

Q&A

VRC 2021-2022: Tipping Point

Tagged: Referee Decisions

Welcome to the official VEX Robotics Competition Question & Answer system, where all registered teams have the opportunity to ask for official rules interpretations and clarifications. This Q&A system is the only source for official VRC Tipping Point rules clarifications, and the clarifications made here from the Game Design Committee (GDC) are considered as official and binding as the written [Game Manual](#) itself.

Please review the [Q&A Usage Guidelines](#) before posting. This system is only intended for specific VRC Tipping Point rules questions.

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978: When a mobile goal leaves the field during skills?

18-Dec-2021

Referee Decisions Scoring SG9

How should a skills run be scored/referee'd if a robot interacts with a mobile goal that is on a balanced platform and causes it or any other elevated mobile goal to fall over such that its stem extends over the field perimeter and touches the ground outside of the field but the base remains on the platform? We are under the assumption that once a stem touches the ground outside the arena then that mobile goal is considered to have left the field but this may be erroneous on our part.

Appendix B States: **"Please note that all rules from "The Game" section of the manual apply to the Robot Skills Challenge, unless otherwise specified.**

SG9 Keep Scoring Objects in the field. Teams may not intentionally remove Scoring Objects from the field. While Scoring Objects may accidentally leave the field, doing so intentionally or repeatedly would be a violation of this rule. **Scoring Objects that leave the field during Match play, intentionally or unintentionally, will be returned to the field at the location nearest the point at which they exited. Referees will return the Scoring Object to the field when it is deemed safe to do so, at the leisure of the referee.** Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion. If a Mobile Goal leaves the field, any Rings that were Scored in the Mobile Goal Base, or on Mobile Goal Branches, will be returned to the field in a non-Scored state, on the field tile closest to where they exited.** **Note: During the last 30 seconds of the Match: • Any Scoring Object that leaves the field will not be returned. • If a Scoring Object is leaving the Field (as determined by the Head Referee), but is deflected back into the field by a Drive Team Member, field monitor, ceiling / wall, or other external factor, it should still be considered "out of the field" and removed by a scorekeeper or Head Referee.** If the redirection occurred due to contact with a Drive Team Member, it will be at the Head Referee's discretion whether or should apply.

-Is that neutral mobile goal officially considered out of play once any part of it touches the ground outside of the arena and should be removed and replaced on the nearest field tile, but not within the last 30 seconds of the skills run? OR -Should it remain in place, thus deeming the platform to be unbalanced and disallowing any elevated points to additional goals on the platform? OR -Other?

Thank you for your time and effort to clarify as we prepare to host an event. Apologies if this has been answered elsewhere.

Answered by committee

As quoted in your post, all standard gameplay rules apply in the Robot Skills Challenge, unless otherwise specified. There are no Skills-specific rules pertaining to Scoring Objects exiting the field, so you are correct, SG9 would apply.

For more information regarding how to apply SG9 in this case, please see this related Q&A:

<https://events.vex.com/VRC/2021-2022/QA/888>

If this does not answer your question, please feel free to rephrase and re-submit.

948: SG3 Clarification

30-Nov-2021

G13 G14 SG3 Referee Decisions

Here are 2 possible ways of interpreting SG3. Please let us know which is correct.

Scenario In Question: You get the scenario where there are 10 seconds left in the match and you (red) are going back towards your platform with a neutral mogo (ie going from neutral zone to your alliance zone) and there is a blue robot playing defense on you to prevent you from getting back to your platform. The result of the interaction is that the blue

robot gets pushed into the red platform by the you (red robot)

Relevant Rules: **SG3** states:

"Platforms are "safe" during the endgame. During the last thirty (30) seconds, Robots may not contact the opposing Alliance's Platform."

