



Change History	
August 25, 2008	Lesson Plan First Developed
January 27, 2007	Update
December 12, 2011	Update
December 4, 2012	Update
July 13, 2013	Update
October 17, 2013	Customer Service Pod Added
September 30, 2014	Updated

1. DESCRIPTION

This workshop will use scenario-based instruction to enhance the decision-making capabilities of the referee.

2. GOALS

The objectives of this lesson workshop are:

- Highlight the fact that “tackles an opponent” has been re-classified under “careless, reckless, or using excessive force.”
- Reinforce the fact that “tackling an opponent” by itself is not a foul.
- Review what “careless, reckless, or using excessive force” means and the consequences for each.
- Provide decision-making practice in a controlled environment.
- Provide guidance and advice to all levels of referee experience.
- Improve the referee’s decision-making skills.

3. PREREQUISITES

- This lesson plan is suitable for all levels of referee experience. Advanced, upper level referees may have a larger frame of reference.

4. STUDENT MATERIALS

- Copies of scenarios used in the PowerPoint presentation without the recommendations/rationale may be provided by the instructor, but will not be provided generally. (Optional)

5. INSTRUCTOR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- Copies of scenarios #1 through #3 with the recommendations and rationale.
- PowerPoint presentation, laptop computer, screen, and multimedia projector.
- Flip chart and markers

6. INSTRUCTOR NOTES

Using scenario-based instruction requires the tactful handling of answers that are wrong or not recommended so that attendees don’t feel threatened or “tune-out.” Furthermore, care must be given to ensure attendees leave with correct information and do not have misconceptions about the correct answers.

Instructors must monitor the time. There is a benefit to allowing all groups to participate. If all groups cannot present their answers to the scenarios, there is a danger that those who do not present will feel that their contributions were not valuable. Further, instructors should carefully monitor the discussions to prevent an experienced referee from dominating a group which includes less experienced referees.

It is important to have a co-instructor to serve as a facilitator to help keep the discussion focused in work groups. All scenarios may not be covered because of time constraints.

The size of the audience will affect whether it is best to break out into small discussion groups who then report to the entire audience or the instructors guide volunteers from the audience for each scenario.

7. ATTACHMENTS

None

LESSON PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

- Introduce self and co-instructors
- Emphasize the fact that in everyday refereeing, there are many moments in which you must make split second decisions based on what you see and the impact on other players. Practice in advance increases the confidence and accuracy of the decision.
- Reinforce the fact that tackling an opponent is not necessarily a foul.

II. BODY

- A. Begin by addressing the fact that the tackling or challenging of an opponent to dispossess them of the ball is not necessarily a foul if done fairly. Ask if anyone has ever been to a soccer game and heard a player say, "I got the ball, ref!"
- B. Players often believe that if they challenge an opponent and get the ball then they can't be guilty of a foul. Touching the ball first is not a license for mayhem. We will discuss how to judge whether the tackle is fair or whether it is "careless, reckless, or using excessive force".
- C. Clarify that for a tackle on an opponent to be a foul the challenge must be "careless, reckless, or with excessive force. That means regardless of the fact that the player got the entire ball, partial ball, or even a small piece of the ball, the challenging player may not commit a foul at the same time or immediately after the challenge without punishment (or the application of advantage, if appropriate). The tackling of an opponent to gain possession of the ball is legal under the Laws but must also be fair regardless of the contact that is made with the ball. Players do not have the right to endanger another player when challenging for the ball or commit a secondary foul. **This eliminates a player's excuse of, "I got the ball, ref!."**
- D. How does this subject impact the referee? Anytime a player challenges for the ball or tries to tackle the ball away from an opponent it must be judged on its fairness under the following guidelines:
- Was it a fair challenge or tackle?
 - Was it a careless challenge or tackle?
 - Was it a reckless challenge or tackle?
 - Was excessive force used?

