



2019 - 2020

Summary of Law Changes & Clarifications

This year's law changes are extensive.
For that reason, it is highly recommended that every
referee thoroughly read and review them.

Laws of the Game can be found at THEIFAB.COM



IFAB Reminders

- **Captains**

The Laws of the Game state that the captain has ‘a degree of responsibility for the behavior of their team’ – captains are expected to use this responsibility to help calm/positively influence the behavior of their players, especially in controversial/confrontational situations involving opponents or match officials



IFAB Reminders

- **Respect for Referees**

Players must respect all decisions made by the referee and other match officials. Respect for the Laws of the Game and the match officials who apply the Laws is paramount to the fairness and image of football



Law 3 - The Players

- A player who is being substituted must leave the field at the nearest point on the boundary line, unless otherwise directed by the referee



Law 3 - The Players

Explanation:

To stop a player who is being substituted 'wasting' time by leaving slowly at the halfway line (which is not a Law requirement) the player must leave at the nearest point (as with an injury) unless the referee indicates otherwise, e.g. if the player can leave quickly at the halfway line, there is a safety/security issue or the player leaves on a stretcher. The player must go immediately to the technical area or dressing room to avoid problems with substitutes, spectators, or the match officials. A player who infringes the spirit of this Law should be sanctioned for unsporting behavior i.e. delaying the restart of play.



Law 4 - The Player's Equipment

- Undershirts can be multi-colored/patterned if exactly the same as the sleeve of the main shirt

Explanation:

Manufacturers now make patterned undershirts whose sleeves are the same as the main shirt sleeve; these should be allowed as they help match officials' decision-making.



Law 5 - The Referee

- Referee cannot change a restart decision after play has restarted but, in certain circumstances, may issue a YC/RC for a previous incident



Law 5 - The Referee

Explanation:

If, at the end of a half, the referee goes to the RRA or to tell the players to return to the field a 'review' and a decision can be changed, if the offence occurred before the half ended

Sometimes a match official indicates or communicates a YC/RC offence (e.g. AR flagging for violent conduct off the ball) but the referee does not see the indication/hear the communication until after play has restarted. The referee can still take the appropriate disciplinary action, but the restart associated with the offence does not apply



Law 5 - The Referee

- Team officials guilty of misconduct can be shown a YC/RC; if an offender cannot be identified, the senior coach in the technical area receives the YC/RC



Law 5 - The Referee

Explanation:

The experiment with YC/RC for misconduct by team officials has been successful and has revealed many benefits at all levels, including for young referees dealing with 'difficult' adult coaches. If the offender cannot be identified, the senior team official (usually the main coach) in the technical area will receive the YC/RC (as the person responsible for the other team officials).



Law 5 - The Referee

- If a penalty kick is awarded, the team's penalty taker can receive assessment or treatment and then stay on the field and take the kick

Explanation:

It is unfair if the kicker needs assessment and/or treatment and then has to leave the field and cannot take the penalty kick.



Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

- Clarification of the difference between ‘cooling’ and ‘drinks’ breaks

Explanation:

In the interests of player safety, competition rules may allow, in certain weather conditions (e.g. high humidity and temperatures), ‘cooling’ breaks (from ninety seconds to three minutes) to allow the body’s temperature to fall; they are different from drinks’ breaks (maximum one minute) which are for rehydration.



Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

- The team that wins the toss may choose to take the kick-off

Explanation:

Recent Law changes have made the kick-off more dynamic (e.g. a goal can be scored directly from the kick-off) so captains winning the toss often ask to take the kick-off.



Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

- Dropped ball – ball dropped for goalkeeper (if play stopped in penalty area) or for one player of team that last touched the ball at the location of the last touch; all other players (of both teams) must be at least 4m (4.5 yds) away



Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Explanation:

The current dropped ball procedure often leads to a ‘manufactured’ restart which is ‘exploited’ unfairly (e.g. kicking the ball out for a throw-in deep in the opponents’ half) or an aggressive confrontation. Returning the ball to the team that last played it restores what was ‘lost’ when play was stopped, except in the penalty area where it is simpler to return the ball to the goalkeeper. To prevent that team gaining an unfair advantage, all players of both teams, except the player receiving the ball, must be at least 4m (4.5 yds) away.



