



Referee Guidance

2024 North American Sand Soccer Championships

The following have been specifically adapted for the North American Sand Soccer Championships rules of competition. It is meant to serve as a reference to highlight the unique differences between soccer and sand soccer and to clarify the key points that most referees will encounter on most matches to gain greater consistency in how the local matches are officiated.

COIN TOSS

- Before the match
 - Winner of toss chooses ball or end
- Between 2nd and 3rd periods
 - Winner of toss chooses ball or end
- Prior to penalty kicks
 - Referee determines which goal will be used
 - Winner of toss chooses to kick first or second

PERIODS

- Three (3) 11-minute periods
- Two (2) minutes between each period

KICK-OFF

- Same procedures as soccer with the following modifications:
 - Opponents must be at least **5 yards** from the ball until it is in play
 - Goal can **not** be scored directly from kick-off
 - **No** 4-second count required

SAND MOUND

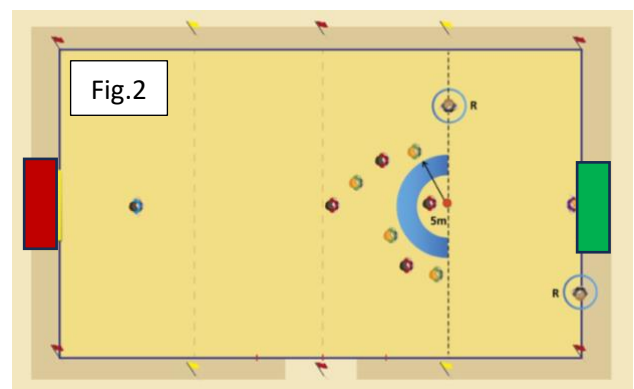
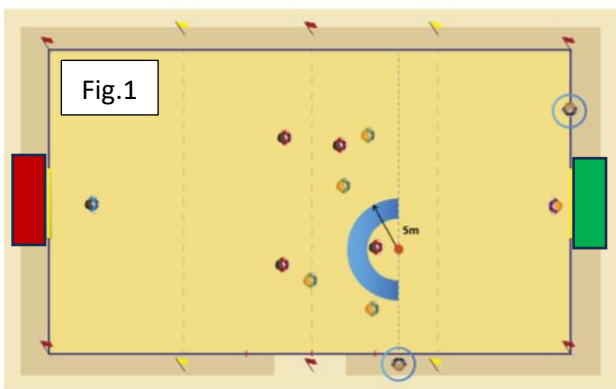
- A sand mound may be built to elevate the ball for all kicks and kick-ins
- It may only be built using the feet or the ball (not the hands)
- 4-second count begins when mound is completed

FREE KICKS

- **ALL Free kicks** are **direct** and **require a whistle** to restart play followed by a **visible four-second count**
- **Defensive walls** are **not** allowed
- **The player who was fouled must take the Free kick**
(If they are injured and must leave the field, their **substitute** kicks for them)
- **All Free Kicks** require one of two types of **“CLEAR ZONES”**:

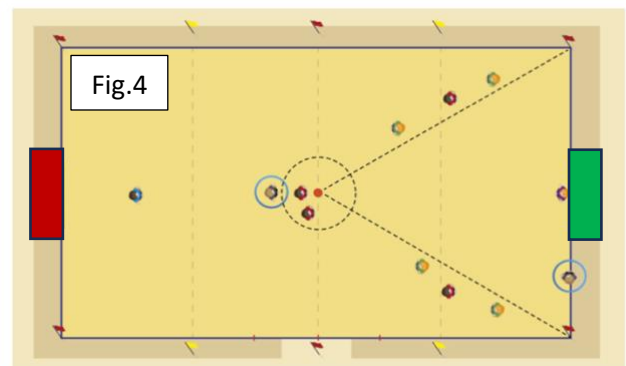
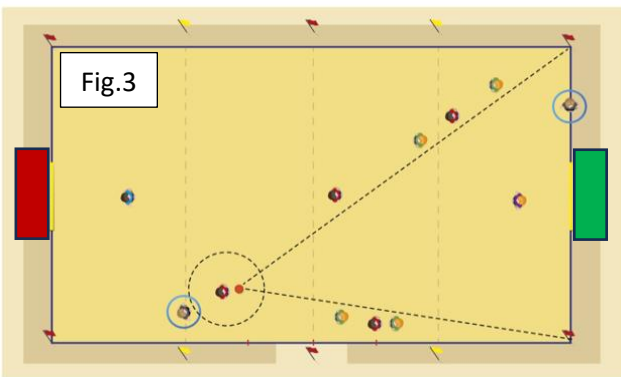
1. CLEAR ZONE (No Cone)-

If an offense occurred in the attacking half of the team taking a free kick (fig.1) or for a team taking a penalty kick (fig. 2), players from both teams must be positioned at least 5 yards away, and behind or even with the ball until it is put into play



2. CLEAR ZONE (Cone)-

If an offense occurred in the defensive half of the team taking a free kick, a clear zone is established from the point of the offense to each of the opponent's corner flags (fig.3). For all offenses that require a free kick taken at the center of midfield, a clear zone is established from the center of midfield to each of the opponent's corner flags (fig.4)