- E. The referee **must** recognize a fair challenge. When the ball is touched first and there is no primary or secondary contact that involves careless, reckless, or excessive force, there is **no** foul.
- F. The referee **must** also be vigilant of players **simulating a foul** or “**diving**” when challenged or tackled for the ball.
- Good positioning is essential.
 - Careful observation and communication by the assistant referee is vital.
- G. On a white/chalk board or flip chart list and define:
- Careless
 - Reckless
 - Excessive force
1. “Careless” means that the player has not exercised due caution in making a play.
 - A player who is careless in making the challenge and miscalculated his own strength simply committed a normal foul requiring only a direct free kick
 2. “Reckless” means that the player has made unnatural movements designed to intimidate the opponent or to gain an unfair advantage.
 - A player who plays in a reckless manner must be cautioned.
 3. “Using excessive force” means that the player has far exceeded the necessary use of force and is in danger of injuring his opponent.
 - A player who uses excessive force must be sent off.
- H. What are some fair challenges or tackles?
1. Two opponents are shoulder to shoulder, each challenging for the ball. The defender pokes the ball away from the attacker with his foot and leg in a normal position relative to the ground and play. The defender has made contact with the ball first, but the attacker stumbles over the defender’s leg, falling to the ground. **No foul. Why?**
 2. A defender is facing an attacker and makes a play on the ball, striking the ball just as the attacker is pushing the ball to the outside to go around the defender. The attacker trips over the ball, falling to the ground. **No Foul. Why?**
 3. Have attendees give another example, and why it is not a foul.
- I. What are some unfair challenges or tackles on the ball?
1. Two opponents are shoulder to shoulder challenging equally for the ball.

Player A steps between the ball and Player B's foot but touches the ball first. Player B falls over Player A's leg and foot, falling to the ground. **Foul. Why?**

2. The attacker is on a fast break up field after beating a player on the defending team to the ball. As he is running up the touch line, a defender challenges for the ball by slide-tackling from behind the attacking player. The leading foot clearly makes contact with the ball first, but the trailing foot hits the attacker's calf causing the attacker to fall to the ground, grabbing his calf in pain. **Foul and Misconduct. What type and why?**
 3. Have attendees give another example.
- J. Divide the groups into no more than 8 – 10 attendees. Each group select the following:
- a group secretary
 - a group speaker
 - a discussion leader (a different one for each scenario)

Hand out the first scenario (but not the recommended answer sheet) to the first leader of each group. The group leader then reads and moderates the discussion of the scenario. During the discussion, the group secretary records the conclusions. When the allotted time expires (about 7-10 minutes) ask each group to end their discussion.

Ask each (if time permits) group speaker to present their group's conclusion to the entire workshop audience. (Ensure that each group gives its answers to at least one scenario.) Be sure to end each presentation by giving the authorized response. Then move on to the next scenario.

Note to instructors: If the workshop leader or the co-instructor do not understand or agree with the recommendations, discuss this with the proper authority **prior to the workshop**. Differences of opinion can promote healthy discussion, but when expressed by the workshop leaders during the workshop, discord can confuse attendees and erode the credibility of the program and the workshop leader.

III. CONCLUSION

Anytime a challenge for the ball is made by two players, the referee must evaluate the challenge:

- Is the contact fair?

- Was contact made with the ball before (or even at the same time) contact is made with the opponent?
- Is the challenge made in a careful manner with only the amount of contact or force necessary to dispossess the opponent of the ball?
- Was the contact careless, reckless or with excessive force?

It is possible that a careful, ball-first challenge may cause the opponent to fall due to a trip or other player-to-player contact, and the referee might judge the challenge fair and not call a foul because the challenge was not careless, reckless or with excessive force. Ultimately this determination of fair or foul, when a challenging player contacts ball first, is based on **the judgment of the referee and the referee's opinion of the challenge.**

Remember, soccer is a contact sport.

Ask for and answer any questions.

Thank everyone for participating.

ATTACHMENT 1

Scenario #1:

You are the referee in a U-16 girls' match. About mid-way through the first half, the Red Team is building an attack in the middle third of the field. As Red #2 is dribbling downfield, Blue #3 challenges her for the ball. The Blue #3 makes contact with the ball with her left foot but at the same time, pushes her left hip into the right hip of the Red Attacker, dispossessing her of the ball.

What action should be taken?

What is the rationale for this action?

Recommendation:

Whistle for the foul and restart with a direct free kick for the Red Team.

