

Football Infringements

The following are things that a player (or a team) may get penalised for before or during a game.

Kicking the ball in play: With the exception of the kick-off, the ball is not allowed to be deliberately kicked in general play. The referee, at his/her discretion, can give a penalty and award the ball to the non-offending side. However, this rule is not strictly enforced, with the referees tending to let play continue. Generally, an on-the-spot caution is applied. It's a severe stickler to the rules who hands out cards for this offence.

Fielding more players than allowed for a position: With the amount of scrutiny placed on sides by official organisations, and by the media, it is exceedingly rare that a side would accidentally, or intentionally exceed the maximum amount of players for a position, like, for example, fielding five strikers in a side. If it does happen, teams are fined, and may be subjected to a loss of competition points, or, in the case of tournaments, may have winnings forfeited and be booted out of the event.

Fielding more than sixteen players in a match: The only time that this should happen, is when both captains have agreed to raising the limit for the match. Occasionally it does happen, mostly in league matches, where a side may take advantage of players having look-alikes or twins. If caught, a side can expect to lose competition points, and be fined. They may even be booted out of the competition.

Having too many players on the field: Generally, this rarely happens in a match. However, if, at some point, the referee (or linesman) notices that one (or both) sides has too many players on the field, he simply halts play, and informs the captain of the offending team that he has to remove the excess players from the pitch before the match can continue. If a side persists, or refuses to comply, the referee can red card random player(s) until the numbers have been sufficiently reduced. They can even call the game off, and award the result to the non-offending side. The offending side may even be fined as well, lose competition points, and be kicked out of the competition.

Fouling fallen players: In most leagues and competitions, attacking players that are already down is considered very unsportsmanlike, though in some competitions, fouling without caution is still permitted. If spotted, regardless as to whether the player was injured or not, the referee is well within his right to immediately send the offending player from the pitch. In the case of a gang foul (where multiple players attack a fallen player) the main offender, or the person deemed to be the main offender, is the one punished.

Attacking players that have already scored: Some players, if they get the opportunity, cannot refuse a cheap shot on an opposing player that has already scored. The referee, if he deems it necessary, can send the offending player from the field, but usually a yellow card suffices, or even a stern caution.

Attacking players after a half has been finished: This is considered as severe an offence as attacking a player that has already scored, seeing on both occasions play has already stopped. The referee can send the player off, but like the other offence, a yellow card or a stern caution generally suffices.

Carrying weapons onto the pitch: Rules have long been in place forbidding the carrying of weapons onto the pitch. This, though, has not stopped some players sneaking well-hidden weapons into a match, the usual favourites being stilettos, coshes, and knuckledusters. Match officials are not permitted to search players before they come onto the pitch, but if they suspect a player is hiding a weapon, they can get a club or tournament official to search the player. On most occasions, the only time a referee discovers that a player is carrying a weapon, is when they use it during the match. It's a very lenient (or biased) referee that permits a weapon wielding player to stay on the pitch. There is usually no caution - it's a straight red card. There have even been occasions where players have been red carded before they even take to the field when they have been caught.

Having spikes on armour or clothing: In the early years of the game, all sorts of protective clothing was being worn. However, spikes on armour, like weapons, were soon forbidden, except in the case of helmets, provided that they were kept to a “tasteful” length (generally not larger than your average big toe). Naturally, modern equipment makers generally find ways to reinforce gloves, or gauntlets, giving them small studs and reinforced areas, which is considered acceptable. Even boots will have reinforced toes, and the permitted hobnailed soles, which are designed to give a player better traction on a pitch, will still do damage. Match officials are well within their right to inspect player's kit before matches. If spikes are discovered on players clothing, it's a simple case of asking the offending player to remove the item in question before they can come onto the pitch. Players who have natural horns, are obviously excused, though some competitions have called for horned players to have their protrusions capped, or the points filed down.

Swearing at the referee or linesman: At all times, match officials are meant to be treated with respect, after all, they have a difficult job to perform. If a player swears at a referee, at the very least they can expect a caution in return, though most are inclined to reward the foul-mouthed player with a yellow card.

Assaulting the referee or linesman: If a player can get a yellow for swearing at an official, then assaulting one definitely earns them a red. If the referee is incapacitated as a result of the attack, one of the linesmen, or a competition official, can dismiss the offending player. In severe cases, the match can be abandoned, or victory awarded to the non-offending side. The player(s) who assaulted the official can face a life-time ban from the game, and/or be brought up on charges of assault by the local watch.

Illegal Procedures: Occasionally, something may happen during a match that isn't covered by conventional rules. It may be as highly unusual as a player suddenly mutating, or acquiring a power that they didn't have before, or something more plausible such as a player deliberately stomping on a ball. Whatever the case, the referee, using his judgement, may decide if the matter warrants a warning, or a yellow or red card.

Time Wasting: Sides, often after scoring, may take too long to get back into position and restart play, in a blatant effort to run down the clock. If the referee believes that this is the case, he/she starts by warning the offending side. If it continues, they can stop the clock, have additional time added on, or their captain may even be yellow or red carded, depending on the severity of the offence. In some circumstances, sides have been fined.

Illicit Substances: Performance enhancing (or disabling) substances are not that hard to come by. Whilst it is acceptable to give a player a special concoction to get them back onto the pitch after being knocked out, or to aid them to quickly recover from injury, giving them performance enhancing substances or “nobbling” a few opposing players is definitely against the rules. There have even been occasions where players have been fatally poisoned prior to or during a match. However, though most sides comply with the rules, there are a few that take advantage of the fact that this is facet of the game isn't being tightly controlled. If an official suspects that a player has been given an enhancing, or disabling substance, they can ask that the player be tested (the technology currently available doesn't usually pick up on all possible substances that could be used on a player) with positive results ensuring that enhanced players to be removed from the game, and offending sides to be fined, stripped of competition points, or even booted out of the competition. If the circumstances allow it, offenders can be brought up on criminal charges.

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