KICK-IN & THROW-IN

- Opponents must remain **5 yards** away until the kick-in or throw-in is taken
- 4-second count must be visibly performed by the referee once the player is ready to take it
 - *(Restart = kick-in/throw in for opponent)*
- If kick-in or throw-in is delayed for tactical reasons (time wasting) or if one player starts to take the kick-in or throw-in and leaves the ball for a teammate to take it instead, the referee blows the whistle, and visibly starts the 4-second count, whether the player taking the kick-in or throw-in is ready or not
- If ball does not enter the field the restart is awarded to the opposing team
- A goal can **not** be scored directly from a kick-in or throw-in
 - *(Violation = goal clearance for opponent)*
- A keeper in their own penalty area may receive the kick-in with their hands/arms from **either** team
- A keeper taking a kick-in or throw-in **is permitted** to use their **hands/arms** to receive the ball from a team-mate. However, they are **not permitted** to use their **hands/arms** a second time to receive the ball from a team-mate until an opponent has touched the ball
 - *(Violation = Kick-in or Throw-in for opponent)*

CORNER KICK

- 4-second count is required
 - *(Violation = goal-clearance for opponent)*
- Corner kicks **do not require a whistle**
- Opponents must remain **5 yards** away from the imaginary corner arc
- If a corner is delayed for tactical reasons (time wasting) the referee blows the whistle, and visibly starts the 4-second count, whether the player taking the corner is ready or not

PENALTY KICK

- **NO** 4-second count
- Same procedures as soccer with the following modifications:
 - All players, except the keeper, must be outside the penalty area and at least **5 yards** from the imaginary penalty spot
 - **The player who was fouled must take the kick**
 - ◆ If they are injured and must leave the field, their **substitute** will kick for them
 - If the offense was not a foul (e.g. handball)
 - ◆ The penalty kick may be taken by **any** player or substitute of the team taking the kick
 - Penalty area is between an imaginary line parallel at 9m (9.8 yds) from goal line on large fields, and 8m (8.75 yds) on small fields

DROPPED BALL

- Same criteria as soccer with the following modification:
 - All players from both teams must remain at least **5 yards** from the ball until it is in play

FOUR-SECOND COUNT

- **No count** for *Kick-offs* or *Penalty Kicks*
- If a restart is delayed for tactical reasons (time wasting) the referee blows the whistle and visibly starts the 4-second count, whether the player taking the restart is ready or not
- The player taking **any** kick may make a small mound of sand with their feet, or the ball (NO hands) to raise the position of the ball. The 4-second count begins after the mound is built.

❖ Referee MUST visibly perform the four-second count for the following:

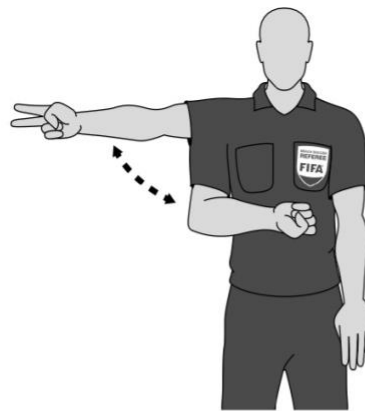
- **Goal Clearance**
 - The ball does **NOT** have to leave the penalty area upon the keeper's release, but if it doesn't, and if the defending team is still in possession, a **new** 4-second count is required until the ball leaves the penalty area.
(Violation = free kick for opponent with clear zone (cone) at midfield)
- **Team is in possession of the ball at any time in their own penalty area**
(Violation = free kick for opponent with clear zone (cone) at midfield)
- **Keeper is in possession of the ball at any time in their own penalty area**
(Violation = free kick for opponent with clear zone (cone) at midfield)
- **During Free kicks**
 - 4-second count begins after the **required whistle**
(Violation = free kick for opponent, with clear zone (cone), either at midfield or behind midfield at the spot of the offense)
 - If a free kick taken by defending team inside its own penalty area is not kicked directly out of this area, the kick is retaken, but the 4-second count is not reset and continues once the player is ready to retake it
(Violation = free kick for opponent with clear zone (cone) at midfield)
- **Kick-in/Throw-in**
 - 4-second count begins once the player is ready to take it
(Violation = kick-in/throw in for opponent)
- **Corner kick**
 - 4-second count begins once the player is ready to take it
(Violation = goal clearance for opponent)

4-SECOND COUNT

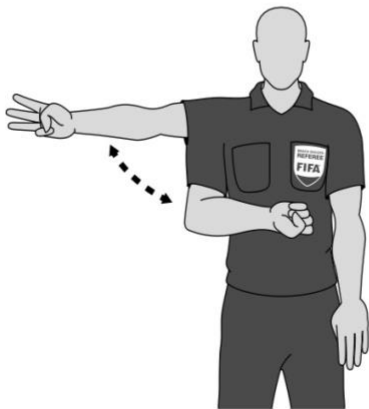
(must be visibly performed by the referee)



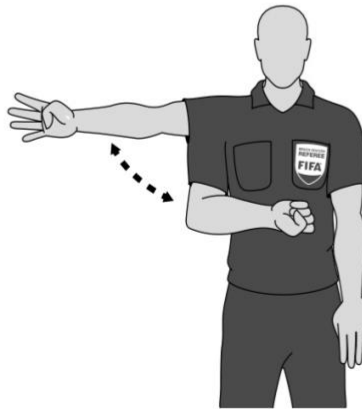
(Step I)



(Step II)



(Step III)



(Step IV)



(Step V)

