

# Law 12

## **Fouls and Misconduct**

**Denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity**

# Change of Law 12

The 130th AGM of The IFAB in Cardiff on 5 March 2016 approved a major revision of the Laws of Game to take effect from 1 June 2016.

One important change is that the disciplinary sanction for some 'denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity' (DOGSO) offences committed in the penalty area will now be a caution (yellow card) and not a sending-off (red card).

The main reason for the change is that a penalty kick is a very good opportunity to score a goal so it 'restores' the goal-scoring opportunity that was 'lost' by the DOGSO offence. Therefore, the punishment of the player should not be as severe/strong as the punishment for a DOGSO committed outside the penalty area where the red card is deserved as a free kick is not as good a scoring opportunity as a penalty.



# Change of Law 12

As a result, Law 12 has been changed so that for DOGSO offences in the penalty area where the offender is penalised for an offence which was **an attempt to play the ball or challenge the opponent for the ball**, the offender will be cautioned (yellow card) not sent off (red card).

However, The IFAB does not want to encourage unfair play so for DOGSO offences inside the penalty area which are not an attempt to play the ball or challenge the opponent for the ball, the offending player will still be sent off (red card).

# ‘New’ DOGSO wording

*“Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.*

*Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:*

- *The offence is holding, pulling or pushing or*
- *The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball or*
- *The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc..)*

*In all the above circumstances the player is sent off.”*



# **‘New’ DOGSO wording**

The following examples demonstrate the change -  
it is important to be aware that slow motion  
makes an offence seem more serious

# Handball

Further explanation:

*"Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs."*

For **all** handball DOGSO offences there is **no change**.

Deliberate handling the ball is not part of a 'normal' attempt to challenge an opponent for the ball so for all DOGSO handball offences (inside and outside the penalty area) the player will be sent off (red card).







# Some DOGSO offences in penalty area are YC

Further explanation:

*“Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned (...)”*

This statement emphasises that for DOGSO offences in the penalty area, the offending player is cautioned (yellow card) not sent off (red card), unless the offence falls into one of the DOGSO offences which remains a red card.

Referees should apply the philosophy of the Law change - if the player unsuccessfully attempts to play the ball or challenge the opponent for the ball and a penalty kick is awarded, the correct sanction is a caution (yellow card). The player's movement towards the ball/opponent is a good indication of whether or not the player was attempting to play the ball or challenge the opponent for the ball.





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FIFA



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# Holding, pulling and pushing

Further explanation:

*“Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:*


- *The offence is holding, pulling or pushing”*

An offence where the offending player is penalised for holding, pulling or pushing will still be sanctioned with a sending-off (red card) as these offences are not part of a fair challenge of an opponent for the ball.

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## No attempt or possibility to play the ball

Further explanation:

*“Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:*

- *The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball.”*

Where the offending player is penalised by the referee for an offence where:

- it was clear that the player did not attempt to play the ball or
- it was clear that the player did not have the chance/possibility to play the ball

the offender will be sanctioned with a sending-off (red card).



# Other sending-off offences

Further explanation:

*“Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:*

- The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc.)”*

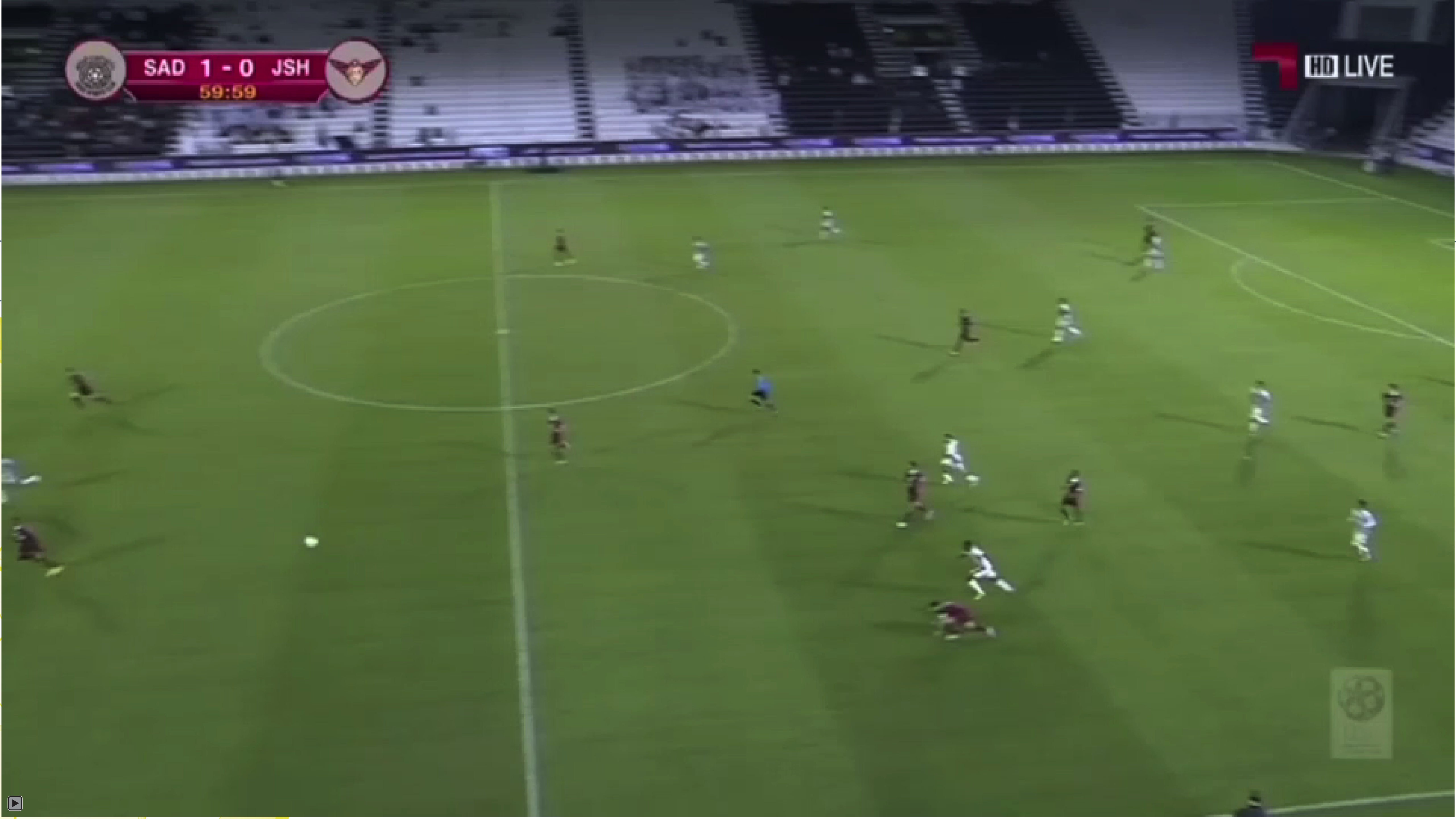
This is a reminder that offences such as serious foul play, violent conduct etc.. must be sanctioned with a sending-off (red card) as they are not affected by the change in the DOGSO wording.



SAD 1 - 0 JSH  
59:59



LIVE





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## DOGSO offences outside the penalty area

Further explanation:

There is **no change** for DOGSO offences which are committed **outside the penalty area**.

**All** DOGSO offences outside the penalty area are sanctioned with a sending-off (red card).

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## Change of Law 12 - summary

The change in the DOGSO wording in Law 12 does not mean that every DOGSO offence in the penalty area is sanctioned with a caution (yellow card).

The reduction from sending-off (red card) to caution (yellow card) is only for DOGSO offences in the penalty area which are an attempt to play the ball or challenge an opponent for the ball.

Where there is clearly no attempt to play the ball or challenge an opponent for the ball, (especially holding, pulling, pushing and handball) the sanction remains a sending-off (red card).

All DOGSO offences outside the penalty area are sanctioned with a sending-off (red card) - there is no change in the Law for these offences.