

“To have Australian referees regarded as world class officials”



**Laws of the Game Revision
2016/2017**

The following are the main changes to the Laws of the Game which are not related to English/phraseology.

For each change the old wording (where appropriate) and the [new/changed wording](#) are given followed by an explanation for the change.

The text shown in the 'old text' boxes may be the exact previous text or a more general outline of the meaning of the previous text.

01.1 Artificial and natural surfaces may not be combined

Old text

Matches may be played on natural or artificial surfaces, according to competition rules.

New text

The field of play must be a wholly natural or, if competition rules permit, a wholly artificial playing surface, except where competition rules permit an integrated combination of artificial and natural materials (hybrid system).

Explanation

Clarifies that for safety reasons mixing natural and artificial surfaces is not permitted on the field of play. A different surface is permitted on the surrounding areas e.g. artificial turf for the assistant referees' patrol area. An integrated mix of natural and artificial material is permitted.

01.2 Competitions may determine length of boundary lines (within Law 1 parameters)

Additional text

Competitions may determine the length of the goal line and touchline within the above dimensions.

Explanation

Clarifies that competitions have the authority to determine the length of the touchlines and goal lines for their matches within the dimensions of Law 1.

01.3 The technical area

Explanation

Technical area information moved from end of Laws section

01.4 Goal Line Technology (GLT)

Explanation

Goal Line Technology (GLT) moved from Law 10

01.5 Commercial advertising on the ground

Old text

No form of commercial advertising, whether real or virtual, is permitted on the field of play, on the ground within the area enclosed by the goal nets or the technical area, or within 1 m (1 yd) of the touchline from the time the teams enter the field of play...

New text

No form of commercial advertising, whether real or virtual, is permitted on the field of play, on the ground within the area enclosed by the goal nets or the technical area, or on the ground within 1 m (1 yd) of the boundary lines from the time the teams enter the field of play...

Explanation

Clarifies that restrictions on commercial advertising on the ground relate to the area behind the goal lines as well as the touchlines.

01.6 Logos and emblems on corner flags

Old text

The reproduction, whether real or virtual, of representative logos or emblems of FIFA, confederations, member associations, leagues, clubs or other bodies is forbidden on the field of play, the goal nets and the areas they enclose, the goals, the flagposts and their flags during playing time.

New text

The reproduction, whether real or virtual, of representative logos or emblems of FIFA, confederations, [national football associations](#), [competitions](#), clubs or other bodies is forbidden on the field of play, the goal nets and the areas they enclose, the goals, and the flagposts during playing time. [They are permitted on the flags on the flagposts.](#)

Explanation

- **National football associations** replaces **member associations**
- **competitions** replaces **leagues** as cup competitions are not covered by the current wording.
- These logos are already widely used and allowing them on the flags is consistent with Law 2 which permits them on the ball.

No changes.

03.1 Title change

Old title	New title
The Number of Players	The Players
Explanation	
New title reflects that the content includes reference to substitutes etc.	

03.2 Minimum number of players

Old text

A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players. (...) although a match may not START if either team consists of fewer than seven players, the minimum number of players in a team required for a match to CONTINUE is left to the discretion of member associations.

However, it is the opinion of the International F.A. Board that a match should not continue if there are fewer than seven players in either team.

New text

A match may not start [or continue](#) if either team has fewer than seven players.

Explanation

The IFAB recommendation of the minimum number of players for a match to continue becomes Law. This is consistent with the minimum to start the match.

03.3 Restarts by substitutes

Old text	New text
<p>A substitute who has not completed the substitution procedure by entering the field of play cannot restart play by taking a throw-in or corner kick.</p>	<p><u>Substitutes can take any restart provided they first enter the field of play.</u></p>
<p>Explanation</p>	
<p>Clarifies that a substitute who steps onto the field of play can then take any restart, including a corner kick or throw-in; some wrongly interpreted the 'old' wording as requiring play to be restarted before a substitute can take a restart.</p>	

03.4 Named substitute starts instead of named player

Old text

If a named substitute enters the field of play instead of a named player at the start of the match and the referee is not informed of this change:

- the referee allows the named substitute to continue the match (...)

New text

If a named substitute starts the match instead of a named player and the referee is not informed of this change:

- the referee allows the named substitute to continue the match (...)

Explanation

Clarifies that a substitute who steps onto the field of play can then take any restart, including a corner kick or throw-in; some wrongly interpreted the 'old' wording as requiring play to be restarted before a substitute can take a restart.

03.5 Extra persons on the field of play - status of sent off player

Old text

Anyone not indicated on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is deemed to be an outside agent, as is a player who has been sent off.

New text

Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is deemed to be an outside agent.

Explanation

It is more logical to treat a sent off player like a substitute so that a player who returns to the field (having been sent off) is penalised with a free kick.

03.6 Infringements by substitutes and team officials

Old text

If a substitute or substituted player enters the field of play without the referee's permission:

- if the referee has stopped play, it is restarted with an indirect free kick (...).

If a team official enters the field of play:

- if the referee stops the match, he must restart play with a dropped ball (...).

New text

If play is stopped and the interference was by:

- a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player, play restarts with a direct free kick or penalty kick

Explanation

There is a growing problem of substitutes/team officials entering the field to interfere with play or an opponent, e.g. stopping a goal. This is clearly 'unfair' and a direct free kick (or penalty kick if in own penalty area) is more appropriate.

