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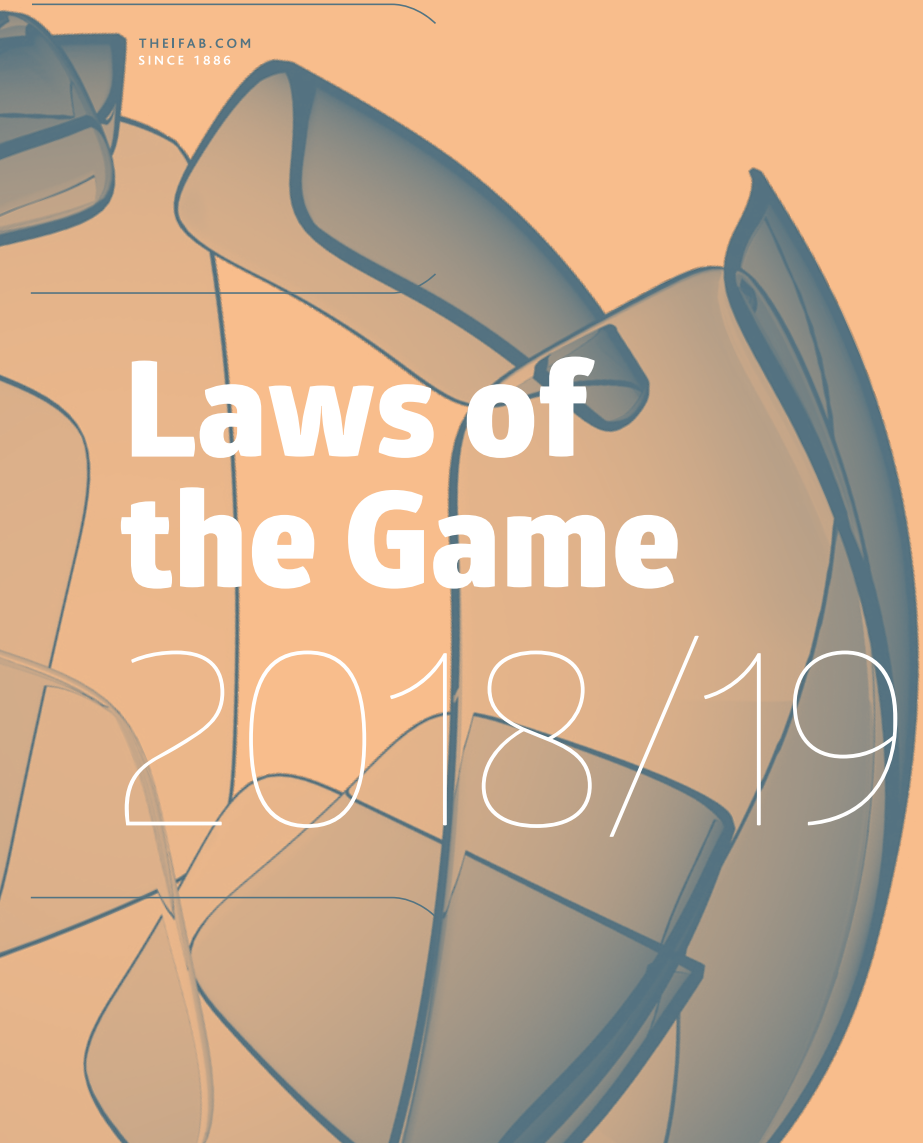

Laws of the Game

2018/19

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Laws of the Game 2018/19

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Introduction

The philosophy and spirit of the Laws

Football is the greatest sport on earth. It is played in every country and at many different levels. The Laws of the Game are the same for all football throughout the world from the FIFA World Cup™ Final through to a game between young children in a remote village.

That the same Laws apply in every match in every confederation, country, town and village throughout the world is a considerable strength which must be preserved. This is also an opportunity which must be harnessed for the good of football everywhere.

Football must have Laws which keep the game 'fair' as a crucial foundation of the beauty of the 'beautiful game' is its fairness – this is a vital feature of the 'spirit' of the game. The best matches are those where the referee is rarely needed as the players play with respect for each other, the match officials and the Laws.

The integrity of the Laws, and the referees who apply them, must always be protected and respected. All those in authority, especially coaches and team captains, have a clear responsibility to the game to respect the match officials and their decisions.

Managing changes to the Laws

The first 'universal' football Laws were drawn up in 1863 and in 1886 The International Football Association Board (The IFAB) was founded by the four British football associations (The FA, Scottish FA, FA of Wales and Irish FA) as the worldwide body with sole responsibility for developing and preserving the Laws of the Game. FIFA joined The IFAB in 1913.

For a Law to be changed, The IFAB must be convinced that the change will benefit the game. This means that the potential change will usually be tested, as with the video assistant referee (VAR) and additional substitute in extra time experiments. For every proposed change, as seen in the significant modernising revision of the Laws of the Game for 2016/17 and 2017/18, the focus must be on: fairness, integrity, respect, safety, the enjoyment of the participants and how technology can benefit the game. The Laws must also encourage participation from everyone, regardless of background or ability.

Although accidents occur, the Laws should make the game as safe as possible. This requires players to show respect for their opponents and referees should create a safe environment by dealing strongly with those whose play is too aggressive and dangerous. The Laws embody the unacceptability of unsafe play in their disciplinary phrases, e.g. 'reckless challenge' (caution = yellow card/YC) and 'endangering the safety of an opponent' or 'using excessive force' (sending-off = red card/RC).

Football must be attractive and enjoyable for players, match officials, coaches, as well as spectators, fans, administrators etc. The Laws must help make the game attractive and enjoyable so people, regardless of age, race, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability etc. want to take part and enjoy their involvement with football.

Football's Laws are relatively simple, compared to other team sports, but as many situations are 'subjective' and referees are human (and thus make mistakes) some decisions will inevitably cause debate and discussion. For some people, this discussion is part of the game's enjoyment and attraction but, whether decisions are right or wrong, the 'spirit' of the game requires that referees' decisions are always respected.

The Laws cannot deal with every possible situation, so where there is no direct provision in the Laws, The IFAB expects the referee to make a decision within the 'spirit' of the game – this often involves asking the question, "what would football want/expect?"

The IFAB will continue to engage with the global football family so changes to the Laws benefit football at all levels and in every corner of the world, and so the integrity of the game, the Laws and the referees is respected, valued and protected.

Background to the 2018/19 revision of the Laws

The 2016/17 revision of the Laws of the Game was probably the most far-reaching and comprehensive in The IFAB's history. The aim was to make the Laws clearer, more accessible and to ensure they reflect the needs of the modern game.

As with any large-scale revision, there is always a second 'follow up' stage and many of the changes for 2017/18 were clarifications which made the text clearer and/or easier to translate – most are the result of requests from individuals, groups and national FAs from around the world.

In addition to the clarifications, there were some changes which were extensions of principles established in the 2016/17 revision and the 2017 AGM also approved some significant changes to help develop and promote football, including:

- an extension of the flexibility of national FAs (and confederations and FIFA) to modify some of the 'organisational' Laws (e.g. increasing the maximum number of substitutes to five, except for the highest level) to help promote and develop the football for which they are responsible as The IFAB believes that national FAs know best what will benefit football in their country
- the introduction of temporary dismissals (sin bins) as a potential alternative sanction to a caution (YC) in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots (lowest levels) football
- extension of the use of return substitutes to youth, veterans and disability football (they are already permitted in grassroots football).

The Law changes for 2018/19 are mainly further refinements to the major revision and the inclusion, after rigorous testing, of 2 major options for competitions:

- the use of an additional substitute in extra time
- the use of video assistant referees (VARs), subject to permission from The IFAB and FIFA

The future

The IFAB's '*play fair!*' strategy for 2017-22 was established to examine and consider proposed changes to see if they will benefit the game. It has been well-received throughout the football world and there has been strong approval of its focus on three important areas:

- **Fairness and integrity**
  - will the proposed change strengthen the game's fairness and integrity on the field of play?
- **Universality and inclusion**
  - will the proposed change benefit football at all levels throughout the world?
  - will the proposed change encourage more people from all backgrounds and abilities to take part in and enjoy football?
- **The growth of technology**
  - will the proposed change have a positive impact on the game?

During 2018/19, The IFAB, working with its expert panels, will continue to consult widely on a number of important Law-related topics, including:

- Player behaviour, with special focus on:
  - the role of the captain
  - measures to tackle time-wasting
- A potentially fairer system of taking kicks from the penalty mark
- Potential use of red and yellow cards for non-playing members in the technical area
- Handball
- Offside

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By focussing on fairness, universality and inclusion, and technology, The IFAB will continue to develop the Laws to promote a better game on every football field in every part of the world.

The IFAB has enjoyed engaging with people throughout the world and is always pleased and interested to receive suggestions or questions relating to the Laws of the Game. Indeed, many of the recent Law changes and topics in the '*play fair!*' strategy have come from suggestions from people from many different parts of the world. Please send your suggestions or questions to: lawenquiries@theifab.com

Notes
on the Laws of the Game

Official languages
The IFAB publishes the Laws of the Game in English, French, German and Spanish. If there is any divergence in the wording, the English text is authoritative.

Other languages
National FAs which translate the Laws of the Game can obtain the layout template for the 2018/19 edition of the Laws from The IFAB by contacting: **info@theifab.com.**

National FAs which produce a translated version of the Laws of the Game using this format are invited to send a copy to The IFAB (stating clearly on the front cover that it is that national FA's official translation) so it can be posted on The IFAB website for use by others.

Applying the Laws
The same Laws apply in every match in every confederation, country, town and village and, apart from the Modifications permitted by The IFAB (see 'Modifications to the Laws'), the Laws must not be modified or changed, except with the permission of The IFAB.

Those who are educating match officials and other participants, should emphasise that:

- referees should apply the Laws within the 'spirit' of the game to help produce fair and safe matches
- everyone must respect the match officials and their decisions, remembering and respecting that referees are human and will make mistakes

Players have a major responsibility for the image of the game and the team captain should play an important role in helping to ensure that the Laws and referees' decisions are respected.

Key
The main Law changes are underlined and highlighted in the margin.
YC = yellow card (caution); RC = red card (sending-off).

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Laws of the Game

2018/19

Modifications to the Laws

The universality of the Laws of the Game means that the game is essentially the same in every part of the world and at every level. As well as creating a 'fair' and safe environment in which the game is played, the Laws should also promote participation and enjoyment.

Historically, The IFAB has allowed national football associations (FAs) some flexibility to modify the 'organisational' Laws for specific categories of football. However, The IFAB strongly believes that national FAs should now be given more options to modify aspects of the way football is organised if it will benefit football in their own country.

How the game is played and refereed should be the same on every football field in the world from the FIFA World Cup™ final to the smallest village. However, the needs of a country's domestic football should determine how long the game lasts, how many people can take part and how some unfair behaviour is punished.

Consequently, the 131st AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3rd March 2017 unanimously agreed that national FAs (and confederations and FIFA) now have the option to modify all or some of the following organisational areas of the Laws of the Game for football for which they are responsible:

For youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football:

- size of the field of play
- size, weight and material of the ball
- width between the goalposts and height of the crossbar from the ground
- duration of the two (equal) halves of the game (and two equal halves of extra time)
- the use of return substitutes
- the use of temporary dismissals (sin bins) for some/all cautions (YCs)

For any level except competitions involving the 1st team of clubs in the top division or 'A' international teams:

- the number of substitutions each team is permitted to use up to a maximum of five, except in youth football where the maximum will be determined by the national association, confederation or FIFA.

In addition, to allow national FAs further flexibility to benefit and develop their domestic football, The IFAB AGM approved the following changes relating to 'categories' of football:

- women's football is no longer a separate category and now has the same status as men's football
- the age limits for youth and veterans have been removed – national FAs, confederations and FIFA have the flexibility to decide the age restrictions for these categories
- each national FA will determine which competitions at the lowest levels of football are designated as 'grassroots' football

Permission for other modifications

National FAs have the option to approve different modifications for different competitions - there is no requirement to apply them universally or to apply them all. **However, no other modifications are allowed without the permission of The IFAB.**

National FAs are asked to inform The IFAB of their use of these modifications, and at which levels, as this information, and especially the reason(s) why the modifications are being used, may identify development ideas/strategies which The IFAB can share to assist the development of football in other national FAs.

The IFAB would also be very interested to hear about other potential modification of the Laws of the Game which could increase participation, make football more attractive and promote its worldwide development.

Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)

The 131st AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3rd March 2017 approved the use of temporary dismissals (sin bins) for all or some cautions/yellow cards (YCs) in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the approval of the competition's national FA, confederation or FIFA, whichever is appropriate.

Reference to temporary dismissals is found in:

Law 5 – The Referee (Powers and duties):

Disciplinary action

The referee has the power to show yellow or red cards and, where competition rules permit, temporarily dismiss a player, from entering the field 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

A temporary dismissal is when a player commits a cautionable (YC) offence and is punished by an immediate 'suspension' from participating in the next part of that match. The philosophy is that an 'instant punishment' can have a significant and immediate positive influence on the behaviour of the offending player and, potentially, the player's team.

The national FA, confederation or FIFA, should approve (for publication in the competition rules) a temporary dismissal protocol within the following guidelines:

Players only

- Temporary dismissals apply to all players (including goalkeepers) but not for cautionable offences (YCs) committed by a substitute or substituted player

Referee's signal

- The referee will indicate a temporary dismissal by showing a yellow card (YC) and then clearly pointing with both arms to the temporary dismissal area (usually the player's technical area)

The temporary dismissal period

- The length of the temporary dismissal is the same for all offences
- The length of the temporary dismissal should be between 10–15% of the total playing time (e.g. 10 minutes in a 90-minute match; 8 minutes in an 80-minute match)
- The temporary dismissal period begins when play restarts after the player has left the field of play
- The referee should include in the temporary dismissal period any time 'lost' for a stoppage for which 'additional time' will be allowed at the end of the half (e.g. substitution, injury etc...)
- Competitions must decide who will help the referee time the dismissal period – it could be the responsibility of a delegate, 4th official or neutral assistant referee; conversely it could be a team official
- Once the temporary dismissal period has been completed, the player can return from the touchline with the referee's permission, which can be given while the ball is in play
- The referee has the final decision as to when the player can return
- A temporarily dismissed player can not be substituted until the end of the temporary dismissal period (but not if the team has used all its permitted substitutes)
- If a temporary dismissal period has not been completed at the end of the first half (or the end of the second half when extra time is to be played) the remaining part of the temporary dismissal period is served from the start of the second half (start of extra time)
- A player who is still serving a temporary dismissal at the end of the match is permitted to take part in kicks from the penalty mark (penalties)

Temporary dismissal area

- A temporarily dismissed player should remain within the technical area (where one exists) or with the team's coach/technical staff, unless 'warming up' (under the same conditions as a substitute)

Offences before/during/after a temporary dismissal

- A temporarily dismissed player who commits a cautionable (YC) or sending-off (RC) offence during their temporary dismissal period will take no further part in the match and may not be replaced or substituted

Further disciplinary action

- Competitions/national FAs will decide if temporary dismissals must be reported to the appropriate authorities and whether any further disciplinary action may be taken e.g. suspension for accumulating a number of temporary dismissals, as with cautions (YCs)

Temporary dismissal systems

A competition may use one of the following temporary dismissal systems:

- System A – for all cautions (YCs)
- System B – for some but not all cautions (YCs)

System A – temporary dismissal for all cautions (YCs)

- All cautions (YCs) are punished with a temporary dismissal
- A player who commits a second caution (YC) in the same match:
  - will receive a second temporary dismissal and then takes no further part in the match
  - may be replaced by a substitute at the end of the second temporary dismissal period if the player's team has not used its maximum number of substitutes (this is because the team has already been 'punished' by playing without that player for 2 x temporary dismissal periods)

System B – temporary dismissal for some but not all cautions (YCs)*

- A pre-defined list of cautionable (YC) offences will be punished by a temporary dismissal
- All other cautionable offences are punished with a caution (YC)
- A player who has been temporarily dismissed and then receives a caution (YC) continues playing
- A player who has received a caution (YC) and then receives a temporary dismissal can continue playing after the end of the temporary dismissal period
- A player who receives a second temporary dismissal in the same match will serve the temporary dismissal and then takes no further part in the match. The player may be replaced by a substitute at the end of the second temporary dismissal period if the player's team has not used its maximum number of substitutes but a player who has also received a non-temporary dismissal caution (YC) may not be replaced or substituted
- A player who receives a second caution (YC) in the same match will be sent off and takes no further part in the match and may not be replaced/substituted

**Some competitions may find it valuable to use temporary dismissals only for cautions (YCs) for offence relating to 'inappropriate' behaviour, e.g.*

- *Simulation*
- *Deliberately delaying the opposing team's restart of the match*
- *Dissent or verbal comments or gestures*
- *Stopping a promising attack by holding, pulling, pushing or handball*
- *Kicker illegally feinting at a penalty kick*

Guidelines for return substitutes

Following approval at the 131st AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3rd March 2017 The Laws of the Game now permit the use of return substitutes in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the approval of the competition's national FA, confederation or FIFA, whichever is appropriate.

