

From the November 2012 issue of Referee Magazine: 11 (+1) tips about dangerous tackles :

1. A tackle must get the ball 1st to be fair; however getting the ball 1st does not make it either fair or safe.
2. The velocity of contact must be evaluated. The higher the velocity, the more potential for danger.
3. Ask yourself whether the tackler makes contact with the ground before contact with the opponent.
4. The distance from the tackling foot to the ground is an important factor. The ball is about 9" in diameter. Tackles higher than that are likely to be dangerous.
5. If the tackler makes contact with the opponent while still airborne, his velocity will be high and likely to be dangerous.

6. Is the knee locked? If the leg is stiff, they are far more likely to do damage to the opponent.
7. Most experienced players have been taught proper tackling. Others may not understand the danger of poor technique. If the challenge is dangerous, give the proper card.
8. Most tackles are made with one foot aimed at where the ball will be when the foot gets there and the other leg tucked under. A two-footed tackle is nearly always dangerous and must be stopped.
9. Players are taught to tackle with cleats down. Tackles with cleats up may be intentional or accidental but always dangerous.

10. Tackle to the back of a leg is more dangerous than to the front or side.
11. If the defender has an opportunity to play the ball but chooses to tackle anyway, it most likely can be considered serious foul play. If it has already been played or is some distance away it is considered violent conduct.
12. Your number-one job is to protect the players.

Highlights from a Hall of Fame Umpire that could apply to soccer.

- Give a coach or player credit for trying to get an edge. Right or wrong, it's part of the game so accept it.
- Don't get too technical. Let them play the game. You aren't

out there to show everyone how much you know the rules. You are out there to be sure a team does not get an advantage not intended by the rules.

Don't walk onto the field with a chip on your shoulder. Keep it friendly.

There is not one set way to (umpire) officiate. Remember that over time, mechanics and rules do change.

Don't be stubborn. Get the play right.

Don't get the worst of any situation. When you are faced with a knotty situation, start with the team that caused the problem.

The other bench is watching. Whenever something happens, the other team is watching to see how you handle it. If you let

one team walk on you, the other team will do the same.

- Move to the proper position. The official sets the tone of the crew by the way he/she hustles. Work hard.
- You must be ready and prepared to make the call. Waiting too long may be perceived as being indecisive.
- The lazy official will catch most of the heat. If you are hustling, most players and managers won't look for things to take issue with.
- Don't get too close; it will affect your angle.
- Players and coaches have the right to complain. Expect it. Your job is to decide how far to let it go.

- If you are right, it takes guts to take the heat. Maintain a steady composure.
- Our job is to be a calming influence. Situations often get out of hand because the official gets caught up in the emotion of the moment.
- Watch out how you say things. An antagonistic voice can create additional problems.
- Be a good listener.
- Keep your explanations simple and to the point. Too much talk could result in conflicting comments.