

50/50 Ball and a Fair Charge

As we continue this section, it is time to introduce the concept of a “fair charge”. For this section, I have excerpted some notes sent to the soccer-coach-I mailing list from Bob Christensen of the Mandan (ND) Soccer Club.

A fair charge is defined as a shoulder to shoulder hit. Referees, in general will look at the player carrying the ball as if they were standing at the center of a clock face. The player is facing 12 o'clock. Opposing players coming at the ball handler from 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock and 12 o'clock to 3 o'clock are generally not going to be called for an illegal charge unless you literally just run the player over. At 3 and 9 exactly you are essentially shoulder to shoulder. A ref will start to look closely if you approach at 8 and 4, and generally, if contact is made between 4 and 8 it will be a foul.

One of the ways to help teach aggressiveness using the tactic of a shoulder charge is to gather the group for a team run. Give 3-4 players balls, and tell them that the runners without the ball are to shoulder charge to gain the ball. **No tackling of the ball is allowed.** They MUST stay in a tight group. This stresses close ball control in traffic while being bumped (sometimes HARD).

Coaching Points

- You will find that there are some players who will not ever challenge hard for the ball. Designate a more aggressive player to get the ball with a shoulder charge, and pass it to the meek player.
- Have the meek player get the ball from a more aggressive player on your signal.
- Watch the more aggressive players, they can FLATTEN the smaller or meeker players.