

Laws of the Game

2019/20

Changes and clarifications

The International Football Association Board





Laws of the Game 2019/20



Philosophy

In accordance with the requirements of The IFAB that potential Law changes should be considered within the structure of the *play fair!* initiative, all changes for 2019/20 fall into at least one of the initiative's three focus areas. Many of the changes reflect solution to 'problems' aside by all parts of the football family.

improving **player behaviour** and increasing **respect**

increasing **playing time**

increasing **fairness and attractiveness**

Key Law Changes 2019/20



- Ball in Play -Goal Kick/Free Kick in Goal Area
- Handball
- Yellow and Red Cards for Team Officials
- Defensive Wall
- Substitutes leaving the field
- Dropped Ball Uncontested
- Ball Hits a Match Official
- Goalkeeper Movement on Penalty Kicks
- Delayed Card
- Injured Kicker
- Kick Off



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Goal Kicks/Free Kicks

Ball in Play

Goal Kick/Free Kick in Play: Rationale for Change



A goal kick and defensive 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 created a more dynamic/constructive restart to the game
- has reduced the time 'lost/wasted'
- has stopped the tactic of a defender deliberately playing the ball before it leaves the penalty area, knowing that all that will happen is that the goal kick will be retaken.

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

Law 16 – Goal Kick

1. Procedure

- *The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves*
- 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.

2. Offences and sanctions

- *If, when a goal kick is taken, any opponents are inside the penalty area because they did not have time to leave, the referee allows play to continue.*
- *If an opponent who is in the penalty area when the goal kick is taken, or enters the penalty area before the ball is in play, touches or challenges for the ball before it—is in play, the goal kick is retaken.*

Possible Consequence



- If a goalkick is taken quickly, before all the attackers have left the penalty area, and an attacker intercepts and scores, the goal will stand.

Law 13 – Free Kicks



2. Procedure

The ball:

- *is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves at least 9.15m from the ball (...)*
- *outside the penalty area for free kicks inside the opponent's penalty area*

3. Offences and sanctions

If, when a free kick is taken by the defending team inside its penalty area, any opponents are inside the penalty area because they did not have time to leave, the referee allows play to continue.

If an opponent who is in the penalty area when the free kick is taken, or enters the penalty area before the ball is in play, touches or challenges for the ball before it is in play, the free kick is retaken.



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Handball

Law 12 – Handball: Rationale for change



Handball is certainly the most ‘unclear’ area of the Laws of the Game and this **lack of clarity** causes much confusion, inconsistency and controversy.

It creates situations where **defenders** often do not stand naturally but try to **hide** their **arms behind their back**.



Law 12 – Handball: Rationale for change



Football does not accept:

- a **goal** being **scored** directly **from the hand/arm** (even if accidental)
- a player **gaining possession/control** of the ball from their hand/arm (even if accidental) and then **scoring** or **creating a goal-scoring opportunity**

Law 12 – Handball: Rationale for change



The new wording of Law 12 will provide **greater clarity** for situations where the ball touches the hand/arm and it is (or may be) **‘accidental/non-deliberate’**.

In particular:

- having the hand/arm **above shoulder height** is rarely a ‘natural’ position, except when deliberately playing the ball, and a player is **‘taking a risk’** by having the hand/arm in that position
- if the ball touches the hand/arm having come **off the player’s own body**, or the **body of another player** (of either team) who is close by, it is almost impossible to avoid contact with the ball
- it is natural for a player to put their **arm between their body and the ground for support** when falling down, but extending the arm(s) **to make the body bigger** (larger barrier) is not natural/fair and the player ‘takes a risk’ when doing so

Law 12 – Handling the ball



1. Direct free kick – Handling the ball

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 – Handling the ball



*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 – Handling the ball



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 is falling 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





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Yellow and red cards for
team officials

