

JOE KNOWS AYSO
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Joe Eldridge, National Referee Administrator

AYSO frequently receives questions regarding rules, regulations, policies, interpretation of FIFA Law and AYSO modifications. In my position as National Referee Administrator, I am often asked to respond.

Question from John:

Joe, can a goalkeeper, after making a save, dribble the ball with her feet and then pick it up again? Is this legal? Is the dribbling considered "possession" or is this a handled ball?

Question 2: Same scenario, can she dribble the ball outside of the penalty area and then back in and then pick it up?

John

Answer:

Hi John, thank you for your questions. The goalkeeper is afforded the special privilege of being allowed to handle the ball under certain conditions. Once the goalkeeper has made a save with her hands and has the ball under control, she may dribble the ball with her feet but may not touch the ball again with her hands until it has touched another player. This means touching an opposing player or touching a teammate who has not deliberately kicked the ball to the goalkeeper. When the goalkeeper releases the ball to the ground to dribble, this is considered giving up possession with her hands. The penalty for a goalkeeper touching the ball under these circumstances is an indirect free kick for the opponents. The penalty is not "handling the ball" in this circumstance.

In scenario No. 2, the goalkeeper still may not use her hands. There are several more special situations involving the goalkeeper and circumstances where she is not allowed to use her hands. If you are interested in reviewing these, I would recommend you get a copy of the AYSO edition of the Laws of the Game and read Law 12, particularly the Indirect Free Kick section. You can purchase a new Law book by calling the AYSO Supply Center at (888) 243-2976.

I encourage you to continue your interest in the Laws. The better your knowledge, the better your enjoyment of the game.

Good luck and enjoy "The Beautiful Game".

Question from Barbara:

Joe, I am sorry for having to write this letter but I feel something must be done. My daughter's ankle was broken during a tournament game. I was very disappointed because there was no reason for this accident to happen. The game was out of control

from the beginning. Unfortunately, the referee was young and very overwhelmed by her position. The other team was playing aggressively using high kicks, pushing and tripping and, without any backup or assistant refs, I think the young referee felt overpowered. This was especially demonstrated when the game had to be repeatedly stopped due to injuries to the non-aggressive team. Parents were also out of control and encouraging the unsportsmanlike conduct to continue.

As my daughter was being placed in the ambulance, her coach and the referee argued over whether the game should be stopped just because an ambulance was next to the field. The ambulance had to drive around the fields in order to return to the street. You tell me how this was supposed to be handled. What were these adults arguing about when, obviously, the player's safety was in jeopardy?

I also found out later that the referee, one of the directors of my AYSO region, and some of the parents watching the game were involved in a heated argument over this game and how it was handled. This all took place while the players from both teams and other spectators looked on. This is not what AYSO represents and these behaviors definitely do not follow AYSO's guidelines. I just do not know what to say. Is there any way to stop it from happening again in the future?

Maybe these tournaments are too much and should be stopped. Maybe there should be stronger guidelines as to how and when tournament games can be played. I always thought the objective of AYSO soccer was to teach the children to love the game and to be a good sport.

Answer:

Dear Barbara,

I am very sorry that your daughter has a broken ankle, and sincerely wish her a speedy recovery.

When players are injured it naturally causes us to reflect on the circumstances surrounding the injury to see if similar injuries can be avoided in the future. The referee's ability to keep play within the boundaries of safety and fairplay is always a concern. Experience and training are key to this issue. AYSO has excellent training for referees and we hope regions take full advantage of these programs. Youth referees have become a significant part of many regional referee programs and have made a significant contribution. Full use of the referee mentoring and assessment programs available should be made to help inexperienced or young referees learn from more experienced officials. Regions are strongly encouraged to utilize these training opportunities as frequently as possible. Accidents happen and we must do our best to help all involved work to avoid situations which might cause injury.

The behavior of some adults at youth sporting events is, unfortunately, sometimes less than desirable. AYSO has attempted to counteract this alarming trend through special

programs such as Kids Zone and Safe Haven. These programs are geared to educate coaches, referees and spectators about the importance of modeling appropriate behavior in front of the young players. There is no question that attending to injured players is far more important than the continuation of the game and everyone should behave accordingly.

At this year's annual Section Meetings we made a special effort to make everyone more aware of the "Problems Outside the Touch Lines". A booklet by that name was circulated which contains specific information about what coaches, referees and spectators can do when adults behave inappropriately. All have a responsibility to work together to provide the young players with a healthy and safe atmosphere to enjoy sport and the positive life lessons which should accompany it. Copies of the booklet "Problems Outside the Touchline" are available from the AYSO Supply Center (888) 243-2976.

I'm sorry that you and your daughter had this experience and I'm sure all involved will be working hard to improve and to hopefully avoid additional similar incidents. Please, feel free to contact me if you have any further comments or concerns.

Best regards, Joe