

**Rule 8 Fouls and Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

It is **permitted** to :

- 8:1**
- a) use arms and hands to block or gain possession of the ball;
  - b) use an open hand to play the ball away from the opponent from any direction;
  - c) use the body to obstruct an opponent, even when the opponent is not in possession of the ball;
  - d) make body contact with an opponent, when facing him and with bent arms, and maintain this contact in order to monitor and follow the opponent.

**Rule 8 Fouls and Unsportsmanlike Conduct****Permitted actions**

**8:1 It is permitted:**

- a) to use an open hand to play the ball out of the hand of another player;
- b) to use bent arms to make body contact with an opponent, and to monitor and follow him in this way;
- c) to use one's trunk to block the opponent, in a struggle for positions;

**Comment:**

*Blocking means, preventing an opponent from moving into open space. Setting the block, maintaining the block and moving out of the block must, in principle, be done in a passive manner in relation to the opponent (see, however, 8:2b).*

It is **not permitted** to :

- 8:2**
- a) pull or hit the ball out of the hands of an opponent;
  - b) block or force away an opponent with arms, hands or legs;
  - c) restrain or hold (body or uniform), push, run or jump into an opponent;
  - d) endanger an opponent (with or without the ball).

**8:3** Violations of Rule 8:2 may occur in the struggle for the ball; however, violations where the action is mainly or exclusively directed at the opponent and not at the ball, are to be punished 'progressively'. This means that, in addition to a free-throw or 7-meter throw, there is also a need for a personal punishment, beginning with a warning (16:1b), followed by increasingly severe punishments, such as suspensions (16:3b) and disqualifications (16:6f). (Unsportsmanlike conduct is also to be punished progressively, under 16:1c, 16:3c and 16:6f). As indicated in Rule 16:3 Comment, however, the referees have the right to determine that a particular violation warrants an immediate 2-minute suspension, even if the player did not previously have a warning.

### Fouls that normally do not lead to personal punishment (consider, however, the decision-making criteria in 8:3 a-d)

#### 8:2 It is not permitted:

- a) to pull or hit the ball out of the hands of the opponent;
- b) to block the opponent with arms, hand, legs, or to use any part of the body to displace him or push him away; this includes a dangerous use of the elbow, both as a starting position and in motion;
- c) to hold an opponent (body or uniform), even if he remains free to continue the play;
- d) run into or jump into an opponent;

### Fouls that warrant a personal punishment under Rules 8:3-6

**8:3** Fouls, where the action is mainly or exclusively aimed at the body of the opponent, must lead to a personal punishment. This means that, in addition to a free-throw or 7-meter-throw, at least the foul is to be punished progressively, beginning with a warning (16:1), then with 2-minute suspensions (16:3b) and disqualification (16:6d).

For more severe fouls, there are 3 further levels of punishment on the basis of the following decision-making criteria:

- Fouls that are to be punished with an immediate 2-minute suspension (8:4);

- Fouls that are to be punished with a disqualification (8:5);
- Fouls that are to be punished with a disqualification and where a written report is required (8:6);

#### **Decision-making criteria:**

For the judgment as to which personal punishments are appropriate for specific fouls, the following decision-making criteria apply; these criteria are to be used in combination as appropriate in each situation:

- a) **the position** of the player who commits the foul (frontal position, from the side, or from behind);
- b) **the part of the body** against which the illegal action is aimed (torso, shooting arm, legs, head/throat/neck);
- c) **the dynamics** of the illegal action (the intensity of the illegal body contact, and/or a foul where the opponent is in full motion);
- d) **the effect** of the illegal action:
  - the impact on the body and ball control
  - the reduction or prevention of the ability to move
  - the prevention of the continuation of the game

For the judgment of fouls is also the particular game situation relevant (e.g., shooting action, running into open space, situations with high running speed).

**8:4** Physical and verbal expressions that are incompatible with the spirit of good sportsmanship are regarded as constituting unsportsmanlike conduct (for example see Clarification No. 5). This applies to both players and team officials on or off the playing court. Progressive punishment also applies in the case of unsportsmanlike conduct (16:1c, 16:3c-d and 16:6a).

### Fouls that warrant an immediate 2-minute suspension

**8:4** For certain fouls, the punishment is a direct 2-minute suspension, regardless of whether the player had received a warning earlier.