Sanctions for Team Officials: Rationale for Change



The experiment with a **YC/RC for misconduct by team officials** has been successful and has many benefits at all levels (including for young referees dealing with 'difficult' adult coaches)

- Better understanding of the disciplinary sanction
- Avoid confrontational situation

3 levels of disciplinary sanctions and the corresponding offences will be listed in **Law 12**:

- Warning
- Yellow card
- Red card

Law 5 – The Referee



The referee:

- *takes action against team officials who fail to act in a responsible manner and warns or shows a yellow card for a caution or a red card for a sending-off from the field of play and its immediate surrounds, including the technical area; if the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.*

Law 12 – Warnings



The following offences should usually result in a warning; repeated or blatant instances 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 an 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

Law 12 – Cautions



Caution offences include (but are 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
- excessively/persistently gesturing for a red or yellow card
- gesturing or acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- persistent unacceptable behaviour (including repeated warning offences)
- showing a lack of respect for the game

Law 12 – Send-offs



Sending off offences include (but are 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

Law 12 – Send-offs...cont'd



Sending-off offences include (but are not limited to):

- *physical or aggressive behaviour (including spitting or biting) towards an opposing player, substitute, team official, match official, spectator or any other person (e.g. ball boy/girl, security or competition official etc.)*
- *receiving a second caution in the same match*
- *using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures*
- *using unauthorised electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as the result of using electronic or communication equipment*
- *violent conduct*

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The Defensive Wall

Law 13 – Free Kicks: Rationale for Change

There is **no legitimate tactical reason** for players from the **attacking team** to be **in the defensive ‘wall’** and their presence in the ‘wall’ often causes confrontation and/or management problems which waste time and are **not good for the image of the game**.

Their presence is also **against the ‘spirit’ of the game** that the defending team should be able to defend a free kick without being **unfairly impeded**.

Requiring the **attacking team players** to be **at least 1m from the ‘wall’** solves these problems.



Law 13 – Free Kicks



Additional text

2. Procedure

Where three or more defending team players form a 'wall', all attacking players must remain at least 1m (1 yd) from the 'wall' until the ball is in play.

3. Offences and sanctions

If, when a free kick is taken, an attacking player is less than 1m (1 yd) from a 'wall' formed by three or more defending players, an indirect free kick is awarded.



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Substituted player leaving the
field

Substitution: Rationale for Change



To stop the **unfair practice** of a player who is being substituted taking a long time to leave at the halfway line (in order to waste time), the player must now leave at the nearest point unless the referee indicates otherwise:

- **if the player can leave quickly at the halfway line**
- **because of a safety/security issue**
- **because the player is injured (and needs to leave on a stretcher)**

The substituted player must go straight to the technical area or dressing room to avoid interfering with match officials, substitutes etc. and to avoid problems with spectators.

A player who infringes the spirit of this Law will be sanctioned for unsporting behaviour.

Law 3 – The Players



3. Substitution procedure

To replace a player with a substitute, the following must be observed:

- *the player being substituted*
 - *receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless already off the field, and must leave by the nearest point on the boundary line unless the referee indicates that the player may leave directly and immediately at the halfway line or another location (e.g. for a safety/security issue or injury)*
 - *must go immediately to the technical area or dressing room and takes no further part in the match, except where return substitutions are permitted*

If the player being substituted refuses to leave, play continues



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Dropped Ball

Dropped Ball – Rationale for Change



The current dropped ball procedure is unsatisfactory as it often leads to

- a '**manufactured**' restart (referee decides to drop the ball to one player) which is often 'exploited' unfairly (e.g. kicking the ball out for a throw-in deep in the opponents' half)
- a **confrontation**

The procedure has been improved so it becomes '**uncontested**' and

- the ball is dropped for one player of the team that last touched the ball
- consequently there is no requirement to 'return' the ball to the opponents

All other players must remain a required distance away (**4m**)

For simplicity the ball will be dropped for the defending team goalkeeper if, when play was stopped the ball was in the penalty area or the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play



2. Dropped ball - Procedure

The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:

- the ball was in the penalty area or
- the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area

In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, outside agent or, as outlined in Law 9.1, a match official.