Law 9 – The Ball in and out of Play

- Dropped ball if the ball touches the referee (or other match official) and goes into the goal, possession changes or an attacking move starts

Explanation:

It can be very unfair if a team gains an advantage or scores a goal because the ball has hit a match official, especially the referee.



Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

- Goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball into the opponents' goal

Explanation:

Change to be consistent with re-wording of handball in Law 12



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- Handball text re-written for greater clarity/consistency with clear guidelines for when ‘non-deliberate’ handball should (and should not) be penalized



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

It is an offence if a player:

- deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball
- gains possession/control of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then:
 - scores in the opponents' goal
 - creates a goal-scoring opportunity
- scores in the opponents' goal directly from their hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

It is **usually** an offence if a player:

- touches the ball with their hand/arm when:
 - the hand/arm has made their body unnaturally bigger
 - the hand/arm is above/beyond their shoulder level (unless the player deliberately plays the ball which then touches their hand/arm)

The above offences apply even if the ball touches a player's hand/arm directly from the head or body (including the foot) of another player who is close.



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Except for the above offences, **it is not usually** an offence if the ball touches a player's hand/arm:

- directly from the player's own head or body (including the foot)
- directly from the head or body (including the foot) of another player who is close
- if the hand/arm is close to the body and does not make the body unnaturally bigger
- when a player falls and the hand/arm is between the body and the ground to support the body, but not extended laterally or vertically away from the body



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Explanation:

Greater clarity is needed for handball, especially on those occasions when ‘nondeliberate’ handball is an offence. The re-wording follows a number of principles:

- football does not accept a goal being scored by a hand/arm (even if accidental)
- football expects a player to be penalized for handball if they gain possession/control of the ball from their hand/arm and gain a major advantage e.g. score or create a goal-scoring opportunity
- it is natural for a player to put their arm between their body and the ground for support when falling.



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Explanation (continued):

- having the hand/arm above shoulder height is rarely a 'natural' position and a player is 'taking a risk' by having the hand/arm in that position, including when sliding
- if the ball comes off the player's body, or off another player (of either team) who is close by, onto the hand/arm it is often impossible to avoid contact with the ball.



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- Confirmation that an ‘illegal’ handball offence by a goalkeeper in their own penalty area is not sanctioned with a YC/RC

Explanation:

Goalkeepers cannot handle the ball in their penalty area from a deliberate pass or throw-in from a team-mate, or having released the ball from their hands. If they do, it is an IDFK but this and any other ‘illegal’ handling does not incur any disciplinary sanction even if it stops a promising attack or denies a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- If, after a throw-in or deliberate pass from a team-mate, the goalkeeper unsuccessfully kicks or tries to kick the ball to release it into play, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball.

Explanation:

When the GK clearly kicks or tries to kick the ball into play, this shows no intention to handle the ball so, if the 'clearance' attempt is unsuccessful, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball without committing an offence



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- Referee can delay issuing a YC/RC until the next stoppage if the non-offending team takes a quick free kick and creates a goal-scoring opportunity



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Explanation:

Occasionally, an attack is stopped by a cautionable or sending-off offence and the attacking team takes a quick free kick which restores the 'lost' attack; it is clearly 'unfair' if this 'new' attack is stopped to issue the YC/RC. However, if the referee has distracted the offending team by starting the YC/RC procedure, the quick free kick is not allowed. For a DOGSO offence, the player will be cautioned and not sent-off because the attack was re-started (as when advantage is applied for a DOGSO offence).



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- The YC for an ‘illegal’ goal celebration remains even if the goal is disallowed

Explanation:

Cautions for inappropriate goal celebrations apply even if the goal is disallowed as the impact (safety, image of the game etc.) is the same as if the goal was awarded.



Warnings, YC, RC for Team Officials

Where an offence is committed and the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.