Reference to return substitutions is found in:

Law 3 – The Players (Number of substitutions):
Return Substitutes

- The use of return substitutions is only permitted in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the agreement of the national football association, confederation or FIFA.

A 'return substitute' is a player who has already played in the match and has been substituted (a substituted player) and later in the match returns to play by replacing another player.

Apart from the dispensation for a substituted player to return to play in the match, all other provisions of Law 3 and the Laws of the Game apply to return substitutes. In particular, the substitution procedure outlined in Law 3 must be followed.

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Law 01

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The Field of Play

1. **Field surface**
   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).

   The colour of artificial surfaces must be green.

   Where artificial surfaces are used in competition matches between representative teams of national football associations affiliated to FIFA or international club competition matches, the surface must meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Programme for Football Turf or the International Match Standard, unless special dispensation is given by The IFAB.

2. **Field markings**
   The field of play must be rectangular and marked with continuous lines which must not be dangerous; artificial playing surface material may be used for the field markings on natural fields if it is not dangerous. These lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries.

   Only the lines indicated in Law 1 are to be marked on the field of play.

   The two longer boundary lines are touchlines. The two shorter lines are goal lines.

   The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the two touchlines.

   The centre mark is at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of 9.15 m (10 yds) is marked around it.

Marks may be made off the field of play 9.15 m (10 yds) from the corner arc at right angles to the goal lines and the touchlines.

All lines must be of the same width, which must not be more than 12 cm (5 ins). The goal lines must be of the same width as the goalposts and the crossbar.

Where artificial surfaces are used, other lines are permitted provided they are a different colour and clearly distinguishable from the football lines.

A player who makes unauthorised marks on the field of play must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour. If the referee notices this being done during the match, the player is cautioned when the ball next goes out of play.

3. Dimensions

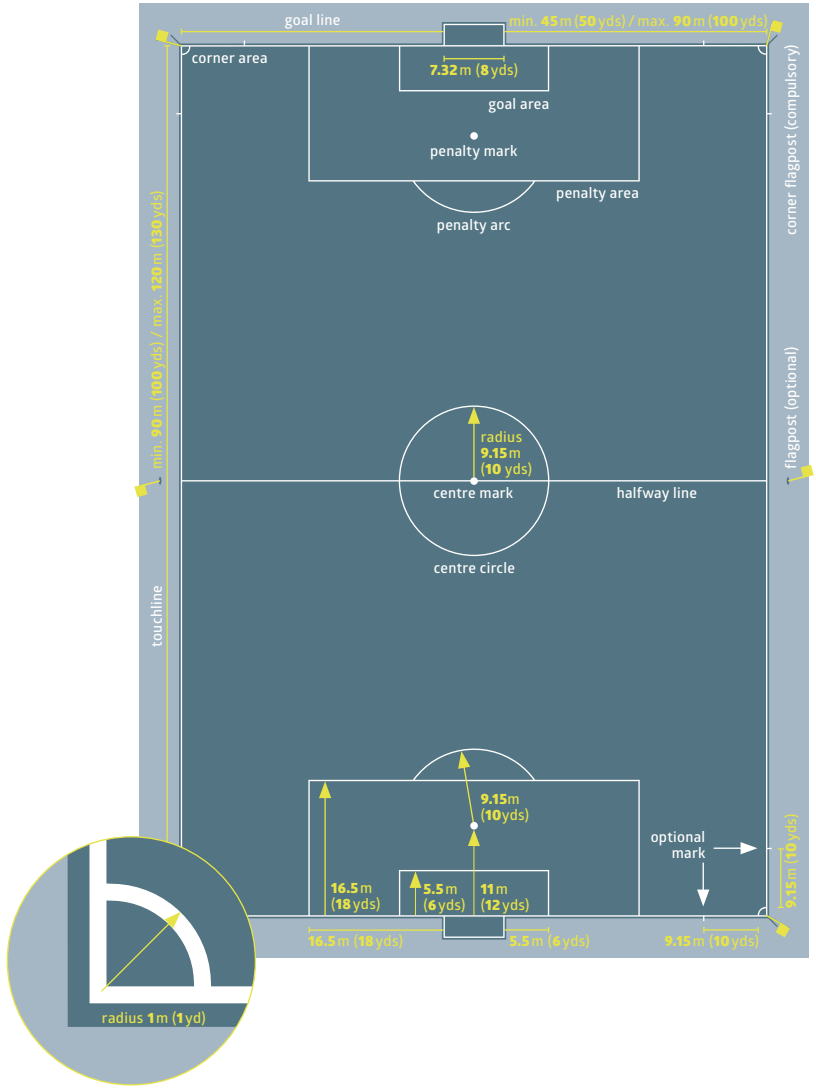
The touchline must be longer than the goal line.

- Length (touchline):
  minimum 90 m (100 yds)
  maximum 120 m (130 yds)
- Length (goal line):
  minimum 45 m (50 yds)
  maximum 90 m (100 yds)

4. Dimensions for international matches

- Length (touchline):
  minimum 100 m (110 yds)
  maximum 110 m (120 yds)
- Length (goal line):
  minimum 64 m (70 yds)
  maximum 75 m (80 yds)

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



- Measurements are from the outside of the lines as the lines are part of the area they enclose.
- The penalty mark is measured from the centre of the mark to the back edge of the goal line.

5. The goal area

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 5.5 m (6 yds) from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for 5.5 m (6 yds) and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

6. The penalty area

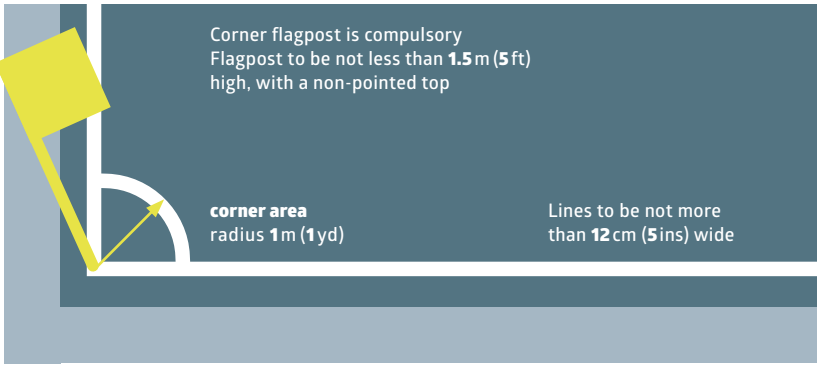
Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 16.5 m (18 yds) from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for 16.5 m (18 yds) and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area.

Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made 11 m (12 yds) from the midpoint between the goalposts.

An arc of a circle with a radius of 9.15 m (10 yds) from the centre of each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

7. The corner area

The corner area is defined by a quarter circle with a radius of 1 m (1 yd) from each corner flagpost drawn inside the field of play.



8. Flagposts

A flagpost, at least 1.5 m (5 ft) high, with a non-pointed top and a flag must be placed at each corner.

Flagposts may be placed at each end of the halfway line, at least 1 m (1 yd) outside the touchline.

9. The technical area

The technical area relates to matches played in stadiums with a designated seated area for team officials, substitutes and substituted players as outlined below:

- the technical area should only extend 1 m (1 yd) on either side of the designated seated area and up to a distance of 1 m (1 yd) from the touchline
- markings should be used to define the area
- the number of persons permitted to occupy the technical area is defined by the competition rules
- the occupants of the technical area:
  - are identified before the start of the match in accordance with the competition rules
  - must behave in a responsible manner
  - must remain within its confines except in special circumstances, e.g. a physiotherapist/doctor entering the field of play, with the referee's permission, to assess an injured player
- only one person at a time is authorised to convey tactical instructions from the technical area

10. Goals

A goal must be placed on the centre of each goal line.

A goal consists of two vertical posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The goalposts and crossbar must be made of approved material. They must be square, rectangular, round or elliptical in shape and must not be dangerous.

The distance between the inside of the posts is 7.32 m (8 yds) and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 2.44 m (8 ft).

The position of the goalposts in relation to the goal line must be in accordance with the graphics.

The goalposts and the crossbar must be white and have the same width and depth, which must not exceed 12 cm (5 ins).

If the crossbar becomes displaced or broken, play is stopped until it has been repaired or replaced in position. If it can not be repaired the match must be abandoned. A rope or any flexible or dangerous material may not replace the crossbar. Play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Nets may be attached to the goals and the ground behind the goal; they must be properly supported and must not interfere with the goalkeeper.

Safety

Goals (including portable goals) must be firmly secured to the ground.

11. Goal line technology (GLT)

GLT systems may be used to verify whether a goal has been scored to support the referee's decision.

Where GLT is used, modifications to the goal frame may be permitted in accordance with the specifications stipulated in the FIFA Quality Programme for GLT and with the Laws of the Game. The use of GLT must be stipulated in the competition rules.

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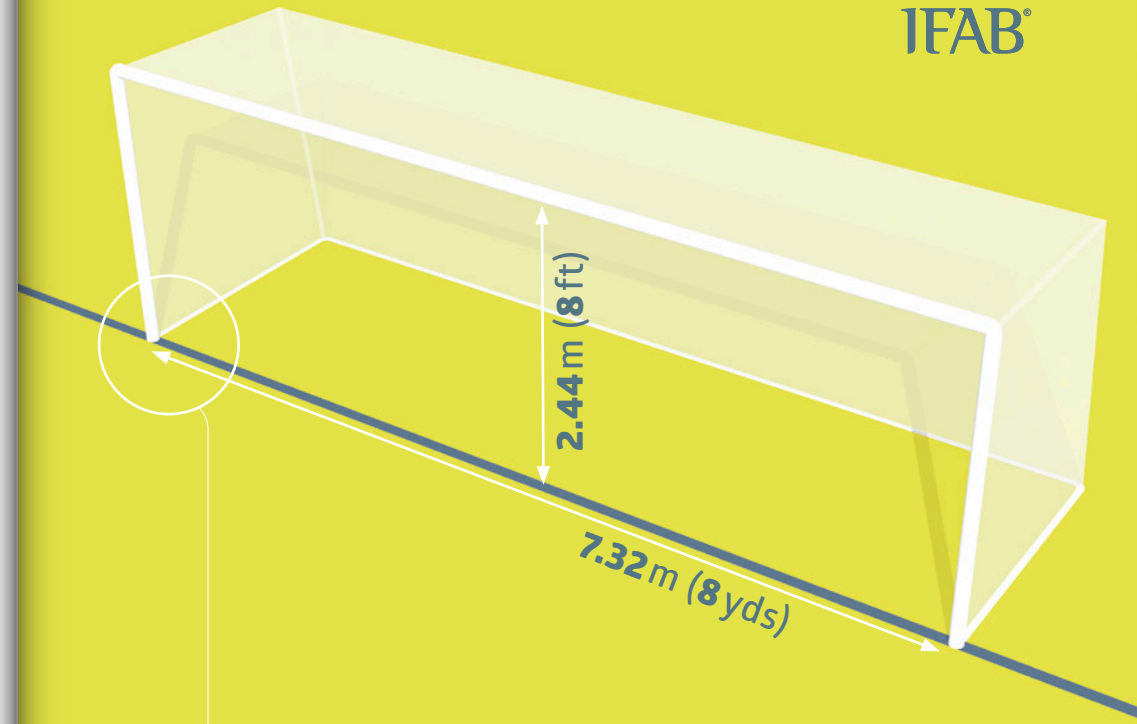
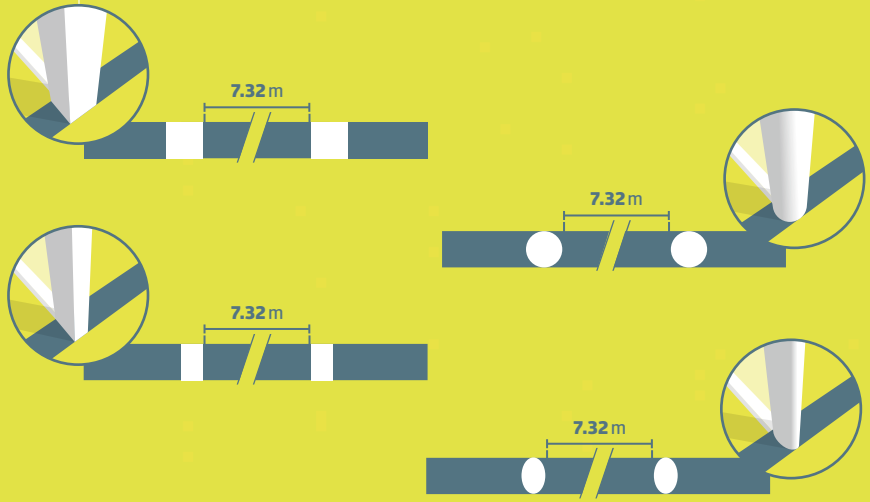


The position of the goalposts in relation to the goal line must be in accordance with the graphics below.



Principles of GLT

GLT applies solely to the goal line and is only used to determine whether a goal has been scored.

The indication of whether a goal has been scored must be immediate and automatically confirmed within one second by the GLT system only to the match officials (via the referee's watch, by vibration and visual signal).

Requirements and specifications of GLT

If GLT is used in competition matches, the competition organisers must ensure that the system is certified according to one of the following standards:

- FIFA Quality PRO
- FIFA Quality
- IMS - INTERNATIONAL MATCH STANDARD

An independent testing institute must verify the accuracy and functionality of the different technology providers' systems in accordance with the Testing Manual. If the technology does not function in accordance with the Testing Manual, the referee must not use the GLT system and must report this to the appropriate authority.

Where GLT is used, the referee must test the technology's functionality before the match as set out in the FIFA Quality Programme for GLT Testing Manual.

12. Commercial advertising

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, the technical area or the referee review area (RRA), or on the ground within 1 m (1 yd) of the boundary lines from the time the teams enter the field of play until they have left it at half-time and from the time the teams re-enter the field of play until the end of the match. Advertising is not permitted on the goals, nets, flagposts or their flags and no extraneous equipment (cameras, microphones, etc.) may be attached to these items.

In addition, upright advertising must be at least:

- 1 m (1 yd) from the touchlines of the field of play
- the same distance from the goal line as the depth of the goal net
- 1 m (1 yd) from the goal net

13. Logos and emblems

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.

14. Video Assistant Referees (VARs)

In matches using VARs there must be a video operation room (VOR) and at least one referee review area (RRA).

Video Operation Room (VOR)

The VOR is where the video assistant referee (VAR), assistant VAR (AVAR) and replay operator (RO) work; it may be in/close to the stadium or at a more distant location. Only authorised persons are permitted to enter the VOR or communicate with VAR, AVAR and RO during the match.

A player, substitute or substituted player who enters the VOR will be sent off; a team official who enters the VOR will be dismissed from the technical area.

Referee review area (RRA)

In matches using VARs there must be at least one RRA where the referee undertakes an 'on-field review' (OFR). The RRA must be:

- in a visible location outside the field of play
- clearly marked

A player, substitute or substituted player who enters the RRA will be cautioned; a team official who enters the RRA will be publicly given an official warning (or cautioned where YCs are used for team officials).

