



CALLING 'ADVANTAGE': A RESOURCE FOR REFEREES

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One of the most important tools that a referee has at their disposal is the advantage call, or, allowing play to continue after a foul. How a referee calls advantage says a lot about their overall skill level. New referees often stop play when they should call advantage, and even experienced referees often don't stop play when advantage ends. This guide is meant to help referees gain the knowledge to put this complicated rule into practice.

First, we need to know the advantage rule and what it means.

From USQ Rulebook 8:

3.3.4. Advantage—If the head referee determines that stopping play due to a foul would provide an advantage to the fouling team, the referee may call advantage by raising one hand straight into the air.

3.3.4.B. Play continues until the fouled team loses possession of the quaffle, the fouled team scores, a foul is committed by the team that was fouled originally, or the fouling team would no longer benefit from play being stopped.

This rule says that if a team commits a foul, the head referee has the option to allow play to continue until there is no further advantage to be gained from continuing play.



It is important to note that an advantage call is not a requirement for every foul that occurs. The head referee determines when advantage is applied and when it ends. When there is a foul committed against the team with the quaffle, the head referee's first instinct should be to apply advantage, and raise a hand to signify to players that there is a foul coming. Once the hand is raised, the head referee is committed to making a call.

Rule 3.3.4.B defines the four ways play can be stopped during an advantage situation:

- **The fouled team loses possession of the quaffle.** The simplest way play stops after advantage without a goal is that the fouling team picks up the quaffle. Always stop play once that occurs. If the quaffle is lost by the fouled team and nobody on the fouled team is able to pick it back up, play should also be stopped.
- **The fouled team scores.** Signify a good goal and then blow the whistle again (in paired short blasts) to stop play. Show the appropriate card and hand signal, if any. Do not send the player to the penalty box if it is a yellow card.
- **A foul is committed by the team that was originally fouled.** If the team with the quaffle fouls, play stops immediately and the quaffle is turned over to the defending team. Both fouls are administered, but the quaffle is reset based on the second foul.
- **The fouling team would no longer benefit from play being stopped.** This is up to the HR.

Some things to consider:

- The most frequent situation in which advantage abates is when the fouled player is on the ground and is not attempting to pass to a teammate from the ground. Play should be stopped as soon as it's clear that the ball carrier is no longer advancing.
- The same is true if the quaffle is under contention. For example, a defender starts to wrestle the ball away from the carrier. In this case you could wait a moment to see the outcome, however more than a second or two would likely dissolve any advantage given.



- If the ball carrier is not actively trying to make a play of any kind, play should be stopped. This may happen if they are trying to wait while their offense sets up. If they are driving, or looking to pass or shoot, play should continue. If they are not advancing or simply walking forward, play should be stopped as doing so would not create a further disadvantage to them. This often occurs when there is a foul closer to the fouled team's defensive hoops. Play can be stopped right away in a case like this unless they immediately try to make a fast break to score.

There are a few situations not outlined here where play should be immediately stopped even if advantage would normally be called.

- If the foul is egregious and/or has malicious intent, it is usually a good idea to stop play right away. If players recognize malicious intent, like an obvious punch, play should be stopped right away to contain the situation and to prevent retaliation.

There are other situations that apply similarly to advantage but have crucial differences.

- **Delayed Penalty (Rule 3.3.5).** If an assistant or snitch referee calls a penalty, they raise their hand just like the head referee does to signal advantage. However, if the head referee doesn't see the foul, they must wait to stop play until it would not create an advantage or disadvantage for either team. This is usually the moment that possession changes between the teams; it's important to stop play immediately in these scenarios so as to not hinder any fast breaks.
- **Injury.** A serious injury results in a stoppage in play; a serious injury is anything that involves blood, a head or neck injury, or anything that the referee determines in their judgment to be serious enough to stop play. Otherwise, it is important to let play continue on if there is an injured player who is away from active gameplay (see rules 8.1.2 H and I). Many people shout at the head referee to stop play if the head referee does not see the injured player, but the head referee should have a clear view of active gameplay and where active gameplay is likely to develop. They should let play continue on, similarly to how they would when calling



advantage or a delayed penalty, so that play is not stopped in a way that may stop a team's scoring chance. They may stop play if an official tells them to do so immediately.

More important advantage notes:

- Snitch catches made by the fouling team are not counted during an advantage.
- Bludger beats made by either team during advantage do count.
- Unless a goal is scored or the fouled team fouls during the advantage, the quaffle and the quaffle-carrier are moved back to the position where they were when the foul occurred. If they were knocked out, they do not have to touch their hoops, and are placed at that original position as an eligible player. Everyone else stays in their respective positions and knocked out status. When you first call the advantage you should place your beanbag near where the quaffle carrier was at the time of the foul to help you reset the field properly.