SG3b states:

"For the purposes of this rule, G13 supersedes rule G14. Any Robot which is contacting its own Platform during the last thirty (30) seconds, provided that no other rules are being violated, will automatically receive the "benefit of the doubt". Therefore, any contact with this Robot will be considered a violation, regardless of intent"

G13 states:

"Offensive Robots get the "benefit of the doubt". In the case where Head Referees are forced to make a judgment call regarding a destructive interaction between a defensive and offensive Robot, for an interaction which results in a questionable rules violation, the referees will err on the side of the offensive Robot"

G14 states:

"You can't force an opponent into a penalty. Intentional strategies that cause an opponent to violate a rule are not permitted, and will not result in an infraction on the opposing Alliance. Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion"

Interpretation A: You can interpret this as SG3 saying the platform is safe and offensive robots get the benefit of the doubt supersedes the ruling of forcing an opponent into a penalty (i.e you cannot apply G14 to a ruling on this interaction because it explicitly says that G13 supersedes G14 and we must err on the side of the offensive robot) This ruling would result in issuing the red alliance a free elevated robot or DQing the blue robot for interfering with gameplay by not letting you score your mogo on the platform. (the DQ comes from the last lines of SG3 "Violations of this rule which do interfere with gameplay, such as preventing a Platform from becoming Balanced, will result in a Disqualification, regardless of whether the interference was Match Affecting or not")

Interpretation B: You can also interpret this ruling as SG3 saying platforms are safe and SG3B clarifying the context of G13 superseding G14 to mean "if you are touching your platform, you will receive the benefit of the doubt" (i.e if you are already touching your platform and an opposing robot touches you, we err on your side and award you the free elevated robot). This ruling would result in not issuing the red alliance a free elevated robot because SG3b is not meant to apply to this type of interaction based on its clarification of what context it applies to ("Any Robot which is contacting its own Platform during the last thirty (30) seconds, provided that no other rules are being violated, will automatically receive the "benefit of the doubt")

I can kind of understand both interpretations but would like to know which is correct.

Answered by committee

We apologize for the delay in responding to this question. Thank you for the well thought-out post with all relevant rules / quotes included.

Please see these similar Q&A's for more detail on this subject:

<https://events.vex.com/VRC/2021-2022/QA/968>

<https://events.vex.com/VRC/2021-2022/QA/973>

Interpretation A: You can interpret this as SG3 saying the platform is safe and offensive robots get the benefit of the doubt supersedes the ruling of forcing an opponent into a penalty (i.e you cannot apply G14 to a ruling on this interaction because it explicitly says that G13 supersedes G14 and we must err

on the side of the offensive robot) This ruling would result in issuing the red alliance a free elevated robot or DQing the blue robot for interfering with gameplay by not letting you score your mogo on the platform. (the DQ comes from the last lines of SG3 "Violations of this rule which do interfere with gameplay, such as preventing a Platform from becoming Balanced, will result in a Disqualification, regardless of whether the interference was Match Affecting or not")

This interpretation is correct. That is to say, the intent of SG3-b is to remove any need for Head Referee judgment regarding "offense"/"defense", "which Robot touched first", etc. Put simply, any time when the following criteria are met, SG3-b has been violated, regardless of intent or context:

- It is during the last 30 seconds of the Match
- A Robot is physically contacting its own Alliance Platform, either directly or transitively through other Robots or Scoring Objects
- An opposing Robot is physically contacting that Robot, either directly or transitively through other Robots or Scoring Objects

893: Reviewing Video

21-Oct-2021

Referee Decisions

Hello,

T1 part B states

b. Head Referees may not review any photo or video Match recordings to determine a score or ruling.

Does this mean it's okay for Scorekeeper Referees to review match footage?

Thank you for your time!

Answered by committee

No.

856: Rings scored in mobile goal base

30-Aug-2021

Referee Decisions

A Ring is considered Scored in a Mobile Goal Base if it is not contacting a Robot and is at least partially within the 3-dimensional vertical projection formed by the "bowl" of the Mobile Goal Base.

Verticality is typically defined as a right angle from the horizon.

If a mobile goal is not sitting flat on the tiles (horizontally), are we to rule rings scored in the vertical projection of the bowl or just the projection of the bowl? Because the definition of the mobile goal branch is that it extends "*vertically out of a Mobile Goal Base*", I would assume the intent is that all rings are scored in the projection of the goal that is perpendicular to the mobile goal base. Is this correct?

A result if that interpretation is correct though is that teams could notice a mobile goal tipped over and place their match loads within that projection.