Law 02

The Ball

1. Qualities and measurements

All balls must be:

- spherical
- made of suitable material
- of a circumference of between 70 cm (28 ins) and 68 cm (27 ins)
- between 450 g (16 oz) and 410 g (14 oz) in weight at the start of the match
- of a pressure equal to 0.6 – 1.1 atmosphere (600 – 1,100 g/cm^2) at sea level (8.5 lbs/sq in – 15.6 lbs/sq in)

All balls used in matches played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA or confederations must bear one of the following:

- FIFA Quality PRO
- FIFA Quality
- IMS - INTERNATIONAL MATCH STANDARD

Each mark indicates that it has been officially tested and meets the specific technical requirements for that mark which are additional to the minimum specifications stipulated in Law 2 and must be approved by The IFAB.
The institutes conducting the tests are subject to the approval of FIFA.

Where goal line technology (GLT) is used, balls with integrated technology must carry one of the above listed quality marks.

National football association competitions may require the use of balls bearing one of these marks.

In matches played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, confederations or national football associations, no form of commercial advertising is permitted on the ball, except for the logo/emblem of the competition, the competition organiser and the authorised manufacturer's trademark. The competition regulations may restrict the size and number of such markings.

2. Replacement of a defective ball

If the ball becomes defective:

- play is stopped and
- restarted by dropping the replacement ball where the original ball became defective

If the ball becomes defective at a kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, free kick, penalty kick or throw-in the restart is re-taken.

If the ball becomes defective during a penalty kick or kicks from the penalty mark as it moves forward and before it touches a player, crossbar or goalposts the penalty kick is retaken.

The ball may not be changed during the match without the referee's permission.

3. Additional balls

Additional balls which meet the requirements of Law 2 may be placed around the field of play and their use is under the referee's control.

IFAB®

Law 03

IFAB®

The Players

1. Number of players

A match is played by two teams, each with a maximum of eleven players; one must be the goalkeeper. A match may not start or continue if either team has fewer than seven players.

If a team has fewer than seven players because one or more players has deliberately left the field of play, the referee is not obliged to stop play and the advantage may be played, but the match must not resume after the ball has gone out of play if a team does not have the minimum number of seven players.

If the competition rules state that all players and substitutes must be named before kick-off and a team starts a match with fewer than eleven players, only the players and substitutes named on the team list may take part in the match upon their arrival.

2. Number of substitutions

Official competitions

The number of substitutes, up to a maximum of five, which may be used in any match played in an official competition will be determined by FIFA, the confederation or the national football association except for men and women competitions involving the 1st teams of clubs in the top division or senior 'A' international teams, where the maximum is three substitutes.

The competition rules must state

- how many substitutes may be named, from three to a maximum of twelve.
- whether one additional substitute may be used when a match goes into extra time (whether or not the team has already used the full number of permitted substitutes)

Other matches

In national "A" team matches, a maximum of twelve substitutes may be named of which a maximum of six may be used.

In all other matches, a greater number of substitutes may be used provided that:

- the teams reach agreement on a maximum number
- the referee is informed before the match

If the referee is not informed, or if no agreement is reached before the match, each team is allowed a maximum of six substitutes.

Return substitutions

The use of return substitutions is only permitted in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the agreement of the national football association, confederation or FIFA.

3. Substitution procedure

The names of the substitutes must be given to the referee before the start of the match. Any substitute not named by this time may not take part in the match.

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

- the referee must be informed before any substitution is made
- the player being substituted receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless already off the field
- the player being replaced is not obliged to leave at the halfway line and takes no further part in the match, except where return substitutions are permitted
- if a player who is to be replaced refuses to leave, play continues

The substitute only enters:

- during a stoppage in play
- at the halfway line
- after the player being replaced has left
- after receiving a signal from the referee

The substitution is completed when a substitute enters the field of play; from that moment, the replaced player becomes a substituted player and the substitute becomes a player and can take any restart.

All substituted players and substitutes are subject to the referee's authority whether they play or not.

4. Changing the goalkeeper

Any of the players may change places with the goalkeeper if:

- the referee is informed before the change is made
- the change is made during a stoppage in play

5. Offences and sanctions

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

- the referee allows the named substitute to continue playing
- no disciplinary sanction is taken against the named substitute
- the named player can become a named substitute
- the number of substitutions is not reduced
- the referee reports the incident to the appropriate authorities

If a substitution is made during the half-time interval or before extra time, the procedure must be completed before the match restarts. If the referee is not informed, the named substitute may continue to play, no disciplinary action is taken and the matter is reported to the appropriate authority.

If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission, the referee:

- allows play to continue
- cautions both players when the ball is next out of play but not if the change occurred during half-time (including extra time) or the period between the end of the match and the start of extra time and/or kicks from the penalty mark.

For any other offences:

- the players are cautioned
- play is restarted with an indirect free kick, from the position of the ball when play was stopped

6. Players and substitutes sent off

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; the number of substitutions the team can make is not reduced
- after the kick-off can not be replaced

A named substitute who is sent off before or after the kick-off may not be replaced.

7. Extra persons on the field of play

The coach and other officials named on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are team officials. Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is an outside agent.

If a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player or outside agent enters the field of play the referee must:

- only stop play if there is interference with play
- have the person removed when play stops
- take appropriate disciplinary action

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
- an outside agent, play restarts with a dropped ball

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.

8. Player outside the field of play

If a player who requires the referee's permission to re-enter the field of play re-enters without the referee's permission, the referee must:

- stop play (not immediately if the player does not interfere with play or a match official or if the advantage can be applied)
- caution the player for entering the field of play without permission

If the referee stops play, it must be restarted:

- with a direct free kick from the position of the interference
- with an indirect free kick from the position of the ball when play was stopped if there was no interference

A player who crosses a boundary line as part of a playing movement, does not commit an offence.

9. Goal scored with an extra person on the field of play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realises, before play restarts, an extra person 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; play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position of the extra person
  - 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 dropped ball
- the referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:
  - a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of the team that conceded the goal
  - an outside agent who did not interfere with play

In all cases, the referee must have the extra person removed from the field of play.

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 free kick as appropriate

The referee must report the incident to the appropriate authority.

10. Team captain

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

Law 04

IFAB®

The Players' Equipment

1. Safety

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous.

All items of jewellery (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewellery is not permitted.

The players must be inspected before the start of the match and substitutes before they enter the field of play. If a player is wearing or using unauthorised/dangerous equipment or jewellery the referee must order the player to:

- remove the item
- leave the field of play at the next stoppage if the player is unable or unwilling to comply

A player who refuses to comply or wears the item again must be cautioned.

2. Compulsory equipment

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

- a shirt with sleeves
- shorts
- 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
- shinguards – these must be made of a suitable material to provide reasonable protection and covered by the socks
- footwear

Goalkeepers may wear tracksuit bottoms.

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.

3. Colours

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the match officials
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours that are distinguishable from the other players and the match officials
- If the two goalkeepers' shirts are the same colour and neither has another shirt, the referee allows the match to be played

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.

4. Other equipment

Non-dangerous protective equipment, for example headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material is permitted as are goalkeepers' caps and sports spectacles.

Head Covers

Where head covers (excluding goalkeepers' caps) are worn, they must:

- be black or the same main colour as the shirt (provided that the players of the same team wear the same colour)
- be in keeping with the professional appearance of the player's equipment
- not be attached to the shirt
- not be dangerous to the player wearing it or any other player (e.g. opening/closing mechanism around neck)
- not have any part(s) extending out from the surface (protruding elements)

Electronic communication

Players (including substitutes/substituted and sent off players) are not permitted to wear or use any form of electronic or communication equipment (except where EPTS is allowed). The use of any form of electronic communication by team officials is permitted where it directly relates to player welfare or safety or for tactical/coaching reasons but only small, mobile, hand-held equipment (e.g. microphone, headphone, ear-piece, mobilephone/smartphone, smartwatch, tablet, laptop) may be used. A team official who uses unauthorised equipment or who behaves in an inappropriate manner as a result of the use of electronic or communication equipment will be dismissed from the technical area.

Electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS)

Where wearable technology (WT) as part of electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS) is used in matches played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, confederations or national football associations, the competition organiser must ensure that the technology attached to the player's equipment is not dangerous and must bear the following mark:

IMS
INTERNATIONAL MATCH STANDARD™

This mark indicates that it has been officially tested and meets the minimum safety requirements of the International Match Standard developed by FIFA and approved by The IFAB. The institutes conducting these tests are subject to the approval of FIFA.

Where electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS) are used (subject to the agreement of the national football association/competition organiser) the competition organiser must ensure that the information and data transmitted from EPTS to the technical area during the match in matches played in an official competition are reliable and accurate.

A professional standard was developed by FIFA and approved by The IFAB in order to support the competition organisers with the approval process of reliable and accurate electronic performance and tracking systems.

The professional standard will be implemented in the transition period until 1 June 2019. The following mark indicates that an EPTS device/system has been officially tested and meets the requirements in terms of reliability and accuracy of positional data in football:

5. Slogans, statements, images and advertising

Equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images. Players must not reveal undergarments that show political, religious, personal slogans, statements or images, or advertising other than the manufacturer`s logo. For any offence the player and/or the team will be sanctioned by the competition organiser, national football association or by FIFA.

Principles

- Law 4 applies to all equipment (including clothing) worn by players, substitutes and substituted players; its principles also apply to all team officials in the technical area
- The following are (usually) permitted:
  - the player's number, name, team crest/logo, initiative slogans/emblems promoting the game of football, respect and integrity as well as any advertising permitted by competition rules or national FA, confederation or FIFA regulations
  - the facts of a match: teams, date, competition/event, venue
- Permitted slogans, statements or images should be confined to the shirt front and/or armband
- In some cases, the slogan, statement or image might only appear on the captain's armband

Interpreting the Law

When interpreting whether a slogan, statement or image is permissible, note should be taken of Law 12 (Fouls and Misconduct), which requires the referee to take action against a player who is guilty of:

- using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- gesturing in a provocative, derisory or inflammatory way

Any slogan, statement or image which falls into any of these categories is not permitted.

Whilst 'religious' and 'personal' are relatively easily defined, 'political' is less clear but slogans, statements or images related to the following are not permitted:

- any person(s), living or dead (unless part of the official competition name)
- any local, regional, national or international political party/organisation/group, etc.
- any local, regional or national government or any of its departments, offices or functions
- any organisation which is discriminatory
- any organisation whose aims/actions are likely to offend a notable number of people
- any specific political act/event

When commemorating a significant national or international event, the sensibilities of the opposing team (including its supporters) and the general public should be carefully considered.

Competition rules may contain further restrictions/limitations, particularly in relation to the size, number and position of permitted slogans, statements and images. It is recommended that disputes relating to slogans, statements or images be resolved prior to a match/competition taking place.

6. Offences and sanctions

For any offence play need not be stopped and the player:

- is instructed by the referee to leave the field of play to correct the equipment
- leaves when play stops, unless the equipment has already been corrected

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)

A player who enters without permission must be cautioned and if play is stopped to issue the caution, an indirect free kick is awarded from the position of the ball when play was stopped, unless there was interference in which case a direct free kick (or penalty kick) is awarded from the position of the interference.

IFAB®

Law 05

IFAB®

The Referee

1. **The authority of the referee**
   Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match.

2. **Decisions of the referee**
   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.

   The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. The decisions of the referee, and all other match officials, must always be respected.

   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 or the referee has signalled the end of the first or second half (including extra time) and left the field of play or terminated the match.

   If a referee is incapacitated, play may continue under the supervision of the other match officials until the ball is next out of play.

3. **Powers and duties**
   The referee:

   - enforces the Laws of the Game
   - controls the match in cooperation with the other match officials
   - acts as timekeeper, keeps a record of the match and provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, including information on disciplinary action and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match
   - supervises and/or indicates the restart of play

Advantage

- allows play to continue when an offence occurs and the non-offending team will benefit from the advantage and penalises the offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time or within a few seconds

Disciplinary action

- 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
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences
- 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
- has the power to show yellow or red cards and, where competition rules permit, temporarily dismiss a player, 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
- takes action against team officials who fail to act in a responsible manner and may expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds; a medical team official who commits a dismissible offence may remain if the team has no other medical person available, and act if a player needs medical attention.
- acts on the advice of other match officials regarding incidents that the referee has not seen

Injuries

- allows play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is only slightly injured
- stops play if 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 of play and may only re-enter after play has restarted; if the ball is in play, re-entry must be from the touchline but if the ball is out of play, it may be from any boundary line. Exceptions to the requirement to leave the field of play are only when:
  - a goalkeeper is injured
  - a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need attention
  - players from the same team have collided and need attention
  - a severe injury has occurred
  - 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
- ensures that any player bleeding leaves the field of play. The player may only re-enter on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped and there is no blood on the equipment
- if the referee has authorised the doctors and /or stretcher bearers to enter the field of play, the player must leave on a stretcher or on foot. A player who does not comply, must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour
- if the referee has decided to caution or send off a player who is injured and has to leave the field of play for treatment, the card must be shown before the player leaves
- if play has not been stopped for another reason, or if an injury suffered by a player is not the result of an offence, play is restarted with a dropped ball

Outside interference

- stops, suspends or abandons the match for any offences or because of outside interference e.g. if:
  - the floodlights are inadequate
  - an object thrown by a spectator hits a match official, a player or team official, the referee may allow the match to continue, or stop, suspend or abandon it depending on the severity of the incident
  - a spectator blows a whistle which interferes with play - play is stopped and restarted with a dropped ball
  - 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
- allow play to continue if it does not interfere with play and have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity

- allows no unauthorised persons to enter the field of play

4. Video assistant referee (VAR)

The use of video assistant referees (VARs) is only permitted where the match/competition organiser has fulfilled all the VAR protocol and implementation requirements (as set out in the VAR Handbook) and has received written permission from The IFAB and FIFA.

The referee may be assisted by a video assistant referee (VAR) only in the event of a 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' in relation to:

- goal/no goal
- penalty/no penalty
- direct red card (not second caution)
- mistaken identity when the referee cautions or sends off the wrong player of the offending team

The assistance from the video assistant referee (VAR) will relate to using replay(s) of the incident. The referee will make the final decision which may be based solely on the information from the VAR and/or the referee reviewing the replay footage directly ('on-field review').

Except for a 'serious missed incident', the referee (and where relevant other 'on-field', match officials) must always make a decision (including a decision not to penalise a potential offence); this decision does not change unless it is a 'clear and obvious error'.

Reviews after play has restarted

If play has stopped and restarted, the referee may only undertake a 'review', and take the appropriate disciplinary sanction, for mistaken identity or for a potential sending-off offence relating to violent conduct, spitting, biting or extremely offensive, insulting and/or abusive gesture(s).

5. Referee's equipment

Compulsory equipment

Referees must have the following 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 'on-field' match officials are prohibited from wearing jewellery or any other electronic equipment, including cameras.

6. Referee signals

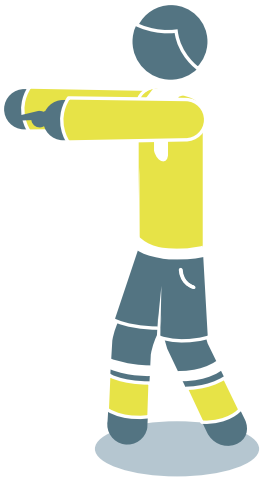
Refer to graphics for approved referee signals.

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.

Indirect free kick

Direct free kick

Advantage (1)



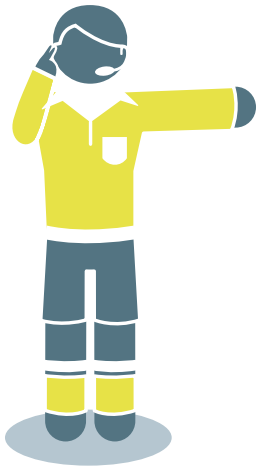
Advantage (2)

Penalty kick

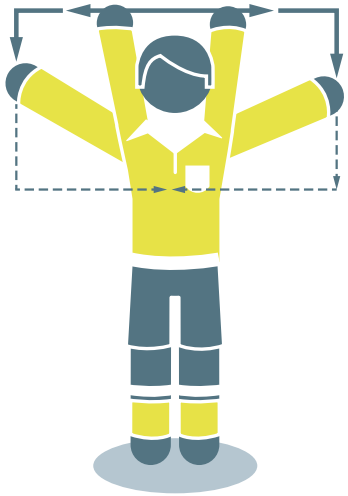
Red and **Yellow** card

Corner kick

Goal kick



Check finger to ear, other hand/arm extended



Review TV signal

7. Liability of Match Officials

A referee or other match official is not held liable for:

- any kind of injury suffered by a player, official or spectator
- any damage to property of any kind
- any other loss suffered by any individual, club, company, association or other body, which is due or which may be due to any decision taken under the terms of the Laws of the Game or in respect of the normal procedures required to hold, play and control a match.