GOAL CLEARANCE

- **Keeper must throw or release the ball from inside the penalty area within 4 seconds.**
- **Opponents must leave and remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The ball is in play when it is thrown or released.**
- **If an opponent didn't have time to leave the penalty area, and the keeper chooses to take the clearance, the referee allows play to continue.**
 - If keeper takes a goal clearance using the foot, warn the keeper and retake the goal clearance using the hand. The 4-second count continues from the point where it was stopped, once the keeper is ready to retake the goal clearance
(Violation = free kick for opponent with a clear zone (cone) at midfield)
 - The ball does **not** have to leave the penalty area upon the keeper's release for a goal clearance, but if it doesn't, and the defending team is still in possession, a **new** 4-second count is required until the ball leaves the penalty area
(Violation = free kick for opponent with a clear zone (cone) at midfield)
 - The keeper may not touch the ball a second time if they didn't throw or release it out of the penalty area for a goal clearance
(Violation = free kick for opponent with a clear zone (cone) at midfield)
 - If ball is thrown/released **directly** into the keepers **own** goal on a goal clearance
(Restart = corner kick for the opponent)
 - If ball is thrown/released **directly** into **opponent's** goal on a goal clearance
(Restart = goal clearance for the opponent)
 - If ball is thrown/released, and after touching a team-mate, enters the keepers **own** goal
(Restart = kick-off (goal is allowed))
 - After a **goal clearance**, the keeper **is permitted** to use their **hands/arms** to receive the ball from a team-mate. However, they are **not permitted** to use their **hands/arms** a second time to receive the ball from a team-mate until an opponent has touched the ball
(Violation = free kick for opponent with a clear zone (cone) at midfield)

GOALKEEPER (restrictions and permissions)

- **NO PUNTING**
 - **If at a goal clearance** - warn keeper, retake, and continue 4-second count
 - **If during play** - Restart= Clear Zone (Cone) for opponent at midfield
- Keeper can **never** score in **opponent's** goal, **directly** from **hands/arms**
 - (Violation = goal clearance for opponent)
- Goal **can** be scored directly, or indirectly, into the keeper's **own** goal while attempting to play or save the ball using their hands/arms
- Keeper can **not** play the ball outside their penalty area, then return to their penalty area and touch/play the ball with **any** part of their body before it has touched another player
- **USE OF HANDS BY GOALKEEPER inside their penalty area:**
 - Keeper **can** touch the ball in their own penalty area with their **hands/arms** if a team-mate plays the ball to them. However, once the keeper releases the ball back into play, they are **not permitted** to use their **hands/arms** a second time to receive the ball from a team-mate until an opponent has touched the ball
(Violation = free kick for opponent with Clear Zone (cone) at midfield)
 - Keeper taking a **throw-in or kick-in can** then use their **hands/arms** to then receive the ball from a team-mate if the keeper is in their own penalty area. However, they are **not permitted** to use their **hands/arms** a second time to receive the ball from a team-mate until an opponent has touched the ball.
(Violation = free kick for opponent with Clear Zone (cone) at midfield)
 - Keeper, while in their own penalty area, **can** use their **hands/arms** to receive a **throw-in/kick-in** from **either** team
- **KEEPER CHANGE**
 - Any **SUBSTITUTE** may change places without informing the referee or waiting for a stoppage in play
 - Any **PLAYER** may change places with the goalkeeper, but they must do so during a stoppage in play and inform the referee before the change is made

SUBSTITUTIONS

IMPORTANT-

Discuss substitution process with both teams before each match and try to work with them without issuing cards.

- When issuing a yellow card for improper substitution:
 - A **PLAYER** must be shown a yellow card while **ON** the pitch
 - ★ If a **PLAYER**, receives their second yellow, their team **WOULD** play down a player
 - A **SUBSTITUTE** must be shown a yellow card while **OFF** the pitch
 - ★ If a **SUBSTITUTE**, receives their second yellow, their team **WOULD NOT** play down a player

Substitution zone

- Zone is 5 yards wide straddling midfield between the benches. (2 ½ yards on either side of midfield)
- **PLAYER** must leave the field in the substitution zone
- **SUBSTITUTE** must enter the field in the substitution zone and only after the **PLAYER** being replaced has completely left the field in the substitution zone

- If a **SUBSTITUTE**, during a substitution:
 - enters the pitch before the player being replaced has left, or enters the pitch from a place other than the substitution zone:
 - ★ the referee stops play (although not immediately if they can apply advantage)
 - ★ the referee will order the **SUBSTITUTE** to leave the pitch, and once the substitute is off the pitch, the referee will caution the substitute for the improper substitution and then allow a proper substitution

- If a **PLAYER**, during a substitution:
 - Exits the pitch from a place other than the substitution zone:
 - ★ The referee stops play (although not immediately if they can apply advantage)
 - ★ The referee will order the player back onto the pitch, and once the player is on the pitch, the referee will caution the player for the improper substitution and then allow a proper substitution

- If the referee stops play for an improper substitution, play is restarted with a free kick to the opposing team, to be taken:
 - from the position of the ball at the time of the stoppage, if the ball was in the half of the team against which the offense was committed. (Clear Zone Cone)
 - from the center of the pitch (Clear Zone Cone) if the ball was in the half of the team that committed the offense

BICYCLE AND SCISSOR KICKS

- A player is considered to be in possession of the ball, for the purposes of a scissors kick or overhead kick (bicycle), when after controlling it with any part of the body (except the hands or arms), the ball remains in the air and in close proximity to the player, either in front or on either side of them.
- If the ball is in the possession of the player who is executing or intends to execute a scissors kick or an overhead kick (bicycle), and an opponent touches them or the ball, or otherwise interferes, a free kick at the spot of the offense or a penalty kick is awarded to the player that was attempting the scissor or bicycle kick.
- If when a ball is passed in the air, and there is an attempt to scissor or bicycle on the volley, the player **IS NOT** considered to have control and may be challenged for the ball.