03.7 Player who is sent off before or after kick-off

Additional text

A player who is sent off:

- before submission of the team list can not be named on the team list in any capacity
- after being named on the team list and before kick-off may be replaced by a named substitute (who can not be replaced)
- after the kick-off can not be replaced

Explanation

Clarifies whether a sent off player can be replaced.

03.8 Impact of substitute/team official/outside agent touching a ball which is going into the goal

Old text

In the situations outlined in 3.6 above the referee must stop play if the 'intruder' interferes with play or touches the ball If an outside agent enters the field of play:

- the referee must stop play (although not immediately if the outside agent does not interfere with play)

New text

If a ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the ball enters the opponents' goal.

Explanation

This '**fair play**' change means the referee can apply the advantage principle so that if the attempt to stop a goal is unsuccessful the referee can award the goal (See 3.9)

03.9 Goal scored with an extra person on the field of play

Old text

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realises, before play restarts, that there was an extra person on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- the referee must disallow the goal if:
 - > the extra person was an outside agent and he interfered with play
 - > the extra person was a player, substitute, substituted player or team official associated with the team that scored the goal

New text

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realises, before play restarts, that an extra person(s) was on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- the referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:
 - > a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of the team that scored the goal
 - > an outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'extra persons on the field of play'

Play is restarted with a goal kick, corner kick or a dropped ball (...)

If, after a goal is scored and play has restarted, the referee realises an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, the goal can not be disallowed.

If the extra person is still on the field the referee must:

- stop play
- have the extra person removed
- restart with a dropped ball or indirect free kick as appropriate

The referee must report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

03.9 Goal scored with an extra person on the field of play (cont)

Explanation

- Incorporates principle outlined in 3.8 (above)
- Clarifies how to restart if a goal is scored when there is an extra person on the field and play has not restarted.
- Clarifies that if a goal was scored when there was an extra person on the field and play has restarted the referee has to allow the game to continue; the referee can not disallow the goal or 'nullify' the period between the goal and the discovery of the extra person.

03.10 Reference to team captain (from Law 12)

Additional text

The team captain has no special status or privileges but has a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of the team.

Explanation

More logical to have this statement in Law 3 rather than Law 12.

04.1 Tape /material on /covering socks

Old text

The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following (...)

- stockings - if tape or similar material is applied externally it must be the same colour as that part of the sock it is applied to

New text

- socks - tape or [any material applied or worn externally](#) must be the same colour as that part of the sock it is applied to [or covers](#)

Explanation

Clarifies that non-tape material must be the same colour as the sock it covers as some players wear ankle socks (or similar) which are a different colour to the sock.

04.2 Loss of footwear and shinguard

Old text

If a player loses his footwear accidentally and immediately plays the ball and/or scores a goal, (...) (...) the goal is awarded.

New text

A player whose footwear or shinguard is lost accidentally must replace it as soon as possible and no later than when the ball next goes out of play; if, before doing so, the player plays the ball and/ or scores a goal, the goal is awarded.

Explanation

It is clearer to specify that footwear must be replaced quickly and no later than when the ball next goes out of play. It is logical to apply the principle to shinguards.

04.3 Colour of undergarments

Old text

The basic compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- a jersey or shirt with sleeves - if undergarments are worn, the colour of the sleeve must be the same main colour as the sleeve of the jersey or shirt
- shorts - if undershorts or tights are worn, they must be of the same main colour as the shorts

New text

The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- a shirt with sleeves
- shorts

Undershirts must be the same colour as the main colour of the shirt sleeve; undershorts/tights must be the same colour as the main colour of the shorts or the lowest part of the shorts - players of the same team must wear the same colour.

Explanation

- **Undershirts** replaces **undergarments**.
- Manufacturers now make shorts with a different coloured lower part (hem). Law change gives the choice of the undershorts/tights being the same colour as the shorts or the 'hem' but the team must all wear the same colour.

04.4 Caps

Old text

Non-dangerous protective equipment (...) is permitted as are sports spectacles.

New text

Non-dangerous protective equipment (...) is permitted as are [goalkeepers' caps](#) and sports spectacles.

Explanation

Reference to goalkeepers' caps included so their use is permitted within the Laws.

04.5 Electronic communication with players (including substitutes)

Old text

The use of any form of electronic communication systems between players and/or technical staff is not permitted.

New text

The use of any form of electronic communication between players ([including substitutes/substituted and sent off players](#)) and/or technical staff is not permitted.

Explanation

Clarifies that electronic communication with substitutes is not permitted.

04.6 Player returning after changing/correcting equipment

Old text

- In the event of any infringement of this Law(...) :
- any player required to leave the field of play to correct his equipment must not re-enter without the referee's permission
 - the referee checks that the player's equipment is correct before allowing him to re-enter the field of play
 - the player is only allowed to re-enter the field of play when the ball is out of play

New text

A player who leaves the field of play to correct or change equipment must:

- have the equipment checked by a match official before being allowed to re-enter
- only re-enter with the referee's permission (which may be given during play)

Explanation

Law was unclear about whether a player who chooses to leave the field of play (e.g. to change boots) can return during play. New wording allows the fourth official/assistant referee to check the equipment and, regardless of the reason for leaving the field, the player is treated the same as if returning after an injury. This is better for the game and reduces conflict/irritation.

