



# SOCCER REFEREES 101

## HOW TO WRITE A MISCONDUCT REPORT



\* If you show the card, you must do the paperwork! The paperwork is as much a part of the game as calling fouls. Team, coach, and player discipline cannot be done properly unless you turn in ALL misconduct reports promptly and correctly.

### **WHAT DO I NEED FOR THE MISCONDUCT REPORT?**

- 1) Your game sheet/rosters and notes
- 2) Misconduct Report Form
- 3) Current FIFA LOTG - Reference Law 12 for penal fouls (reckless/excessive force)
- 4) USSF 7 + 7 Misconduct Information
- 5) USSF Referee Admin. Handbook - Guide To Report Writing
- 6) Sample Misconduct Reports

### **WHY BOTHER? WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MISCONDUCT REPORT?**

- 1) You, as the referee, are empowered by Law V to take disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences. Further, you have the authority to take action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. However, you are also required to provide the appropriate authorities with a match report that includes information on ANY disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match.
- 2) The appropriate league or association judicial committee reviews your written report and allows player/coach comment on their actions.
- 3) Sanctions (possible game sitouts) are levied against the player/coach and/or team, and the reputation of the game is maintained (or not) **SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF YOUR WRITTEN REPORT!**
- 4) In some leagues, yellow and red cards "add up" against a player and team. Using cards to control a game and failing to turn in the appropriate paperwork allows players and/or teams to develop a pattern of misconduct without any disciplinary action being taken. Do your fellow referees a favor and do the paperwork.



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**HOW DO I WRITE A PROPER MISCONDUCT REPORT?** All misconduct reports consist of two sections - the fill-in-the-blank (who/what/where/when) section and the freestyle description of the incident. The misconduct report should give a clear, concise account of the incident. Well presented reports make it easier for a disciplinary committee to clearly picture what happened and arrive at a just decision. You are the "eyes and ears" of the disciplinary committee and your report must reflect only information related to the incident.

Excerpts from USSF REFEREE GUIDE TO REPORT WRITING - Report preparation begins with accurate game information, player identification and the technical classification of the offense.

### **REMEMBER THE ABCs - Accurate, Brief, Clear**

- 1) Be **ACCURATE** - in reporting the incident avoid confusing or conflicting statements. Make sure the stated offense matches the incident described. Double-check the player information
- 2) Be **BRIEF** - you are required to report only the incident leading to the caution or sending off. Information about the state of the playing surface or climatic conditions should be included **ONLY** if you feel they play a part in the incident described.
- 3) Be **CLEAR** - stick rigidly to a description of the incident, e.g. a kick in the groin, a punch in the face, etc.; it is not for you to pass judgment. The Disciplinary Committee will make a judgment from the information you provide.

In the presentation of your report, try to make sure that what you write is legible, correctly spelled and punctuated. It is often wise to seek approval of what you have written from a more experienced colleague.

**BASIC (Fill-in-blank) INFORMATION** - All misconduct reports require the basic game / referee / player / team information. Always get complete game rosters before the game from both teams. It is a good practice to get a players last name when showing the appropriate card. For coaches, it is good practice to determine the head coach and note their name on the game roster **BEFORE** the game.

Game Date, Time, Location  
League / Division  
Home/Visiting Team Name & Number  
Offending Player Name, #, and Team Affiliation  
Referee name, contact information, and assignor name

**OFFENSE VS. INCIDENT** - You must differentiate between the "offense" and the "incident" when making a report. The "offense" is a classification according to the laws of the game of a player's misconduct (ref. the USSF 7 + 7 Misconduct Information); the "incident" is what the player actually did at the time he committed the offense.

Your report must also make clear:

- \* The time at which the incident took place and how long it lasted.
- \* Whether it had any consequences and, if so, of what nature
- \* Where it took place using a field diagram to establish location, if necessary
- \* As referee, your position and distance from the incident
- \* Whether the ball was in play or not
- \* If a player was fouled, the part of the body that was struck
- \* Whether the player received medical treatment. Do not state any personal medical opinions.