Rationale:

This was simply a foul. Even though the Blue #3 got the ball first, she "hip checked" the Red #2, pushing her off the ball.

This is a *careless* charging foul.

Scenario #2:

You are the referee in a U-19 boys' match. This game has been hotly contested with neither team dominating the game. There are 6 minutes left in the match. Blue #21 has just tackled the ball away from red # with a legal slide tackle. Blue #21 dribbles the ball about 20 yards toward the touch line near your assistant referee. Blue #21 then turns up field and is about to kick the ball to a teammate when Red #3 challenges by slide tackling for the ball. Red #3 successfully touches the ball first with his lead foot but at the same time wraps his trailing leg around the back of Blue #21's leg. Red #3 then raises his lead leg up and twists his body causing his legs to close around the Blue #21's legs in a scissors movement. Blue #21 goes to the ground face first.

What action should be taken?

What is the rationale for this action?

Recommendation:

Whistle the foul and issue a red card to Red #3 for using excessive force on the tackle (serious foul play). Restart with a direct free kick for the defending team.

Rationale:

The referee should have been anticipating some sort of retaliation for the original slide tackle by the defender. At the moment the foul occurred the referee should be running toward the spot of the foul and giving a loud, long whistle. The referee should also be aware of potential problems with both teams and should have covered this type of situation in his/her pregame. Briefly check Blue #21 for injury and summon a trainer or coach if needed. The referee might want to consider conferring with his assistant referee to make sure they are both on the same page as to what they saw. In this situation, with the contest as heated as it was and the game approaching its end, the referee needs to take firm and decisive action and issue the red card to Red #3. In this instance even though Red #3 got the ball first, he used excessive force in doing so.

Instructor Note: It should be emphasized that when the legs are caught up in a scissors tackle, there is a high probability of injury to the player's feet, ankle, knees, calves, hamstring, and Achilles tendon. This can be career-ending.

Scenario # 3

You are a referee at a U-19 girls' match, a rivalry between two neighboring Regions. The last time these teams met, the Red Team defeated the Blue team 5-0. This game is late into the second half with the Red team winning 6-0. It has been a tough match with the Red team clearly dominating. Red #6 has just received the ball from a pass at the top of Blue's penalty arc when Blue #4 challenges for the ball by slide tackling from the front. Blue #4, with **cleats exposed**, raises her leg enough so that her foot comes over the top of the ball but catches enough of the ball to deflect it away from Red #6. Red #6 sees the exposed cleats and moves aside to safely avoid the cleats but into the path of Blue #4's trailing foot. Red #6 is tripped by the trailing foot. The ball goes to Red #12, and you play advantage. Red #12 shoots the ball which goes out of play after hitting the crossbar.

What action should be taken?

What is the rationale for this action?

Recommendation:

Playing the advantage was appropriate. The referee should delay the restart and caution Blue #4 by showing the yellow card for unsporting behavior for playing in a dangerous manner. The restart is a goal kick.

Rationale:

Although it is legal to slide-tackle, when a player comes in "cleats up," there is a high probability of harm. . In this scenario the cleats did **not** make contact with attacker but the

defender played in a dangerous manner by exposing her cleats. A caution is appropriate for the reckless “cleats up” tackle and subsequent tripping foul. Once play has stopped, it was prudent of the referee to caution Blue #4 for unsporting behavior only. A send-off is not appropriate since there was no contact with the exposed cleats. The restart is the goal kick because the subsequent advantage. Blue #4 by exposing her cleats to Red #6 and going over the ball is clearly outside the norm for fair play, regardless of first contact with the ball.

Instructor Note: Time permitting, the instructors may want to add “what if’s” to the scenario. For example:

What if Blue #4 did strike Red #6 with her cleats after the ball was deflected and allowed play to continue on the advantage with the same results?

What action should be taken?

What is the rationale for this action?

Stop play. Send off Blue #4 for serious foul play by showing the red card. Restart with a goal kick.

Rationale: Blue #4 used excessive force and was totally beyond the bounds of normal play. The probability of serious physical injury is very high even if there was no intent to harm. (The instructor should be prepared to discuss whether the advantage was sufficient to warrant allowing play to continue instead of stopping immediately and sanctioning the misconduct.)

