



From: Chris Mulholland, USPSA National Supervisor of Officials

To: All USPSA Referees

Date: 8 April 2008

Subject: **LAW 12: PUSHING THE BALL ACROSS THE GOAL LINE**

**Policy:** A ball may be pushed across the goal line for a score by an attacker even when a defender is blocking the ball.

**Background:** There has been some confusion regarding the amount of contact allowed between opponents when the ball is on or near the goal line. This memorandum provides definitions and examples of how Laws 10 and 12 are to be applied to these situations.

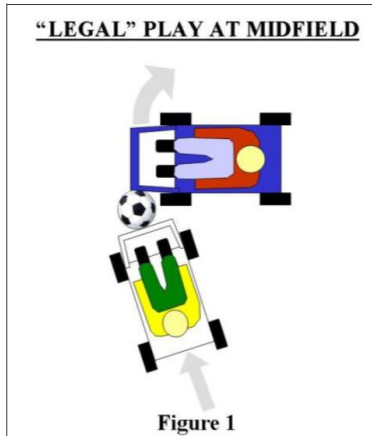
### **Specifics**

- Law 10, Method of Scoring, states that, “A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goal posts, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.”
- Law 12, Fouls and Misconduct, states that,
  - “A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player rams or attempts to ram an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force.”
  - “Tackling and fair charges are allowed as long as they are footguard to footguard. Contact with any other part of the chairs or ramming is a foul and is NOT allowed.”
  - “Ramming is defined as when a player deliberately drives into an opponent, with or without the ball, at a high rate of speed or with excessive force. The opponent may be moving or standing still.”

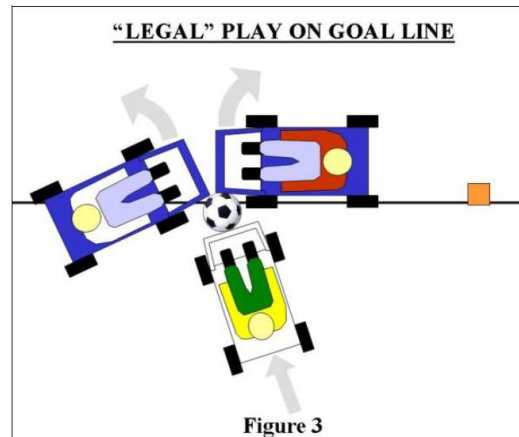
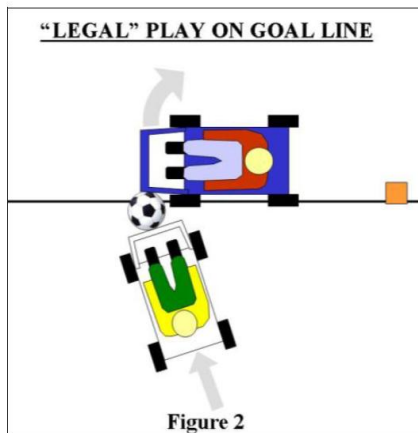
### **Discussion**

- Footguard-to-footguard contact between opponents is legal as long as it is not reckless, careless, or uses excessive force. Footguard-to-footguard contact includes those instances when the ball is between the two opponents. In those cases when a defender uses his/her footguard to stop a ball from crossing the goal line, the attacker is not prohibited from attempting to score as long as:
  - the contact involves the footguards only;
  - the action is not reckless, careless, or uses excessive force; and
  - the play does not create a dangerous situation for the defender.

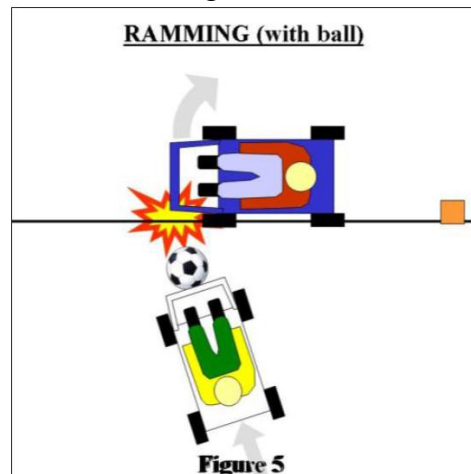
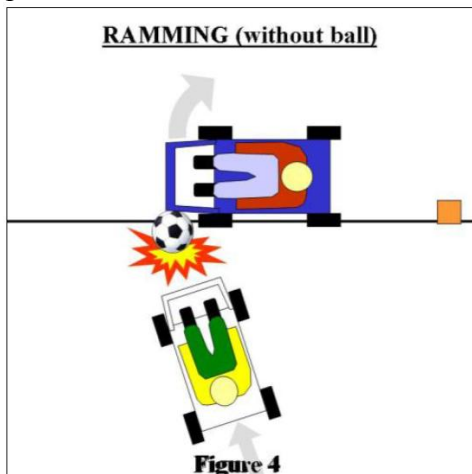
- Figure 1 below illustrates a play seen many times during a match at midfield when a player pushes the ball and moves an opponent's chair. This is a legal play as long as it is not "careless, reckless or using excessive force." For the action to be legal, the player must drive up to the ball, place his/her footguard against it, and then begin moving the ball. He/she cannot "drive through" the ball and opponent. There must be a measure of control and care for the opponent.



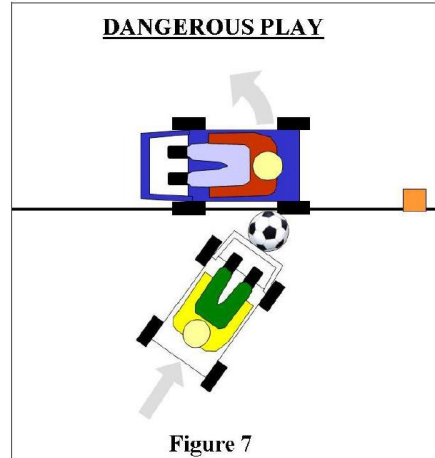
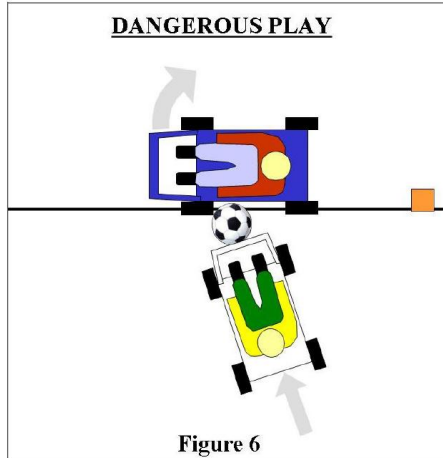
- Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the same action, only this time along the goal line. The same requirements as described above must exist for it to be a legal play. If there is excessive force, carelessness or recklessness, it will be considered a ramming violation – a major foul – which results in a direct free kick (DFK) for the opponent's team



- Figures 4 and 5 illustrate an illegal play, "ramming". This happens when the attacker, with or without the ball, drives into a defender without stopping. The referee will stop the match and award a direct free kick (DFK) to the defending team at the spot of the infraction, keeping in mind all the requirements of Law 13 for a free kick within a team's own goal area



- Figures 6 and 7 illustrate “playing in a dangerous manner” whereby the safety of the defender is imperiled. The referee will stop the match and award an indirect free kick (IFK) to the defending team at the spot of the infraction, keeping in mind all the requirements of Law 13 for a free kick within a team’s own goal area.



- This memorandum does not change the laws, it only illustrates how this aspect of the laws is defined and applied by the referees.

*CML*  
C.MULHOLLAND