05.1 Decisions of the referee - opinion and discretion

Additional text

Decisions will be made to the best of the referee's ability according to the Laws of the Game and the 'spirit of the game' and will be based on the opinion of the referee who has the discretion to take appropriate action within the framework of the Laws of the Game.

Explanation

Throughout the Laws, there is reference to 'in the opinion of the referee' and 'at the discretion of the referee' so this statement removes the need to use 'in the opinion of/at the discretion of' regularly. The concept of the 'spirit of the game' now appears in the Laws.

05.2 Decisions of the referee - when decisions can not be changed

Old text	New text
<p>The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee or the fourth official, provided that he has not restarted play or terminated the match.</p>	<p>The referee may not change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or on the advice of another match official if play has restarted <u>or the referee has signalled the end of the first or second half (including extra time) and left the field</u> or terminated the match.</p>

Explanation

Clarifies that once the referee signals the end of a half and leaves the field a decision can not be changed even if information then comes to light e.g. during the half-time interval.

05.3 Several offences committed at the same time

Old text

- punishes the more serious offence when a player (or players from the same team) commits more than one offence at the same time
- Offences committed by players from different teams: the referee must stop play and restart it with a dropped ball.

New text

- punishes the more serious offence, in terms of sanction, restart, physical severity and tactical impact, when more than one offence occurs at the same time.

Explanation

It should not matter if it is one or several players or from which team(s) as the most serious offence should be penalised. Same change included in Law 14.

05.4 Authority to take disciplinary action from pre-match inspection of the field (see 12.8)

Old text

- The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle

New text

has the authority to take disciplinary action from entering the field of play [for the pre-match inspection](#) until leaving the field of play after the [match ends \(including kicks from the penalty mark\)](#). [If, before entering the field of play at the start of the match, a player commits a sending-off offence, the referee has the authority to prevent the player taking part in the match \(see Law 3.6\); the referee will report any other misconduct.](#)

Explanation

New wording identifies exactly when the referee's authority to take action starts. The current Law 12 wording relates to when there was no pre-match warming up, teams did not enter the field together etc... It is logical that if, for example, 2 players have a fight in the tunnel, or in the pre-match warm up, they can not be allowed to play as this would risk match control and not be good for the image of the game.

During the inspection of the field of play the referee can have the markings changed etc., so it is logical that this is when the authority to 'send off' a player starts. Non-sending-off offences will be reported so YCs cannot be issued prior to the match or carried into the match (See also 12.8).

05.5 Authority to show red and yellow cards

Old text

The referee has the power to show yellow or red cards during the half-time interval and after the match has finished as well as during extra time and kicks from the penalty mark, since the match remains under his jurisdiction at these times.

New text

- has the power to show yellow or red cards from entering the field of play at the start of the match until after the match has ended, including during the half-time interval, extra time and kicks from the penalty mark

Explanation

Clarifies (in light of 5.4) that the referee may only use red and yellow cards from entering the field of play at the start of the match.

05.6 Player may have quick on-field assessment/treatment after YC/RC offence

Old text

The referee... ..stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that the player is removed from the field of play. An injured player may not be treated on the field and may only return after the match has restarted (...)

Exceptions to the requirement to leave the field are only when:

- a goalkeeper is injured
- a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need immediate attention
- players from the same team have collided and need immediate attention
- a severe injury has occurred

Additional text

- a player is injured as the result of a physical offence for which the opponent is cautioned or sent off (e.g. reckless or serious foul challenge), if the assessment/treatment is completed quickly

Explanation

It is widely seen as unfair that a player who is injured by a serious foul and the trainer/doctor comes on, the player has to leave the field giving the offending team a numerical benefit (see Practical Guidelines).

05.7 Impact of an outside agent touching a ball which is going into the goal
Old text

An extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match, the referee must:

- stop play only if it interferes with play. Play must be restarted with a dropped ball

New text

an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match, the referee must:

- stop play (and restart with a dropped ball) only if it interferes with play unless the ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the ball enters the opponents' goal.

Explanation

This makes Law 5 consistent with the change in Law 3 (see 3.8).

05.8 Referees' equipment

Additional text

Compulsory equipment

- Whistle(s)
- Watch(es)
- Red and yellow cards
- Notebook (or other means of keeping a record of the match)

Other equipment

Referees may be permitted to use:

- Equipment for communicating with other match officials - buzzer/beep flags, headsets etc (...)
- EPTS or other fitness monitoring equipment

Referees and other match officials are prohibited from wearing jewellery or any other electronic equipment.

Explanation

Moved from Law 4; wording clarifies what equipment a match official is or may be permitted to use.

In addition to the current 'two armed' signal for an advantage, a similar 'one arm' signal is now permitted as it is not always easy for referees to run with both arms extended.

06.1 Title change

Old text

The Assistant Referee

New text

[The Other Match Officials](#)

Explanation

The duties of all the other match officials (assistant referees, fourth official, additional assistant referees and reserve assistant referee) are now included in this Law.

06.2 Referee's authority over other match officials

Additional text

[The match officials operate under the direction of the referee.](#)

Explanation

Emphasises the referee's leadership role.

06.3 Assistance given to the referee by other match officials

Additional text

The match officials assist the referee with inspecting the field of play, the balls and players' equipment (including if problems have been resolved) and maintaining records of time, goals, misconduct etc (...).