SLIDING/SLIDE TACKLING -(NASSC)

- Player may **NOT** slide tackle **AT** the ball
- Player may **NOT** slide tackle **AT** an opponent
- Player may slide **IN FRONT** of the ball and into its intended path in order to block a shot or pass.
- Player may slide to save a ball from going out of play or to attempt a shot on goal only if no defenders are close
- Whether or not a player makes contact with an opponent while performing a slide tackle, a free kick is awarded at the spot of the offense. (Caution if reckless. Send-off if excessive)

ADVANTAGE

ADVANTAGE IS NOT RECOMMENDED UNLESS:

1. There is a **clear** goal-scoring opportunity
(i.e. the ball going into the goal or an attacker has the ball with no defenders between them and the goal)
2. At a Corner Kick with the opponent less than 5 yards away and the kicker wishes to take the kick quickly

A free kick is considered the advantage as it gives the fouled player a clear zone with only the keeper to defend.

**CALL THE FOUL,
CALL THE FOUL,
CALL THE FOUL**

RED CARDS-

Report Red Cards to tent coordinator and the Referee Advisor immediately after your match

- If a **PLAYER** receives a **Red Card**:
 - They must be sent-off
 - Sent-off player may no longer take part in the match or their next match
 - Referee **must** write a report for red cards involving serious foul play, violent conduct, or referee abuse
 - Team is penalized with a time penalty of either 2-minutes, or 10-minutes
- **2-MINUTE RED CARD PENALTY**
PLAYER receives a **Red Card** as a result of receiving a **second yellow card**
- **10-MINUTE RED CARD PENALTY**
PLAYER receives a **Red Card** that is **NOT** as a result of receiving a **second yellow card**

TIME PENALTY RULES

- After time penalty has elapsed, the team may replace the sent-off player
 - Time penalty carries into the next period as needed
 - If team playing down a player is scored against, time penalty ends, and the team may replace the sent-off player
 - If the team playing down a player scores, the time penalty is not affected
- If a **SUBSTITUTE** receives a **Red Card**:
 - Team does **NOT** play down a player
 - **NO** time penalty for a **SUBSTITUTE** receiving a red card of any kind
 - Referee **must** write a report if red card was **not** a result of receiving a second yellow card

YELLOW CARDS

- **No time penalty** for yellow cards

QUARTER, SEMI, AND FINALS-

- One 3-minute extra-time will be golden goal. (NASSC)
- Penalty kicks if still tied after 3-minute extra-time
- If co-ed, at least 2 women must be in first round of kicks from each team
- Any 5 eligible kickers from each team
- All eligible kickers must kick before repeating
- After first 5 kickers the kicks are one for one until one team scores and the other team doesn't score

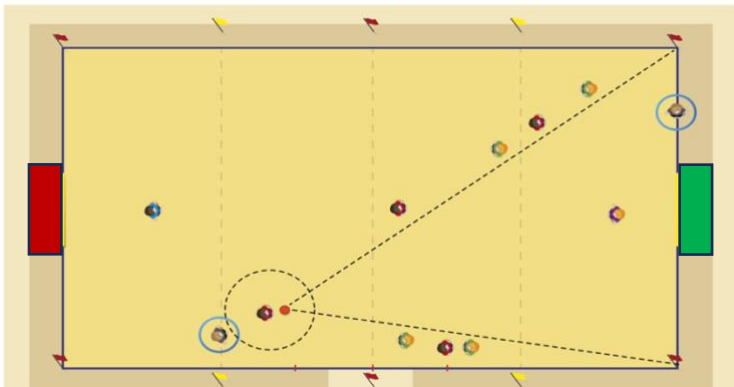
CO-ED TEAMS

- At least 2 female players must be on the field at all times.
- If only 1 is available due to injury, the team plays down 1 player
- If there are no females available, the team plays down 2 players

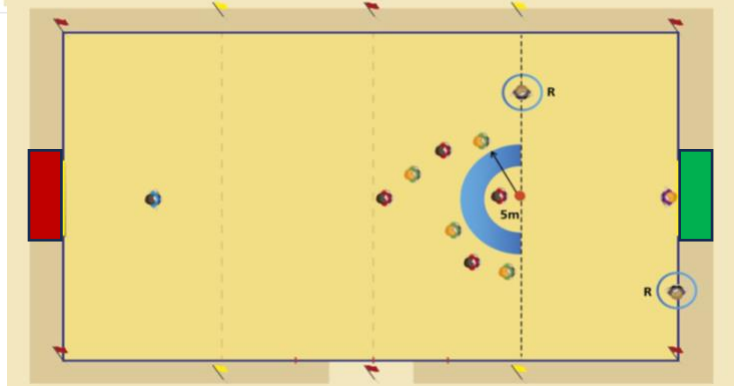
“PHYSICAL” FOULS ANYWHERE ON THE FIELD

RESTART = DIRECT FREE KICK AT THE SPOT OF THE FOUL or PENALTY KICK:

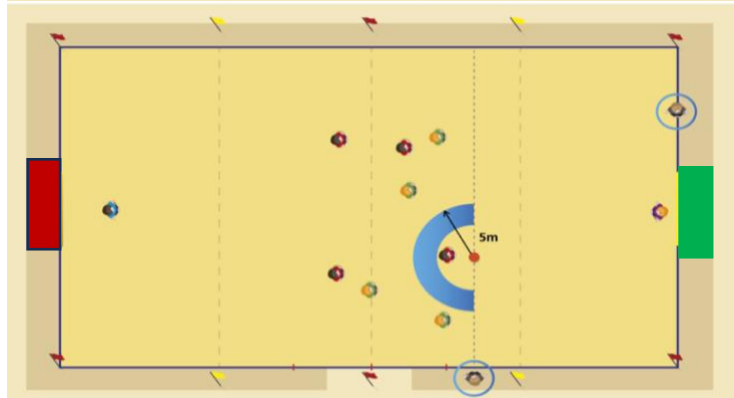
- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Interferes with a scissors or bicycle kick
- Spits or deliberately throws sand at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately
- Slide tackles with or without contact (NAASC)



In this example, the red player was tripped by a green player in the red player's own half. The restart is a free kick for red with a clear zone (cone) at the spot of the foul.