See pictures.

- the first is stuck in the base of the neutral goal, but in the projection of the blue goal because it is tipped slightly being on the platform.
- the second meets the definition of on a branch, but, for the sake of this question, assume that it is on the field tile within the tipped projection, but not on a branch.





Answered by committee

In version 2.1 of the Game Manual, the scenario in the first image was added to the Scoring section as Scoring Figure 1. The caption reads:

Both Rings would be considered Scored, as neither Ring is contacting a Robot, Field Element or Ring that is not considered Scored. Both are contacting the colored portion of a Mobile Goal Base, and only meet the definition of Scored for one Mobile Goal.

A scenario similar to the second image was added to the Scoring section as Scoring Figure 2. The relevant portion of the caption reads:

The highlighted Ring is contacting the floor, causing it to not be Scored.

775: .

5-Apr-2021

G16 Referee Decisions

Answered by committee

752: LRT9 - touching scored balls

24-Feb-2021

Referee Decisions

Since my question <https://events.vex.com/VRC/2020-2021/QA/734> was not answered, let me ask it again regarding the touching of scored balls.

<LRT9> This rule is a modification of the definition of Scored. In a Live Remote Tournament, a Ball may be considered Scored in a Goal if it is still touching a Robot of either Alliance color. Note: The intent of this rule is for Head Referees to give Teams the "benefit of the doubt" if they inadvertently contact a Ball when attempting to Double / Quadruple a Goal.

There are two different interpretations of the rule: 1) In an attempt to touch the tower, you can touch a scored ball (sometimes that balls are sticking out). In this case touching the scored ball is OK and the scored ball and touch will be counted. 2) Touching all scored balls is now legal. This would allow teams to build a robot to cradle many balls to the goal to get them as scored. I could see 6, 7, 8 balls scored in a way that a robot is holding them into the scored position. On the Vex forum someone thinks they can get 15 (<https://www.vexforum.com/t/live-remote-competition-6-ball-scoring/88845>).

It appears with your ruling (<https://events.vex.com/VRC/2020-2021/QA/731>) about the autonomous can be touching seems to indicate that teams can now build robots to cradle balls and get 15 in a tower since you state "robot contact is irrelevant". If robot contact is indeed irrelevant the rules should be updated as such to make that clear.

The key sentence here is "if they **inadvertently** contact a Ball when attempting to Double / Quadruple a Goal.". Is it OK to purposefully touch/hold balls for the intent to score additional ones? If so, the LRT software will definitely need to be changed last I checked it only allows up to five.

Answered by committee

Is it OK to purposefully touch/hold balls for the intent to score additional ones?

Yes, this is legal.

As noted in the response from [this similar Q&A post](#):

The phrase "when attempting to Double or Quadruple" was intended to be a colloquial explanation for this rule modification, and reinforce that Head Referees will be providing "benefit of the doubt" often during a Live Remote Tournament. It was not intended to be an explicit caveat to the verbiage of LRT9.

735: SG8 in Remote Skills Event

26-Jan-2021

Referee Decisions

<SG8> rule makes clear that the robot can not have more than three balls in possession. However the <LTR5> says that <SG8> does not apply in Live Remote Tournament. Does the <LTR5> applies in Remote Skills tournament too?

Answered by committee

No, LRT5 only applies to Live Remote Tournaments. SG8 still applies for all Skills Challenge Matches, include Remote Skills Matches.

734: LRT9 - touching scored balls

25-Jan-2021

Referee Decisions

<LRT9> This rule is a modification of the definition of Scored. In a Live Remote Tournament, a Ball may be considered Scored in a Goal if it is still touching a Robot of either Alliance color. Note: The intent of this rule is for Head Referees to give Teams the "benefit of the doubt" if they inadvertently contact a Ball when attempting to Double / Quadruple a Goal.

This seems clear, but I wanted to verify my interpretation that teams may inadvertently only contact a ball when attempting to touch a goal. Teams cannot however be touching a ball with the intent to hold the ball in the goal.

In a recent LRT event, a team was able to put five balls in the center goal by using their robot to prop/cradle the balls in. This seems like it is not the intent of the rule covered by the specified note.

