



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF  
**CP FOOTBALL**

# Only the Captain Guidelines

## MEMO

To: IFCPF Members  
From: Sam Turner, IFCPF Football Director & Skye Arthur-Banning, Officiating Manager  
Date: 16 Oct 2024  
Subject: Implementation of "Only the Captain Guidelines" for the 2024 IFCPF World Cup

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Dear Members,

We are excited to announce that the **2024 IFCPF World Cup**, set to take place in **Salou, Spain**, will introduce a new regulation aimed at enhancing the integrity and conduct of the game. In line with our commitment to fair play and respect for officials, the **"Only the Captain Guidelines"** will be implemented throughout the tournament.

Communication between the referee and players is important, but where a player oversteps acceptable levels of verbal communication, the referee already has the power to caution (YC) or send off (RC) the offender.

The emphasis of this protocol is on stopping players physically approaching the referee, as this can be very intimidating, especially when a number of players are involved and get very close to and/or surround the referee. This intimidation may be prevented by creating a secure and calm zone around the referee which can only be entered by each team's captain.

## What Are the "Only the Captain Guidelines"?

The "Only the Captain Guidelines" stipulate that during all match proceedings, the referee can initiate the 'only the captain' protocol at any stage, but it is most likely to be used following major decisions and to prevent major confrontations:

- **Ensure proper communication:** Once initiated, all on-field interactions with referees or other officials will be channelled through the team captain, preventing unnecessary confrontations and improving clarity in decision-making.
- **Promote respect for officials:** By restricting dialogue to the captain, we foster a more respectful environment where match officials can focus on enforcing the rules without distractions.

- **Uphold team discipline:** This guideline encourages players to maintain their focus on the game, leaving leadership and communication responsibilities with the captain.

Detailed information from IFAB about the protocol and trail regulations can be found here:

<https://www.theifab.com/trials/only-the-captain-can-approach-the-referee/>

## How Will It Be Implemented?

1. **Pre-match Captain Briefing:** Prior to every match, captains will be reminded of their role and responsibilities regarding communication with officials. This briefing will be conducted by the referees.
2. **Initiating “only the captain” protocol:** If the referee feels the need to initiate the “only the captain” protocol, the referee will blow the whistle and verbalise “captains only”.
3. **Enforcement:** If one player other than the captain enters the captain-only zone this will result in a warning, and repeated offences may lead to further sanctions, including yellow cards for unsporting behaviour.
4. **Support for Team Captains:** Team captains will receive additional guidance on their role and how to effectively manage communication to ensure smooth match proceedings.

## Why This Change?

This initiative aligns with **IFCPF’s values of integrity, unity, leadership, and excellence**. Many sports federations around the world have successfully implemented similar guidelines, and we believe this will contribute positively to the atmosphere and professionalism of our events.

Match Officials will be encouraged to be open in their discussions with the captains to foster a healthy atmosphere between all parties. This will allow them to build significant amounts of trust with players and show the kind of leadership required from modern officials in action. Embracing this approach and empowering referees will lead to an increase in the already very high quality of officiating in our competitions and better matches for players and fans to enjoy during the tournament. By empowering captains and ensuring orderly communication, we aim to enhance the player and spectator experience while upholding the highest standards of sportsmanship.

## Next Steps

We ask all member countries to:

- **Brief your team captains** on the guidelines and their responsibilities during the 2024 IFCPF World Cup.
- **Educate your players** about the importance of the guidelines and ensure they understand the necessity of channelling official communications through their captain.
- **Collaborate with your coaching staff** to reinforce discipline and support the smooth introduction of these new regulations.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification on the implementation of the "Only the Captain Guidelines," please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to a successful and respectful tournament, and we trust that this new measure will contribute to a better competitive experience for all.

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to upholding the values of IFCPF.

Best wishes,

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