**“Play it again?”**

**PARIS, France** (Achieve3000, March 24, 2010).

The soccer match between France and Ireland was tied at 1-1 and in overtime when France's Thierry Henry[blatantly](https://portal.achieve3000.com/kb/lesson/?lid=8043&step=19&c=1&asn=) "handled" the ball (meaning that he touched the ball with his hands), not once but twice. Ireland's players reacted with fury to the [flagrant](https://portal.achieve3000.com/kb/lesson/?lid=8043&step=19&c=1&asn=) rule violation.They knew—and Henry knew—that in soccer, players are not permitted to use their hands to hold or guide the ball. But the referees allowed it, and Henry was able to pass the ball to teammate William Gallas.Gallas kicked the ball into the net, scoring the game-winning goal that gave his team a 2-1 victory and a spot in the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. The incident has sparked a [contentious](https://portal.achieve3000.com/kb/lesson/?lid=8043&step=19&c=1&asn=) debate in the soccer world over how to handle disputes on the field.

At issue was the fact that referees had not noticed the handling of the ball, though Henry himself admitted that the ball "bounced" onto his hand.

"I will be honest," Henry said. "It was a [handled ball]. But I'm not the ref. I played it. The ref allowed it."

In the wake of the game, Irish soccer officials have accused Henry of damaging the integrity of the game. Some people are calling for improved on-field policing during soccer games to prevent cheating.

"Something has got to be done," said Graham Barber, a former referee for FIFA, the governing body in charge of professional soccer (or football, as it is called in most countries).

Some are urging the International Football Association Board, the custodians of the rules of soccer, to reconsider soccer regulations. As it stands, the only way a play can be disputed is if an assistant referee notes a foul and informs the head referee, who can then declare a goal or a play invalid. Soccer—unlike some other sports—does not allow officials to use video replay, but many are calling for that to change. Gordon Smith is the chief executive of the Scottish Football Association. Smith backs a tennis-style review system, whereby each team is allowed two challenges per match, which it retains if the referee decides in its favor based on video playback.

"I keep on suggesting it, but no one is interested," Smith said. "[The incident with Henry] could have been clarified and cleared up immediately."

Critics of introducing the technology to soccer agree that there's a problem but argue that video is not the solution. Video isn't always clear-cut, they say. Furthermore, pausing every few minutes to consult replays would ruin the game's flow, considered a vital [component](https://portal.achieve3000.com/kb/lesson/?lid=8043&step=19&c=1&asn=) of its appeal.

"I don't think video cameras will work," Barber said.

Proponents of video technology, however, note that it took 97 seconds for order to be restored and the game to resume after the Henry incident, sufficient time for replays to be quickly—and adequately—[scrutinized](https://portal.achieve3000.com/kb/lesson/?lid=8043&step=19&c=1&asn=).

"The game stopped anyway and [the referees] could have reviewed the evidence," Smith argued.

Adding to the agony of Ireland's defeat is the fact that the match was a qualifying game for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Football Association of Ireland chief executive John Delaney has requested that the match be replayed.

"The governing body of world football has to step up to the plate and [allow] our call for a replay," Delaney said. "This was not a league game. This was a defining game with the whole world watching."

The request, however, has been ignored by FIFA officials, who say that according to the rulebook, results may not be overturned after a match.

The Irish are not alone, however. Many people in France criticized Henry's behavior, saying that it sets a poor example for children because it implies that in everything, including sports, cheating is an acceptable means to an end.

Steve Bruce, manager of England's Sunderland Association Football Club, expressed his dismay at soccer's failure to embrace video replays.

"Surely it is time now for technology to come into it," Bruce said.

*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*