# USSF 7 + 7 MISCONDUCT INFORMATION



**7 CAUTIONABLE OFFENSES** - A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if they commit any of the following seven (7) offenses:

**1. Unsporting Behavior (UB)**

- a. Commits a penal foul in a reckless manner
- b. Commits a penal foul while tackling for the ball from behind
- c. Commits a tactical foul designed to interfere with or impede an opposing team's attacking play
- d. Commits an act deemed by the referee as bringing the game into disrepute (e.g., aggressive attitude, inflammatory behavior, or taunting)
- e. Pushes or holds (including holding the opponent's uniform) to interfere with opponent's attacking play
- f. Handles the ball deliberately to interfere with an opponent's attacking play
- g. Handles the ball deliberately to score a goal
- h. Fakes an injury or exaggerates the seriousness of an injury
- i. Fakes a foul (dives) or exaggerates the severity of the foul
- j. Interferes with or prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands into play
- k. Unfairly distracts or impedes an opponent performing a throw-in
- l. Verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart
- m. If identified as the kicker, engages in unfair deception while taking a penalty kick
- n. Changes jerseys with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission
- o. Engages in trickery to circumvent the Gk.'s limitation on handling a ball played from a teammate's foot

**2. Dissent by word or action (DT)**

- a. Verbally or through action disputes or shows contempt for an official's decision
- b. GK leaves the penalty area to engage an official in debate regarding a decision

**3. Persistently Infringes the Laws of the Game (PI)**

- a. Repeatedly commits fouls or participates in a pattern of fouls directed at an opponent
- b. Violates Law 14 again, having previously been warned
- c. Fails to start or restart play properly or promptly, having previously been warned
- d. If playing as goalkeeper, wastes time, having previously been warned or penalized for this behavior

**4. Delays the Restart of play(DR)**

- a. Kicks or throws the ball away or holds the ball to prevent a free kick restart by an opponent
- b. Kicks or throws the ball away or holds the ball to prevent a throw-in or corner kick by an opponent
- c. Fails to restart play after being so instructed by the referee
- d. Excessively celebrates a goal
- e. Fails to return to the field upon conclusion of the midgame break, fails to perform a kick-off when signaled by the referee, or fails to be in a correct position for a kick-off

**5. Fails to respect the Required Distance when play is restarted with a corner kick/free kick (FRD)**

- a. Does not retire at least ten yards away from an opponent's free kick
- b. Does not retire at least ten yards away from an opponent's corner kick

**6. Enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission (E)**

- a. Illegally returning to the field having previously been substituted
- b. After a player at fault is instructed to leave the field to correct his equipment
- c. After a player leaves the field for an injury
- d. After a player leaves the field for bleeding or blood on the uniform
- e. Illegally entering the field as a substitute without having received a signal to do so from the referee

**7. Deliberately Leaves the field of play without the referee's permission (L)**

- a. Leaves the field to place an opponent in an offside position
- b. Leaves the field other than through the normal course of play



# USSF 7 + 7 MISCONDUCT INFORMATION



From USSF Advice To Referees - Soccer is a tough, combative, contact sport where the contest to gain possession of the ball should nonetheless be fair and sporting. Serious Foul Play and the related offense of Violent Conduct are strictly forbidden. They violate the Spirit of the Game and the referee must respond to them by stringently applying the Laws of the Game: sending-off (players) or dismissal (nonplayers). Referees must be particularly vigilant regarding offenses which are too severe for a caution and which include one or more of the following additional elements:

- Retaliation / Tackling from behind / One or both feet, with cleats showing, above the ground
- Violent or excessive force / No chance of playing the ball

Such offenses are completely unacceptable to the Spirit of the Game, the enjoyment of spectators, the education of youth players, and the safety of the players themselves. All violations of the Law that meet these criteria must be called (stopping play or applying advantage) and the appropriate card shown.