Explanation

Statement early in the Law of the usual assistance given to the referee avoids repetition in sections on each match official

06.4 Procedure if an official is unable to officiate

Old text

Prior to the start of the competition, the organiser states clearly whether, if the referee is unable to continue, the fourth official takes over as the referee or whether the senior assistant referee or senior additional assistant referee takes over as referee with the fourth official becoming an assistant referee

New text

Competition rules must state clearly who replaces a match official who is unable to start or continue and any associated changes. In particular, it must be clear whether, if the referee is unable to start or continue, the fourth official or the senior assistant referee or senior additional assistant referee takes over

Explanation

Wording simplified so each scenario does not need to be listed.

06.5 Duties of the fourth official

Additional text

A fourth official's assistance includes:

- [checking a player's/substitute's equipment \(...\)](#)
- [indicating the minimum amount of additional time the referee intends to play at the end of each half \(including extra time\).](#)

Explanation

Tasks usually performed by fourth officials have been added.

07.1 Additional time

Additional text

Allowance is made by the referee in each half for all time lost in that half through:

- [assessment and/or removal from the field of play of injured players \(...\)](#)
- [stoppages for drinks or other medical reasons permitted by competition rules](#)

Explanation

These frequent causes of additional time have been added. In particular, approved 'drinks breaks' have been added so that they have validity within the Laws.

08.1 Inclusion of reference to all restarts

Additional text

[Free kicks \(direct or indirect\), penalty kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are other restarts \(see Laws 13 to 17\)](#)

Explanation

Illogical (especially to non-referees) that the Law about restarts only included the kick-off and dropped ball so reference to other restarts of play has been added.

08.2 Infringements when the ball is not in play

Additional text

[If an infringement occurs when the ball is not in play this does not change how play is restarted.](#)

Explanation

Clarifies that the restart is not changed for an incident when the ball is not in play e.g. holding before a corner kick; violent conduct after a FK is awarded etc.

08.3 Kick-off: ball must clearly move to be in play; can be kicked in any direction

Old text	New text
The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward	The ball is in play when it is kicked and <u>clearly</u> moves

Explanation

Not requiring the ball to go forward at the kick-off means an attacker does not need to stand in the opponents' half (which is not permitted) to receive the ball. As with other Laws, the ball must clearly move to stop the practice of a player just touching the ball and then unsportingly pretending the kick has not been taken.

08.4 Dropped ball position

Additional text

The referee drops the ball at the position where it was when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area in which case the ball is dropped on the goal area line which is parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.

Explanation

Clear statement here removes the many other times this appears in the current Laws.

08.5 Referee can not determine the drop ball contest

Old text

The referee cannot decide who may or may not contest a dropped ball.

New text

Any number of players may contest a dropped ball (including the goalkeepers); the referee cannot decide who may contest the dropped ball or its outcome.

Explanation

Clarifies that referees should not 'manufacture' dropped ball situations.

08.6 Dropped ball kicked directly into the goal

Old text

If the ball enters the goal (...) (...) directly (...).

New text

If a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players (...).

Explanation

Replacing 'directly' with 'without touching at least 2 players' is clearer and consistent with wording in other Laws.

09.1 Ball rebounding off a match official

Old text

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play
- it rebounds off the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

New text

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- it rebounds off [a match official](#), goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play

Explanation

Change confirms that the ball is still in play if it rebounds off an official who is just off the field of play (AR, AAR) and the ball does not wholly pass over the line.

10.1 Title change

Old title	New title
The Method of Scoring	Determining the Outcome of a Match
Explanation	
Kicks from the Penalty Mark, Away goals, etc. now included in this Law.	

10.2.1 Choosing the goal for the kicks from the penalty mark (KFPM)

Old text	New text
<p>The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.</p> <p>The penalty area where the kicks from the penalty marks are taking place may be changed only if the goal or the playing surface becomes unusable.</p>	<p><u>Unless there are other considerations (e.g. ground conditions, safety etc.) the referee tosses a coin to decide</u> the goal at which the kicks will be taken <u>which may only be changed for safety reasons</u> or if the goal or playing surface becomes unusable.</p>
<p>Explanation</p> <p>Referees find it difficult to decide which goal to use with home supporters at one end and away supporters at the other end. Subject to over-riding considerations (security, condition of the field etc...) the fairest method is to toss a coin.</p>	

10.2.2 Eligible players (including those temporarily off the field)

Old text

With the exception of the foregoing case, only players who are on the field of play at the end of the match, which includes extra time where appropriate, are eligible to take kicks from the penalty mark.

New text

With the exception of [a substitute for an injured goalkeeper](#), only players who are on the field of play [or are temporarily off the field \(injury, adjusting equipment etc.\)](#) at the end of the match are eligible to take kicks.

Explanation

Clarifies that a player temporarily off the field legitimately (injury, changing equipment etc...) can take part, as can a substitute who replaces a goalkeeper.

10.2.3 Naming and order of penalty taker

Old text

Each team is responsible for selecting the players from those on the field of play at the end of the match and the order in which they will take the kicks.

New text

Each team is responsible for selecting from the eligible players the order in which they will take the kicks. [The referee is not informed of the order.](#)

Explanation

Clarifies that the names and/or the order of the kickers do not have to be given to the referee (some incorrectly ask for the names and stop the order being changed).

10.2.4 Same number of players

Old text

If at the end of the match and before the kicks start to be taken from the penalty mark one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to equate with that of its opponents and the captain must inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded.