This applies especially for such fouls where the guilty player disregards the danger to the opponent (*see also 8:5 and 8:6*);

Taking into account the decision-making criteria under 8:3, such fouls could for instance be:

- a) fouls that are committed with high intensity or against an opponent who is running fast;
- b) holding on to the opponent for a long time, or pulling him down;
- c) fouls against the head, throat or neck;
- d) hard hitting against the torso or throwing arm;
- e) attempting to make the opponent lose body control (e.g., grabbing the leg/foot of an opponent who is jumping; *see, however, 8:5a*);
- f) running or jumping with great speed into an opponent.

- 8:5** A player who endangers the opponent's health when attacking him, shall be disqualified (16:6b) particularly if he
- from the side or from behind, either strikes or pulls back the throwing arm of a player who is in the process of throwing or passing the ball;
  - takes any action resulting in the opponent being struck on the head or neck;
  - deliberately hits the body of an opponent with his foot or knee or in any other way; this includes tripping;
  - pushes an opponent who is running or jumping, or attacks him in such a way that the opponent loses control of his body; this also applies when a goalkeeper leaves his goal area in connection with a counter-attack from the opponents;
  - hits a defending player in the head with a free-throw taken as a direct shot on goal, assuming that the defending player was not moving; or similarly, hits the goalkeeper in the head with a 7-meter throw, assuming that the goalkeeper was not moving.

**Comment:**

Even a foul with a very small physical impact can be very dangerous and have potentially very serious consequences, if the timing of the foul is such that the opponent is defenseless and caught unaware. It is the risk to the player and not the seemingly minor nature of the body contact that should be guiding in determining the appropriateness of a disqualification.

**Fouls that warrant a disqualification**

- 8:5** A player who is attacking an opponent in a way that is dangerous to his health is to be disqualified (16:6a). The special danger to the opponent's health follows from the high intensity of the foul or from the fact that the opponent is completely unprepared for the foul and therefore cannot protect himself (see Rule 8:5 Comment).

In addition to the criteria of 8:3 and 8:4, the following decision-making criteria also apply:

- the actual loss of body control while running or jumping, or during a throwing action;
- a particularly aggressive action against a part of the body of the opponent, especially face, throat or neck; (the intensity of the body contact);
- the reckless attitude demonstrated by the guilty player when committing the foul.

**Comment:**

Also a foul with a very small physical impact can be very dangerous and lead to a severe injury, if the foul is committed in a moment when the player is jumping in the air or running, and therefore is unable to protect himself.

*In this type of situation, it is the danger to the opponent and not the intensity of the body contact that is the basis for the judgment whether a disqualification is warranted.*

This also applies in those situations where a goalkeeper leaves the goal area, for the purpose of catching a pass intended for an opponent. Here the goalkeeper has the responsibility for ensuring that a situation does not arise that is dangerous to the health of the opponent.

He is to be disqualified if he:

- a) gains possession of the ball, but in his movement causes a collision with the opponent;
- b) cannot reach or control the ball, but causes a collision with the opponent;

If the referees are convinced in one of these situations, that, without the illegal action from the goalkeeper, the opponent would have been able to reach the ball, then a 7-meter throw is to be awarded.

**Disqualification due to a particularly reckless, particularly dangerous, premeditated or malicious action (also to be reported in writing)**

**8:6** Seriously unsportsmanlike conduct by a player or team official on or outside the court (for example see Clarification No. 6) shall be punished with disqualification (16:6c).

**8:6** If the referees find an action to be particularly reckless, particularly dangerous, premeditated or malicious, they must submit a written report after the game, so that the responsible authorities are in a position to take a decision about further measures.

Indications and characteristics that could serve as decision-making criteria in addition to those in Rule 8:5 are:

- a) a particularly reckless or particularly dangerous action;
- b) a premeditated or malicious action, which is not in any way related to the game situation;

**Comment:**

*When a foul under Rule 8:5 or 8:6 is committed during the last minute of a game, with the purpose of preventing a goal, then the action is to be seen as 'extremely unsportsmanlike conduct' under Rule 8:10d and punished accordingly*

**Unsportsmanlike conduct that warrants a personal punishment under Rules 8:7-10**

As unsportsmanlike conduct is considered any verbal and non-verbal expressions that are not in conformity with the spirit of good sportsmanship. This applies to both players and team officials, on the court and outside the court. For the punishment of unsportsmanlike, seriously unsportsmanlike, and extremely unsportsmanlike conduct, a difference is made between 4 levels of actions:

- Actions that are to be punished progressively (8:7);
- Actions that are to be punished with a direct 2-minute suspension (8:8);
- Actions that are to be punished with a disqualification (8:9);
- Actions that are to be punished with a disqualification and a written report (8:10)

**8:7** A player who is guilty of assault during the playing time shall be excluded (16:9-11). Assault outside the playing time (see 16:13) leads to a disqualification (16:6d; 16:14b). A team official who is guilty of assault shall be disqualified (16:6e).

