

Subject: Youth Soccer Insider: Crack down on Persistent Infringement

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Crack down on Persistent Infringement

By Randy Vogt

There are seven reasons for cautioning a player. I don't believe that I cautioned anybody for one of the reasons -- persistent infringement -- during my first three years of refereeing.

White forward No. 10 is the best player on that team and the main goalscorer. Seemingly every time that she receives the ball, she is fouled by blue defender No. 5. Verbally warn that defender that you recognize the pattern and the fouling needs to stop immediately. The captain might be able to help you control her teammate as well. If No. 5 continues fouling No. 10, she gets cautioned for persistent infringement.

Cautioning is also valid if different players take turns fouling white forward No. 10. If you see this pattern developing, you can verbally warn, then caution the next player who fouls No. 10. Although technically, that player would be cautioned for unsporting behavior.

The caution is a statement that any further misconduct will result in a player's removal from the field. Cautioning the player does not in any way reset the foul counter and fouls that would have been whistled if not for an advantage situation are included in the count for persistent infringement.

Recently on a hot day, green had more substitutes than white in a boys under-14 game. White No. 4, a left midfielder, was becoming tired and fouled three times in a span of five minutes during the second half. The caution for persistent infringement at that point worked wonders as he did not commit another foul in the game. His fear of fouling again and his fatigue opened up space for the green team to attack.



It's important that all players are protected by the referee from being constantly fouled so that all are able to play to the best of their abilities.

Nowadays, I am cautioning more and more players for persistent infringement. Has the game changed so much in nearly four decades where I have gone from not cautioning any players for persistent infringement during the 1970s to more and more players today? No, the game has not changed much if at all in this regard but my ability to see things as a referee has broadened with experience.

Rare will be the new official who can spot persistent infringement. There are very few incidents of persistent infringement in young children's games but more as the players become teenagers. That's one of the reasons why it's important that new officials start out refereeing young kids' games and serve as an assistant referee for experienced refs doing teenager and senior games. Learn from those refs who could help explain when they see persistent infringement.

It's vital that the officials spot persistent infringement before the players and coaches. If they are saying, "Their No. 4 keeps fouling," or "Our No. 10 keeps getting fouled," the ref is then in the bad spot of when the player is cautioned, appearing as if he or she was influenced by the opposing players and coaches. It's so much more productive to at least have a brief word with a player early or blowing the whistle hard on his or her second foul.

I do like the mechanics how some refs have been cautioning players for persistent infringement: 1-point to place of first foul, 2-point to place of second foul, 3-got you now or simply put 1, 2 and 3 fingers on their hand. Although these techniques are not an official signal, no further explanation needs to be given as for the reason for the caution.

(Randy Vogt has officiated over 8,000 games during the past three decades, from professional matches in front of thousands to 6-year-olds being cheered on by very enthusiastic parents. In his book, "[Preventive Officiating](#)," he shares his wisdom gleaned from thousands of games and hundreds of clinics to help referees not only survive but thrive on the soccer field. You can visit the book's website at www.preventiveofficiating.com/)

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