

## Trump crossed the line

Published: July 8, 2026, 6:02 am

---

Did Donald Trump persuade FIFA to overturn a World Cup red card? More importantly, if he did, why does it matter?

This video is not really about football. It is about something much bigger.

Sport only works because everyone accepts the same rules. Referees make decisions, appeals follow established procedures, and no player should receive special treatment simply because they have powerful friends. Once that principle disappears, confidence in the game disappears with it.

The same is true of democracy.

Courts, regulators, election officials and public institutions all depend on one simple principle: that rules apply equally to everyone. The moment powerful individuals can bypass normal procedures, trust begins to collapse.

In this video, I examine the controversy surrounding Donald Trump's intervention over a USA World Cup red card and ask what it tells us about the growing willingness of powerful politicians to expect different treatment from everyone else.

Whether you support Trump or oppose him is not the central issue. The real question is whether any individual should be able to bend institutions to their own advantage. If we lose confidence that rules apply equally, we lose far more than a football match. We begin to lose confidence in democracy itself.

I'd be very interested to know what you think, so please vote in the poll, leave a comment and join the discussion below.

If you enjoy these videos, please like, subscribe and share. Your support really does help this channel continue to grow.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59k5hgVoaAA?si=007gyMrxYcDakch9>

This is the audio version:

[https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=5upjb-1b08a6c-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo\\_link=episode\\_page&btn-skin=c73a3a](https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=5upjb-1b08a6c-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a)

The Debate Ammunition for this video is available here.

This is the transcript:

---

Donald Trump has had a US football player's red card overruled during the course of the World Cup. We now know that this has not changed the outcome for the USA. In the next game in which this player did take part, the USA was knocked out of the World Cup by Belgium by four-one. And that means that, thankfully, Trump did not change the footballing outcome.

But this video isn't really all about football. This is a story about power and the rule of law. It asks whether rules apply equally to everyone or whether the powerful can simply ask for exceptions for themselves. And that question matters far beyond the football pitch. It matters to every institution that we rely upon to ensure that fair play operates in the world as a whole, and not just on the football pitch.

So what did happen? A US player received a red card, and they got an automatic suspension. Donald Trump did not like the decision. He said it was unfair. Whether it was unfair or not, it doesn't matter. The rules of football are that eventually the referee's decision has to be upheld, or the game is brought into discredit.

But Donald Trump asked FIFA to review the decision that had been made, and they then allowed the suspension to be lifted. That was the first time that had happened in a World Cup since 1962, and the player became eligible to play again. And as we now know, the US then went on to lose.

But the controversy is about the intervention and not about the football. I don't care how the US did in the World Cup, to be totally honest. I'm quite glad they're out, but that's not the point here. We are talking about rules and why they exist, because every game depends upon there being agreed rules. Players have to accept those rules before they compete, and referees have to apply them to everyone without favour. And

yes, they also make mistakes, but that's a fact of life, and it's something that every player, every club, and every tournament has to accept. And nobody should receive special treatment.

Without that principle, there is no fair contest in any sport, whichever one you care to look at, and society works in the same way.

Democracies also depend upon agreed rules.

Courts apply the law.

Regulators enforce standards.

Officials are expected to act independently.

Trust depends upon equal treatment for all.

The real issue is not whether the red card was, in this case, correct or not. The question is whether the normal procedures were bypassed.

Did influence replace due process?

Did personal access achieve what ordinary appeals could not?

And did that damage confidence as a result?

This matters. It looks as though Trump did pull favours. FIFA had already gone out of its way to court him, and he used that access that he had achieved as a consequence to pursue a claim that was, if not unjustified, at least unfair. And that matters because institutions survive because people trust them, and trust requires impartial decision-making.

If powerful people can rewrite outcomes, as it appears Trump tried to do and succeeded in doing, everyone begins to doubt the system. Confidence is much harder to rebuild than to destroy, and this is becoming a pattern.

We've seen pressure placed on courts in the USA and in the UK.

We've seen attacks on regulators.

We've seen challenges to election officials in the US.

We've seen institutions expected to serve powerful individuals, and football may now illustrate exactly the same problem.

Do we run the world on the basis of rules or favour? Those are two very different ways to organise society. One asks, what do the rules require? The other asks, who has

enough influence to bend them?

Democracies need rules. Authoritarian systems depend upon favours.

And there's a wider lesson that we need to look at. This story matters not because it's about football, not because it's about the World Cup, not because it's about a particular player, not because it's just about Donald Trump. It's about whether institutions remain independent. It's about whether everyone is equal before the rules, and that principle is worth defending wherever it is challenged.

Every institution depends upon public trust. Trust depends upon fairness. Fairness depends upon equal rules. Once exceptions are made for the powerful, which is what looks like it happened here, we all lose something much more important than a football match. We lose confidence in society itself, and at that point, authoritarianism can run wild, which is exactly what Donald Trump wants.

We should be worried because if people like Trump can influence football, what else can they influence, and how much worse can they make life for everyone? That's the ultimate question we need to ask about this football match and this red card, and it being overturned. This matters.

That's what I think. What do you think? There's a poll down below. Let us have your opinions. Please share this video, and if you'd like to support our work by making a donation, we'd be very grateful.

---

## **Poll**

[poll id="448"]