Such decisions may include a decision:

- that the condition of the field of play or its surrounds or that the weather conditions are such as to allow or not to allow a match to take place
- to abandon a match for whatever reason
- as to the suitability of the field equipment and ball used during a match
- to stop or not to stop a match due to spectator interference or any problem in spectator areas
- to stop or not to stop play to allow an injured player to be removed from the field of play for treatment
- to require an injured player to be removed from the field of play for treatment
- to allow or not to allow a player to wear certain clothing or equipment
- where the referee has the authority, to allow or not to allow any persons (including team or stadium officials, security officers, photographers or other media representatives) to be present in the vicinity of the field of play
- any other decision taken in accordance with the Laws of the Game or in conformity with their duties under the terms of FIFA, confederation, national football association or competition rules or regulations under which the match is played

Law 06

IFAB®

The Other Match Officials

Other match officials (two assistant referees, fourth official, two additional assistant referees, reserve assistant referee, video assistant referee (VAR) and at least one assistant VAR (AVAR)) may be appointed to matches. They will assist the referee in controlling the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game but the final decision will always be taken by the referee.

The referee, assistant referees, fourth official, additional assistant referees and reserve assistant referee are the 'on-field' match officials.

The VAR and AVAR are the 'video' match officials and assist the referee in accordance with the VAR protocol as determined by The IFAB.

The match officials operate under the direction of the referee. In the event of undue interference or improper conduct, the referee will relieve them of their duties and make a report to the appropriate authorities.

With the exception of the reserve assistant referee, the 'on-field' match officials assist the referee with offences when they have a clearer view than the referee and they must submit a report to the appropriate authorities on any serious misconduct or other incident that occurred out of the view of the referee and the other match officials. They must advise the referee and other match officials of any report being made.

The 'on-field' 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.

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.

1. Assistant referees

They indicate when:

- the whole of the ball leaves the field of play and which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in
- a player in an offside position may be penalised
- a substitution is requested
- at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line; if additional assistant referees have been appointed the assistant referee takes a position in line with the penalty mark

The assistant referee's assistance also includes monitoring the substitution procedure.

The assistant referee may enter the field of play to help control the 9.15m (10 yards) distance.

2. Fourth official

The fourth official's assistance also includes:

- supervising the substitution procedure
- checking a player's/substitute's equipment
- the re-entry of a player following a signal/approval from the referee
- supervising the replacement balls
- indicating the minimum amount of additional time the referee intends to play at the end of each half (including extra time)
- informing the referee of irresponsible behaviour by any technical area occupant

3. Additional assistant referees

The additional assistant referees may indicate:

- when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, including when a goal is scored
- which team is entitled to a corner kick or goal kick
- whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line

4. Reserve assistant referee

The only duty of a reserve assistant referee is to replace an assistant referee or fourth official who is unable to continue.

5. Video match officials

A video assistant referee (VAR) is a match official who may assist the referee to make a decision using replay footage only for a 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' relating to a goal/no goal, penalty/no penalty, direct red card (not a second caution) or a case of mistaken identity when the referee cautions or sends off the wrong player of the offending team

An assistant video assistant referee (AVAR) is a match official who helps the VAR primarily by:

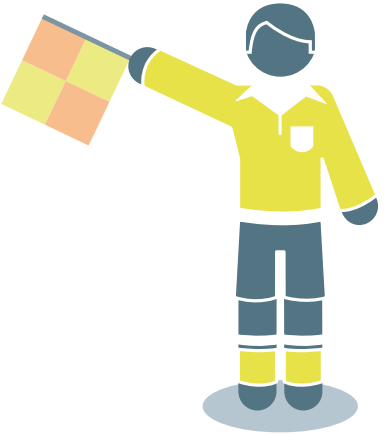
- watching the television footage while the VAR is busy with a 'check' or a 'review'
- keeping a record of VAR-related incidents and any communication or technology problems
- assisting the VAR's communication with the referee, especially communicating with the referee when the VAR is undertaking a 'check'/'review' e.g. to tell the referee to 'stop play' or 'delay the restart' etc.
- recording the time 'lost' when play is delayed for a 'check' or a 'review'
- communicating information about a VAR-related decision to relevant parties

6. Assistant referee signals

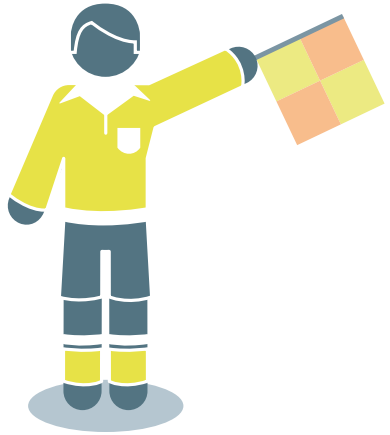
Substitution

Attacking free kicks

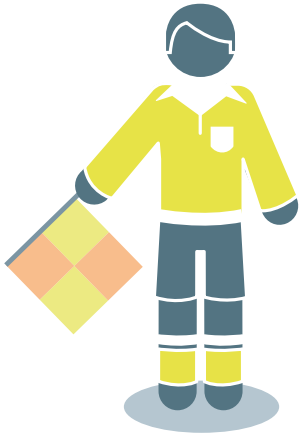
Defending free kicks



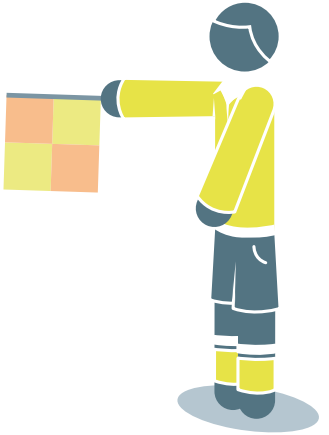
Throw-in for **attacker**



Throw-in for **defender**



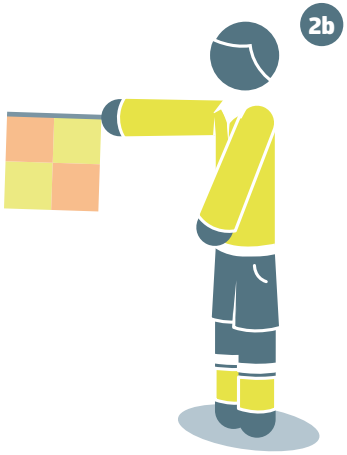
Corner kick



Goal kick

Offside

Offside on the
near side of the field



Offside in the
middle of the field

Offside on the
far side of the field

7. Additional assistant referee signals

goal
(unless the ball has very clearly
passed over the goal line)

Law 07

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The Duration of the Match

1. **Periods of play**
   A match lasts for two equal halves of 45 minutes which may only be reduced if agreed between the referee and the two teams before the start of the match and is in accordance with competition rules.

2. **Half-time interval**
   Players are entitled to an interval at half-time, not exceeding 15 minutes; a short drinks break (which should not exceed one minute) is permitted at the interval of half-time in extra time. Competition rules must state the duration of the half-time interval and it may be altered only with the referee's permission.

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

   - substitutions
   - assessment and/or removal of injured players
   - wasting time
   - disciplinary sanctions
   - stoppages for drinks (which should not exceed one minute) or other medical reasons permitted by competition rules
   - delays relating to VAR 'checks' and 'reviews'
   - any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart (e.g. goal celebrations)

   The fourth official indicates the minimum additional time decided by the referee at the end of the final minute of each half. The additional time may be increased by the referee but not reduced.

The referee must not compensate for a timekeeping error during the first half by changing the length of the second half.

4. **Penalty kick**
   If a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the half is extended until the penalty kick is completed.

5. **Abandoned match**
   An abandoned match is replayed unless the competition rules or organisers determine otherwise.

Law 08

IFAB®

The Start and Restart of Play

A kick-off starts both halves of a match, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored. Free kicks (direct or indirect), penalty kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are other restarts (see Laws 13–17). A dropped ball is the restart when the referee stops play and the Law does not require one of the above restarts.

If an offence occurs when the ball is not in play this does not change how play is restarted.

1. Kick-off

Procedure

- the team that wins the toss of a coin decides which goal it will attack in the first half
- their opponents take the kick-off
- the team that wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half
- for the second half, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals
- after a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by their opponents

For every kick-off:

- all players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field of play
- the opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play
- the ball must be stationary on the centre mark
- the referee gives a signal
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- a goal may be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents

Offences and sanctions

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick, or for deliberate handball a direct free kick, is awarded.

In the event of any other kick-off procedure offence the kick-off is retaken.

2. Dropped ball

Procedure

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.

The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

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

Offences and sanctions

The ball is dropped again if it:

- touches a player before it touches the ground
- leaves the field of play after it touches the ground, without touching a player

If a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players play is restarted with:

- a goal kick if it enters the opponents' goal
- a corner kick if it enters the team's goal

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Law 09

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The Ball in and out of Play

1. **Ball out of play**
   The ball is out of play when:
   - it has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline on the ground or in the air
   - play has been stopped by the referee

2. **Ball in play**
   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.

Law 10

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Determining the Outcome of a Match

1. Goal scored

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence has been committed by the team scoring the goal.

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

2. Winning team

The team scoring the greater number of goals is the winner. If both teams score no goals or an equal number of goals the match is drawn.

When competition rules require a winning team after a drawn match or home-and-away tie, the only permitted procedures to determine the winning team are:

- away goals rule
- two equal periods of extra time not exceeding 15 minutes each
- kicks from the penalty mark

A combination of the above procedures may be used.

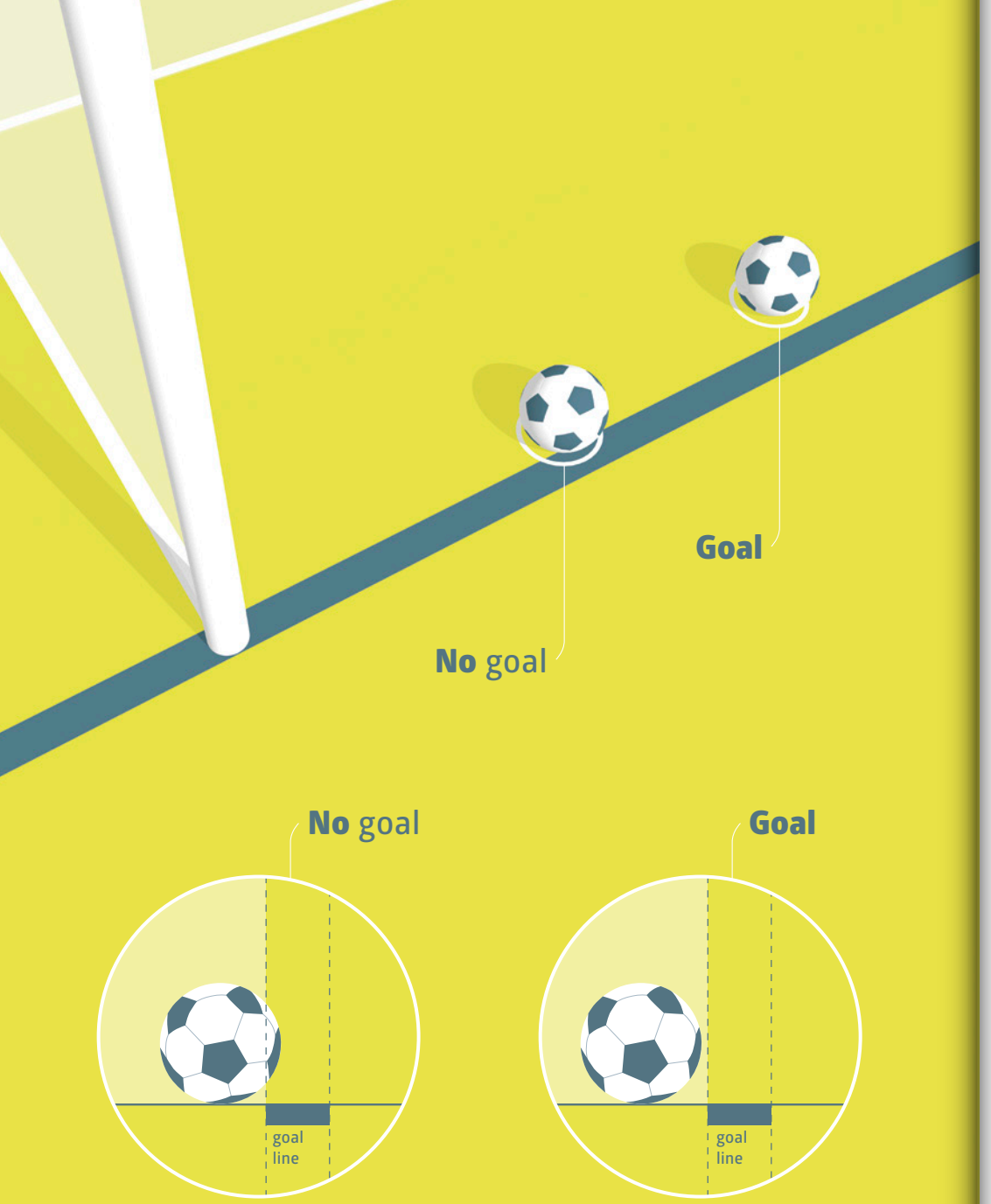
3. Kicks from the penalty mark

Kicks from the penalty mark are taken after the match has ended and unless otherwise stated, the relevant Laws of the Game apply.

Procedure

Before kicks from the penalty mark start

- Unless there are other considerations (e.g. ground conditions, safety etc.), the referee tosses a coin to decide the goal at which the kicks will be taken



which may only be changed for safety reasons or if the goal or playing surface becomes unusable
- The referee tosses a coin again and the team that wins the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick
- With the exception of a substitute for a goalkeeper who is unable to continue, only players who are on the field of play or are temporarily off the field of play (injury, adjusting equipment etc.) at the end of the match are eligible to take kicks
- 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
- 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. Any excluded player is not eligible to take part in the kicks (except as outlined below)
- A goalkeeper who is unable to continue before or during the kicks may be replaced by a player excluded to equalise the number of players or, if their team has not used its maximum permitted number of substitutes, a named substitute, but the replaced goalkeeper takes no further part and may not take a kick
- If the goalkeeper has already taken a kick, the replacement may not take a kick until the next round of kicks

During kicks from the penalty mark

- Only eligible players and match officials are permitted to remain on the field of play
- All eligible players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the centre circle
- The goalkeeper of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area, on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line
- An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper
- The kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play or the referee stops play for any offence; the kicker may not play the ball a second time
- The referee keeps a record of the kicks

- If the goalkeeper commits an offence and, as a result, the kick is retaken, the goalkeeper must be cautioned.
- If the kicker is penalised for an offence committed after the referee has signalled for the kick to be taken, that kick is recorded as missed and the kicker is cautioned.
- If both the goalkeeper and kicker commit an offence at the same time:
  - if the kick is missed or saved, the kick is retaken and both players cautioned
  - if the kick is scored, the goal is disallowed, the kick is recorded as missed and the kicker cautioned

Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks

- The kicks are taken alternately by the teams
- If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken
- If, after both teams have taken five kicks, the scores are level kicks continue until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks
- 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
- 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

Substitutions and send offs during kicks from the penalty mark

- A player, substitute or substituted player may be cautioned or sent off
- A goalkeeper who is sent off must be replaced by an eligible player
- A player other than the goalkeeper who is unable to continue may not be replaced
- The referee must not abandon the match if a team is reduced to fewer than seven players

Law 11

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Offside

1. Offside position

It is not an offence to be in an offside position.

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) and
- 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.

A player is not in an offside position if level with the:

- second-last opponent or
- last two opponents

2. Offside offence

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:

- interfering with play by playing or touching a ball passed or touched by a team-mate or
- interfering with an opponent by:
  - preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or
  - challenging an opponent for the ball or

**The first point of contact of the 'play' or 'touch' of the ball should be used*

- clearly attempting to play a ball which is close when this action impacts on an opponent or
- making an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball

or

- gaining an advantage by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:
  - rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar, match official or an opponent
  - been deliberately saved by any opponent

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately plays the ball (except from a deliberate save by any opponent) is not considered to have gained an advantage.