**7 SENDING-OFF OFFENSES** - A player is sent off and shown the red card if they commit any of the following seven (7) offenses:

1. **Serious Foul Play (SFP)** - It is serious foul play when a player uses violence (excessive force; formerly defined as "disproportionate and unnecessary strength") when challenging for the ball on the field against an opponent. There can be no serious foul play against a teammate, the referee, an assistant referee, a spectator, etc.
2. **Violent Conduct (VC)** - It is violent conduct when a player (or substitute) is guilty of aggression towards an opponent (when they are not contesting for the ball) or towards any other person (one of his teammates, the referee, an assistant referee, a spectator, etc.). The ball can be in or out of play. The aggression can occur either on or off the field of play.
3. **Spits at an opponent or any other person (S)**
4. **Denies 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 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)**

The referee must consider five criteria when deciding whether or not the conditions during an infringement of Law 12 constituted an obvious goalscoring opportunity:

- I. The direction of play (player must be moving toward opponents' goal, not toward goal line or corner).
- II. The proximity of the ball (could the player have reached it to play it?).
- III. The location and number of opponents able to participate immediately (one or none between the player and the goal, in addition to the opponent infringing Law 12).
- IV. The location of the foul (farther from goal, the less likely an obvious goalscoring opportunity existed).
- V. There was a reasonable chance for a shot (not a definite goal, but at least a chance to shoot).

Even if all these criteria are met, it is still the judgment and opinion of the referee that determines if the event was an obvious goalscoring opportunity.

6. **Uses offensive, insulting or Abusive Language and/or gestures (AL)** - The referee should judge offensive, insulting, or abusive language according to its content (the specific words or actions used), the extent to which the language can be heard by others beyond the immediate vicinity of the player, and whether the language is directed at officials, opponents, or teammates.
7. **Receives a Second Caution in the same match (2CT)** - A player who receives a second caution must be shown the yellow card for the second caution and must then be shown the red card for the sending-off offense. Each offense requires a separate misconduct report.



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**SAMPLE INCIDENT #1:** Mr. John Doe recklessly tripped an opponent while challenging for the ball. The incident occurred near midfield approximately 10 yards from my view.

Mr. Doe was cautioned and shown the yellow card in the 23<sup>rd</sup> minute for Unsporting Behavior. There were no further incidents with this player.

**SAMPLE INCIDENT #2:** Ms. Jane Doe deliberately handled the ball to stop the opponents attacking play. The incident occurred about 30 yards from goal approximately fifteen yards from my view.

Ms. Doe was cautioned and shown the yellow card in the 52<sup>nd</sup> minute for Unsporting Behavior. Ms. Doe proceeded to loudly dissent the call and was subsequently cautioned and sent off (see following misconduct report).

**SAMPLE INCIDENT #3:** Ms. Jane Doe loudly dissented while being cautioned for Unsporting Behavior (see previous misconduct report). Ms. Doe loudly proclaimed "get a clue you jerk" while being shown the yellow card.

Ms. Doe was shown a second yellow card for Dissent followed by a red card in the 52<sup>nd</sup> minute for receiving a Second Caution. There were no further incidents with this player.

**SAMPLE INCIDENT #4:** Mr. Hacker carelessly tripped an opponent as the player was dribbling by him near midfield. The incident occurred approximately ten yards from my view. Mr. Hacker had already committed several careless fouls and had been verbally warned earlier for overly aggressive play.

Mr. Hacker was cautioned and shown the yellow card in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute for Persistent Infringement. There were no further incidents with this player.

**SAMPLE INCIDENT #5:** Mr. Muscle deliberately and violently pushed an opponent in the back with both hands knocking him to the ground. The opponent had just carelessly fouled Mr. Muscle and play was stopped for the foul when Mr. Muscle retaliated with the push in the back. The incident occurred at midfield along the touchline approximately 10 yards from my view.

Mr. Muscle was shown the red card and sent off in the 32<sup>nd</sup> minute for violent conduct. There were no further incidents with this player.

NOTE - for dissent and offensive language you should try and write an **actual quote** of what was said (put a warning note for vulgar language!). For the sample below the quote is left to your imagination.

**SAMPLE INCIDENT #6:** Mr. Coach used offensive language, "f\*\*k you as\*\*le", at halftime when he attempted to argue with the referee crew regarding a yellow card one of his players had received.

Mr. Coach was shown the red card at halftime and sent off for using Offensive, Insulting and Abusive Language. Mr. Coach continued to using foul language after being asked to leave the field vicinity and then threatened the referee "I'm going to kick you're a\*\*, mo%&#&%#er". The match was terminated for referee abuse (see attached game report) and the referee crew left the area without further incident.

Note - WSYSAs takes referee abuse ("verbal statement or physical act which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment") and referee assault ("an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee of the referee's property or equipment") very seriously and the proper authorities should be notified immediately.