In this example, the red player was pushed in the green team's own penalty area. The restart is a penalty kick for red.



In this example, the red player was tripped in the green team's own half. The restart is a free kick with a clear zone (straight line) for red at the spot of the foul.

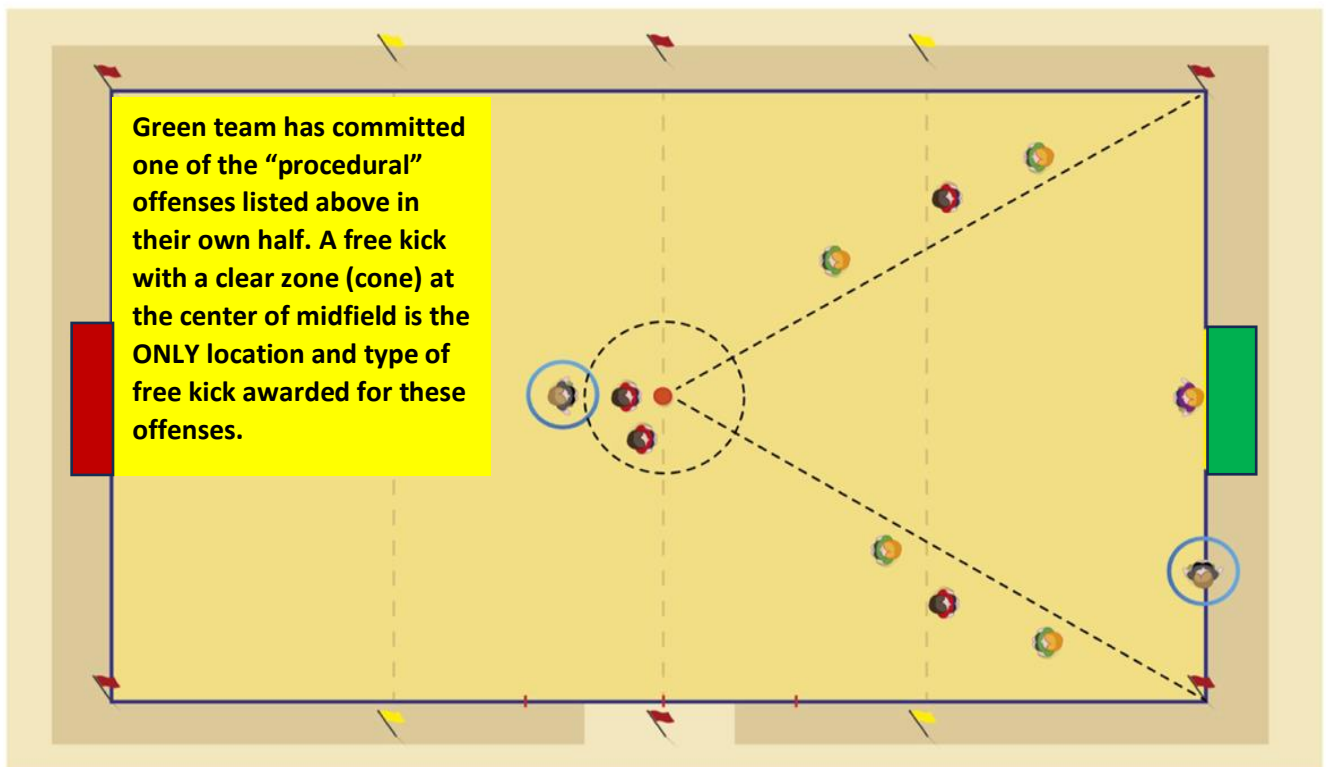
“PROCEDURAL” OFFENSES by player in their **OWN HALF**

RESTART = DIRECT FREE KICK from CENTER OF MIDFIELD with CLEAR ZONE (CONE)

- Team possesses the ball in own penalty area more than 4-seconds
- Keeper possesses the ball in own penalty area more than 4-seconds
- **(US OPEN ONLY)** Keeper controls ball in own half more than 4-seconds
- Keeper plays ball with hand/arm inside their penalty area after receiving it from a team-mate, then deliberately touches it again with the hand/arm after receiving a second pass from a team-mate, without the ball touching an opponent in between the two passes
- Keeper deliberately touches ball with hand/arm inside their penalty area after releasing it, and before it has touched another player.
- Keeper Punts the ball
- Keeper after playing ball outside their penalty area, returns to their penalty area, and before it has touched another player, touches or plays ball with any part of their body.

Team or keeper in possession of the ball in their **own half** commits any of the following offenses:

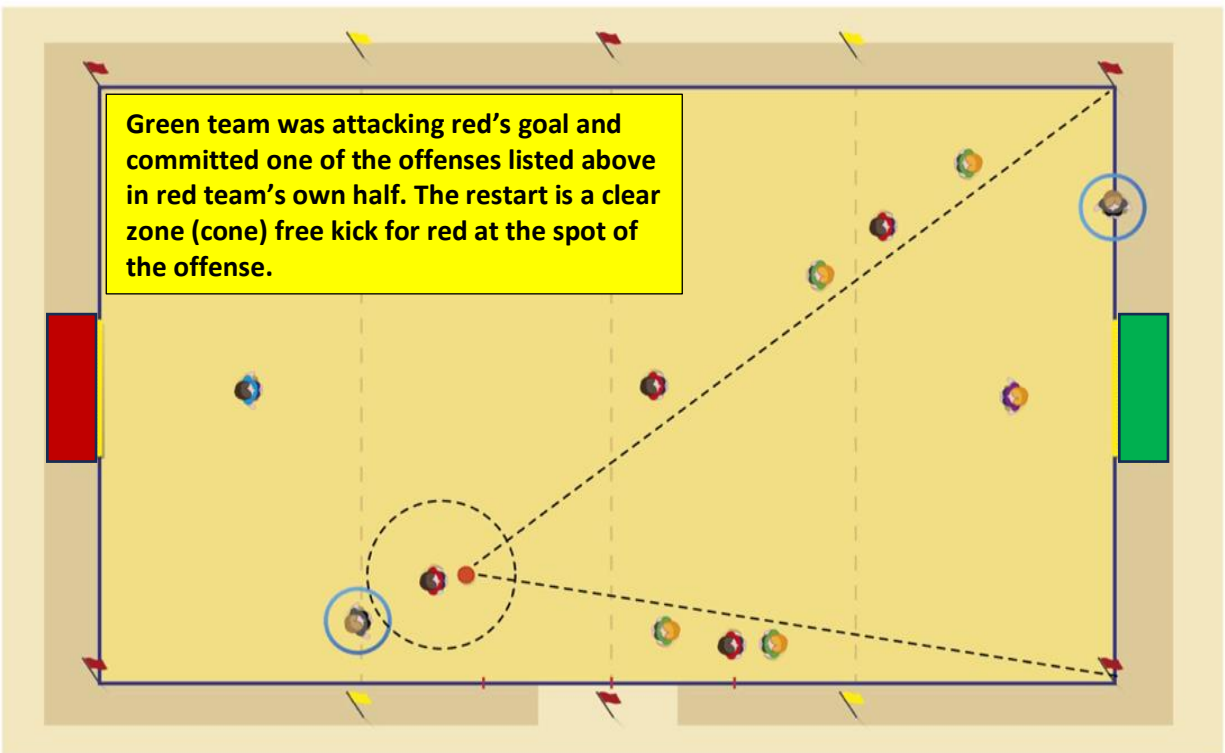
- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes progress of an opponent without contact
- Simulation (foul or injury)
- Dissent or using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s) or other verbal offenses
- Any other offense for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player
- A player, in their own half, commits against a **team-mate** any of the ten offenses (except deliberate handball) for which a penalty kick is awarded



“PROCEDURAL” OFFENSES by player in the **OPPONENT’S HALF**

DIRECT FREE KICK with CLEAR ZONE (CONE) at SPOT of OFFENSE behind MIDFIELD:

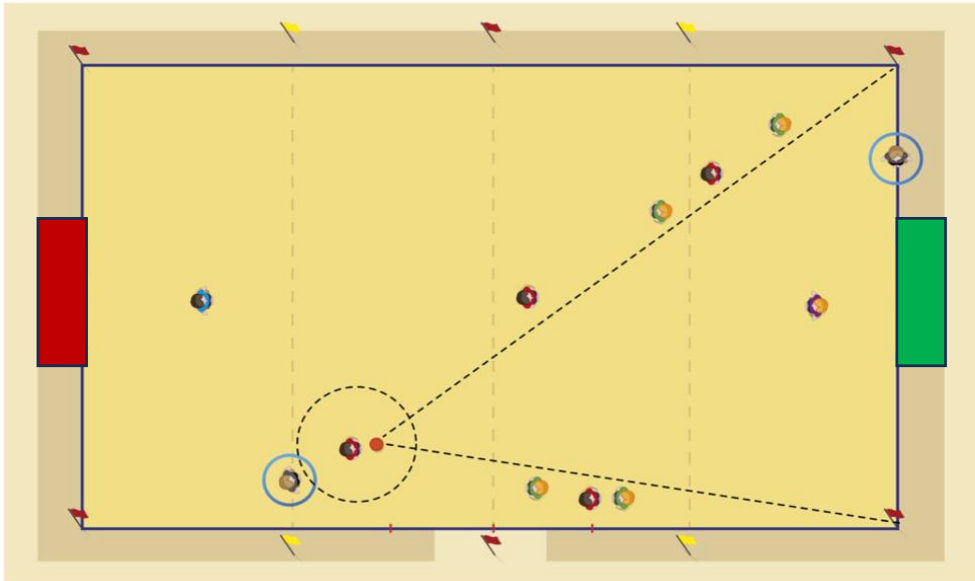
- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes progress of an opponent without contact
- Simulation (foul or injury)
- Dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s) or other verbal offenses
- Prevents keeper from releasing the ball from the hands, or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the keeper is in the process of releasing it
- Any other offense for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player



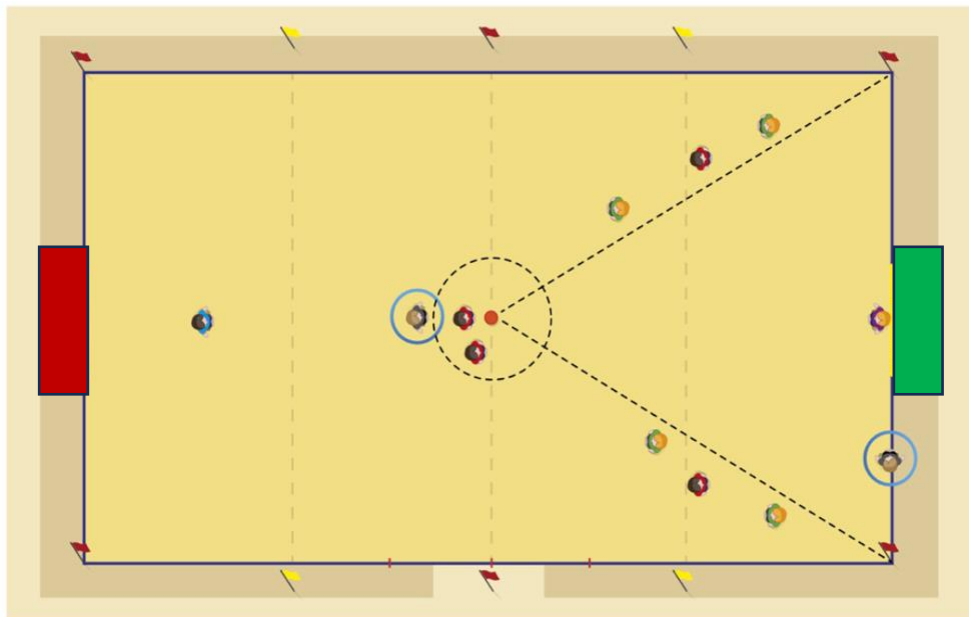
CLEAR ZONE VIOLATION by the **ATTACKING** team

