

4 Passive Play (7:11-12)

General Guidelines

The application of the rules regarding passive play has the objective of preventing unattractive methods of play and intentional delays in game. This requires that the referees throughout the game recognize and judge passive methods in a consistent manner.

Passive methods of play may arise in all phases of a team's attack, i.e. when the ball is moved down the court, during the build-up phase, or during the finishing phase.

Passive ways of playing may be used relatively more frequently in the following situations :

- a team is narrowly in the lead towards the end of the game;
- a team has a player suspended;
- when the defense of the opponents is superior.

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A. General Guidelines

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Passive methods of play may arise in all phases of a team's attack, i.e. when the ball is moved down the court, during the build-up phase, or during the finishing phase.

Passive ways of playing are typically used more frequently in the following situations:

- a team is narrowly in the lead towards the end of the game;
- a team has a player suspended ;
- when the ability of the opponent is superior, especially on defense;

The criteria mentioned in the following specifications rarely apply alone, but must generally be judged in their entirety by the referees. In particular, the impact of active defensive work in conformity with the rules must be taken into account.

The Utilization of the Forewarning Signal

The forewarning signal should be shown particularly in the following situations :

1. When substitutions are made slowly or when the ball is moved slowly down the court.

Typical indications are :

- players are standing around in the middle of the court waiting for substitutions to be completed;
- a player is delaying the execution of a free-throw (by playing around with the ball or pretending not to know the correct spot), throw-off (by a slow recovery of the ball by the goalkeeper, by an erratic pass to middle, or by slow walking with the ball to the middle), goalkeeper-throw, or throw-in, after the team has previously been admonished for such delaying tactics;
- a player is standing still bouncing the ball;
- the ball is played back into the team's own half of the court, even though the opponents are not putting on any pressure;

2. In connection with a late substitution after the build-up phase has already started.

Typical indications are :

- all players have already taken up their attacking positions;
- the team starts the build-up phase with a preparatory passing play;
- not until this stage does the team undertake a substitution.

B. The Utilization of the Forewarning Signal

The forewarning signal should be shown particularly in the following situations:

B1. Forewarning signal when substitutions are made slowly or when the ball is moved slowly down the court

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- players are standing around in the middle of the court waiting for substitutions to be completed;
- a player is delaying the execution of a free-throw (by pretending not to know the correct spot), a throw-off (by a slow recovery of the ball by the goalkeeper, by an intentionally erratic pass to middle, or by slow walking with the ball to the middle), a goalkeeper-throw, or a throw-in, after the team has previously been admonished to refrain from such delaying tactics;
- a player is standing still bouncing the ball;
- the ball is played back into the team's own half of the court, even though the opponents are not putting on any pressure;

B2. Forewarning signal in connection with a late substitution during the build-up phase

Typical indications are:

- all players have already taken up their attacking positions ;
- the team starts the build-up phase with a preparatory passing play ;
- not until this stage does the team undertake a substitution.

Comment :

A team which has attempted a rapid counter-attack from its own half of the court, but has failed to get to an immediate scoring opportunity after reaching the opponents' half of the court, must be allowed to undertake a quick substitution of players at that stage.

3. During an excessively long build-up phase.

In principle, a team must always be allowed a build-up phase with a preparatory passing play before they can be expected to start a targeted attacking situation.

Typical indications of an excessively long build-up phase are :

- the team's attack does not lead to any targeted attacking action;

Comment :

A targeted attacking action exists particularly when the attacking team uses tactical methods to move in such a way that they gain spatial advantage over the defenders, or when they increase the pace of the attack in comparison with the build-up phase;

- players are repeatedly receiving the ball while standing still or moving away from the goal;
- repeated bouncing of the ball while standing still;
- when confronted by an opponent, the attacking player turns away prematurely, waits for the referees to interrupt the game, or gains; no spatial advantage over the defender;
- active defensive actions : active defensive methods preventing the attackers from increasing the pace because the defenders block the intended ball movements and running;

Comment:

A team which has attempted a rapid counter-attack from its own half of the court, but has failed to get to an immediate scoring opportunity after reaching the opponents' half of the court, must be allowed to undertake a quick substitution of players at that stage.

B3. During an excessively long build-up phase

In principle, a team must always be allowed a build-up phase with a preparatory passing play before they can be expected to start a targeted attacking situation.

Typical indications of an excessively long build-up phase are:

- the team's attack does not lead to any targeted attacking action;

Comment:

A targeted attacking action exists particularly when the team in ball possession uses tactical methods to move in such a way that they gain spatial advantage over the defenders, or when they increase the pace of the attack in comparison with the build-up phase:

- *players are repeatedly receiving the ball while standing still or moving away from the goal ;*
- *repeated bouncing of the ball while standing still;*
- *when confronted by an opponent, the attacking player turns away prematurely, waits for the referees to interrupt the game, or gains no spatial advantage over the defender ;*
- *active defensive actions: active defensive methods preventing the attackers from increasing the pace because the defenders block the intended ball movements and running paths;*
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Rulebook 2005

- the attacking team achieves no clear increase in pace from the build-up phase to the finishing phase.