**Comment :**

Assault is, for the purposes of this rule, defined as a forceful and deliberate attack against the body of another person (player, referee, timekeeper/scorekeeper, team official, delegate, spectator, etc.). In other words, it is not simply a reflex action or the result of careless and excessive methods. Spitting on another person, so that the person is actually hit, is specifically regarded as assault.

## Unsportsmanlike conduct that warrants progressive punishment

**8:7** The actions listed below under a-f are examples of unsportsmanlike conduct that is to be punished progressively, beginning with a warning.

- a) protests against referee decisions, or verbal and non-verbal actions intended to cause a specific referee decision;
- b) harassing an opponent or teammate through words or gestures, or shouting at an opponent in order to cause distraction;
- c) delaying the execution of a formal throw for the opponents, by not respecting the 3-meter distance or in some other way;
- d) through 'theater', trying to mislead the referees regarding the actions of an opponent or exaggerating the impact of an action, in order to provoke a time-out or an undeserved punishment for an opponent;
- e) actively blocking a shot or pass by using a foot or lower leg; pure reflex motions, e.g., moving the legs together, are not to be punished (see also Rule 7:8);
- f) repeated entering of the goal area for tactical reasons;

**8:8** Violations of Rules 8:2-7 lead to a 7-meter throw for the opponents (14:1) if the violation directly, or indirectly because of the interruption it causes, destroys a clear chance of scoring for the opponents. Otherwise the violation leads to a free-throw for the opponents (see 13:1a-b but see also 13:2 and 13:3).

### Unsportsmanlike conduct warranting an immediate 2-minute suspension

**8:8** Certain unsportsmanlike actions are by their nature seen as more severe and warrant an immediate 2-minute suspension, regardless of whether the player or the officials had received a warning earlier. This includes:

- a) protests involving loudness with forceful gestures, or provocative behavior;
- b) when there is a decision against a team in possession, and the player with the ball does not immediately make it available to the opponents by dropping it or putting it down on the floor;
- c) blocking the access to a ball that went into the substitution area;

### Seriously unsportsmanlike conduct warranting a disqualification

**8:9** Certain forms of unsportsmanlike conduct are considered so serious that they warrant a disqualification. The following are examples of such conduct:

- a) throwing or hitting the ball away in a demonstrative manner, after a decision by the referees;
- b) if a goalkeeper demonstratively refrains from trying to stop a 7-meter-throw;
- c) deliberately throwing the ball at an opponent during a stoppage in the game; if it is done with a lot of force

and from very short distance, it is more appropriately regarded as a 'particularly reckless action' under 8:6 above;

- d) when a 7-m shooter hits the goalkeeper's head, if the goalkeeper is not moving his head in the direction of the ball;
- e) when a free-throw shooter hits a defender's head, if the defender is not moving his head in the direction of the ball;
- f) an act of revenge after having been fouled.

**Comment:**

*In the case of a 7-meter throw or a free-throw, the shooter has the responsibility not to endanger the goalkeeper or the defender.*

**Disqualification due to extremely unsportsmanlike conduct (also to be reported in writing)**

**8:10** If the referees classify a conduct as extremely unsportsmanlike, they must submit a written report after the game, so that the responsible authorities are in a position to take a decision about further measures.

The following actions may serve as examples:

- a) insulting or threatening behavior directed at another person, e.g., referee, timekeeper/scorekeeper, delegate, team official, player, spectator; the behavior may be in verbal or non-verbal form (e.g., facial expression, gestures, body language or body contact).
- b) (I) the interference by a team official in the game, on the playing court or from the substitution area, or  
(II) a player destroying a clear chance of scoring, either through an illegal entry on the court (*Rule 4:6*) or from the substitution area;
- c) if during the last minute of a game the ball is out of play, and a player or team official prevents or delays the execution of a throw for the opponents, in order to prevent them from being able to take a shot on goal or to obtain a clear scoring chance; this is considered extremely unsportsmanlike, and it applies to any type of interference (e.g., with only limited physical action, intercepting a pass, interference with the reception of the ball, not releasing the ball);
- d) if during the last minute of a game the ball is in play, and the opponents, through an action falling under rule 8:5 or 8:6, prevent the team in possession from being able to take a shot on goal or to obtain a clear scoring chance; this is not just to be punished with a disqualification under 8:5 or 8:6; a written report must