Handout by instructor (optional)

I Got Ball, Ref! - Scenarios

What action should be taken?

What is the rationale for this action?

Scenario #1:

You are the referee in a U-16 girls’ match. About mid-way through the first half, the Red Team is building an attack in the middle third of the field. As the Red Attacker is dribbling downfield, a Blue Defender challenges her for the ball. The Blue Defender makes contact with the ball with her left foot but at the same time, pushes her left hip into the right hip of the Red Attacker, dispossessing her of the ball.

Recommendation:

Whistle for the foul and restart with a direct free kick for the Red Team.

Rationale:

This was a simply a foul. Even though the Blue Defender got the ball first, she “hip checked” the Red Attacker, pushing her off the ball.

Scenario #2:

You are the referee in a U-19 boys’ match. This game has been hotly contested with neither team dominating the game. There are 6 minutes left in the match. Defender A has just successfully tackled the ball away from Striker B of the attacking team with a legal slide tackle. Defender A dribbles the ball about 20 yards toward the touch line toward your assistant referee. Defender A then turns up field and is about to kick the ball to a teammate when the dispossessed striker challenges the defender by slide tackling for the ball. Striker B successfully touches the ball first with his lead foot but at the same time wraps his trailing leg around the back of Defender A’s leg. Striker B then raises his lead leg up and twists his body causing his legs to close around the Defender A’s legs in a scissors movement. Defender A goes to the ground face first.

Recommendation:

Whistle the foul and issue a red card to the striker for using excessive force on the tackle (serious foul play). Restart with a direct free kick for the defending team.

Rationale:

The referee should have been anticipating some sort of retaliation for the original slide tackle by the defender. At the moment the foul occurred the referee should be running toward the spot of the foul and giving a loud, long whistle. The referee should also be aware of potential problems with both teams and should have covered this type of situation in his/her pregame. Briefly check the defender for injury and summon a trainer or coach if needed. The referee might want to consider conferring with his assistant referee to make sure they are both on the same page as to what they saw. In this situation, with the contest as heated as it was and the game approaching its end, the referee needs to take firm and decisive action and issue the red card to the striker. In this instance even though the striker got the ball first, he used excessive force in doing so.

Scenario # 3

You are a referee at a U-19 girls’ match. It is a rivalry between two neighboring Regions. The last time these teams met, the Red Team defeated the Blue team 5-0. This game is late into the second half with the Red team winning 6-0. It has been a tough match with the Red team clearly dominating. The Red team has possession of the ball and is in the attacking third of the field, just outside the penalty area. Red Attacker just received the ball from a pass at the top of the penalty arc, when a Blue Defender challenges for the ball by slide tackling from the front of the attacker. The Blue

Defender, with cleats exposed, raises her leg enough so that her foot comes over the top of the ball but catches enough of the ball to deflect it away from the Red Attacker. The Red Attacker sees the exposed cleats, and moves aside to safely avoid the cleats but into the path of the Blue Defenders trailing foot. The Red Attacker A is tripped by the trailing foot and goes to the ground. The ball goes to a teammate of the Red Attacker, who is driving on goal. You signal advantage. The Red Attacker B shoots the ball. The ball, not touched by any other player, goes out of play after hitting the crossbar.

Recommendation:

The referee should delay the restart and caution the Blue Defender by showing the yellow card for unsporting behavior, for playing in a dangerous manner. The restart is a goal kick.

Rationale:

Although it is legal to slide-tackle, when a player comes in “cleats up,” there is a high probability of harm. Although in this instance the cleats did not make contact with the Red Attacker, the defender was still playing in a dangerous manner by exposing her cleats to the Red Attacker. There was a secondary foul that occurred: the follow-through resulting in a trip. Playing the advantage in this situation is appropriate. Once play has stopped, it was prudent of the referee to caution the Blue Defender for unsporting behavior only. A send-off is not appropriate since there was no contact with the exposed cleats. The restart is the goal kick because of the subsequent advantage. The Blue Defender by exposing her cleats to the Red Attacker and going over the ball is clearly outside the norm for fair play, regardless of first contact with the ball.