Warning

The following offences should usually result in a warning; repeated or blatant offences should result in a caution or sending-off

- entering the field of play in a respectful/non-confrontational manner
- failing to cooperate with a match official e.g. ignoring an instruction/request from assistant referee or the fourth official
- minor/low-level disagreement (by word or action) with a decision
- occasionally leaving the confines of the technical area without committing another offence



Warnings, YC, RC for Team Officials

Caution (include but not limited to:)

- clearly/persistently not respecting the confines of their team's technical area
- delaying the restart of play by their team
- deliberately entering the technical area of the opposing team (non-confrontational)
- dissent by word or action including: throwing/kicking drinks bottles or other objects
- gestures which show a clear lack of respect for the match official(s) e.g. sarcastic clapping



Warnings, YC, RC for Team Officials

Caution (include but not limited to:)

- entering the referee review area (RRA)
- excessively/persistently gesturing for a red or yellow card
- excessively showing the TV signal for a VAR 'review'
- gesturing or acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- persistent unacceptable behavior (including repeated warning offences)
- showing a lack of respect for the game



Warnings, YC, RC for Team Officials

Sending Off (include but not limited to:)

- delaying the restart of play by the opposing team e.g. holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a player
- deliberately leaving the technical area to:
 - show dissent towards, or remonstrate with, a match official
 - act in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- enter the opposing technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner
- deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field of play
 - entering the field of play to:
 - confront a match official (including at half-time and full-time)
 - interfere with play, an opposing player or match official



Restart of Play After Fouls and Misconducts

- All verbal offences are penalized with an indirect free kick
- If an offence is committed outside the field of play by a player against a player, substitute, substituted player or team official of the player's team, play is restarted with an indirect free kick on the boundary line closest to where the offence occurred



Restart of Play After Fouls and Misconducts

- If a player standing who is on or off the field of play throws or kicks an object (other than the match ball) at an opposing player, or throws or kicks an object (including a ball) at an opposing player, substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official, or a match official or the match ball, play is restarted with a direct free kick (...)



Law 13 – Free Kicks

- Once an IDFK has been taken, the referee can stop showing the IDFK signal if it is clear that goal cannot be scored directly (e.g. from most offside IDFKs)

Explanation:

Many indirect free kicks are too far from the opponents' goal for a goal to be scored directly (e.g. IDFKs for offside); in these cases, the referee only needs to maintain the signal until the kick is taken because running whilst showing the signal is not easy.



Law 13 – Free Kicks

- For defending team free kicks in their penalty area, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area

Explanation:

The experiment where, at a defending team free kick in the penalty area, **the ball is in play once it is kicked and does not have to leave the penalty area**, has produced a faster and more constructive restart. Opponents must remain outside the penalty area and at least 9.15m away until the ball is in play.



Law 13 – Free Kicks

- When there is a defensive ‘wall’ of at least three players, all attacking team players must be at least 1m from the ‘wall’; IDFK if they encroach

Explanation:

Attackers standing very close to, or in, the defensive ‘wall’ at a free kick often cause management problems and waste time. There is no legitimate tactical justification for attackers to be in the ‘wall’ and their presence is against the ‘spirit of the game’ and often damages the image of the game.



Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

- Goalposts, crossbar and nets must not be moving when a penalty is taken and the goalkeeper must not be touching them
- Goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on the goal line when a penalty kick is taken; cannot stand behind the line
- If an offence occurs after the referee signals for a penalty kick to be taken but the kick is not taken, it must then be taken after any YC/RC is issued



Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Explanation:

The referee must not signal for the penalty kick to be taken if the goalkeeper is touching the goalposts, crossbar or net, or if they are moving e.g. the goalkeeper has kicked/shaken them

Goalkeepers are not permitted to stand in front of or behind the line. Allowing the goalkeeper to have only one foot touching the goal line (or, if jumping, in line with the goal line) when the penalty kick is taken is a more practical approach as it is easier to identify if both feet are not on the line. As the kicker can ‘stutter’ in the run, it is reasonable that the goalkeeper can take one step in anticipation of the kick.



Law 15 – The Throw In

- Opponents must be at least 2m from the point on the touchline where a throw-in is to be taken, even if the thrower is back from the line

Explanation:

This covers situations where a player takes a throw-in some distance from the touchline.



Law 15 – The Goal Kick

- At goal kicks, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area

Explanation:

The experiment that at a goal kick the ball is in play once it is kicked, and does not have to leave the penalty area, has created a faster and more dynamic/constructive restart to the game. It has reduced the time 'lost/wasted' including stopping the tactic of 'wasting' time when a defender deliberately plays the ball before it leaves the penalty area knowing that all that will happen is the goal kick will be retaken.

Opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.



Questions

