
League Policy on Foul /Abusive/Insulting Language

FIFA Laws of the Game

The Laws are clear:

Law 5 The Referee [p.16]:

...‘takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds.’

Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct [p26]:

Cautionable offences

...‘ is guilty of unsporting behaviour’

Sending-Off Offences

...‘uses offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures’

The Technical Area [p.38]

...’ the coach and occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner’

Policy Protocol

Referees will be advised to consistently enforce the above laws as follows:

Before the season starts

The League will circulate a directive to all registered clubs and coaches informing them that there will be consistent enforcement of

- 1) the Laws of the Game concerning foul and abusive language [resulting in ejection] and
- 2) unacceptable language as unsporting conduct or irresponsible behavior [resulting in a warning, or caution, or removal from the technical area]

Definition

- The foul and abusive language and unacceptable language shall be defined as any form of words typically considered by society as vulgar, profane, or offensive.
- For interpretation of words/language, the referee will use his/her own discretion.

Warning, Caution, Ejection for Low Volume Language Player Directs at Him/Herself

- The referee shall be given the discretion to judge if the language was muttered [heard only in a limited area to a limited audience] as a form of self criticism or frustration. If that is the case then, in the first offence, **a verbal warning shall be given.**
- **A second offence** by the same player or team staff member shall result in a **caution for the player and a final warning for a member of team staff.**
- **A third offence** shall result in **an ejection for a player and a removal from the vicinity of play for a staff member.**

Ejection, Removal from Game or Technical Area for Loud Language Directed at Referee or Assistant Referee or Fourth Official, Opponent or Self

- **If the language is clearly heard by the referee, and in the referee's opinion, likely heard by spectators, there will be an immediate ejection or removal from the field of play or the technical area.**

The referee may consult an assistant to inquire if the language was heard on the sideline by the assistant.

Pre-game Instructions

At the coin toss, the team captains will be informed that the referee will consistently enforce

- 1) The Laws concerning unsporting behavior and irresponsible behavior on the bench as they apply to the use of unacceptable language
- 2) Ejections for players using offensive and insulting language that can be clearly heard by the game official[s].

The referee will request the captains to pass on this information to players and team staff in technical area. Note: the referee is not asked to ensure that captains do, in fact, pass on the information.

The referee will ask if there are any questions for clarification.

Referees who Fail to Implement

- Complaints about referees who fail to implement the protocol will be required in writing.
- They will be copied to the referee, the chair of the referee Development Committee, the Chief Assessor, and the referee's regional assessor for mutual discussion.
- A second written complaint shall be copied to the same people, and a written response shall be required from the referee.
- A third written complaint shall result in an interview between the referee and representatives of the NSSL. The NSSL will then make a decision on whether or not to continue to assign that referee.