



Union des associations européennes de football



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UEFA elite referees given guidance for the European season ahead

Penalty area jostling and injuries requiring the ball out-of-play highlighted

The annual pre-season Seminar for UEFA Elite Referees and Assistant Referees has concluded today in Nyon with clear instructions to Europe's referees regarding penalty area jostling and stopping play for player injuries. The seminar which took place between 4 and 6 September was opened by a speech from UEFA President Michel Platini.

UEFA continues to work with Europe's top referees and assistants, in particular focusing on certain aspects which are harming the image of the modern game.

The referees recognised that there is an increasing tendency for the illegal use of arms in the penalty area, particularly prior to the taking of corner kicks and free kicks, and that this should be carefully controlled and the appropriate action be taken in the case of infringements.

Referees have been instructed to continue to be pro-active prior to the ball being in play, by initially giving a verbal warning to players who are using their arms illegally to hold, push, jostle for position etc...

Further infringement, after the initial preventive action of the referee, and before the ball is in play should be punished by a disciplinary sanction (yellow or red card).

Moreover, referees agreed that once the ball is in play, their level of tolerance should not change and they should deal firmly with continued holding, pushing, etc. by awarding a free kick or a penalty kick depending upon which team commits the initial offence.

UEFA Referees Committee Chairman, Angel María Villar Llona, commented positively on the latest instructions given to Europe's match officials:

"The penalty area is not a wrestling ring and shirt pulling is not part of football, so as Chairman of the UEFA Referees Committee I will support the referees who have the courage to punish holding and pushing in the penalty area."

In addition, in many countries when a player is injured and in apparent need of treatment his team, or in some cases the opposing team, kick the ball out of play, to allow the injured player to receive treatment. The customary unwritten practice is that on re-starting play, the ball is returned to the team who put the ball out of the field of play.

UEFA has noted that some of its member associations have recommended in their domestic leagues that this practice be stopped, and that the players should leave it to the referee to decide whether a player's injury is serious enough to stop the play in order to allow him/her to receive treatment.

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For further information:
UEFA Media Services: ++41 848 04 27 27

Route de Genève 46
CH-1260 Nyon 2
Tel. +41 848 04 27 27
Fax +41 22 707 28 38
media@uefa.ch
uefa.com

Clearly when clubs from different member associations, observing different practices, meet in UEFA competitions confusion can sometimes arise.

To prevent any potential confusion UEFA has therefore recommended that players leave it to the referee to deal with such situations within the Laws of the Game. Therefore, UEFA has reminded its referees that under Law 5 of the Laws of the Game, "The Referee:

- stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that he is removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted."

Consequently, when an injured player's team has put the ball out of play, they should not expect the ball to be returned to them.