In order to demonstrate, the team was asked to move the robot away from the tower. The team admitted that the ball would then not be scored (they were honest) and the team moved their robot away and only four balls remained that met the definition of scored. Four balls were then marked scored and the robot was marked as touching the goal.

Is this the correct interpretation of LRT9?

Answered by committee

Please see this similar Q&A, which we believe answers your question. If it does not, please feel free to rephrase and re-submit.

<https://events.vex.com/VRC/2020-2021/QA/731>

692: Owned Goal

9-Nov-2020

Referee Decisions

From the Rules Manual definitions:

Scored - A Ball status. A Ball is considered Scored in a Goal if it is not touching a Robot of the same color as the Ball and meets all of the following criteria. • The Ball is fully or partially within the outer edge of the Goal. • The Ball is fully below the upper edge of the Goal. • The Ball is not contacting the foam tiles outside of the Goal**

Owned - A Goal status. A Goal is considered Owned by an Alliance if its colored Ball is the vertically highest Scored Ball in that Goal. **

In the attached picture, both balls meet the definition of scored and the goal is owned by red since that is vertically the highest Scored Ball in that Goal. We have had some teams question that but after reading the definitions again agreed with the ruling. I figured I'd post this here to get a final ruling and make sure that all events understand the ruling as well.



Answered by committee

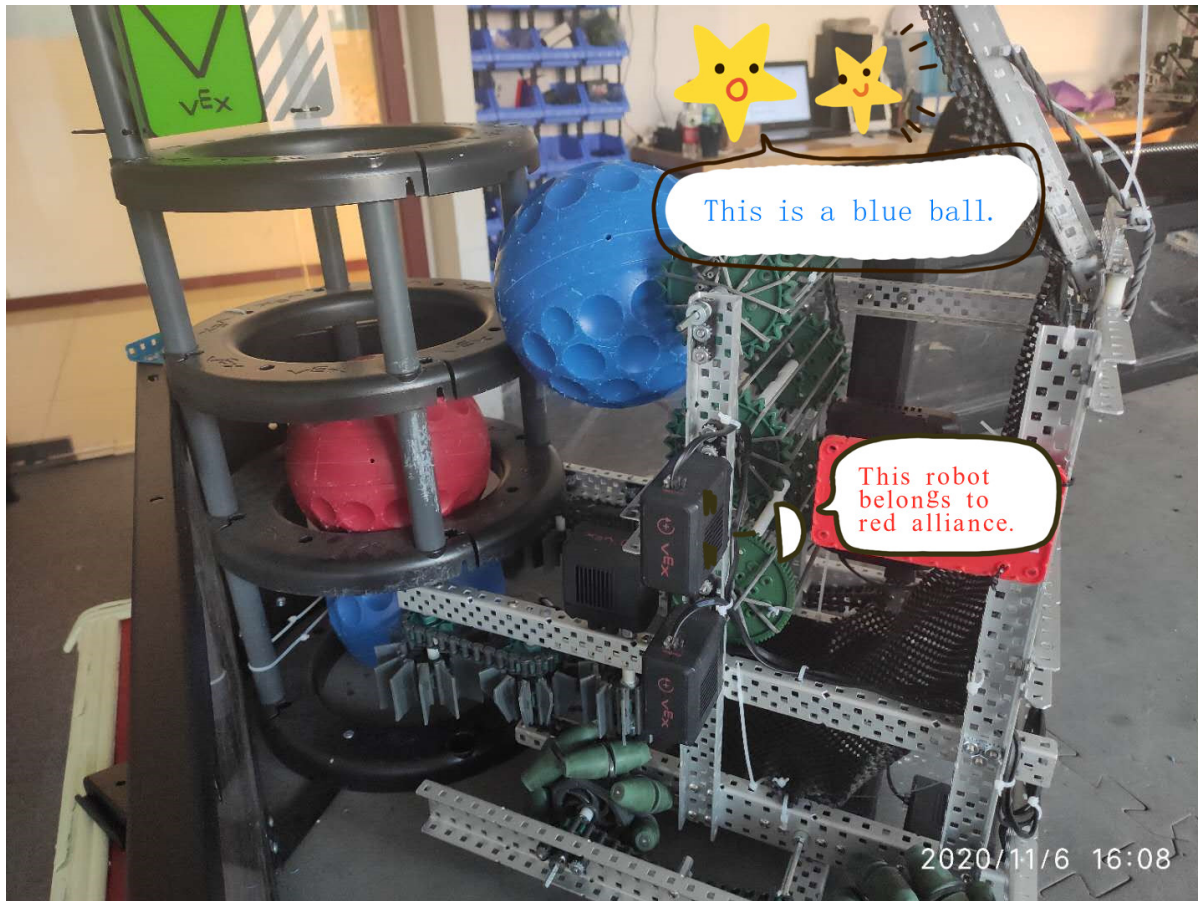
Yes, this is the correct interpretation.