Once the ball is kicked and clearly moves, players are permitted to enter the clear zone, but if an **attacking** team player touches the ball before it touches either the sand, goal frame, keeper or the ball leaves the cone, the restart is either:

1. A free kick for the defending team with a clear zone (cone) from the spot of the touch, if touched in the opponent's defensive half.



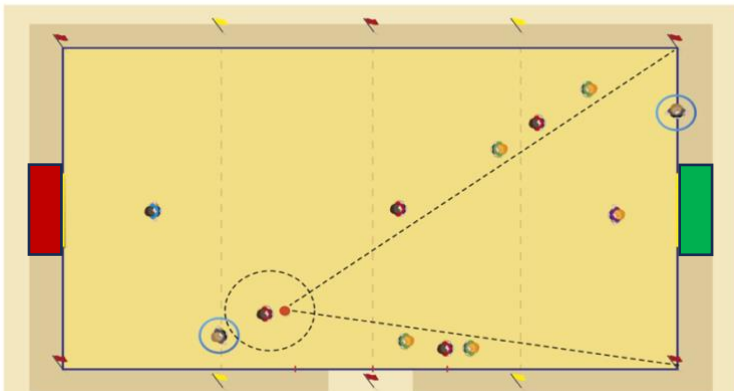
2. A free kick for the defending team with a clear zone (cone) at midfield if the attacker's touch was anywhere in the attacker's half.



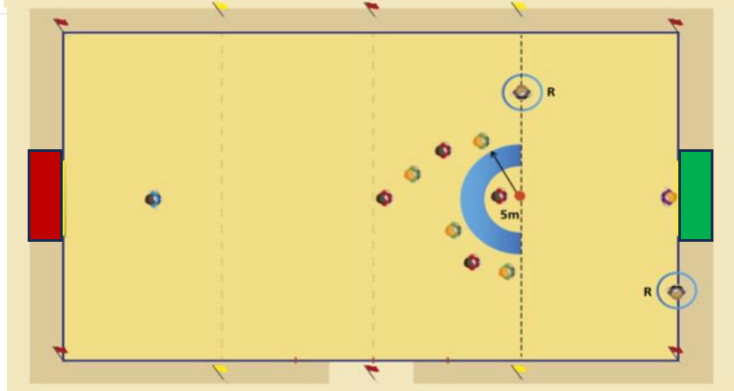
CLEAR ZONE VIOLATION by the **DEFENDING** team

Once the ball is kicked and clearly moves, the players are permitted to enter the clear zone, but if a **defending** team player touches the ball before it touches either the sand, goal frame, keeper or the ball leaves the cone, the restart is either:

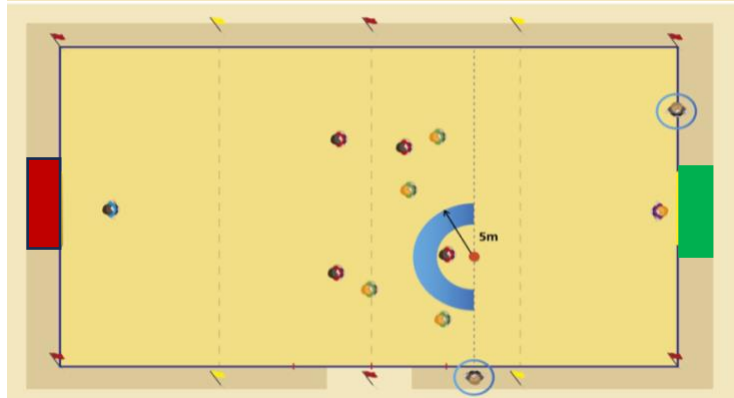
1. A free kick with a clear zone (cone) at the spot the defender touched the ball if in the opponent's half.
2. A penalty kick if a defender touched the ball in their own penalty area.
3. A free kick with a clear zone (straight) at the spot the defender touched the ball in their own half



The restart is a free kick with clear zone (cone) at the spot the defender touched the ball in the opponent's half



The restart is a penalty kick if a defender touched the ball in their own penalty area



The restart is a free kick with a clear zone (straight) at the spot the defender touched the ball in their own half

SIGNALLING

Referee and Other Match Official Signals

The referees must give the signals listed below, bearing in mind that most of the signals need only be made by one of the referees, but one signal must be made by both referees at the same time.