If a player is injured or sent off during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark and the team has one player fewer, the referee should not reduce the number of players taking kicks for the other team. An equal number of players from each team is required only at the start of the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.

New text

If at the end of the match and before or during the kicks one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to the same number as its opponents and the referee must be informed of the name and number of each player excluded.

Explanation

This applies the 'fair play' principle at the start of KFPM i.e. one team should not benefit from having fewer kickers than their opponents as this could mean their 'best' kicker taking a 2nd kick against the opponents' last/worst kicker.

10.2.5 Goalkeeper unable to continue

Old text

A goalkeeper who is injured while kicks are being taken from the penalty mark and is unable to continue as goalkeeper may be replaced by a named substitute provided his team has not used the maximum number of substitutes permitted under the competition rules

New text

A goalkeeper who is unable to continue before or during the kicks and whose team has not used its maximum permitted number of substitutes, may be replaced by a named substitute, or a player excluded to equalise the number of players, but the goalkeeper takes no further part and may not take a kick.

Explanation

Clarifies that a goalkeeper can be replaced at any time by a substitute (or by a player excluded to make the numbers equal) but may not take a kick.

10.2.6 When penalty is completed (see 14.3)

Additional text

The kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play or the referee stops play for any infringement of the Laws.

Explanation

Clarifies when a referee should decide a kick is over (see 14.3).

10.2.7 Sequence of kickers

Additional text

- Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick
- The above principle continues for any subsequent sequence of kicks but a team may change the order of kickers

Explanation

Clarifies that all team members must take the same number of kicks before a player can take another kick; the order can be changed for the new 'round' of kicks.

10.2.8 Player leaving the field of play

Additional text

Kicks from the penalty mark must not be delayed for a player who leaves the field of play. The player's kick will be 'forfeited' (not scored) if the player does not return in time to take a kick.

Explanation

Clarifies that the referee must not delay KFPM if a player leaves the field of play; if the player is not back in time the kick is missed (forfeited). It is important to stop this potentially unfair conduct (instructions from the coach, deliberate delay, match fixing etc.).

11.1 Status of halfway line

Old text

A player is not in an offside position if:

- he is in his own half of the field of play or (...).

New text

A player is in an offside position if:

- any part of the head, body or feet is in the opponents' half (excluding the halfway line)

Explanation

Clarifies that the halfway line is 'neutral' for offside i.e. a player must have part of the body in the opponents' half to be in an offside position.

11.2 Status of players' arms

Additional text

A player is in an offside position if:
 any part of the head, body or feet is nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent. The hands and arms of all players, including the goalkeepers, are not considered.

Explanation

Clarifies that the hands and arms of the defenders, attackers and goalkeepers are not included when judging offside.

11.3 Position not offence judged at the moment the ball is played

Old text

A player in an offside position is only penalised if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by ...

New text

A player in an offside position at the moment the ball is played or touched by a team-mate is only penalised on becoming involved in active play by ...

Explanation

Clarifies that it is the player's (offside) position which is judged when the ball is played. The offence occurs after the ball is played e.g. an offside player who scores after a save by the goalkeeper commits the offence after the ball was played.

11.4 Offence following a rebound or save

Old text

gaining an advantage by being in that position by playing a ball:

- that rebounds or is deflected to him off the goalpost, crossbar or an opponent
- (...) from a deliberate save by any opponent

New text

gaining an advantage by being in that position by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:

- rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar or an opponent
- been deliberately saved by any opponent

Explanation

Clarifies that 'interfering with an opponent' after a rebound, deflection or save is an offside offence.

11.5 Position of free kick

Old text

p. 36 In the event of an offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred;

p. 111 When an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played to him by one of his team-mates

New text

If an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick where the offence occurred, including if it is in the player's own half of the field of play.

Explanation

The Law and the interpretation were contradictory. Throughout the Laws, the general principle is that a FK is awarded where an offence occurs so this now applies to offside. A FK can be awarded in a player's own half if the player moves from an offside position in the opponents' half to commit an offside offence in the player's own half.

11.6 Defending player off the field

Old text

Any defending player leaving the field of play for any reason without the referee's permission shall be considered to be on his own goal line or touch line for the purposes of offside until the next stoppage in play. If the player left the field of play deliberately, he must be cautioned when the ball is next out of play.

New text

A defending player who leaves the field of play without the referee's permission shall be considered to be on the goal line or touchline for the purposes of offside until the next stoppage in play or until the defending team has played the ball towards the halfway line and it is outside their penalty area. If the player left the field of play deliberately, the player must be cautioned when the ball is next out of play.

Explanation

It is unfair that an injured defending player off the field 'plays everyone onside' until play stops. The new wording defines the end of the phase of play when the defender is no longer considered to be on the field for the purposes of offside.

11.7 Attacking player off the field

Old text

It is not an offence in itself for a player who is in an offside position to step off the field of play to show the referee that he is not involved in active play. However, if the referee considers that he has left the field of play for tactical reasons and has gained an unfair advantage by re-entering the field of play, the player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour. The player needs to ask for the referee's permission to re-enter the field of play.

New text

An attacking player may step or stay off the field of play not to be involved in active play. If the player re-enters from the goal line and becomes involved in play before the next stoppage in play or the defending team has played the ball towards the halfway line and it is outside their penalty area, the player shall be considered to be positioned on the goal line point for the purposes of offside. A player who deliberately leaves the field of play and re-enters without the referee's permission and is not penalised for offside and gains an advantage, must be cautioned.