690: VEX EDR---Scored or Not

6-Nov-2020

Referee Decisions

The top blue ball is out the goal , but it meets all the criteria for a score , so scored or not? ?tournament?



Scored - A *Ball* status. A *Ball* is considered *Scored* in a *Goal* if it is not touching a *Robot* of the same color as the *Ball* and meets all of the following criteria.

- The *Ball* is fully or partially within the outer edge of the *Goal*.
- The *Ball* is fully below the upper edge of the *Goal*.
- The *Ball* is not contacting the foam tiles outside of the *Goal*.

Answered by committee

Per the definition of *Scored*, as quoted in your post, this is an edge case that would be considered *Scored* for the blue Alliance.

601: Clarification of "Momentary" Possession

13-May-2020

SG8 Referee Decisions

This question is posted based on a [VEX Forum thread](#) and on behalf of a frequent volunteer in Arizona.

According to <SG8>:

Robots may not have greater-than-momentary Possession of more than three (3) Balls of its opposing Alliance's color at once.

Since "momentary" is not defined, would the following scenario be permitted within the rules?

Red Robot approaches a Goal containing one or more blue Balls while currently in Possession of three blue Balls. Red robot descodes the Balls in the Goal, so that it is momentarily holding more than three blue Balls. Then, the Robot immediately ejects the additional blue Balls, so that the Possession of greater than 3 blue Balls is around 5 seconds long.

Is there any rule-of-thumb that referees should follow when considering similar scenarios?

Answered by committee

The full text of SG8 reads as follows, with a portion bolded for emphasis:

<SG8> Possession is limited. Robots may not have greater-than-momentary Possession of more than three (3) Balls of its opposing Alliance's color at once. When two Robots from the same Alliance are working in tandem and blocking Balls, those Robots may not Possess a total of more than six (6) Balls of its opposing Alliance's color at once.

Robots that violate this rule must stop all Robot actions except for those actions that are attempting to remove the excess Ball.

Minor violations of this rule that are not Match Affecting will receive a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion.

Provided that the Robot in question immediately ceases all other actions (e.g. driving, scoring, lifting a mechanism, intaking, etc), and ejects the extra Balls, this scenario would be legal.

Is there any rule-of-thumb that referees should follow when considering similar scenarios?

When a VRC-specific definition is not available, a standard dictionary definition should be used. The Oxford definition of "momentary" is "lasting for a very short time; brief".

It will be at the Head Referee's discretion if a given Robot has exceeded a "momentary" violation, if the violation is Match Affecting, and/or if the Team has received multiple warnings prior to this violation.

597: Wallbot's Possession of Balls

13-May-2020

SG8 Referee Decisions

SG8: Robots may not have greater-than-momentary Possession of more than three (3) Balls of its opposing Alliance's color at once. When two Robots from the same Alliance are working in tandem and blocking Balls, those Robots may not Possess a total of more than six (6) Balls of its opposing Alliance's color at once.

