



U.S. Soccer's Advice to Referees is meant to provide officials of all levels with guidance on the interpretation and application of the Laws of the Game and to create consistent guidelines and procedures for officials to follow in all affiliated competitions.

Cautionable and Sending-Off Misconduct

7 Cautionable Offenses and Their Report Codes

Cautionable offenses require that a player, substitute or substituted player be shown a yellow card.

A player is cautioned for committing any of the following seven offenses:

1. Unsporting behavior (UB)

- Commits a direct free kick foul in a reckless manner (charging, pushing, tripping)
- Commits a direct free kick foul in a reckless manner while tackling for the ball from any direction
- Commits a tactical foul designed to interfere with or impede an opposing team's attacking play (pushing an opponent, blatantly holding an opponent or an opponent's uniform, handling the ball deliberately)
- Handles the ball deliberately to score a goal
- Commits an act which, in the opinion of the referee, shows a lack of respect for the game (aggressive attitude, inflammatory behavior, or taunting)
- Fakes an injury or exaggerates the seriousness of an injury
- Fakes a foul (dives) or exaggerates the severity of a foul
- Interferes with or prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands into play
- Verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart
- Unfairly distracts or impedes an opponent performing a throw-in
- Changes jerseys with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission (both players must be cautioned)
- Engages in trickery to circumvent the goalkeeper's limitation on handling the ball played from a teammate's foot (the defender who initiates the "trickery" is cautioned, the decision does not require that the goalkeeper actually handles the ball, and the misconduct can occur during dynamic play or at a restart)
- Makes unauthorized marks on the field
- Removes the jersey or covers the face with a mask or similar device after scoring a goal
- Uses an artificial aid to unfairly assist play (leaning on the shoulders of a teammate, using an article of clothing to avoid direct contact with the ball, moving or removing a corner flag, hanging on a crossbar)
- Uses tobacco or tobacco products in any form in the area of the field
- At a penalty kick, feints to kick the ball once the run-up to the ball has been completed
- Participates in an orchestrated pattern of fouls directed at one or more opponents

2. Dissent by word or action (DT)

- Verbally or through action disputes or shows contempt for an official's decision
- If playing as a goalkeeper, leaves the penalty area (not beckoned by the referee) to engage an official in debate regarding a decision



3. Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game (**PI**)
 - Repeatedly commits fouls
 - Violates Law 14 again, having previously been warned
 - If playing as goalkeeper, wastes time, having previously been warned or penalized for this behavior
4. Delaying the restart of play (**DR**)
 - Kicks or throws the ball away or holds the ball to prevent a free kick restart by an opponent
 - Kicks or throws the ball away or holds the ball to prevent a throw-in or corner kick by an opponent
 - Fails to restart play after being instructed to do so by the referee or hinders the restart of play
 - Excessively celebrates a goal
 - Fails to return to the field upon conclusion of the midgame break, fails to perform a kick-off when signaled to do so by the referee, or fails to be in a correct position for a kick-off
 - Provokes a confrontation by deliberately taking possession of a ball which is to be put back into play by the opposing team
5. Failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in (**FRD**)
 - Does not retire at least ten yards away from an opponent's free kick
 - Does not retire at least ten yards away from an opponent's corner kick
 - Does not retire at least two yards away from an opponent's throw-in
6. Entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission (**E**)
 - After having previously been instructed to leave the field to correct equipment
 - After having previously been given permission by the referee to leave the field due to an injury
 - After having previously been instructed to leave the field due to bleeding or blood on the uniform
7. Deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission (**L**)
 - To place an opponent in an apparent offside position
 - Other than through the normal course of play

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned for committing any of the following three offences:

1. Unsporting behavior (**UB**)
2. Dissent by word or action (**DT**)
3. Delaying the restart of play (**DR**)

If a substitute who enters the field of play without the permission of the referee is to be cautioned, the official reason given for the card must be "unsporting behavior" – only a player can be cautioned using the "entering the field" illegally reason in the match report.



7 Sending-Off Offenses and Their Report Codes

Sending-off offenses require that a player, substitute or substituted player be shown a red card.

A player, substitute or substituted player is sent off for committing any of the following seven offenses:

1. Serious foul play (**SFP**)
2. Violent conduct (**VC**)
3. Spitting at an opponent or any other person (**S**)
4. Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to the goalkeeper within his or her own penalty area) (**DGH**)
5. Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick (**DGF**)
6. Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures (**AL**)
7. Receiving a second caution in the same match (**2CT**)

Although the International Board has stated that all seven sending-off offenses also may be committed by a substitute or substituted player, US Soccer has indicated that any violent act by a substitute or substituted player should be categorized as "violent conduct" in the match report.