All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play

The ball is in play when it touches the ground.



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Ball Hits a Match Official

Law 9 – Ball Out of Play: Rationale for Change



It can be very unfair if, because the ball has hit a match official (especially the referee), a team

- **gains possession**

Similarly if a team

- **starts an attack, or**
- **scores a goal**

In all these situations, a dropped ball will be given.

Law 9 – The Ball in and Out of Play



1. Ball out of play

The ball is out of play when:

- *it touches a match official, remains on the field of play and any of the following results:*
 - *a team starts a promising attack or*
 - *the ball goes directly into the goal or*
 - *the team in possession of the ball changes*

In all such cases, play is restarted with a dropped ball at the position where the ball touched the match official



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Goalkeeper Movement

Law 14 – Penalty Kicks: Rationale for Change



Requiring the **goalkeeper** to have **only one foot (rather than two) touching the goal line** (or, if jumping, in line with the goal line) when the penalty kick is taken is a **fairer approach**.

It is almost **impossible** for the goalkeeper **to save a penalty kick** having two feet touching the goal line when the penalty is taken.

Also as the kicker can **‘stutter’** in the run up, it is fair to allow the goalkeeper to anticipate the kick and **take one step forward**.

Law 14 – Penalty Kicks: Rationale for Change



Sometimes the goalkeeper touches the goalpost, crossbar or net in **an attempt to distract the kicker.**

This is something unfair and the referee must **not signal** for the penalty kick to be taken if the **goalposts, crossbar or net** are **moving** because the goalkeeper has shaken them.

Law 14 – Penalty Kicks



Additional text

1. Procedure

When the ball is kicked, the defending goalkeeper must have at least one foot touching, or in line with, the goal line.

The ball must be stationary on the penalty mark and the goalposts, crossbar and goal net are not moving.

The defending goalkeeper must remain on the goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts without touching the goalposts, crossbar or goal net until the ball has been kicked.



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Delayed Card

Delaying the Card: Rationale for Change



If an **attack is stopped by a YC/RC offence** and the attacking team takes a **quick free kick** which creates a **goal-scoring opportunity**, it is **unfair** that this 'new' attack must be stopped to issue the YC/RC.

Therefore, unless the referee has started the YC/RC procedure (which may unfairly distract the defending team), the **YC/RC** can be shown at the **next stoppage**.

As the quick free kick effectively restores the 'lost' attack, if the original offence was a DOGSO it will be sanctioned with a YC, which is consistent with the sanction when the referee plays advantage for a DOGSO offence.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct - Delay Card



Amended Text

3. Disciplinary action

Delaying the restart of play to show a card

Once the referee has decided to caution or send off a player, play must not be restarted until the sanction is administered, unless the non-offending team takes a quick free kick, has a clear goal-scoring opportunity and the referee has not started the disciplinary sanction procedure. The sanction is administered at the next stoppage; if the offence was denying the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the player is cautioned.



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Injured Kicker

Law 5 – Injured Player



Rationale for the change

It is unfair when a **team's penalty taker** is injured and requires **treatment** as this means he/she must leave the field and **cannot take the penalty kick**.

Amended text

3. Powers and duties

Injuries

- *An injured player may not be treated on the field of play and may only re-enter after play has restarted. Exceptions to the requirement to leave the field of play are only when:*
 - *a penalty kick has been awarded and the injured player will be the kicker*



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Kick Off

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play



1. Kick-off

Procedure

- *the team that wins the toss of a coin decides which goal it will attack in the first half or to take the kick-off*
- *depending on the above, their opponents take the kick-off or decide which goal to attack in the first half*
- *the team that decided which goal to attack in the first half takes the kick-off to start the second half*