SG8 establishes a Robot may not have Possession of more than 3 of the opposing alliance's balls at one time. The definition of Possession is the following:

Possession – A Robot is considered to be Possession a Ball if a Ball is in an unscored position and either of the following criteria are met:

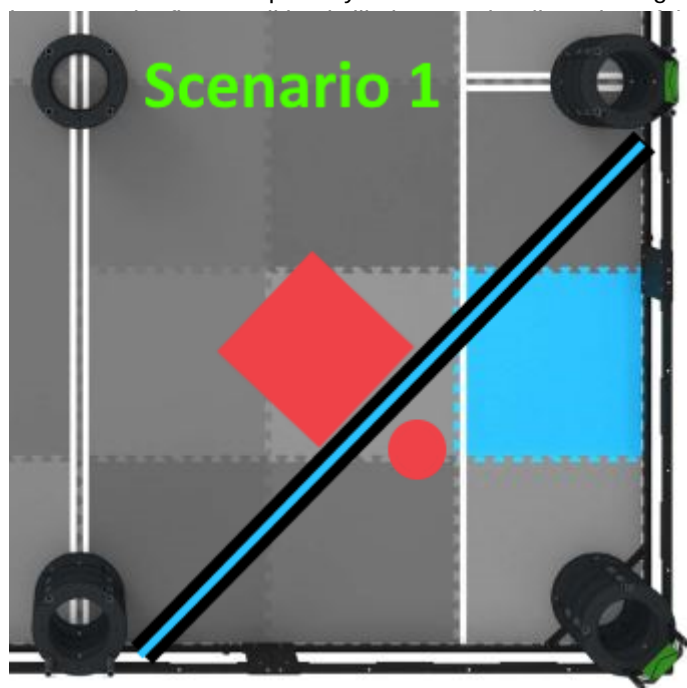
- The Robot is carrying, holding or controlling the movement of a Ball such that if the Robot changes direction, the Ball will move with the Robot. Pushing/plowing Balls is not considered Possession, however using concave portions of your Robot to control the movement of Balls is considered Possession.
- The Robot is blocking the opposing Robot's access to Balls that are located between Goals along the field perimeter.* Blocking access to Balls is considered Possessing those Balls only if the opposing Robot is attempting to make contact with those Balls from close range* **AND those Balls are at least partially within the width of the Goals between the Goals.** Robots on the same Alliance working in tandem to block access to Balls would share the Possession of the Balls. See <SG8> for Possession limits.

Emphasis added. A wallbot that has sectioned off a portion of the field does not meet the criteria for possession in the first bullet point as the wallbot (assuming it is stationary) is not carrying, holding, or controlling the movement of a ball. The focus of this question centers around the second bullet point.

There are two conditions under the second point. The “and” qualifier necessitates that both conditions must be met in order to be considered in possession of a ball.

The first condition is that the opposing robot has to be attempting to make contact with a ball from close range and the second is that a ball is partially between the width of two goals along the field perimeter. The second condition is easy to

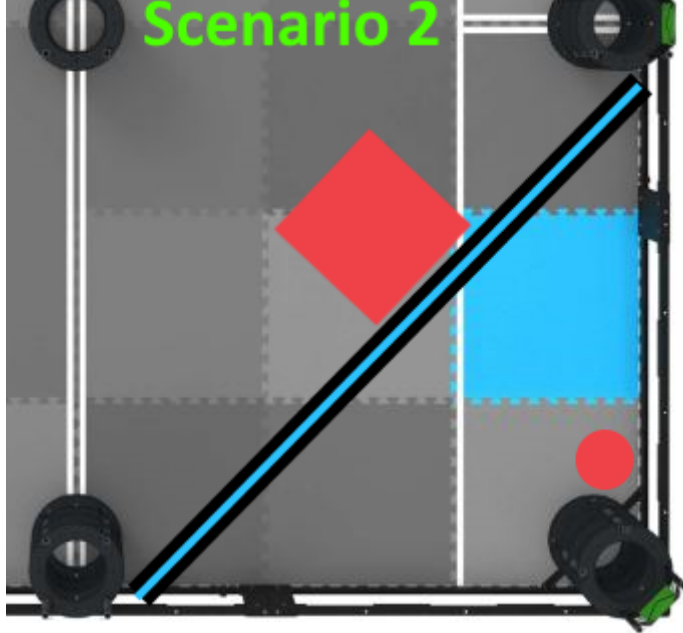
Head Referee as to what is considered “from close range.”
precedent for Head Referees to base their decisions upon.