A 'save' is when a player stops, or attempts to stop, a ball which is going into or very close to the goal with any part of the body except the hands/arms (unless the goalkeeper within the penalty area).

In situations where:

- a player moving from, or standing in, an offside position is in the way of an opponent and interferes with the movement of the opponent towards the ball this is an offside offence if it impacts on the ability of the opponent to play or challenge for the ball; if the player moves into the way of an opponent and impedes the opponent's progress (e.g. blocks the opponent) the offence should be penalised under Law 12.
- a player in an offside position is moving towards the ball with the intention of playing the ball and is fouled before playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the foul is penalised as it has occurred before the offside offence
- an offence is committed against a player in an offside position who is already playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the offside offence is penalised as it has occurred before the foul challenge

3. No offence

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- a goal kick
- a throw-in
- a corner kick

4. Offences and sanctions

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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Law 12

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Fouls and Misconduct

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

1. Direct free kick

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

- charges
- jumps at
- kicks or attempts to kick
- pushes
- strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- tackles or challenges
- trips or attempts to trip

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

- Careless is when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. No disciplinary sanction is needed
- Reckless is when a player acts with disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent and must be cautioned
- Using excessive force is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent and must be sent off

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

- handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within their penalty area)

- holds an opponent
- impedes an opponent with contact
- bites or spits at someone
- throws an object at the ball, opponent or match official, or makes contact with the ball with a held object

See also offences in Law 3

Handling the ball

Handling the ball involves a deliberate act of a player making contact with the ball with the hand or arm.

The following must be considered:

- the movement of the hand towards the ball (not the ball towards the hand)
- the distance between the opponent and the ball (unexpected ball)
- the position of the hand does not necessarily mean that there is an offence

The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. Inside their penalty area, the goalkeeper cannot be guilty of a handling offence incurring a direct free kick or any related sanction but can be guilty of handling offences that incur an indirect free kick.

2. Indirect free kick

An indirect free kick is awarded if a player:

- plays in a dangerous manner
- impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made
- is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures or other verbal offences
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- commits any other offence, not mentioned in the Laws, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player

An indirect free kick is awarded if a goalkeeper, inside their penalty area, commits any of the following offences:

- controls the ball with the hands for more than six seconds before releasing it
- touches the ball with the hands after:
  - releasing it and before it has touched another player
  - it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate
  - receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

A goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball when:

- the ball is between the hands or between the hand and any surface (e.g. ground, own body) or by touching it with any part of the hands or arms except if the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper or the goalkeeper has made a save
- holding the ball in the outstretched open hand
- bouncing it on the ground or throwing it in the air

A goalkeeper cannot be challenged by an opponent when in control of the ball with the hands.

Playing in a dangerous manner

Playing in a dangerous manner is any action that, while trying to play the ball, threatens injury to someone (including the player themself) and includes preventing a nearby opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury.

A scissors or bicycle kick is permissible provided that it is not dangerous to an opponent.

Impeding the progress of an opponent without contact

Impeding the progress of an opponent means moving into the opponent's path to obstruct, block, slow down or force a change of direction when the ball is not within playing distance of either player.

All players have a right to their position on the field of play; being in the way of an opponent is not the same as moving into the way of an opponent.

A player may shield the ball by taking a position between an opponent and the ball if the ball is within playing distance and the opponent is not held off with the arms or body. If the ball is within playing distance, the player may be fairly charged by an opponent.

3. Disciplinary action

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.

A player who commits a cautionable or sending-off offence, either on or off the field of play, against an opponent, a team-mate, a match official or any other person or the Laws of the Game, is disciplined according to the offence.

The yellow card communicates a caution and the red card communicates a sending-off.

Only a player, substitute or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card.

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 has been administered.

Advantage

If the referee plays the advantage for an offence for which a caution / send off would have been issued had play been stopped, this caution / send off must be issued when the ball is next out of play, except for the denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity when the player is cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

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, unless the player committed a more serious offence.

If a defender starts holding an attacker outside the penalty area and continues holding inside the penalty area, the referee must award a penalty kick.

Cautionable offences

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

- delaying the restart of play
- dissent by word or action
- entering, re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission
- failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- persistent offences (no specific number or pattern of offences constitutes "persistent")
- unsporting behaviour
- entering the referee review area (RRA)
- excessively using the 'review' (TV screen) signal

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if guilty of:

- delaying the restart of play
- dissent by word or action
- entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission
- unsporting behaviour
- entering the referee review area (RRA)
- excessively using the 'review' (TV screen) signal

Where two separate cautionable offences are committed (even in close proximity), they should result in two cautions, for example if a player enters the field of play without the required permission and commits a reckless tackle or stops a promising attack with a foul/handball, etc.

Cautions for unsporting behaviour

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

- attempts to deceive the referee e.g. by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (simulation)
- changes places with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission
- commits in a reckless manner a direct free kick offence
- handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack
- commits a foul which interferes with or stops a promising attack except where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which was an attempt to play the ball
- denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence which was an attempt to play the ball and the referee awards a penalty kick
- 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
- makes unauthorised marks on the field of play
- plays the ball when leaving the field of play after being given permission to leave
- shows a lack of respect for the game
- uses a deliberate trick to pass the ball (including from a free kick) to the goalkeeper with the head, chest, knee etc. to circumvent the Law, whether or not the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands
- verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart

Celebration of a goal

Players can celebrate when a goal is scored, but the celebration must not be excessive; choreographed celebrations are not encouraged and must not cause excessive time-wasting.

Leaving the field of play to celebrate a goal is not a cautionable offence but players should return as soon as possible.

A player must be cautioned for:

- climbing onto a perimeter fence and/or approaching the spectators in a manner which causes safety and/or security issues
- gesturing or acting in a provocative, derisory or inflammatory way
- covering the head or face with a mask or other similar item
- removing the shirt or covering the head with the shirt

Delaying the restart of play

Referees must caution players who delay the restart of play by:

- appearing to take a throw-in but suddenly leaving it to a team-mate to take
- delaying leaving the field of play when being substituted
- excessively delaying a restart
- kicking or carrying the ball away, or provoking a confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has stopped play
- taking a free kick from the wrong position to force a retake

Sending-off offences

A player, substitute or substituted player who commits any of the following offences is sent off:

- denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick (unless as outlined below).
- serious foul play
- biting or spitting at someone
- violent conduct
- using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- receiving a second caution in the same match
- entering the video operation room (VOR)

A player, substitute or substituted player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area.

Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity

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 offender is cautioned if the offence was an attempt to play the ball; in all other circumstances (e.g. holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball etc.) the offending player must be sent off.

A player, sent off player, substitute or substituted player who enters the field of play without the required referee's permission and interferes with play or an opponent and denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity is guilty of a sending-off offence.

The following must be considered:

- distance between the offence and the goal
- general direction of the play
- likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
- location and number of defenders

Serious foul play

A tackle or challenge that endangers the safety of an opponent or uses excessive force or brutality must be sanctioned as serious foul play.

Any player who lunges at an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, from the side or from behind using one or both legs, with excessive force or endangers the safety of an opponent is guilty of serious foul play.

Violent conduct

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.

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.

Offences where an object (or the ball) is thrown

In all cases, the referee takes the appropriate disciplinary action:

- reckless – caution the offender for unsporting behaviour
- using excessive force – send off the offender for violent conduct.

4. Restart of play after fouls and misconduct

- If the ball is out of play, play is restarted according to the previous decision
- 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 or sent off player, team official or a match official – a direct free kick or penalty kick
  - any other person – a dropped ball
- If, when the ball is in play:
  - a player commits an offence against a match official or an opposing player, substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official outside the field of play or
  - a substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official commits an offence against, or interferes with, an opposing player or match official outside the field of play,

play is restarted with a free kick on the boundary line nearest to where the offence/interference occurred; a penalty kick is awarded if this is a direct free kick offence within the offender's penalty area.

If a player standing on or off the field of play throws an object (including the ball) at an opposing player, substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official, match official or the ball, play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position where the object struck or would have struck the person or the ball. If this position is off the field of play, the free kick is taken on the nearest point on the boundary line; a penalty kick is awarded if this is within the offender's penalty area.

If an offence is committed outside the field of play against a player, substitute, substituted player or team official of their own team, play is restarted with an indirect free kick on the boundary line closest to where the offence occurred.

If a player makes contact with the ball with an object (boot, shinguard etc.) held in the hand play is restarted with a direct free kick (or penalty kick).

If a substitute, substituted or sent off player, player temporarily off the field of play or team official throws or kicks an object onto the field of play and it interferes with play, an opponent or match official, play is restarted with a direct free kick (or penalty kick) where the object interfered with play or struck or would have struck the opponent, match official or the ball.

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Law 13

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Free Kicks

1. Types of free kick

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player, substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official guilty of an offence.

Indirect free kick signal

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising the arm above the head; this signal is maintained until the kick has been taken and the ball touches another player or goes out of play.

An indirect free kick must be retaken if the referee fails to signal that the kick is indirect and the ball is kicked directly into the goal.

Ball enters the goal

- if a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded
- if an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded
- if a direct or indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded

2. Procedure

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

- indirect free kicks to the attacking team for an offence inside the opponents' goal area are taken from the nearest point on the goal area line which runs parallel to the goal line
- free kicks to the defending team in their goal area may be taken from anywhere in that area

- 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
- the Law designates another position (see Laws 3, 11, 12)

The ball:

- must be stationary and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player
- is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves except for a free kick to the defending team in their penalty area where the ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area

Until the ball is in play all opponents must remain:

- at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts
- outside the penalty area for free kicks inside the opponents' penalty area

A free kick can be taken by lifting the ball with a foot or both feet simultaneously.

Feinting to take a free kick to confuse opponents is permitted as part of football.

If a player, while correctly taking a free kick, intentionally kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball again but not in a careless or reckless manner or using excessive force, the referee allows play to continue.

3. Offences and sanctions

If, when a free kick is taken, an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance, the kick is retaken unless the advantage can be applied; but if a player takes 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, an opponent who deliberately prevents a free kick being taken quickly must be cautioned for delaying the restart of play.

If, when a free kick is taken by the defending team from 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 has touched another player, the free kick is retaken.

If, when a free kick is taken by the defending team inside its penalty area, the ball is not kicked directly out of the penalty area the kick is retaken.

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded, if the kicker deliberately handles the ball:

- a direct free kick is awarded
- a penalty kick is awarded if the offence occurred inside the kicker's penalty area unless the kicker was the goalkeeper in which case an indirect free kick is awarded

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Law 14

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The Penalty Kick

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.

A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

1. Procedure

The ball must be stationary on the penalty mark.

The player taking the penalty kick must be clearly identified.

The defending goalkeeper must remain on the goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.

The players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must be:

- at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the penalty mark
- behind the penalty mark
- inside the field of play
- outside the penalty area

After the players have taken positions in accordance with this Law, the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken.

The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward; backheeling is permitted provided the ball moves forward.

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

The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player.

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

Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken and completed at the end of each half of the match or extra time. When additional time is allowed, the penalty kick is completed when, after the kick has been taken, the ball stops moving, goes out of play, is played by any player (including the kicker) other than the defending goalkeeper, or the referee stops play for an offence by the kicker or the kicker's team. If a defending team player (including the goalkeeper) commits an offence and the penalty is missed/saved, the penalty is retaken

2. Offences and sanctions

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 offends:
  - 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 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
- the goalkeeper or a team-mate offends:
  - if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded
  - if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken; the goalkeeper is cautioned if responsible for the offence
- a player of both teams offends the Laws of the Game, the kick is retaken unless a player commits a more serious offence (e.g. illegal feinting); if both the goalkeeper and kicker commit an offence at the same time:
  - if the kick is missed or saved, the kick is retaken and both players cautioned
  - if the kick is scored, the goal is disallowed, the kicker is cautioned and play restarts with an indirect free kick to the defending team

If, after the penalty kick has been taken:

- the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player:
  - an indirect free kick (or direct free kick for deliberate hand ball) is awarded
- the ball is touched by an outside agent as it moves forward:
  - the kick is retaken unless the ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent the goalkeeper or a defending player playing the ball, in which case 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.
- the ball rebounds into the field of play from the goalkeeper, the crossbar or the goalposts and is then touched by an outside agent:
  - the referee stops play
  - play is restarted with a dropped ball at the position where it touched the outside agent

3. Summary table

	Outcome of the penalty kick	
	Goal	**No Goal**
Encroachment by attacking player	Penalty is retaken	Indirect free kick
Encroachment by defending player	Goal	Penalty is retaken
Offence by goalkeeper	Goal	Penalty is retaken and caution for goalkeeper
Ball kicked backwards	Indirect free kick	Indirect free kick
Illegal feinting	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker
Wrong kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for wrong kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for wrong kicker
Goalkeeper and kicker at the same time	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker	Retake and caution for kicker and goalkeeper

Law 15

IFAB®

The Throw-in

A throw-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in:

- if the ball enters the opponents' goal – a goal kick is awarded
- if the ball enters the thrower's goal – a corner kick is awarded

1. Procedure

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

- stand facing the field of play
- have part of each foot on the touchline or on the ground outside the touchline
- throw the ball with both hands from behind and over the head from the point where it left the field of play

All opponents must stand at least 2 m (2 yds) from the point at which the throw-in is taken.

The ball is in play when it enters the field of play. If the ball touches the ground before entering, the throw-in is retaken by the same team from the same position. If the throw-in is not taken correctly it is retaken by the opposing team.

If a player, while correctly taking a throw-in, intentionally throws the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball again but neither in a careless nor a reckless manner nor using excessive force, the referee allows play to continue.

The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

2. Offences and sanctions

If, after the ball is in play, the thrower touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded; if the thrower deliberately handles the ball:

- a direct free kick is awarded
- a penalty kick is awarded if the offence occurred inside the thrower's penalty area unless the ball was handled by the defending team's goalkeeper in which case an indirect free kick is awarded

An opponent who unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower (including moving closer than 2 m (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.

For any other offence the throw-in is taken by a player of the opposing team.

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Law 16

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The Goal Kick

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored.

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.

1. Procedure

- The ball must be stationary and is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team
- The ball is in play when it leaves the penalty area
- Opponents must be outside the penalty area until the ball is in play

2. Offences and sanctions

If the ball does not leave the penalty area or is touched by a player before it leaves the penalty area the kick is retaken.

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded; if the kicker deliberately handles the ball:

- a direct free kick is awarded
- a penalty kick is awarded if the offence occurred inside the kicker's penalty area unless the kicker was the goalkeeper in which case an indirect free kick is awarded

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 has touched another player, the goal kick is retaken.

If a player enters the penalty area before the ball is in play and fouls or is fouled by an opponent, the goal kick is retaken and the offender may be cautioned or sent off depending on the offence.

For any other offence the kick is retaken.

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Law 17

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The Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored.

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.

1. Procedure

- The ball must be placed in the corner area nearest to the point where the ball passed over the goal line
- 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; it does not need to leave the corner area
- The corner flagpost must not be moved
- Opponents must remain at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the corner arc until the ball is in play

2. Offences and sanctions

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded; if the kicker deliberately handles the ball:

- a direct free kick is awarded
- a penalty kick is awarded if the offence occurred inside the kicker's penalty area unless the kicker was the goalkeeper in which case an indirect free kick is awarded

If a player, while correctly taking a corner kick, intentionally kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball again but not in a careless or reckless manner or using excessive force, the referee allows play to continue.

For any other offence the kick is retaken.

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VAR protocol

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Protocol – principles, practicalities and procedures

The VAR protocol, as far as possible, conforms to the principles and philosophy of the Laws of the Game.

The use of video assistant referees (VARs) is only permitted where the match/competition organiser has fulfilled all the VAR protocol and implementation requirements (as set out in the VAR Handbook) and has received written permission from The IFAB and FIFA.

Principles

The use of VARs in football matches is based on a number of principles, all of which must apply in every match using VARs.