Explanation

Clarifies how to deal with an attacking player who leaves or stays off the field of play and then returns.

11.8 Attacking player in goal

Old text

If an attacking player remains stationary between the goalposts and inside the goal net as the ball enters the goal, a goal must be awarded. However, if(...) (...) the attacking player distracts an opponent, the goal must be disallowed, the player cautioned for unsporting behaviour and play restarted with a dropped ball(...).

New text

If an attacking player remains stationary between the goalposts and inside the goal as the ball enters the goal, a goal must be awarded unless [the player commits an offside offence or Law 12 offence in which case](#) play is restarted with an indirect or direct free kick.

Explanation

Consistent with updated offside wording (i.e. removal of ‘distracts’) and the ability to penalise an offence off the field with a free kick when the ball is in play.

12.1 Infringements when the ball is not in play

Additional text

Direct and indirect free kicks and penalty kicks can only be awarded for offences and infringements committed when the ball is in play.

Explanation

A definitive statement (from the interpretations section) that the ball must be in play for misconduct to be penalised with a free kick or penalty kick.

12.2 Direct free kick - add 'challenges'

Old text

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following seven offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force

- tackles an opponent

New text

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force

- tackles [or challenges](#).

Explanation

'tackles' implies a challenge with the foot but some challenges can be with other parts of the body (e.g. knee) and technically were not covered.

12.3 Contact means direct free kick

Additional text

If an offence involves contact it is penalised by a direct free kick or penalty kick.

Explanation

Clarifies that a direct free kick must be awarded if an offence involves contact.

12.4 Reckless - removal of 'complete' from definition

Old text

Reckless means that the player has acted with complete disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, his opponent (...) (...) must be cautioned.

New text

Reckless is when a player acts with disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent and must be cautioned.

Explanation

There were legal concerns about the meaning /relevance of 'complete'.

12.5 Serious foul play - removal of 'far' from definition

Old text

Using excessive force means that the player has far exceeded the necessary use of force and is in danger of injuring his opponent (...) (...) must be sent off.

New text

Using excessive force is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and endangers the safety of an opponent and must be sent off.

Explanation

There were legal concerns about the meaning /relevance of 'complete'.

12.6 Direct free kick - add 'impedes an opponent with contact'

Additional text

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences:

- impedes an opponent [with contact](#)

Explanation

Confirmation that impeding an opponent with contact is a direct free kick.

12.7 Impeding without contact means indirect free kick

Old text

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if (...) (...) a player impedes the progress of an opponent.

New text

An indirect free kick is awarded if (...) a player impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made.

Explanation

Confirmation that impeding an opponent without contact is an indirect free kick.

12.8 Authority to take disciplinary action from pre-match inspection of the field (see 5.4)

Old text

The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

New text

The referee has the authority to take disciplinary action from entering the field of play [for the pre-match inspection](#) until leaving the field of play after the [match ends \(including kicks from the penalty mark\)](#).

[If, before entering the field of play at the start of the match, a player commits a sending-off offence, the referee has the authority to prevent the player taking part in the match \(see Law 3.6\); the referee will report any other misconduct.](#)

Explanation

Same change as outlined and explained in Law 5 (see 5.4).

12.9 Advantage played for a red card offence and player then becomes involved**Additional text**

Advantage should not be applied in situations involving serious foul play, violent conduct or a second cautionable offence unless there is a clear opportunity to score a goal. The referee must send off the player when the ball is next out of play but if the player plays the ball or challenges/interferes with an opponent, the referee will stop play, send off the player and restart with an indirect free kick.

Explanation

Clarifies that on the rare occasion that a referee plays advantage for a RC offence (only if a goal-scoring opportunity is imminent) if the RC player then becomes involved in play, the game must be stopped as it would be against 'fair play' if the player scored, contributed to a goal or stopped the opponents scoring.

12.10 Cautions for handball

Old text

There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, e.g. if a player:

- commits a foul for the tactical purpose of interfering with or breaking up a promising attack
- holds an opponent for the tactical purpose of pulling the opponent away from the ball or preventing the opponent from getting to the ball
- handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession or developing an attack
- handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal (irrespective of whether or not the attempt is successful)

New text

There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, including if a player:

- commits a foul or handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack
- handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal (whether or not the attempt is successful) or in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a goal

12.10 Cautions for handball (cont)

Explanation

- 'Preventing an opponent gaining possession' is removed as a YC offence as it causes some referees to YC every handball.
- Handling is included as a YC offence when it 'stops/interferes with a promising attack' (as with other offences which have the same effect).
- Clarifies that a player who tries unsuccessfully to handle the ball to stop a goal being scored should receive a YC.

12.11 Denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity in the penalty area**Additional text**

Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.

Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:

- The offence is holding, pulling or pushing or
- The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball or
- The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc.)

In all the above circumstances the player is sent off.

Explanation

When a DOGSO offence is committed by a defender in the penalty area, the penalty kick effectively restores the goal-scoring opportunity so the punishment for the player should be less strong (a YC) than when the offence is committed outside the penalty area. However, where the offence is handball or clearly not a genuine attempt to play or challenge for the ball (as defined in the wording) the player will be sent off.

