



# REFEREES CIRCULAR

Date  
12/06/07

**ISSUED BY THE NSW REFEREES STANDING  
COMMITTEE FOR ALL NSW SOCCER  
REFEREES**

Issue  
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## Use of Arms to the Head of an Opponent

FIFA and UEFA have both identified that the use of illegal challenges using arms and elbows constitutes an ongoing danger to player safety and to the reputation of the game in general.

In its 2006 seminar for elite referees UEFA noted that the situation had improved slightly but that in most cases referees and indeed, in some instances assistant referees and fourth officials were still not reacting appropriately to such tackles and this was a matter of concern to all parties.

Referees have a duty to the players and to the sport as a whole to recognise and punish correctly, strong unfair challenges that use the hands or arms; they should be aware of the particular danger of the movement of arms and elbows in an unnatural manner.

Many of us will have seen tackles where the player in front jumps for the ball with arms stretched out to the side and others where the player brings their arms and elbows rearward in a sharp jabbing motion at the time they are challenged by an opponent.

This type of behaviour constitutes a clear and present danger to the safety of players and must be eliminated.

Any challenge involving excessive force and therefore endangering the safety of an opponent is "serious foul play" and must result in the appropriate action being taken by the match officials.

Effective immediately, any player judged guilty of using hands, arms or elbows to the head of an opponent in such a manner is to be sent from the field of play and shown the red card.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Fenech  
State Referees Coach