1. A video assistant referee (VAR) is a match official, with independent access to match footage, who may assist the referee only in the event of a '**clear and obvious error**' or '**serious missed incident**' in relation to:
   a. **Goal/no goal**
   b. **Penalty/no penalty**
   c. **Direct red card** (not second yellow card/caution)
   d. **Mistaken identity** (when the referee cautions or sends off the wrong player of the offending team)
2. The referee must always make a decision, i.e. the referee is not permitted to give 'no decision' and then use the VAR to make the decision; a decision to allow play to continue after an alleged offence can be reviewed.
3. The original decision given by the referee will not be changed unless the video review clearly shows that the decision was a 'clear and obvious error'.

4. Only the referee can initiate a 'review'; the VAR (and other match officials) can only recommend a 'review' to the referee.
5. The final decision is always taken by the referee, either based on information from the VAR or after the referee has undertaken an 'on-field review' (OFR).
6. There is no time limit for the review process as accuracy is more important than speed.
7. The players and team officials must not surround the referee or attempt to influence if a decision is reviewed, the review process or the final decision.
8. The referee must remain 'visible' during the review process to ensure transparency.
9. If play continues after an incident which is then reviewed, any disciplinary action taken/required during the post-incident period is not cancelled, even if the original decision is changed (except a caution/sendoff for stopping a promising attack or DOGSO).
10. If play has stopped and been restarted, the referee may not undertake a 'review' except for a case of mistaken identity or for a potential sending-off offence relating to violent conduct, spitting, biting or extremely offensive, insulting and/or abusive gesture(s).
11. The period of play before and after an incident that can be reviewed is determined by the Laws of the Game and VAR protocol.
12. As the VAR will automatically 'check' every situation/decision, there is no need for coaches or players to request a 'review'.

Reviewable match-changing decisions/incidents

The referee may receive assistance from the VAR only in relation to four categories of match-changing decisions/incidents. In all these situations, the VAR is only used *after the referee has made a (first/original) decision* (including allowing play to continue), or if a serious incident is missed/not seen by the match officials.

The referee`s original decision will not be changed unless there was a 'clear and obvious error' (this includes any decision made by the referee based on information from another match official e.g. offside).

The categories of decision/incident which may be reviewed in the event of a potential 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' are:

a. **Goal/no goal**
   An offence by the team that scored the goal in the attacking phase that ended with the scoring of a goal, including
   - offence by the attacking team in the build-up to or scoring of the goal (handball, foul, etc.)
   - offside: position and offence
   - ball out of play prior to the goal
   - goal/no goal decisions

b. **Penalty kick/no penalty kick**
   - penalty kick incorrectly awarded
   - penalty kick offence not penalised
   - location of offence (inside or outside the penalty area)
   - offence by the attacking team in the build-up to the penalty incident
   - ball out of play prior to the incident
   - offence by goalkeeper and/or kicker at the taking of a penalty kick
   - encroachment by an attacker or defender who becomes directly involved in play if the penalty kick rebounds from the goalpost, crossbar or goalkeeper

c. **Direct red cards (not second yellow card/caution)**
   - DOGSO (especially position of offence and positions of other players)
   - serious foul play (or reckless challenge)
   - violent conduct, biting or spitting at another person
   - using offensive, insulting or abusive gestures

d. **Mistaken identity (red or yellow card)**
   If the referee penalises an offence and then gives the wrong player from the offending (penalised) team a yellow or red card, the identity of the offender can be reviewed; the actual offence itself cannot be reviewed unless it relates to a goal, penalty incident or direct red card.

Practicalities

Use of VARs during a match involves the following practical arrangements:

- The VAR watches the match in the video operation room (VOR) assisted by an assistant VAR (AVAR) and replay operator (RO)
- Depending on the number of camera angles (and other considerations) there may be more than one AVAR or RO
- Only authorised persons are allowed to enter the VOR or communicate with the VAR/AVAR/RO during the match
- The VAR has independent access to, and replay control of, TV broadcast footage
- The VAR is connected to the communication system being used by the match officials and can hear everything they say; the VAR can only speak to the referee by pushing a button (to avoid the referee being distracted by conversations in the VOR)
- If the VAR is busy with a 'check' or a 'review', the AVAR may speak to the referee especially if the game needs to be stopped or to ensure play does not restart
- If the referee decides to view the replay footage, the VAR will select the best angle/replay speed; the referee can request other/additional angles/speeds

Procedures

Original Decision

- The referee and other match officials must always make an initial decision (including any disciplinary action) as if there was no VAR (except for a 'missed' incident)
- The referee and other match officials are not permitted to give 'no decision' as this will lead to 'weak/indecisive' officiating, too many 'reviews' and significant problems if there is a technology failure
- The referee is the only person who can make the final decision; the VAR has the same status as the other match officials and can only assist the referee

- Delaying the flag/whistle for an offence is only permissible in *a very clear attacking situation* when a player is about to score a goal or has a clear run into/towards the opponents' penalty area
- If an assistant referee delays a flag for an offence, the assistant referee must raise the flag if a goal/penalty/corner or attacking free kick or throw-in results as this decision will be the basis for any 'check'/'review'

Check

- The VAR automatically 'checks' the TV camera footage for every potential or actual goal, penalty or direct red card decision/incident, or a case of mistaken identity, using different camera angles and replay speeds
- The VAR can 'check' the footage in normal speed and/or in slow motion but, in general, slow motion replays should only be used for facts, e.g. position of offence/player, point of contact for physical offences and handball, ball out of play (including goal/no goal); normal speed should be used for the 'intensity' of an offence or to decide if a handball was 'deliberate'
- If the 'check' does not indicate a 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident', there is usually no need for the VAR to communicate with the referee – this is a 'silent check'; however, it sometimes helps the referee/assistant referee to manage the players/match if the VAR confirms that no 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' occurred
- If the restart of play needs to be delayed for a 'check', the referee will signal this by clearly holding a finger to the earpiece/headset and extending the other hand/arm; this signal must be maintained until the 'check' is complete as it announces that the referee is receiving information (which may be from the VAR or another match official)
- If the 'check' indicates a probable 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident', the VAR will communicate this information (but not the decision to be taken) to the referee who will then decide whether or not to initiate a 'review'

Review

- The referee can initiate a 'review' for a potential 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' when:
  - the VAR (or another match official) recommends a 'review'
  - the referee suspects that something serious has been 'missed'
- If play has already stopped, the referee delays the restart
- If play has not already stopped, the referee stops play when the ball is next in a neutral zone/situation (usually when neither team is in an attacking move)
- In both situations, the referee must indicate that a 'review' will take place by clearly showing the 'TV signal' (outline of a TV screen)
- The VAR describes to the referee what can be seen on the TV replay(s) but not the decision to be taken, and the referee then:
  - makes a final decision based on the referee's own perception and the information from the VAR, and, where appropriate, input from other match officials – VAR-only review
    or
  - goes to the referee review area to view replay footage – 'on-field review' (OFR) – before making a final decision. The other match officials will not review the footage unless, in exceptional circumstances, asked to do so by the referee.
- At the end of both review processes, the referee must show the 'TV signal' again, immediately followed by the final decision
- For factual decisions e.g. position of an offence or player (offside), point of contact (handball/foul), location (inside or outside the penalty area), ball out of play etc. a VAR-only review is usually appropriate but an 'on-field review' (OFR) can be used for a factual decision if it will help manage the players/match or 'sell' the decision (e.g. a crucial match-deciding decision late in the game)
- For subjective decisions, e.g. intensity of a foul challenge, interference at offside, handball considerations (position, intent etc.) an 'on-field review' (OFR) is often appropriate

- The referee can request different cameras angles/replay speeds but, in general, slow motion replays should only be used for facts e.g. position of offence/player, point of contact for physical offences and handball, ball out of play (including goal/no goal); normal speed should be used for the 'intensity' of an offence or to decide if a handball was 'deliberate'
- For decisions/incidents relating to goals, penalty/no penalty and red cards for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO), it may be necessary to review the attacking phase of play which led directly to the decision/incident; this may include how the attacking team gained possession of the ball in open play
- The Laws of the Game do not allow restart decisions (corner kicks, throw-ins etc.) to be changed once play has restarted, so they cannot be reviewed
- If play has stopped and restarted, the referee may only undertake a 'review', and take the appropriate disciplinary sanction, for a case of mistaken identity or for a potential sending-off offence relating to violent conduct, spitting, biting or extremely offensive, insulting and/or abusive gesture(s)
- The review process should be completed as efficiently as possible, but the accuracy of the final decision is more important than speed. For this reason, and because some situations are complex with several reviewable decisions/incidents, there is no maximum time limit for the review process

Final decision

- When the review process is completed, the referee must show the 'TV signal' and communicate the final decision
- The referee will then take/change/rescind any disciplinary action (where appropriate) and restart play in accordance with the Laws of the Game

Substitutes and team officials

- As the VAR will automatically 'check' every situation/incident, there is no need for coaches or players to request a '**check**' or '**review**'
- Players, substitutes and team officials must not attempt to influence or interfere with the review process, including when the final decision is communicated

- During the review process, players should remain on the field of play; substitutes and team officials should remain off the field of play
- A player/substitute/substituted player who excessively shows the TV signal or enters the RRA will be cautioned
- A team official who excessively shows the TV signal or enters the RRA will be publically officially warned (or cautioned where yellow and red cards for team officials are in use)
- A player/substitute/substituted player who enters the VOR will be sent off; a team official who enters the VOR will be dismissed from the technical area

Match Validity

In principle, a match is not invalidated because of:

- malfunction(s) of the VAR technology (as for goal line technology (GLT)
- wrong decision(s) involving the VAR (as the VAR is a match official)
- decision(s) not to review an incident
- review(s) of a non-reviewable situation/decision

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Law changes 2018/19

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Outline summary of Law changes

Herewith a simple outline of the main changes/clarifications.

Modifications

- There is no limit on the number of substitutes that can be used in youth football
- Permission is needed from The IFAB for any modifications not already permitted
- Temporary dismissals – System B: a player who receives two temporary dismissals and a non-temporary dismissal caution (YC) may not be substituted/replaced

Law 1

- Clarification of measurements on the field of play
- Reference to substituted players being permitted to be in the technical area
- Commercial advertising is not permitted on the ground in the referee review area (RRA)
- Reference to the video operation room (VOR) and referee review area (RRA)

Law 3

- Competition rules may permit the use of an additional substitute in extra time (even if not all permitted substitutes have been used)
- A maximum of 12 substitutes can be named for international 'A' friendly matches

Law 4
- Small, hand-held electronic or communication devices are permitted in the technical area if used for coaching/ tactics or player welfare
- Introduction of a FIFA quality mark for EPTS and data from EPTS may be received in the technical area during the match
- Detailed guidelines for what can and cannot appear on players' equipment
- Player who has left the field because of an equipment issue and returns without permission and interferes is penalised with a direct free kick (or penalty kick)

Law 5
- Reference to video assistant referees (VARs) and assistant VARs (AVARs) and the ability of a referee to use video replays for decision-making as part of VAR system
- Some sending-off offences can be reviewed even if play has restarted
- Match officials are not permitted to wear cameras
- Inclusion of the referee 'check' and 'review' signals used in the VAR process

Law 6
- Distinction between 'on-field' match officials and 'video' match officials
- Duties of the video assistant referee (VAR) and assistant VAR (AVAR)

Law 7
- Drinks breaks should not exceed one minute
- Allowance must be made for time 'lost' for drinks breaks and VAR 'checks'/ 'reviews'

Law 10
- Kicks from the penalty mark – a replacement for a goalkeeper cannot take a kick in that 'round' if the goalkeeper has already taken a kick

Law 11
- The first point of contact when the ball is played/touched is the moment when offside position is judged

Law 12
- Biting is included as a direct free kick and sending-off offence
- Throwing an object at the ball or hitting the ball with a held object are separate direct free kick offences (not a form of handball)
- If the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper this does not prevent the goalkeeper handling the ball a second time even if the first attempt to catch/hold the ball was deliberate
- If the referee plays advantage for a DOGSO the offender is cautioned (YC) whether or not a goal is scored
- Entering the RRA or excessively showing the TV signal are cautions (YCs)
- Where 2 separate cautionable (YC) offences are committed in close proximity, both cautions (YCs) must be issued; same principle if one is a sending-off offence
- Entering the VOR is a sending-off (RC) offence
- If a player commits an offence outside the field of play (ball in play) against someone from their own team (including a team official) it is an indirect free kick on the boundary line

Law 13
- Clarification that free kicks can also be awarded for offences by a substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official

Law 15
- A player must stand to take a throw-in (kneeling, sitting etc. not permitted)

In addition, the following wording was deleted as it is no longer relevant:

Law 2
- Reference to previous ball quality marks:
  Balls carrying previous quality marks such as "FIFA Approved", "FIFA Inspected" or "International Matchball Standard" may be used in aforementioned competitions until 31 July 2017.

Details of all Law changes (in Law order)

The following lists all changes to the Laws of the Game since edition 2017/18. For each change the old wording (where appropriate) and the new/changed/additional wording are given followed by an explanation for the change.

Modifications to the Laws

Additional text

For any level except competitions involving the 1st team of clubs in the top division or 'A' international teams:

- the number of substitutes each team is permitted to use up to a maximum of five, except in youth football where the maximum will be determined by the national association, confederation or FIFA

Explanation

The 2017 AGM approved a major revision of the Modifications to the Laws of the Game which aimed to increase participation but unintendedly reduced participation in some countries which already allowed 7 substitutes in youth football; this clarification therefore enables more than 5 substitutes to be used in youth football.

Permission for other modifications

Additional text

National FAs have the option to approve different modifications for different competitions – there is no requirement to apply them universally or to apply them all. However, no other modifications are allowed without the permission of The IFAB.

Explanation

Clarifies that, exceptionally, The IFAB may give permission for other modifications.

Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins) – Temporary dismissal systems (System B)

Additional text

A player who (…). The player may be substituted at the end of the second temporary dismissal period if the player's team has not used its maximum number of substitutes but a player who has also received a non-temporary dismissal caution (YC) may not be replaced or substituted.

Explanation

A player who gets 2x temporary dismissals can be replaced/substituted at the end of the second temporary dismissal period. However, a player who also receives a non- temporary dismissal YC (and has thus had 3 x YCs) should not be replaced /substituted.

Law 01 – The Field of Play

Additional text

Field of Play markings diagram

- Measurements are from the outside of the lines as the lines are part of the area they enclose.
- The penalty mark is measured from the centre of the mark to the back edge of the goal line.

Explanation

Addition to the diagram how to measure the distances for the markings.

9. The technical area

Additional text

The technical area relates to matches played in stadiums with a designated seated area for team officials, substitutes and substituted players as outlined below: (…)

Explanation

Reference to substituted players being allowed in the technical area.

12. Commercial advertising

Additional 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, the technical area or the referee review area (RRA), or on the ground within(…).

Explanation

Inclusion of the referee review area (RRA) in the restrictions on commercial advertising on the ground.

14. Video Assistant Referees (VARs)

New text

In matches using VARs there must be a video operation room (VOR) and at least one referee review area (RRA).

Video Operation Room (VOR)

The VOR is where the video assistant referee (VAR), assistant VAR (AVAR) and replay operator (RO)work; it may be in/close to the stadium or at a more distant location. Only authorised persons are permitted to enter the VOR or communicate with VAR, AVAR and RO during the match.

A player, substitute or substituted player who enters the VOR will be sent off; a team official who enters the VOR will be dismissed from the technical area

Referee review area (RRA)

In matches using VARs there must be at least one RRA where the referee undertakes an 'on-field review' (OFR). The RRA must be:

- in a visible location outside the field of play
- clearly marked

A player, substitute or substituted player who enters the RRA will be cautioned; a team official who enters the RRA will be publicly given an official warning (or cautioned where YCs are used for team officials).

Explanation

Reference is needed in the Laws to the 'working areas' used as part of the VAR process.

Law 03 – The Players

2. Number of substitutes – Official competitions

Additional text

The competition rules must state:

- how many substitutes may be named, from three to a maximum of twelve
- whether one additional substitute may be used when a match goes into extra time (whether or not the team has already used the full number of permitted substitutes)

Explanation

The two-year experiment with a 4th substitute being available in matches with extra time has been successful. Regardless of the maximum number of substitutes allowed during 'normal time', this change gives competition organisers the authority to permit each team to use one additional substitute during extra time.

2. Number of substitutes – Other matches	
Old text	**New text**
In national 'A' team matches a maximum of six substitutes may be used.	In national 'A' team matches, a maximum of twelve substitutes may be named of which a maximum of six may be used.