12.12 Serious foul play - inclusion of 'challenge'	
Old text	New text
A tackle that endangers the safety of an opponent must be sanctioned as serious foul play.	A tackle <u>or challenge</u> that endangers the safety of an opponent (...) must be sanctioned as serious foul play.
Explanation	
Same change as in 12.2 - 'challenge' includes offences with the arms, elbows etc.	

12.13 Violent conduct - no contact

Old text

A player is guilty of violent conduct if he uses excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball or excessive force or brutality against a team-mate, spectator, match official or any other person.

New text

Violent conduct is when a player uses or attempts to use excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball, or against a team-mate, team official, match official, spectator or any other person, regardless of whether contact is made.

Explanation

Clarifies that attempted violence is punished by a RC even if unsuccessful.

12.14 Violent conduct - contact with head/face

Additional text

In addition, a player who, when not challenging for the ball, deliberately strikes an opponent or any other person on the head or face with the hand or arm, is guilty of violent conduct unless the force used was negligible.

Explanation

Clarifies that a player who deliberately hits/strikes an opponent on the head/face (when not challenging for the ball) should be sent off (unless negligible force).

12.15 Offences against substitutes, team officials, match officials etc ...

Old text

If the ball is in play and a player commits an offence inside the field of play:

- against an opponent, play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position where the offence occurred (see Law 13 - Position of free kick) or a penalty kick (if inside the offending player's own penalty area)
- against a team-mate, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position where the offence occurred (see Law 13 - Position of free kick)
- against a substitute or substituted player, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position of the ball when play was stopped (see Law 13 - Position of free kick)
- against the referee or an assistant referee, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position where the offence occurred (see Law 13 - Position of free kick)
- against another person, play is restarted with a dropped ball from the position of the ball when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped

New text

If the ball is in play and a player commits an offence inside the field of play against:

- an opponent - indirect or direct free kick or penalty kick
- a team-mate, substitute, substituted player, team official or a match official
- a direct free kick or penalty kick
- any other person
- a dropped ball

Explanation

The punishment for an offence against another participant reflects the seriousness of such an action e.g. football sends out a weak/poor message if an offence against a match official is only an indirect free kick.

12.16 Fouls off the field of play (see 13.3 + 14.1)

Old text

If the ball is in play and the offence occurred outside the field of play...

- if the player leaves the field of play to commit the offence, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position of the ball when play was stopped (see Law 13 –Position of free kick)

New text

If the ball is in play and the offence occurred outside the field of play(...)

However, if a player leaves the field of play as part of play and commits an offence against another player, play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offence occurred; for direct free kick offences a penalty kick is awarded if this is within the offender's penalty area.

Explanation

Law is changed as football would expect that if 2 players leave the field as part of normal action and one fouls the other off the field, a free kick should be awarded. No one would understand if the referee gave a RC/YC and then restarted with a dropped ball (or IDFK). The FK is awarded on the touchline/goal line nearest to where the foul occurred; if this is on the goal line in the offender's penalty area a penalty is awarded.

13.1 Free kicks are awarded to the opposing team

Old text

Free kicks are direct or indirect.

New text

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player guilty of an offence or infringement.

Explanation

Stating that a free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the start of the Law allows the removal of the many uses of the phrase 'to the opposing team'.

13.2 Position of free kicks

Additional text

All free kicks are taken from the place where the infringement occurred except:

Explanation

Clear statement at the start of this Law allows the removal of specific reference to the position of the free kick in many of the Laws.

13.3 Fouls off the field of play

Old text

Free kicks awarded for offences involving a player entering, re-entering or leaving the field of play without permission are taken from the position of the ball when play was stopped.

New text

Free kicks for offences involving a player entering, re-entering or leaving the field of play without permission are taken from the position of the ball when play was stopped. However, if a player leaves the field of play as part of play and commits an offence against another player, play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offence occurred; for direct free kick offences, a penalty kick is awarded, if this is within the offender's penalty area.

Explanation

Consistent with change outlined in 12.16 and 14.1.

13.4 Ball must clearly move to be in play

Old text	New text
The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.	The ball is in play when it is kicked and <u>clearly</u> moves...
Explanation	
Change consistent with kick-off (8.3), penalty kick (14.2) and corner kick (17.2).	

13.5 Stopping/intercepting free kicks

Old text	New text
<p>If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent who is near the ball deliberately prevents him taking the kick, the referee must caution the player for delaying the restart of play. If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent who is less than 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball intercepts it, the referee must allow play to continue.</p>	<p>If a player <u>takes</u> a free kick quickly and an opponent who is less than 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball intercepts it, the referee allows play to continue. However, <u>an opponent who deliberately prevents</u> a free kick being taken quickly must be cautioned for delaying the restart of play.</p>

Explanation

Paragraphs reversed; clearer distinction between ‘preventing’ a free kick being taken and ‘intercepting’ a quick free kick after it has been taken.

14.1 Penalty for foul off the field of play (see 12.16 + 13.3)

Old text

A penalty kick is awarded against a team that commits one of ten offences for which a direct free kick is awarded inside his own penalty area.

New text

A penalty kick is awarded if a player commits a direct free kick offence inside their penalty area [or off the field as part of play as outlined in Laws 12 and 13](#).

Explanation

Repeat of Law 12 and 13 changes that a penalty is awarded for an offence by a defender off the field of play with the ball in play if the nearest point to the offence is inside their own penalty area.

