



1. Handball

U.S. Soccer follows the updated FIFA 2023 considerations for handball.

Key assessment criteria:

- **Natural vs. Unnatural Position:** Is the arm justified by the body movement? Arms used for support may be natural.
 - **Making the Body Bigger:** Does the arm extend or create an unfair barrier? Extended, widened, or elevated arms typically increase risk.
 - **Movement Toward the Ball:** Hand/arm deliberately moves into the path of the ball.
 - **Additional Movement:** Any second-action arm movement indicates offense.
 - **Attacker Handball Principle:** *Any accidental hand/arm contact by an attacker immediately prior to scoring nullifies the goal.*
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2. Holding

Holding is part of FIFA's "Challenges" considerations.

Referees evaluate:

- **Illegal Use of Arms:** Grabbing, pulling, or restricting movement.
 - **Impact on Opponent:** Does it prevent movement, jumping, or challenge?
 - **Duration and Intensity:** Persistent hold or second action (e.g., tug after initial contact).
 - **Penalty-Area Focus:** Extra scrutiny in set pieces where holding is common.
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3. Fouls: Careless, Reckless, Excessive Force / Violent Conduct

The FIFA Considerations provide a structured checklist:

Careless – Lack of attention/consideration when making a challenge.

Reckless – Acts with disregard to danger or consequences; must be cautioned.

Excessive Force / Violent Conduct – Uses brutality or far exceeds necessary force; must be sent off.

Key factors referees examine:

- Speed and intensity of the challenge.
 - Point of contact and which part of body was used.
 - Direction of lunge (front/side/behind).
 - Studs exposed or weapon-like arm use.
 - Whether the challenge endangers opponent safety.
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4. Breaking a Promising Attack (SPA)

SPA is determined using the FIFA “Stopping a Promising Attack” criteria:

- Distance to goal.
- Control or ability to gain control of the ball.
- Direction of play.
- Number/location of attackers and defenders.
- Passing options available.
- Whether foul clearly stops momentum.

SPA normally results in a **yellow card**, unless DOGSO applies.

5. Denying an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO)

DOGSO analysis uses a standardized four-point test:

- **Distance to Goal**
- **Direction of Play**
- **Likelihood of Controlling the Ball**
- **Number and location of defenders**

DOGSO = **red card**, unless it is a penalty-area challenge with a legitimate attempt to play the ball (then yellow).

6. Advantage

FIFA/USSF “Flow, Control, and Wait-and-See” model:

- **Location and severity:** Serious fouls reduce suitability for advantage.
 - **Flow & Options:** Consider attacking direction, space, and passing options.
 - **Match Control:** Advantage shouldn't compromise discipline management.
 - **Delay:** Brief pause before signaling allows better decision.
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7. Dissent

Included under “Match Control / Interaction with Participants.”

Referees evaluate:

- **Nature of dissent:** Public, personal, provocative behavior.
 - **Impact on match control:** Escalation risk or undermining authority.
 - **Persistence:** Repeated verbal complaints.
 - **Approach:** Use preventive communication before cautioning.
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8. Offside

Latest interpretations derive from:

- FIFA/IFAB Considerations (2023).
- IFAB clarification on *deliberate play vs. deflection* in 2024. [\[ghazelit-m...epoint.com\]](https://www.ghazelit-m...epoint.com)

Key elements:

Interfering with Opponent

- Challenging for ball
- Blocking line of vision
- Affecting opponent movement

Deliberate Play vs Deflection

- Deliberate play = defender controls the ball with time/vision.
- Deflection/rebound = attacker in offside is penalized.

Gaining an Advantage

- Playing ball from rebound/post/save.
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9. Positioning & Movement

FIFA's Positioning and Reading the Game guidance (2023):

- **Angle over Distance:** A better view > closer distance.
 - **Explosive Transitions:** Quick acceleration to handle counters.
 - **Anticipation:** Reading patterns, systems of play, and next phases.
 - **Penalty Area Priority:** Highest need for proximity and angle.
 - **Assistant Referee:** Maintain offside line, delay flag, communication.
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10. Simulation

Simulation/misconduct analysis is defined under "Penalty Area Incidents" and "Tactical Fouls":

- **Clear Deception Attempt:** Player tries to mislead referee.
- **No or Minimal Contact:** Exaggeration inconsistent with contact.
- **Timing Inconsistencies:** Delayed fall, unnatural reaction.
- **Requirement:** Must be *100% certain* to caution for simulation.