Explanation

Clarifies that for national 'A' team friendly matches, a maximum of twelve substitutes can be named. This is consistent with the restriction for competitive matches and prevents there being insufficient seating in the technical area.

Law 04 – The Players' Equipment

4. Other equipment – Electronic communication	
Old text	**New text**
Players (…). The use of any form of electronic communication equipment by team officials is not permitted except where it directly relates to player welfare or safety.	Players (…). The use of any form of electronic communication equipment by team officials is permitted where it directly relates to player welfare or safety or for tactical/coaching reasons but only small, mobile, hand-held equipment (e.g. microphone, headphone, ear-piece, mobilephone/smartphone, smartwatch, tablet, laptop) may be used. A team official who uses unauthorised equipment or who behaves in an inappropriate manner as a result of the use of electronic or communication equipment will be dismissed from the technical area.

Explanation

As it is impossible to prevent communication to/from the technical area and it is reasonable to have an exchange of information relating to coaching/tactics or player welfare (but not match officials' decisions), the focus will move to the behaviour resulting from the use of such equipment.

4. Other equipment – Electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS)

Additional (and amended) text

Where wearable technology (WT) as part of electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS) is used in matches played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, confederations or national football associations, the competition organiser must ensure that the technology attached to the player's equipment is not dangerous and must bear the following mark:

IMS
INTERNATIONAL MATCH STANDARD™

This mark indicates that it has been officially tested and meets the minimum safety requirements of the International Match Standard developed by FIFA and approved by The IFAB. The institutes conducting these tests are subject to the approval of FIFA. ~~The transition period runs until 31 May 2018.~~

Where electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS) are used (subject to the agreement of the national football association/competition organiser) the competition organiser must ensure that the information and data transmitted from EPTS to the technical area during the match in matches played in an official competition are reliable and accurate.

A professional standard was developed by FIFA and approved by The IFAB in order to support the competition organisers with the approval process of reliable and accurate electronic performance and tracking systems.

The professional standard will be implemented in the transition period until 1 June 2019. The following mark indicates that an EPTS device/system has been officially tested and meets the requirements in terms of reliability and accuracy of positional data in football:

Explanation

Outlines the changes to the use of EPTS data and the development of a FIFA Quality standard.

5. Slogans, statements, images and advertising

Additional text

Principles

- Law 4 applies to all equipment (including clothing) worn by players, substitutes and substituted players; its principles also apply to all team officials in the technical area
- The following are (usually) permitted:
  - the player's number, name, team crest/logo, initiative slogans/emblems promoting the game of football, respect and integrity as well as any advertising permitted by competition rules or national FA, confederation or FIFA regulations
  - the facts of a match: teams, date, competition/event, venue
- Permitted slogans, statements or images should be confined to the shirt front and/or armband
- In some cases, the slogan, statement or image might only appear on the captain's armband

Interpreting the Law

When interpreting whether a slogan, statement or image is permissible, note should be taken of Law 12 (Fouls and Misconduct), which requires the referee to take action against a player who is guilty of

- using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- gesturing in a provocative, derisory or inflammatory way

Any slogan, statement or image which falls into any of these categories is not permitted.

Whilst 'religious' and 'personal' are relatively easily defined, 'political' is less clear but slogans, statements or images related to the following are not permitted:

- any person(s), living or dead (unless part of the official competition name)
- any local, regional, national or international political party/organisation/group, etc.
- any local, regional or national government or any of its departments, offices or functions
- any organisation which is discriminatory
- any organisation whose aims/actions are likely to offend a notable number of people
- any specific political act/event

When commemorating a significant national or international event, the sensibilities of the opposing team (including its supporters) and the general public should be carefully considered.

Competition rules may contain further restrictions/limitations, particularly in relation to the size, number and position of permitted slogans, statements and images. It is recommended that disputes relating to slogans, statements or images be resolved prior to a match/competition taking place.

Explanation

This guidance is to help competition organisers, national FAs, confederations and FIFA decide what can be visible on players' equipment.

6. Offences and sanctions

Additional text

(…)
A player who enters without permission must be cautioned and if play is stopped to issue the caution, an indirect free kick is awarded from the position of the ball when play was stopped, unless there was interference in which case a direct free kick (or penalty kick) is awarded from the position of the interference.

Explanation

Clarifies the restart if a player returns without the necessary permission and interferes (consistent with Law 3).

Law 05 – The Referee

4. Video assistant referee (VAR)

Additional text

The use of video assistant referees (VARs) is only permitted where the match/competition organiser has fulfilled all the VAR protocol and implementation requirements (as set out in the VAR Handbook) and has received written permission from The IFAB and FIFA.

The referee may be assisted by a video assistant referee (VAR) only in the event of a 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' in relation to:

- goal/no goal
- penalty/no penalty
- direct red card (not second caution)
- mistaken identity when the referee cautions or sends off the wrong player of the offending team

The assistance from the video assistant referee (VAR) will relate to using replay(s) of the incident. The referee will make the final decision which may be based solely on the information from the VAR and/or the referee reviewing the replay footage directly ('on-field review').

Except for a 'serious missed incident', the referee (and where relevant other 'on-field' match officials) must always make a decision (including a decision not to penalise a potential offence); this decision does not change unless it is a 'clear and obvious error'.

Reviews after play has restarted
If play has stopped and restarted, the referee may only undertake a 'review', and take the appropriate disciplinary sanction, for a case of mistaken identity or for a potential sending-off offence relating to violent conduct, spitting, biting or extremely offensive, insulting and/or abusive gesture(s).

Explanation

- Inclusion of the provision for a referee to use video assistance (via the VAR)
- Reference to the referee being able to use information from video replays for certain sending-off offences and mistaken identity, even if play has restarted.

5. Referee's equipment – Other equipment

Additional text

(…)
Referees and other 'on-field' match officials are prohibited from wearing jewellery or any other electronic equipment, including cameras.

Explanation

Clarifies that referees and other 'on-field' match officials are not permitted to use or wear cameras.

Law 06 – The Other Match Officials

Additional (and amended) text

Other match officials (two assistant referees, fourth official, two additional assistant referees, reserve assistant referee, video assistant referee (VAR) and at least one assistant VAR (AVAR) may be appointed to matches. They will assist the referee in controlling the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game but the final decision will always be taken by the referee.

The referee, assistant referees, fourth official, additional assistant referees and reserve assistant referee are the 'on-field' match officials.

The VAR and AVAR are the 'video' match officials and assist the referee in accordance with the VAR protocol as determined by The IFAB.

(…)
With the exception of the reserve assistant referee, the 'on-field' match officials assist the referee with…. (…)

The 'on-field' match officials assist the referee with inspecting the field of play… (…)

Explanation

- Reference in the Laws to the match officials who are used within the VAR system.
- Distinction created between 'on-field' match officials and the 'video' match officials.

5. Video match officials

Additional text

- A video assistant referee (VAR) is a match official who may assist the referee to make a decision using replay footage only for a 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' relating to a goal/no goal, penalty/no penalty, direct red card (not a second caution) or a case of mistaken identity when the referee cautions or sends off the wrong player of the offending team

An assistant video assistant referee (AVAR) is a match official who helps the VAR primarily by:

- watching the television footage while the VAR is busy with a **'**check**'** or a **'**review**'**
- keeping a record of VAR-related incidents and any communication or technology problems
- assisting the VAR's communication with the referee especially communicating with the referee when the VAR is undertaking a **'**check**'**/**'**review**'** e.g. to tell the referee to 'stop play' or 'delay the restart' etc.
- recording the time 'lost' when play is delayed for a 'check' or a **'**review**'**
- communicating information about a VAR-related decision to relevant parties

Explanation

Outline of main duties of the 'video' match officials.

Law 07 – The Duration of the Match

2. Half-time interval

Additional text

(…); a short drinks break (which should not exceed one minute) is permitted at the interval of half-time in extra time. (…)

Explanation

To avoid drinks breaks becoming lengthy coaching (commercial) breaks, their length is limited/defined. This restriction does not apply to medical 'cooling breaks'.

3. Allowance for time lost

Additional text

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

- stoppages for drinks (which should not exceed one minute) or other medical reasons permitted by competition rule
- delays relating to VAR 'checks' and 'reviews'

Explanation

Reference to additional time for stoppages for drinks and VAR 'checks'/'reviews'.

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of the Match

3. Kicks from the penalty mark – Procedure

Additional text

- A goalkeeper who is unable to continue before or during the kicks may be replaced (…) but the replaced goalkeeper takes no further part and may not take a kick. If the goalkeeper has already taken a kick, the replacement may not take a kick until the next round of kicks

Explanation

Clarifies that if a goalkeeper is replaced and has taken a kick, the replacement may not take a kick in that 'round' of kicks.

Law 11 – Offside

2. Offside offence

Additional 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:
(…)

*The first point of contact of the 'play' or 'touch' of the ball should be used

Explanation

Slow motion shows a detectable difference between the first and last contact with the ball so a definition of the precise moment that the ball is 'played' is needed when judging offside position.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

1. Direct free kick

Additional text

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

- bites or spits at ~~an opponent~~ someone
- throws an object at the ball, opponent or match official, or makes contact with the ball with a held object

Handling the ball

- ~~touching the ball with an object held in the hand (cloting, shinguard etc.) is an offence~~
- ~~hitting the ball with a thrown object (boot, shinguard etc.) is an offence~~

Explanation

- Reference to biting (a rare offence) as a direct free kick offence (and also in the list of sending-off offences)
- Throwing an object at the ball or making contact with the ball with a held object become a separate category of offence and not part of handball so a goalkeeper can be penalised for such conduct in their penalty area.

2. Indirect free kick

Amended text

A goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball when:
the ball is between (…) or by touching it with any part of the hands or arms except if it rebounds ~~accidentally~~ from the goalkeeper or the… (…)

Explanation

Goalkeepers often unsuccessfully attempt to catch/hold/stop or 'parry' the ball but as this is a 'deliberate' touch with the hand(s) they have technically controlled the ball so cannot pick it up. This is not the Law's intention and is not enforced; removal of 'accidentally' clarifies the Law.

3. Disciplinary action – Advantage

Amended text

If the referee plays the advantage for an offence for which a caution / send off would have been issued had play been stopped, this caution / send off must be issued when the ball is next out of play, except ~~when~~ for the denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity ~~results in a goal~~ when the player is cautioned for unsporting behaviour."

Explanation

If the referee plays advantage for a DOGSO and a goal is scored it is a YC but technically if no goal results the Law said it should be a RC. This is never applied and is not seen as 'fair' as applying the advantage effectively means that a goal-scoring opportunity remains; consequently, a YC is the fairest sanction, whether or not a goal is scored.

3. Disciplinary action – Cautionable offences

Additional text

A player is cautioned if guilty of:
(…)
- entering the referee review area (RRA)
- excessively using the 'review' (TV screen) signal

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if guilty of:
(…)
- entering the referee review area (RRA)
- excessively using the 'review' (TV screen) signal

Where two separate cautionable offences are committed (even in close proximity), they should result in two cautions, for example if a player enters the field of play without the required permission and commits a reckless tackle or stops a promising attack with a foul/handball, etc.

Explanation

- Inclusion of entering the referee review area (RRA) or excessively using the 'review' (TV screen) signal in the list of cautionable offences
- Clarifies the action the referee should take where 2 clearly separate cautionable (YC) offences occur which may be linked, particularly when someone enters the field without permission (where needed) and then commits a cautionable offence. This principle also applies to sending-off offences.

3. Disciplinary action – Sending-off offences

Additional text

A player, substitute or substituted player who commits any of the following offences is sent off: (…)
- biting or spitting at someone
- entering the video operation room (VOR)

Explanation

Inclusion of biting and entering the VOR as sending-off offences.

4. Restart of play after fouls and misconduct

Additional text

If, when the ball is in play:
(…)
If an offence is committed outside the field of play against a player, substitute, substituted player, or team official of the ir own team, play is restarted with an indirect free kick on the boundary line closest to where the offence occurred.

If a player makes contact with the ball with an object held in the hand (boot, shinguard etc.) play is restarted with a direct free kick (or penalty kick).

Explanation

Clarifies:

- how the game is restarted if a player commits an offence off the field of play against someone from their own team (including a team official).
- that hitting the ball with an object held in the hand is a separate offence and not part of handball; consequently a goalkeeper can be penalised for such conduct in their own penalty area.

Law 13 – Free kicks

1. Types of free kick

Additional text

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player, substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official guilty of an offence.

Explanation

The Laws permit substitutes, substituted and sent off players, and team official to be penalised with a free kick for some offences.

Law 15 – The Throw-in

1. Procedure

Amended text

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower must:
~~face~~ stand facing the field of play

Explanation

Clarifies that a player must stand to take a throw in i.e. sitting or kneeling positions are not permitted.

Glossary

The Glossary contains words/phrases which need clarification or explanation beyond the detail in the Laws and/or which are not always easily translated into other languages.

Football bodies

The IFAB – The International Football Association Board
Body composed of the four British FAs and FIFA which is responsible for the Laws of the Game worldwide. In principle, changes to the Laws may only be approved at the Annual General Meeting usually held in February or March

FIFA – Fédération Internationale de Football Association
The governing body responsible for football throughout the world

Confederation
Body responsible for football in a continent. The six confederations are AFC (Asia), CAF (Africa), CONCACAF (North, Central America and Caribbean), CONMEBOL (South America), OFC (Oceania) and UEFA (Europe)

National Football Association
Body responsible for football in a country

Football terms

A

Abandon
To end/terminate a match before the scheduled finish

Advantage
The referee allows play to continue when an offence has occurred if this benefits the non-offending team

Additional time
Time allowed at the end of each half for time 'lost' because of substitutions, injuries, disciplinary action, goal celebration etc.

Assessment of injured player
Quick examination of an injury, usually by a medical person, to see if the player requires treatment

Away goals rule
Method of deciding a match/tie when both teams have scored the same number of goals; goals scored away from home count double

B

Brutality
An act which is savage, ruthless or deliberately violent

C

Caution
Official sanction which results in a report to a disciplinary authority; indicated by showing a yellow card; two cautions in a match result a player being dismissed (sent off)

Charge (an opponent)
Physical challenge against an opponent, usually using the shoulder and upper arm (which is kept close to the body)

D

Deceive
Act to mislead/trick the referee into giving an incorrect decision/disciplinary sanction which benefits the deceiver and/or their team

Direct free kick
A free kick from which a goal can be scored by kicking the ball directly into the opponents' goal

Discretion
Judgment used by a referee or other match official when making a decision

Dismissal
Another word for 'sending-off' (red card)

Dissent
Public disagreement (verbal and/or physical) with a match official's decision; punishable by a caution (yellow card)

Distract
Disturb, confuse or draw attention (usually unfairly)

Dropped ball
A 'neutral' method of restarting play – the referee drops the ball between players of both teams; the ball is in play when it touches the ground

E

Electronic performance and tracking system (EPTS)
System which records and analyses data about the physical and physiological performance of a player

Endanger the safety of an opponent
Put an opponent at danger or risk (of injury)

Excessive force
Using more force/energy than is necessary

Extra time
A method of trying to decide the outcome of a match involving two equal additional periods of play not exceeding 15 minutes each

F

Feinting
An action which attempts to confuse an opponent. The Laws define permitted and 'illegal' feinting

Field of play (Pitch)
The playing area confined by the touchlines and goal lines and goal nets where used

G

Goal line technology (GLT)
Electronic system which immediately informs the referee when a goal has been scored i.e. the ball has wholly passed over the goal line in the goal
(See Law 1 for details)

H

Hybrid system
A combination of artificial and natural materials to create a playing surface which requires sunlight, water, air circulation and mowing

I

Indirect free kick
A free kick from which a goal can only be scored if another player (of any team) touches the ball after it has been kicked

Impede
To delay, block or prevent an opponent's action or movement

Intentional
A deliberate action (not an accident)

Intercept
To prevent a ball reaching its intended destination

K

Kick
The ball is kicked when a player makes contact with the foot and/or the ankle

Kicks from the penalty mark
Method of deciding the result of a match by each team alternately taking kicks until one team has scored one more goal and both teams have taken the same number of kicks (unless during the first 5 kicks for each team, one team could not equal the other team's score even if they scored from all their remaining kicks)

