

Media Information

Fédération Internationale de Football Association

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Code of Conduct for Football

FIFA's Code of Conduct encapsulates all the sporting, moral and ethical principles for which FIFA has always stood and for which it will continue to fight in the future, regardless of the influences and pressures that may be brought to bear.

The ten golden rules not only serve as a credo for FIFA as the world football body, but they also reinforce the sense of fraternity and cooperation among the members of the worldwide football family.

1. Play to Win

Winning is the object of playing any game. Never set out to lose. If you do not play to win, you are cheating your opponents, deceiving those who are watching, and also fooling yourself. Never give up against stronger opponents but never relent against weaker ones. It is an insult to any opponent to play at less than full strength. Play to win, until the final whistle.

2. Play Fair

Winning is without value if victory has been achieved unfairly or dishonestly. Cheating is easy, but brings no pleasure. Playing fair requires courage and character. It is also more satisfying. Fair Play always has its reward, even when the game is lost. Playing fair earns you respect, while cheats are detested. Remember: It's only a game. And games are pointless unless played fairly.

3. Observe the Laws of the Game

All games need rules to guide them. Without rules, there would be chaos. The rules of football are simple and easy to learn. Make an effort to learn them, so you understand the game better. This makes you a better player. It is just as important to understand the spirit of the rules. They are designed to make the game fun to play and fun to watch. By sticking to the rules, you will enjoy the game more.

4. Respect Opponents, Teammates, Referees, Officials and Spectators

Fair Play means respect. Without opponents there can be no game. They have the same rights as you have, including the right to be respected. Your teammates are your colleagues. You form a team in which all members are equal. Referees are there to maintain discipline and Fair Play. Always accept their decisions without arguing, and help them to help you enjoy the game more. Officials are also part of the game and must be respected accordingly. Spectators give the game atmosphere. They want to see the game played fairly, but must also behave fairly themselves.

5. Accept Defeat with Dignity

Nobody wins all the time. You win some, you lose some. Learn to lose graciously. Don't seek excuses for defeat. Genuine reasons will always be self-evident. Congratulate the winners with good grace. Don't blame the referee or anyone else. Determine to do better next time. Good losers earn more respect than bad winners.

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6. Promote the Interests of Football

Football is the world's greatest game. But it always needs your help to keep it as Number One. Think of football's interests before your own. Think how your actions may affect the image of the game. Talk about the positive things in the game. Encourage other people to watch it or play it fairly. Help others to have as much fun from football as you do. Be an ambassador for the game.

7. Reject Corruption, Drugs, Racism, Violence and other Dangers to our Sport Football's huge popularity sometimes makes it vulnerable to negative outside interests.

Watch out for attempts to tempt you into cheating or using drugs. Drugs have no place in football or any other sport or in our society. Say No to Drugs. Help Kick Racism out of Football. Treat all players and everyone else equally, regardless of their skin colour or origin. Show that football does not want violence, even from your own fans. Football is Sport, and Sport is Peace.

8. Help Others to Resist Corrupting Pressures

You may hear that teammates or other people you know are being tempted to cheat in some way. They need your help. Don't hesitate to stand by them. Give them the strength to resist. Remind them of their commitment to their teammates and to the game itself. Form a block of solidarity, like a solid defence on the field of play.

9. Denounce Those who Attempt to Discredit our Sport

Don't be ashamed to show up anybody who you are sure is trying to make others cheat. It's better to expose them and have them removed before they can do any damage. It often takes more courage to denounce what is wrong, than to go along with a dishonest plan. Your honesty will be admired but your complicity will not. Don't just say No. Denounce the culprits who are trying to spoil our sport before they can persuade somebody else to say Yes.

10. Honour Those who Defend Football's Good Reputation

The good name of football has survived because the vast majority of people who love the game are honest and fair. Sometimes somebody does something exceptional that deserves our special recognition. They should be honoured and their fine example made public. This encourages others to act in the same way. Help promote football's image by publicising its good deeds.

Indirect Free Kick

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following four offences:

- takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it from his possession;
- touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player;
- touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate;
- touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw, in taken by a team-mate.

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

- plays in a dangerous manner;
- impedes the progress of an opponent;
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands;
- commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player.

The indirect free kick is taken from where the offence occurred. * (see page 3)

Disciplinary Sanctions

Only a player or substitute or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card.

Cautionable Offences

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following seven offences:

1. is guilty of unsporting behaviour;
2. shows dissent by word or action;
3. persistently infringes the Laws of the Game;
4. delays the restart of play;
5. fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick;
6. enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission;
7. deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission.

Sending-Off Offences

A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following seven offences:

1. is guilty of serious foul play;
2. is guilty of violent conduct;
3. spits at an opponent or any other person;
4. denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area)
5. denies an obvious goalscoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick;
6. uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures;
7. receives a second caution in the same match.

A player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area.

Decisions of the International F.A. Board

Decision 1

A player who commits a cautionable or sending-off offence, either on or off the field of play, whether directed towards an opponent, a team-mate, the referee, an assistant referee or any other person, is disciplined according to the nature of the offence committed.

Decision 2

The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his hand or arms. Possession of the ball includes the goalkeeper deliberately parrying the ball, but does not include the circumstances where, in the opinion of the referee, the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after he has made a save.

Decision 3

*Subject to the terms of Law 12, a player may pass the ball to his own goalkeeper using his head or chest or knee, etc. If, however, in the opinion of the referee, a player uses a deliberate trick while the ball is in play in order to circumvent the Law, the player is guilty of unsporting behaviour. He is cautioned, shown the yellow card and an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred. * (see page 3)*

A player using a deliberate trick to circumvent the Law while he is taking a free kick is cautioned for unsporting behaviour and shown the yellow card. The free kick is retaken.

In such circumstances, it is irrelevant whether the goalkeeper subsequently touches the ball with his hands or not. The offence is committed by the player in attempting to circumvent both the letter and the spirit of Law 12.

Decision 4

A tackle from behind, which endangers the safety of an opponent, must be sanctioned as serious foul play.

Decision 5

Any simulating action anywhere on the field, which is intended to deceive the referee, must be sanctioned as unsporting behaviour.

Decision 6

A player who removes his jersey when celebrating a goal must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

