

Ask a Soccer Referee

Answers to Laws of the Game

And Practical Refereeing Questions:

Jim Allen, National Assessor

As of February 23, 2000, all replies to technical questions posted in this column will have been coordinated with and approved by the U. S. Soccer Federation's National Program for Referee Development.

TAPING DOES NOT REPLACE REMOVAL OF JEWELRY

Your question:

I was wondering if a player had their ears pierced, if you can tape them or if you have to take them off? Some referees say that you can tape them and some say you have to take them off and I want to know for sure that you can tape your ears and if it is a rule that you can tape them. Thank you.

USSF answer (October 16, 2001):

Law 4 - The Players' Equipment states very firmly in its very first paragraph: "A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry)." This means that all items of jewelry are normally considered dangerous. There are only two permissible exceptions to the ban on jewelry: medical alert jewelry that can guide emergency medical personnel in treating injured players and certain religious items that are not dangerous and not likely to provide the player with an unfair advantage.

Taping earrings should not be permitted by any referee, as there is still the danger of injury to the player. Taping does not negate "must not . . . wear. . . any kind of jewelry."