An image of scenario 1 can be found at the bottom of this

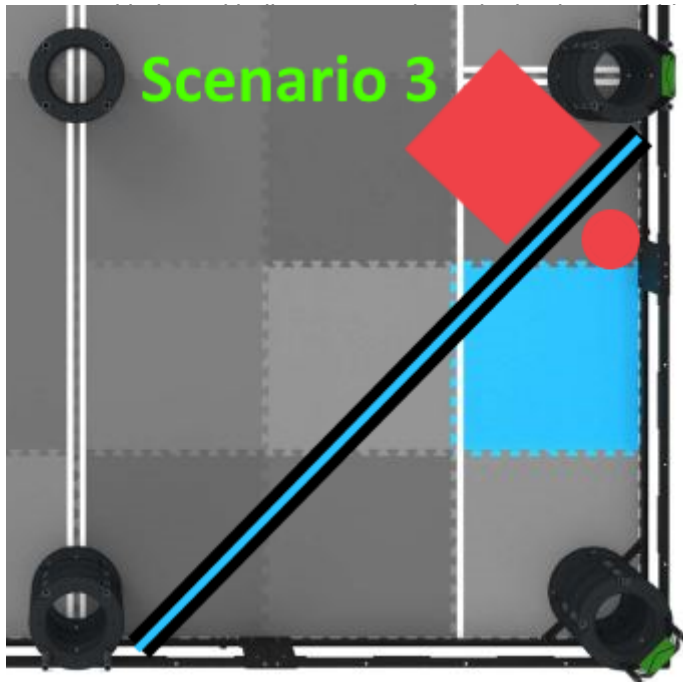
post. A blue robot has deployed a stationary wall in the corner. The wall is tall enough so that no robot can reach over the wall and make contact with balls. A red ball is directly behind the blue wall. A red robot is directly on the other side of the wallbot. The Red robot is attempting to make contact with the red ball and is within close range of the red ball. However, the red ball is clearly not between the width of the goals along the field perimeter. Therefore, the blue robot is not in possession of the red ball. Is this interpretation of scenario 1 correct?

Scenario 2



An image of scenario 2 can be found at the bottom of this

post. A blue robot has deployed a stationary wall in the corner. The wall is tall enough so that no robot can reach over the wall and make contact with balls. A red ball is clearly between the width of two goals along the field perimeter. A red robot is on the other side of the wall but is at least a full tile's length away from the ball. The Red robot is attempting to make close range of the red ball. Therefore, the blue robot is not in correct?



An image of scenario 3 can be found at the bottom of this

post. A blue robot has deployed a stationary wall in the corner. The wall is tall enough so that no robot can reach over the wall and make contact with balls. A red ball is clearly between the width of two goals along the field perimeter and a red robot is directly on the other side of the wall. The red robot is attempting to make contact with the red ball. Even though the red robot is unsuccessful in making contact with the red ball, it is within close range and attempting to make contact. Therefore, the blue robot is in possession of the red ball as both conditions are met. Is this interpretation of scenario 3 correct?

Answered by committee

Thank you for the detailed question, and for your patience while we reviewed the rules in question. <SG8> and the definition of Possession have been modified in the August 17th Game Manual Update to address this confusion. If more clarification is still needed, please feel free to rephrase and re-submit.

1075: Is the "discretion" wording in the header of <G20> overridden by the "must" wording in <G20.b> in the 2.4 version of the rules?

21-Feb-2022

G20 Referee Decisions

I am head referee at an upcoming event and have a question about the 2.4 change in the match replay rule wording.

<G20> Match replays are allowed, but rare. Match replays, i.e. playing a Match over again from its start, are at the discretion of the Event Partner and Head Referee, and will only be issued in the most extreme circumstances. Some example situations that may warrant a Match replay are as follows: ... b. A V5 Robot Brain lockup that is outside of the Team's control and results in a complete shutdown of the Robot. To qualify for a Match replay, all of the following criteria (shown below) must be met:

This new wording is contradictory. The words in the header of the rule are "at the **discretion**", "Some **example** situations", and "**may** warrant a Match replay" while subpart b uses the language "**must** be met."

