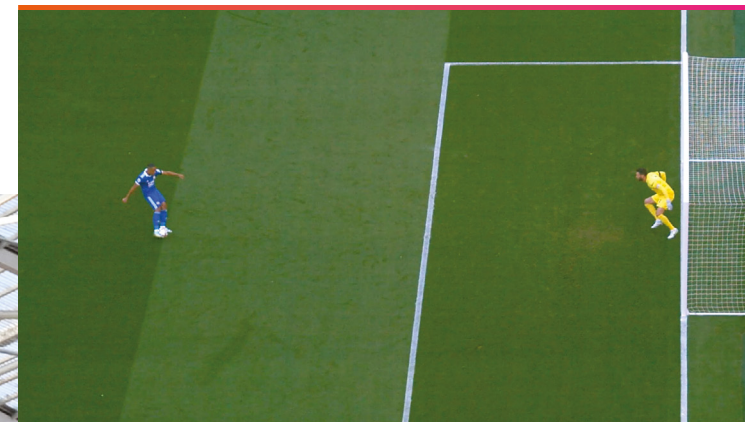
Considerations

- Attackers who only focus on the goalkeeper and pay no attention to challenging for the ball, and contact clearly impacts the ability of the goalkeeper to make a save or challenge for the ball
- Unfair contact usually involves no attempt to challenge for or play the ball and/or a non-footballing action
- Where both the attacker and goalkeeper are involved in simultaneous and/or similar actions, play should be allowed to continue



Penalty kicks

Position of the goalkeeper



When the ball is kicked, the defending goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, in line with, or behind, the goal line

If the goalkeeper saves the penalty and does not have at least part of one foot touching, in line with, or behind, the goal line at the moment the ball is kicked, the penalty must be retaken

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Penalty kicks

Encroachment

Position

A player's position at a restart is determined by the position of their feet or any part of their body which is touching the ground except as outlined in Law 11 – Offside

In practice:

When the ball is kicked, if a player has a foot on the penalty area line (which includes the 'arc') they are encroaching

To be penalised they must have a material impact on the outcome of the kick. e.g. a defender who encroaches clearly prevents a goal being scored, or impacts the ability of an opponent to play the ball

No impact = no offence

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Penalty Area

Not encroaching



Penalty kicks

Encroachment



Encroachment with impact examples:

- Defender clearly distracts/impacts the kicker
- Attacker clearly distracts/impacts the goalkeeper
- Ball rebounds and the encroaching defender prevents a goal or goal-scoring opportunity
- Ball rebounds and the encroaching attacker scores, attempts to score or creates a goal-scoring opportunity

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Outcomes of encroachment at penalty kicks

	Goal	No goal
Encroachment by an attacking player	If impact: penalty is retaken If no impact: goal stands	If impact: indirect free kick to defending team If no impact: no retake
Encroachment by a defending player	If impact: goal stands If no impact: goal stands	If impact: penalty is retaken If no impact: no retake
Encroachment by attacking and defending players	If impact: penalty is retaken If no impact: goal stands	If impact: penalty is retaken If no impact: no retake

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Match Day Protocols

Multiball protocol

The objective of multiball is to minimise interruption to the match when the ball goes out of play by ensuring that replacement balls are readily available to players if required.

There will be fifteen match balls in use:

One ball in play



One ball with the Fourth Official



Thirteen replacement balls distributed evenly around the pitch, including two behind each goal line



When the match ball goes out of play, players must either:

Retrieve the original match ball themselves to restart play, or

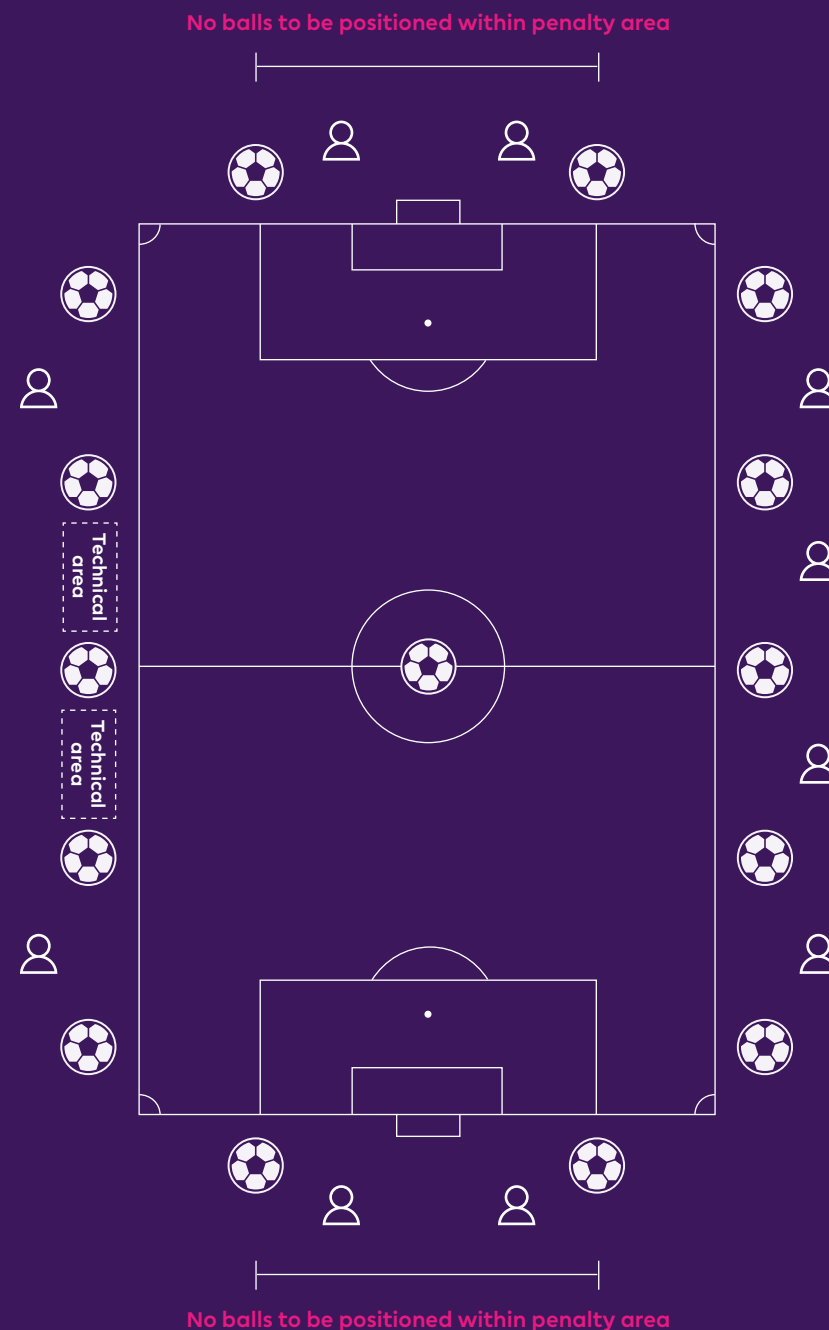
Go to the nearest cone to collect a replacement ball themselves to restart play