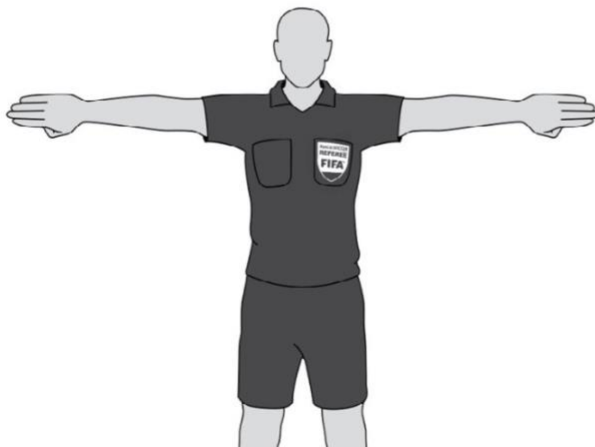
In addition to the existing “two-armed” signal for an advantage, a similar “one-armed” signal is now permitted, as it is not always easy for referees to run with both arms extended.

The assistant referees give the signals that the chronometer has been stopped and that a kick-off has been taken incorrectly.

1. Signals by at least one of the referees



Kick-off/restart of play



Free kick from attacking half of the pitch



Free kick from a team's own half
or from the centre of the pitch



Penalty kick



Kick-in/throw-in (Option 1)



(Option 2)



Corner kick (Option 1)



(Option 2)



Goal clearance (Option 1)



(Option 2)

POSITIONING FOR ONE REFEREE

- Referee should move along the touchline, and if they are positioned on the pitch, they should avoid interfering with play in the middle of the pitch unless there is a free kick or disciplinary action that requires the referee to be there
- Referee should be positioned behind and slightly beside the kicker for free kicks with a Clear Zone (Cone), so they may determine clear zone violations
- Referee should position themselves on the goal line for free kicks with Clear Zone (Straight Line) as these types of kicks often lead to goals or close saves and the referee will be in a position to determine goal or no goal
- Move onto field to set up all free kicks
- Move as necessary along touch line to maintain the best view

- Referee signal to track the goal keepers use of hands after receiving or saving the ball during play (DOES NOT APPLY TO GOAL CLEARANCES)
 - ❖ Once the keeper uses their hands or arms to legally receive the ball from a teammate, the referee should indicate the first touch by extending their arm towards the direction of the keeper downward at a 45-degree angle until the ball is touched by an opponent or goes out of play, at which time the referee stops the signal.

This signal will help the referee and the keeper track whether they are permitted to handle the ball in their penalty area from a pass from their team-mate

POSITIONING FOR TWO REFEREES

General positioning during the match

The referees must always face the pitch. One of the referees must be in line with the second-last member of the defending team or the ball if it is nearer the goal line than the second-last member of the defending team or, if necessary, level with the goal line.

i.e., When attacking play is moving toward the referee that is closest to the goal, they should move to the goal line for goal-no goal decisions. When the attacking play is moving away from the trailing referee, they should take a position in line with second to last member of the defending team.

Ball in-play situation

Important: On all free kicks a referee needs to be positioned on the goal line because any free kick can lead to a goal.

This position ensures accurate goal-no goal decisions.

Recommendations:

- The play should be between the referee and the second referee
- The referees should use a diagonal system, always keeping the ball and players in their field of vision
- Staying outside and parallel to the touch line makes it easier to keep the play and the other referee within the referee's field of vision
- One of the referees should be close enough to see play without interfering with it
- The referees only enter the pitch to restart play, after a foul has been committed, to conduct a dropped ball, to show a card, to assess an injury to a player, or in any other special circumstances
- "What needs to be seen" does not always happen in the vicinity of the ball.
- The referees should also pay attention to:
 - possible offense in the penalty area towards which play is heading
 - aggressive off-the-ball individual confrontations involving players,
 - offense occurring after the ball has been played away

Goalkeeper releasing the ball

One of the referees must take a position in line with the edge of the penalty area and check that the goalkeeper does not touch the ball with their hands outside the penalty area, while also counting the number of seconds they are in possession of the ball.

Once the goalkeeper has released the ball, the referee must take up a suitable position for supervising the match.

Referee signal to track the goal keepers use of hands after receiving or saving the ball during play

(DOES NOT APPLY TO GOAL CLEARANCES)

- Once the keeper uses their hands or arms to legally receive the ball from a teammate, the referee closest to the keeper should indicate the first touch by extending their arm towards the direction of the keeper downward at a 45 degree angle until the ball is touched by an opponent or goes out of play, at which time the referee stops the signal.
- This signal will help the referee and the keeper track whether they are permitted to handle the ball in their penalty area from a pass from their team-mate

“Goal – no goal” situations

- When a goal has been scored and there is no doubt about the decision, the referee and the second referee must make eye contact
- If a goal has been scored, but the ball appears to still be in play, the referee who is nearest blows their whistle to attract the attention of the other referee.

Positioning in ball-out-of-play situations

The best position is one from which the referee can make the right decision. All recommendations about positioning are based on probabilities and must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players and events in the match up to that point.

- Positioning – kick-off
 - At the start of the match, the referee takes up a position on the goal line on the same side as the substitution zone, from where they watch to see if a goal is scored.
 - The second referee (opposite the substitution zone) takes up a position on the touch line opposite the substitution zone, ensuring that the defenders are in the correct position and using the 5m marks on the touch line to make sure that the defenders do not advance too far forward. They should then move to midfield to ensure kick is properly taken. They should then use the whistle to signal for the kick-off to be taken.
 - Once play has started, and at kick-offs, the referees may take up a different position on the touch lines as necessary for better control of the match.
- Positioning for clear zone (cone) free kicks
 - referee closest to kick should take position behind the kicker without interfering in order to see infringements of the clear zone. The other referee should take up a position on the goal line
- Positioning for direct free kicks
 - Referee closest to the location of free kick positions players and signals restart with a whistle.
- Positioning for kick-in/throw-in
 - Referee on the side of the field nearest this type of restart is to take a position on the touch line that keeps the player and ball between the referee and the goal being attacked.
 - The other referee moves to the second to last defender or the goal line as necessary.