Rulebook 2010

- *a special criterion for excessively long build-up phases is when the attacking team achieves no clear increase in pace from the build-up phase to the finishing phase.*

4. After showing the forewarning signal

After showing the forewarning signal, the referees should allow a build-up phase. (The referees should recognize that younger players and teams at lower levels may require more time). If after this build-up phase there is no clear increase in pace and no targeted attacking action can be recognized, then the referees must conclude that the team in possession of the ball is guilty of passive play.

Comment :

The referees must be careful not to take action against passive play precisely at the moment when the attacking team is actually trying to shoot or undertake a move against the goal of the opponents.

How the Forewarning Signal should be shown

If a referee (either the court referee or the goal-line referee) recognizes the emergence of passive play, he lifts the arm (Hand signal No.18). The other referee should also give the forewarning signal. (They should use the arm that is closest to the team benches.)

This is to indicate the judgment that the team in possession is not trying to get a scoring opportunity or is repeatedly delaying a restart of the game. The hand signal is maintained until:

1. the attack is over or
2. the forewarning signal is no longer valid (see below).

Important: Items C and D have been switched!!

C. How the Forewarning Signal should be used

If a referee (either the court referee or the goal-line referee) recognizes the emergence of passive play, he lifts the arm (hand signal **no.17**), to indicate the judgment that the team is not trying to get into a position to take a shot on goal. The other referee should also give the forewarning signal.

The forewarning signal conveys that the team in possession is not making any attempt to create a scoring opportunity, or that it is repeatedly delaying the restart of the game.

The hand signal is maintained until:

- the attack is over, or
- the forewarning signal is no longer valid (see advice below).

If the team in possession does not make a recognizable attempt to get into position to take a shot on goal, then one of the referees whistles for passive play and awards a free-throw to the opponents.

An attack, which begins when the team gets into possession of the ball, is considered over when the team scores a goal or loses possession.

The forewarning signal normally applies for the entire remainder of the attack. However, during the course of an attack, there are two situations where the judgment of passive play is no longer valid, and the forewarning signal must be stopped immediately:

1. the team in possession takes a shot on goal and the ball rebounds to the team from the goal or the goalkeeper (directly or in the form of a throw-in) or
2. a player or team official of the defending team is given a progressive punishment under Rule 16 due to a rules infraction or unsportsmanlike conduct.

In these two situations, the team in possession must be allowed a new build-up phase.

An attack begins when the team gets into possession of the ball, and is considered over when the team scores a goal or loses possession.

The forewarning signal normally applies for the entire remainder of the attack. However, during the course of an attack, there are two situations where the judgment of passive play is no longer valid, and the forewarning signal is to be stopped :

- a) the team in possession takes a shot on goal and the ball rebounds to the team from the goal or the goalkeeper (directly or in the form of a throw-in)
- b) a player or team official of the defending team is given a personal punishment under Rule 16 due to a foul or unsportsmanlike conduct.

In these two situations, the team in possession must be allowed a new build-up phase.

D. After the forewarning signal has been shown

After showing the forewarning signal, the referees should allow the team in possession of the ball some time to change their action. In this regard, the skill level in different age and performance categories must be taken into account.

The team forewarned should thus be allowed the possibility to prepare a targeted attacking action towards the goal.

If the team in possession does not make a recognizable attempt to get into position to take a shot on goal, then one of the referees decides that there is passive play (Rules 7:11-12). (See also below the 'Decision-making criteria after showing the forewarning signal').

Remark:

Passive play should not be whistled during a forwards movement with a chance for a shot on goal, or when the player with the ball gives an indication that he is about to try to take a shot.

Decision-making criteria after showing the forewarning signal

D1. The attacking team

- no clear increase in pace
- no targeted action towards the goal
- 1-on-1 actions where no spatial advantage is achieved
- delays when playing the ball (e.g., because the passing routes are blocked by the defending team)

D2. The defending team

- the defending team tries to prevent an increase in pace or a targeted attacking action, through correct and active defensive methods
- passive play must not be called, if an aggressive defense interferes in the attacking flow through constant fouls

E. Appendix**Indications of a reduction of pace**

- Action sideways and not in depth towards the goal.
- Frequent diagonal running in front of the defenders without putting any pressure on them
- No action in depth, such as confronting an opponent 1-on-1 or passing the ball to players between the goal-area line and the free-throw line
- Repeated passing between two players with no clear increase of pace or actions towards the goal
- Passing of the ball with all positions involved (wing players, pivot and back-court players) with no clear increase of pace or recognizable actions towards the goal

Indications of 1-on-1 actions where no spatial advantage is gained

- 1-on-1 action in a situation where it is obvious that there is no room for a break-through (several opponents block the room for a break-through.)
- 1-on-1 action without any aim to break through towards the goal
- 1-on-1 action with the objective of simply being awarded a free-throw (e.g., letting oneself 'get stuck', or ending the 1-on-1 action even though it might have been possible to break through)

Indications of active defensive methods in conformity with the rules

- Trying not to commit a foul, so as to avoid an interruption in the game
- Obstructing the running path of the attacker, perhaps by using two defenders

- Moving forward to block the passing routes
- Moving defenders forwards to as to force the attackers further back in the court
- Provoking attackers to pass the ball far back into harmless positions