So which is it, do I have the discretion to choose when the match will be replayed on a white screen taking into consideration the criteria i-iv listed under subpart b (as when I decide if a field issue is match affecting and should be replayed) or does the "must" wording in subpart b override the header text?

Answered by committee

This may be an oversimplified analogy, but it might help to clear up some confusion.

If you are faced with a locked door, you "may" choose to open that door or not. However, before you decide to open the door, you "must" have the key required to open that door. Granting a replay is the locked door; the "white screen" criteria is one key that can be used to open that door.

Teams may request a replay at any time, for any reason. In most cases, these requests are denied. However, we have identified one particular form of Robot Brain lockup that is verifiably outside of the Teams' control. If a Robot is not responding, and a Team is requesting a replay, criteria i-iv can be used to determine whether they are experiencing this true "white screen" lockup.

Similarly, just because a Team experiences this lockup, does not immediately mean that a Match replay should occur - this is still within EP / Head Referee discretion. Some examples may be, if it occurs in the last 5 seconds in a non-Match-Affecting manner, if the situation has occurred multiple times and the Team has refused assistance with technical troubleshooting, etc.

1069: SG6 Match Affecting Recovered Rings

17-Feb-2022

SG6 Referee Decisions

Example: The Red alliance scores 5 rings on an alliance goal branch for 15 points. The Blue alliance descodes the rings. Later in the match the red alliance regains control of that alliance goal and places 5 more rings on the branch.

If Red loses by 10 points, should referees consider the original 5 rings as match affecting using SG6 or do the replacement rings negate the call?

<SG6> Rings on the Alliance Mobile Goal are "safe". Strategies intended to remove Rings which are Scored on or in an opposing Alliance Mobile Goal are prohibited. Examples of "intentional strategies" could

include, but are not limited to: • Robot mechanisms or actions solely intended to “lift off” Rings from Mobile Goal Branches. • Robot mechanisms or actions solely intended to “scoop out” Rings from Mobile Goal Bases. “Knocking over” or otherwise forcefully manipulating an Alliance Mobile Goal such that Rings become removed. Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee’s discretion.

Answered by committee

We cannot provide an absolute ruling on this hypothetical situation. At a minimum, the original action of removing the Rings would be considered a warning of SG6 to the Team in question. Whether it was considered a Match Affecting violation or not would be extremely context-sensitive, depending on factors such as the following:

- Under what circumstances the original Rings were removed from the Alliance Mobile Goal (e.g. if it meets any of the examples of “intentional strategies” listed in SG6)
- What circumstances the red Alliance went through to replace the 5 Rings (e.g. if there were any other Match Affecting implications of the illegal action)
- Any prior warnings or violations

1048: Multiple violations of SG3; follow-up to Q&A 907

10-Feb-2022

SG3 Referee Decisions

In speaking with some other local head referees, we identified an edge case of SG3 (During the last 30 seconds, Robots may not contact the opposing Alliance’s Platform.) in which we’re ruling things differently. Q&A 907 indicates that each violation of SG3 is considered a separate incident with a separate penalty.

Here’s an edge case in which the GDC’s intent isn’t completely clear to us, even with the examples provided in 907 & other Q&As: Let’s say a red robot pushes a blue robot into the red platform during the Endgame. The blue robot attempts to escape, and moves briefly away from the platform before being pushed back into one or more additional touches. In this particular example, let’s say this “pinball” back and forth does not exceed the 5-second Trapping limit. Should these touches each be counted as a separate SG3 violation, or should this sequence of touches be considered a single violation?

Local referees have made good arguments for both cases, and we want to be sure we’re ruling consistently across divisions at the upcoming state championship. Thank you for your help!

Answered by committee

This situation is extremely context-sensitive and ultimately within the Head Referee’s discretion given a specific Match. In most cases, the situation you describe would likely be considered a single violation, as it was effectively the same occurrence of the actual violation action.

We cannot provide specific times or distances which a Robot must “back away” before a second SG3 violation occurs. The hypothetical scenario described in [Q&A 907](#) would be an example of a situation where the two actions occurred independently of each other, and would therefore be ruled as separate violations.