

LAW 12 - FOULS & MISCONDUCTS

FIFA's Additional Instructions (Q & A from FIFA's website)

Deliberately handling the ball

Referees are reminded that deliberately handling the ball is normally punished only by a direct free kick or penalty kick if the offence occurred inside the penalty area. A caution or dismissal is not normally required.

Preventing a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity

A player is sent off, however, if he prevents a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball. This punishment in Law arises not from the act of the player deliberately handling the ball but from the unacceptable and unfair intervention which prevented a goal being scored.

Cautions for unsporting behaviour by deliberately handling the ball

There are circumstances when, in addition to a free kick being awarded, a player must also be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, e.g., when a player:

- deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession;
- attempts to score a goal by deliberately handling the ball.

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A scenario for discussion...

There are 2 minutes remaining in a match when the goalkeeper (player no. 1) changes places with a teammate (player no. 7) without notifying the referee. Both teams have already made their three eligible substitutions, player no. 7 has previously been cautioned, and the ball is in play. Player no. 1, who is now dressed like his teammates, i.e., he gave the goal-keeping jersey and gloves to player no. 7 when they changed places, scores a goal for his team. As the referee is about to blow the whistle for the restart (kick-off) he recognizes player no. 1 (who is playing up front) as being the goalkeeper and indeed, an opponent makes a loud comment stating this fact, which several players of both teams hear, a few murmur their agreement. There is a minute left to go in the game. What action does the referee take?

