

Lesson Plan

Subject: Advantage and Trifling Infractions

Lesson Objective: At the conclusion of the lesson the participants will define advantage, trifling infractions and non-infractions, and list the five factors associated with application of the advantage. They will also provide answers to several case studies.

Equipment and Materials to Teach the Lesson: Overhead projector, screen, transparencies, board or flip chart. Optional: video of match in which referee applies advantage clause.

Approximate Time Needed: 1 hour

Learning Set: Ask the participants about examples of advantage in other sports. Are there any? You often hear “no harm, no foul” in connection with American sports. Is that like an advantage call in soccer? Or could that type of foul be more described as a “trifling infraction”?

Strategies to Actively Involve the Participants: There is much group activity associated with this lesson. In addition, it is recommended that the instructor have previewed a video of an upper level soccer match in which the referee has used the advantage signal. Attention should also be placed on observing how the referee handles non-infractions and trifling infractions. The video viewing time should be limited to 5 minutes.

Information: Facts, Concepts, Skills to be Taught: Advantage is described in Law 5. Key points regarding when the advantage clause can or should be applied relate to timing of the incident during the match, the location of the incident on the field, and who possesses the ball. Advantage should always be applied when a goal is likely to be scored and should never be applied when there is an incident of serious foul play or violent conduct, or if a serious injury has resulted from the incident. Other advantage factors relate to playing tactics (e.g. is the play open or tight). The application of the advantage clause in case of an obvious goal scoring opportunity should be discussed. Guidance from the IFAB suggests that this is often advisable, subject to the referee's discretion to award the foul if the advantage is not immediately realized (player falls down, etc).

Although trifling infractions are no longer defined in the Laws of the Game, the previous interpretation stated in Law V, IBD (8) prior to 1998 still holds: “The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with as little interference as possible, and in this view it is the duty of referees to penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law. Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of spectators.”

Non-infractions are not specifically defined by the Law (except by virtue of not being listed as fouls), but are of key importance to match control. The participants need to understand clearly the difference between a trifling infraction, an infraction for which the advantage clause is invoked, and a non-infraction.

Closure: The participants will be asked to recite the following information: The definitions and clarifications of advantage, the definitions of trifling infractions and non-infractions, and the five factors associated with application of the advantage. They will also provide answers to the case studies.