



HANDBALL

Is any ball which touches the hand or arm a handball?

The Laws of The Game is pretty clear. According to *FIFA Law 12*, a player (other than the goalkeeper within his own penalty area) may not handle the ball deliberately. That is deliberately Carries, Strikes, Propels the ball with hand or arm. The hand is *any* part of the arm, from the fingertips to the shoulder. This part of the rule is clear. Either the ball touched the arm or it didn't.

For a handball offence to be called, a player must *deliberately handle the ball with their hand or arm*. A referee must determine if the player *intentionally* handled the ball. Nowhere in the *FIFA Laws of the Game* does it state that an *unintentional* handling of the ball is an offence. So if a player has their back turned to a crossed ball that hits their hand, there is good reason to believe that it is *not* a handball. Even if a player gains an advantage after touching the ball with their hand, it is not a handball if the handling was unintentional.

The interpretation of FIFA Law 12 tells referees to consider a few things when determining a handball offence.

- The movement of the hand is considered. If the hand moved to the ball, then the handling of the ball is most likely intentional. But if the ball moved to the hand, it may not be intentional.
- The distance of the player to the ball is considered. A handball that occurred from a ball played close is unexpected and most likely unintentional. But when a ball is played from far away, a player has time to anticipate the ball and avoid handling it with their arm or hand.
- The position of the hand is considered. Touching the ball with an arm that is hanging away from the body is not necessarily an offence. Once again, the handling of the ball must be intentional.
- Touching the ball with an object held in the hand (clothing, shinguard, etc.) counts as an infringement
- Hitting the ball with a thrown object (boot, shinguard, etc.) counts as an infringement

With the handball law defined, there is one more component to the rule: *the referee's discretion*.

- The referee must determine if the ball made contact with the hand or arm. He must determine if the handling of the ball was intentional.
- Finally, the referee must *witness* the handling of the ball.

There is no instant replay in football. So if the referee does not see handball, then it did not happen. Such is the case with any sport.

Is every Handball offence a caution?

The act of deliberately handling the ball does not always require the Referee to caution offending player. There are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, 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

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



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR SOCCER REFEREE ASSOCIATION

REF'S COACH

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CARELESS, RECKLESS, INVOLVING EXCESSIVE FORCE

"Careless" indicates that the player has not exercised due caution in making a play. If the foul was careless, simply a miscalculation of strength or a stretch of judgment by the player who committed it, then it is a normal foul, requiring only a direct free kick (and possibly a stern talking-to).

"Reckless" means that the player has made unnatural movements designed to intimidate an opponent or to gain an unfair advantage. If the foul was reckless, clearly outside the norm for fair play, then the referee must award the direct free kick and also caution the player for unsporting behavior, showing the yellow card.

"Involving excessive force" means that the player has far exceeded the use of force necessary to make a fair play for the ball and has placed the opponent in considerable danger of bodily harm. If the foul involved the use of excessive force, totally beyond the bounds of normal play, then the referee must send off the player for serious foul play or violent conduct, show the red card, and award the direct free kick to the opposing team.

AERIAL CHALLENGES

When dealing with aerial challenges, the referee must pay strict attention to challenges above the shoulder. In evaluating such challenges, the referee must differentiate between the use of the elbow as a "tool" or a "weapon." The following chart notes what to observe in the case of the elbow used as a tool (consider a foul or caution/yellow card if contact is made) or a weapon (a red card is mandated).

Tool - Free Kick & / or Yellow Card

- The arm is used for balance and appears to be normal body movement.
- No swing of the arm INTO the opponent
- The arm or elbow was out before the challenge was initiated
- The arm was UP not UP and IN

Weapon – RC

- Excessive force is used and the safety of an opponent is endangered (Injury results)
- A firm surface (forearm/elbow/hand) makes contact with a soft surface (face / head / neck)
- The arm/elbow was swung UP and IN to an opponent
- Normally the hand is clenched

CONSISTANCY

One of main complaints about referees from players, coaches, and administrators is CONSISTANCY or the lack of it. How many times do we hear "But last week's referee"? Some of the biggest culprits are the more senior referees who should be the role models and example setters. For example the previous week the referee allowed both teams to wear same colour shorts and socks and ignored the issue, he may seem the nice guy on the day but his lack of AUTHORITY only creates tension in the following week when the referee insist on the home team changing.

We all need to work as a team and be consistent in applying Competition Rules and most importantly adhere to the Laws of the Game.