Ball Assistants are not permitted to provide a replacement ball, or return the original match ball, to any outfield Players

Ball Assistants located behind each goal are permitted to provide a ball only to the goalkeeper of the team who will restart play via a goal kick

Multiball protocol

- The cones and the Ball Assistants must remain in the same positions for the entirety of the League Match
- Participants (including but not limited to players, substitutes, occupants of the Technical Area or any other Club personnel) must not interfere with the multiball system, the match ball or the replacement balls at any time
- The use of the multiball system will be managed by the referee who can, if he/she deems it necessary, order that the multiball system be altered or deactivated, and a single ball system be implemented for the remainder of the League Match
- Any failure to follow the multiball protocol will be referred to the Premier League for further investigation and possible regulatory action under the Premier League Rules
- In the event that an additional ball enters the field of play during the match, the referee will stop play only if the additional ball interferes with play. The referee shall have the additional ball removed at the earliest opportunity (pursuant to Law 5.3 of the IFAB Laws of the Game)
- The replacement balls located behind each goal line must be positioned in line with the 18-yard box



Substitutes warm up protocol



- Not more than five substitute players of each Club can warm up at the same time
- The warm up should be conducted to the left of the Technical Areas, opposite Assistant referee 2

Substitution procedure for U18 players

The player being substituted receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless already off the field, and must leave by the nearest point on the boundary line unless the referee indicates that the player may leave directly and immediately at the halfway line or another point (e.g. for safety/security or injury)

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In line with safeguarding protocols, any U18 player being substituted in a first team match may go directly to the halfway line, and not have to leave the field of play by the nearest point on the boundary line.

U18 players are highlighted by an asterisk (*) on official Premier League team sheets.

Process

- The team making the substitution will verbally inform the 4th official that the player leaving the pitch is U18
- The team making the substitution will highlight the player is U18 on substitute card given to the 4th official
- 4th official to inform referee that the player being substituted is U18
- 4th official informs the opposition technical area that the player is U18 (expectation management)
- Substitution process followed and completed

Concussion substitutions

- Each team is permitted to use a maximum of one 'concussion substitute' per match
- A 'concussion substitute' may be made regardless of the number of substitutes already used
- When a 'concussion substitute' is used, the opposing team has the option to use an 'additional substitute' for any reason
- If a team decides to make a 'concussion substitute', the Fourth Official is informed by using a green substitution card



Pre-match

Warm up protocol

Unless otherwise mutually agreed between both participating Clubs and the League, the following procedures shall be adopted by players and Officials.

The pitch must only be used for warming up or warming down by players named on the team sheet plus an additional goalkeeper who, whilst not named on the team sheet, would have otherwise been eligible to participate in the match.

Pre-match warm up timings

- Warm ups must commence no earlier than 60 minutes before kick-off for goalkeepers and 45 minutes before kick-off for outfield players
- Warm ups shall not last for more than 45 minutes for goalkeepers and 30 minutes for outfield players
- All players must be clear of the pitch 10 minutes before kick-off

Pre-match warm up activities



- All warm up activities must be completed in the areas of the pitch as directed by the Pitch Map produced by the Home Club
- Portable goals must be used for goalkeeping and outfield player drills
- The main goal area may be used for one single continuous period of 15 minutes, comprising:
 - A 10 minute period of use by goalkeepers only, plus
 - An additional 5 minutes with outfield players

Post-match

Warm down protocol



Warm downs must last no longer than 20 minutes



No footballs are permitted during warm downs



Warm downs must only take place in the areas of the pitch as directed by the Pitch Map produced by the Home Club



Warm downs must not take place inside either penalty area





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