



To: National Referees  
National Assistant Referees  
State Referee Administrators  
State Directors of Instruction  
State Directors of Assessment

From: U.S. Soccer Referee Education Resource Center

Subject: "I Got the Ball"

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Tackles and challenges occur regularly in soccer. Most of them are legal but some are not, and the difference between a legal and illegal tackle has been discussed in many referee education sessions. The following points must be kept in mind by all referees and where appropriate, assistant referees:

- Getting the ball first does not make the tackle legal.
- Not getting the ball first does make the tackle illegal.
- Getting the ball first but following through with the rest of the body in a careless or reckless manner or using excessive force does make the tackle illegal.
- **"Getting the ball" cannot be used as an excuse for committing a tackle which is out of control.**

Referees need to see the following when judging tackles or challenges.

- The **direction** of the tackle. Does the tackle come from the front, side or from behind and out of sight of the attacker?
- The **intensity-speed-force** of the tackler
- The **point of contact**. Where the contact takes place on the opponent.
- The **mode of contact**. What is used to make contact. Studs, arm, elbow.

When the referee's angle of view might obscure important elements of the tackle, making it appear legal, the assistant referee must be prepared to signal a foul of this potential severity and provide information regarding clear considerations of misconduct for the referee to consider.

Updated from 2011