14.2 Stationary position and movement of the ball

Old text

The ball:

- must be placed on the penalty mark
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves

New text

The ball:

- must be [stationary](#) on the penalty mark
- The ball is in play when it is kicked [and clearly moves](#)

Explanation

Consistent with other changes.

14.3 When penalty is completed (see 10.2.6)

Additional text

The penalty kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play or the referee stops play for any infringement of the Laws.

Explanation

Clarifies when a penalty kick is over.

14.4 Some offences are always punished with an indirect free kick

Old text

- If the referee gives the signal for a penalty kick to be taken and, before the ball is in play, one of the following occurs:
 the player taking the penalty kick infringes the Laws of the Game:
- the referee allows the kick to be taken
 - if the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken
 - if the ball does not enter the goal, the referee stops play and the match is restarted with an indirect free kick to the defending team from the place where the infringement occurred
- the goalkeeper infringes the Laws of the Game:
- the referee allows the kick to be taken
 - if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded
 - if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken
- a team-mate of the player taking the kick infringes the Laws of the Game:
- the referee allows the kick to be taken
 - if the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken
 - if the ball does not enter the goal, the referee stops play and the match is restarted with an indirect free kick to the defending team from the place
- a team-mate of the goalkeeper infringes the Laws of the Game:
- the referee allows the kick to be taken
 - if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded
 - if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken

New text

- Once the referee has signalled for a penalty kick to be taken, the kick must be taken. If, before the ball is in play, one of the following occurs:
 the player taking the penalty kick or a team-mate infringes the Laws of the Game:
- if the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken
 - if the ball does not enter the goal, the referee stops play and restarts with an indirect free kick except for the following offences/ infringements when play will be stopped and restarted with an indirect free kick regardless of whether or not a goal is scored:
- a penalty kick is kicked backwards:
 - a team-mate of the identified kicker takes the kick; the referee cautions the player who took the kick
 - feinting to kick the ball once the kicker has completed the run-up (feinting in the run-up is permitted); the referee cautions the kicker

14.4 Some offences are always punished with an indirect free kick (cont)

Explanation

Emphasises that the standard re-take/goal/indirect free kick decision does not apply to these situations, especially the wrong player taking the kick or 'illegal' feinting which are 'deliberate' acts of unsporting behaviour

14.5 Offences by the goalkeeper**Additional text**

If the ball does not enter the goal the kick is retaken; [the goalkeeper is cautioned if responsible for the infringement](#)

Explanation

As the Law has been changed to deal more strongly with a penalty kicker who 'illegally feints', it is consistent that a goalkeeper who infringes the Law causing a retake is cautioned. This should encourage goalkeepers not to infringe this Law.

14.6 Several offences committed at the same time

Old text

a player of both the defending team and the attacking team infringes the Laws of the Game the kick is retaken

New text

a player of both teams infringes the Laws of the Game the kick is retaken unless a player commits a more serious offence (e.g. illegal feinting)

Explanation

Repeat of change in Law 5 where the more serious is penalised (See 5.3).

15.1 Ball is thrown with both hands**New text**

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower must:

- face the field of play
- have part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line
- throws the ball with both hands from behind and over the head from the point where it left the field of play

Explanation

- throws is a more logical word to use than delivers
- combining bullet points 3 and 4 emphasises that the 'one handed' foul throw (ball thrown with one hand and guided with the other) is not permitted.

15.2 Encroaching within 2m (2yds)

Old text

If an opponent unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower

- he is cautioned for unsporting behaviour

New text

An opponent who unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower (including moving closer than 2m (2 yds) to the place where the throw-in is to be taken) is cautioned for unsporting behaviour and if the throw-in has been taken an indirect free kick is awarded.

Explanation

Clarifies that not respecting the 2m (2 yds) distance is considered unfairly distracting or impeding and an IDFK is the restart if the throw-in has been taken.

16.1 Corner kick if kicked directly into own goal

Additional text

- A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal a corner kick is awarded to the opponents if the ball left the penalty area.

Explanation

Clarifies the correct restart if a player scores an 'own goal' directly from a goal kick (e.g. in strong wind).

16.2 Ball must be stationary

New text

- The ball must be stationary and is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team

Explanation

Clarifies that the ball must be stationary as this was not in the 'old' wording.

16.3 Attacker in the penalty area

Additional text

- If an opponent who is in the penalty area when the goal kick is taken touches or challenges for the ball before it has touched another player, the goal kick is retaken.

Explanation

Clarifies that any opponent(s) in the penalty area when the goal kick is taken can not touch/challenge for the ball until another player has touched it so that the player does not gain an advantage from having not left the penalty area as required by Law.

17.1 Corner kick if kicked directly into own goal

Additional text

- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick but only against the opposing team; [if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.](#)

Explanation

Clarifies correct restart if a player scores an 'own goal' directly from a corner kick.

17.2 Ball must be stationary and then clearly move to be in play

New text

- The ball must be placed in the corner [area](#).
- The ball [must be stationary](#) and is kicked by a player of the attacking team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked [and clearly moves](#) (...).

Explanation

- Area replaces 'arc'
- Clarifies that the ball must be stationary
- Reflects change to other Laws, but which is especially important for corner kicks to stop a player just touching the ball then unsportingly pretending that the corner has not been taken

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Questions ?

Program References

FIFA Referee development program resources (various)

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