

# Handling Player Injuries

1. You notice that a player has gotten injured. Your first decision is whether to stop the match or not. If it looks serious, blow the whistle to stop play, call the coach on, and go to step 5. Otherwise, for the younger players, if they've gone down to the ground and not gotten up promptly, you might as well blow the whistle. For the older players, you might want to try to figure out if it's something they will shake off by themselves without stopping the match. Things that you should stop play immediately for include: Breathing problems, severe bleeding, head/neck/back injuries, and broken bones.
2. Once play is stopped, whether you stopped it or it stopped because the ball went out of play, run (don't walk) to the injured player. If you let play continue unnecessarily long with a player down, or if you walk nonchalantly to the player after play is stopped, people will get the impression that you don't care about the safety of players.
3. Once you get to the player, ask them if they need their coach's attention. Do not attempt to administer first aid.
4. If the answer is yes, or if the player does not respond coherently, beckon the coach onto the field. If the player's answer was "no", hold up your hand to stop the coach and let them know that the player doesn't need their attention.
5. If you beckoned the coach onto the field, step away from the player. My personal preference is for you to visit the AR on the end of the field where the player is. Walk or jog backwards to the AR keeping the players in view. If the AR is near the team bench or a group of spectators, have him/her come onto the field out of earshot of players. Ask them what they saw. This is important. You get away from the coach who might be tempted to criticize your calls, and it gets you potential helpful information from your AR.
6. If you are the assistant referee, keep an eye on the players. One team may try to get revenge while officials let their guard down.
7. Does the injured player have to leave the field? In general, if you've stopped play solely for the injury, or if you summoned the coach or first-aid crew on to attend to the player, yes. Exceptions: The injured player is a goalkeeper; Both the goalkeeper and another player got injured; Two players from the same team got injured; The injury is severe (e.g., head/neck/back) so there is a risk of harming the player more by moving him/her. In that case, the first-aid crew will decide what to do with the player. In youth soccer, injuries are legal opportunities for substitutions for either team.
8. Once the injury is taken care of, come back onto the field and restart the match. If you blew the whistle because of the injury and there was no foul, restart with a drop ball where the ball was when you blew the whistle. If play was stopped for any other reason, conduct the appropriate restart. Blow your whistle so everybody's attention is back on the match.
9. If the restart is a dropped ball, you do not need to have players from either or both teams participate. If the goalkeeper had possession of the ball when you stopped play, you can have a dropped ball with just the goalkeeper present.