N

Negligible
Insignificant, minimal

O

Offence
An action which breaks/violates the Laws of the Game

Offensive, insulting or abusive language
Verbal or physical behaviour which is rude, hurtful, disrespectful; punishable by a sending-off (red card)

Outside agent
Any person who is not a match official or on the team list (players, substitutes and team officials)

P

Penalise
To punish, usually by stopping play and awarding a free kick or penalty kick to the opposing team *(see also Advantage)*

Played
Action by a player which makes contact with the ball

Playing distance
Distance to the ball which allows a player to touch the ball by extending the foot/leg or jumping or, for goalkeepers, jumping with arms extended. Distance depends on the physical size of the player

Q

Quick free kick
A free kick taken (with the referee's permission) very quickly after play was stopped

R

Reckless
Any action (usually a tackle or challenge) by a player which disregards (ignores) the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent

Restart
Any method of resuming play after it has been stopped

S

Sanction
Disciplinary action taken by the referee

Save
An action by a player to stop or attempt to stop the ball when it is going into or very close to the goal using any part of the body except the hands/arms (unless a goalkeeper within their own penalty area)

Send off (Dismissal)
Disciplinary action when a player is required to leave the field for the remainder of the match having committed a sending-off offence (indicated by a red card); if the match has started the player can not be replaced

Serious foul play
A tackle or challenge for the ball that endangers the safety of an opponent or uses excessive force or brutality; punishable by a sending-off (red card)

Signal
Physical indication from the referee or any match official; usually involves movement of the hand or arm or flag, or use of the whistle (referee only)

Simulation
An action which creates a wrong/false impression that something has occurred when it has not *(see also deceive)*; committed by a player to gain an unfair advantage

Spirit of the game
The main/essential principles/ethos of football

Suspend
To stop a match for a period of time with the intention of eventually restarting play e.g. fog, heavy rain, thunderstorm, serious injury

T

Tackle
A challenge for the ball with the foot (on the ground or in the air)

Team official
Any non-player listed on the official team list e.g. coach, physiotherapist, doctor *(see technical staff)*

Team list
Official team document usually listing the players, substitutes and team officials

Technical staff
Official non-playing team members listed on the official team list e.g. coach, physiotherapist, doctor *(see team official)*

Technical area
Defined area (in stadia) for the team officials which includes seating
(See Law 1 for details)

Temporary dismissal
A temporary suspension from the next part of the match for a player guilty of some/all cautionable offences (depending on competition rules)

U

Undue interference
Action/influence which is unnecessary

Unsporting behaviour
Unfair action/behaviour; punishable by a caution

V

Violent conduct
An action, which is not a challenge for the ball, which uses or attempts to use excessive force or brutality against an opponent or when a player deliberately strikes someone on the head or face unless the force used is negligible

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Referee terms

Match official(s)
General term for person or persons responsible for controlling a football match on behalf of a football association and/or competition under whose jurisdiction the match is played

Referee
The main match official for a match who operates on the field of play. Other match officials operate under the referee's control and direction. The referee is the final/ultimate decision-maker

Other match officials
'On-field' match officials
Competitions may appoint other match officials to assist the referee:

- **Assistant referee**
  A match official with a flag positioned on one half of each touchline to assist the referee particularly with offside situations and goal kick/corner kick/throw-in decisions
- **Fourth official**
  A match official with responsibility for assisting the referee with both on-field and off-field matters, including overseeing the technical area, controlling substitutes etc.
- **Additional assistant referee (AAR)**
  A match official positioned on the goal line to assist the referee particularly with situations in/around the penalty area and goal/no-goal decisions
- **Reserve assistant referee**
  Assistant referee who will replace an assistant (and, if competition rules permit, a fourth official and/or AAR) who is unable to continue

'Video' match officials

These are the VAR and AVAR who assist the referee in accordance with the VAR protocol

- **Assistant video assistant referee (AVAR)**
  A current or former referee/assistant referee appointed to assist the video assistant referee (VAR)
- **Video assistant referee (VAR)**
  A current or former referee appointed to assist the referee by communicating information from replay footage only in relation to a 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident' in one of the reviewable categories

IFAB®

Practical Guidelines for Match Officials

IFAB®

Introduction

These guidelines contain practical advice for match officials which supplements the information in the Laws of the Game section.

Reference is made in Law 5 to referees operating within the framework of the Laws of the Game and the 'spirit of the game'. Referees are expected to use common sense and to apply the 'spirit of the game' when applying the Laws of the Game, especially when making decisions relating to whether a match takes place and/or continues.

This is especially true for the lower levels of football where it may not always be possible for the Law to be strictly applied. For example, unless there are safety issues, the referee should allow a game to start/continue if:

- one or more corner flags is missing
- there is a minor inaccuracy with the markings on the field of play such as the corner area, centre circle etc.
- the goal posts/crossbar are not white

In such cases, the referee should, with the agreement of the teams, play/continue the match and must submit a report to the appropriate authorities.

Key:

- AR = assistant referee
- AAR = additional assistant referee

Positioning, Movement and Teamwork

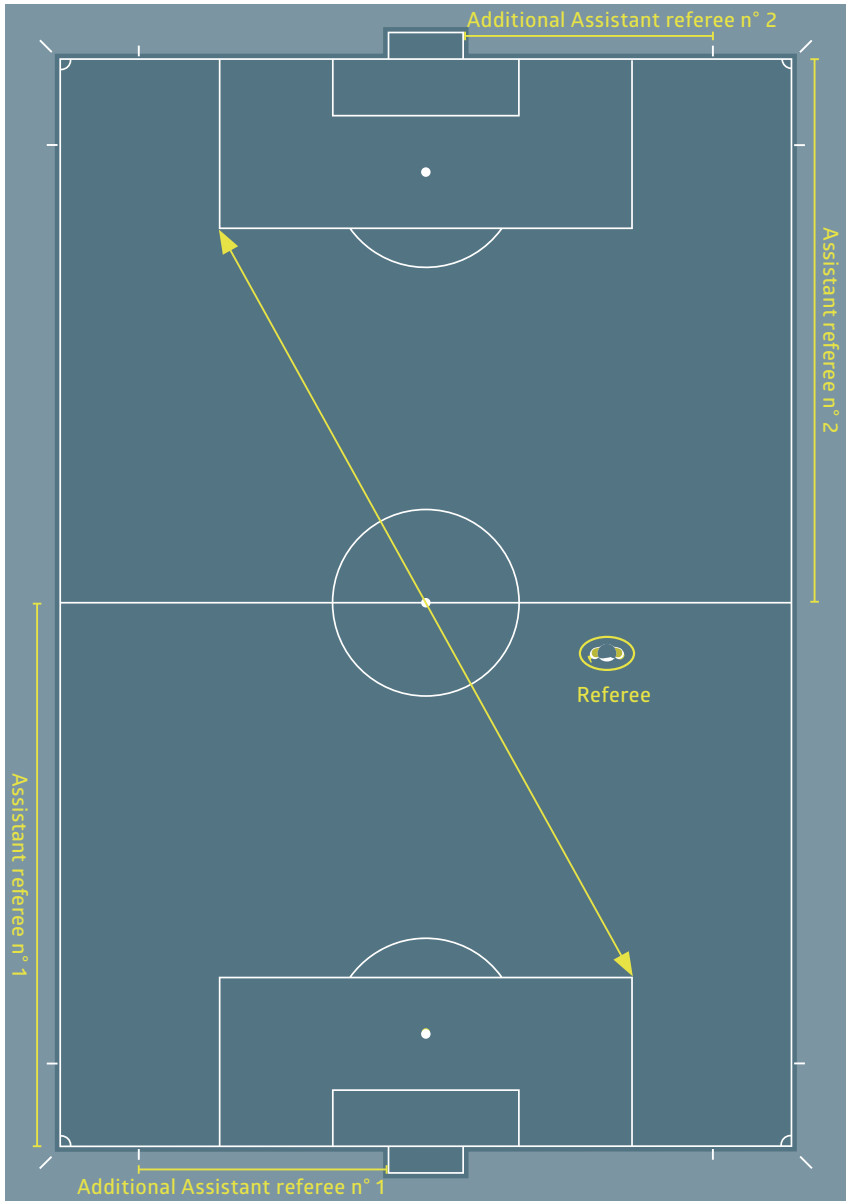
1. General positioning and movement

The best position is one from which the referee can make the correct decision. All recommendations about positioning must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players and events in the match.

The positions recommended in the graphics are basic guidelines. The reference to a "zone" emphasises that a recommended position is an area within which the referee is likely to be most effective. The zone may be larger, smaller or differently shaped depending on the exact match circumstances.

Recommendations:

- The play should be between the referee and the lead AR
- The lead AR should be in the referee's field of vision so the referee should usually use a wide diagonal system
- Staying towards the outside of the play makes it easier to keep play and the lead AR in the referee's field of vision
- The referee should be close enough to see play without interfering with play
- "What needs to be seen" is not always in the vicinity of the ball. The referee should also pay attention to:
  - player confrontations off the ball
  - possible offences in the area towards which play is moving
  - offences occurring after the ball is played away



Positioning of assistant referees and additional assistant referees

The AR must be in line with the second-last defender or the ball if it is nearer to the goal line than the second-last defender. The AR must always face the field of play, even when running. Side-to-side movement should be used for short distances. This is especially important when judging offside as it gives the AR a better line of vision.

The AAR position is behind the goal line except where it is necessary to move onto the goal line to judge a goal/no goal situation. The AAR is not allowed to enter the field of play unless there are exceptional circumstances.

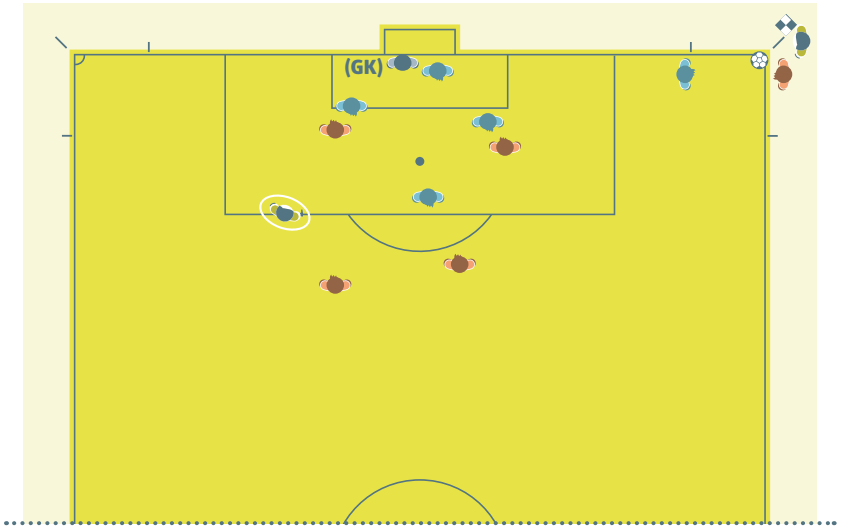
2. Positioning and teamwork

Consultation

When dealing with disciplinary issues, eye contact and a basic discreet hand signal from the AR to the referee may be sufficient. When direct consultation is required, the AR may advance 2–3 metres onto the field of play if necessary. When talking, the referee and AR should both face the field of play to avoid being heard by others and to observe the players and field of play.

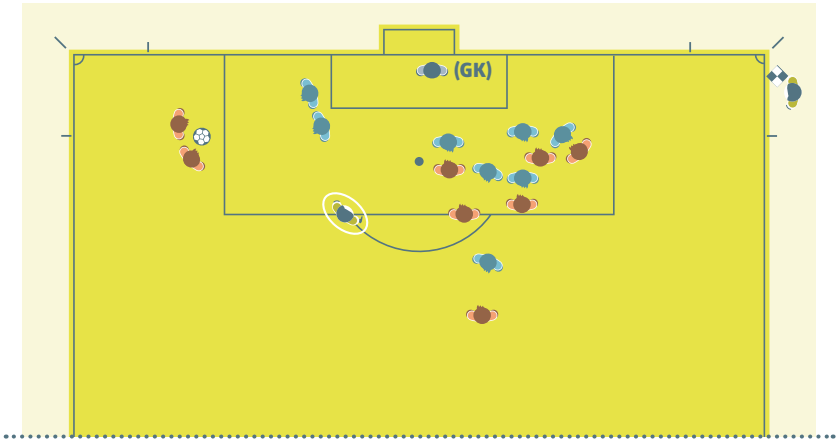
Corner kick

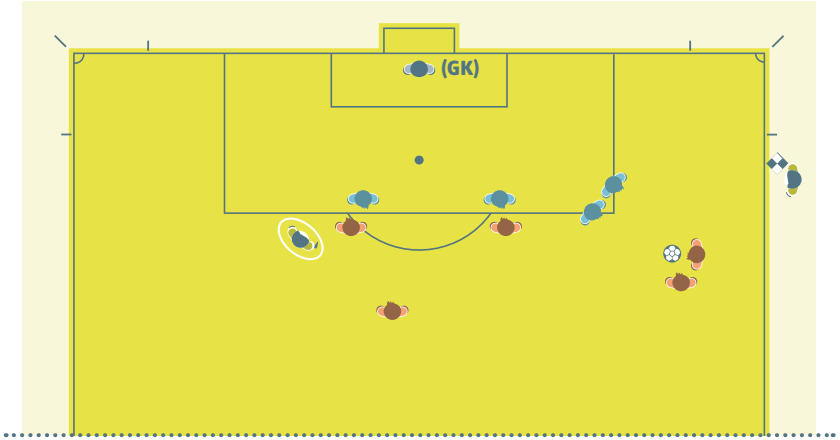
The AR's position for a corner kick is behind the corner flag in line with the goal line but the AR must not interfere with the player taking the corner kick and must check that the ball is properly placed in the corner area.

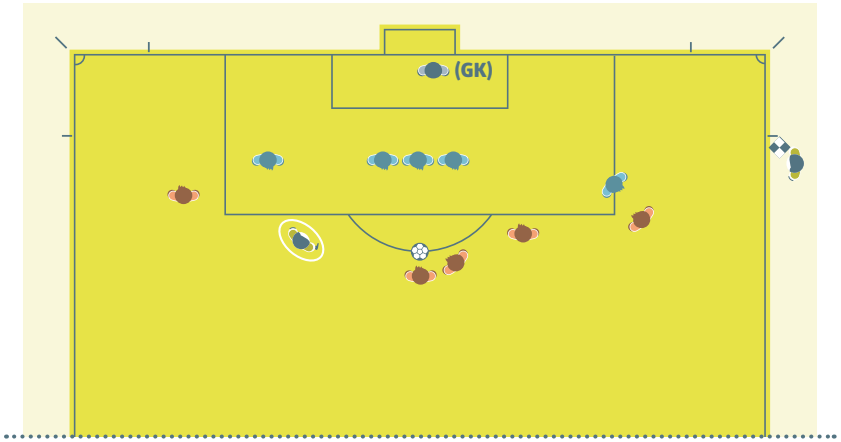


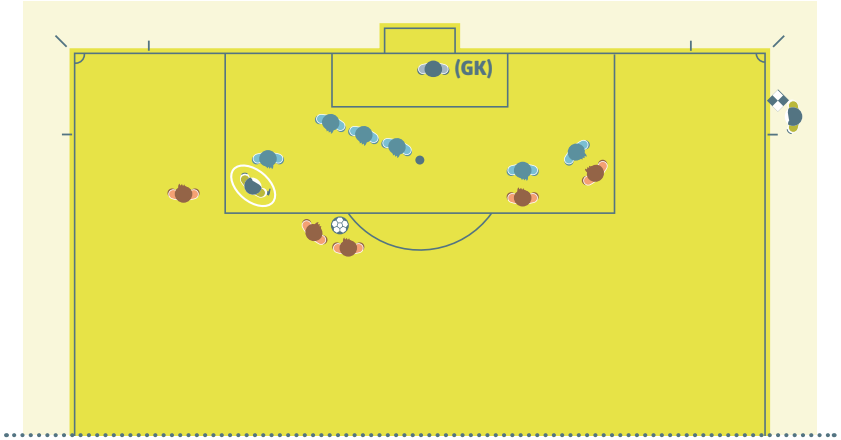
Free kick

The AR's position for a free kick must be in line with the second-last defender to check the offside line. However, the AR must be ready to follow the ball by moving down the touchline towards the corner flag if there is a direct shot on goal.







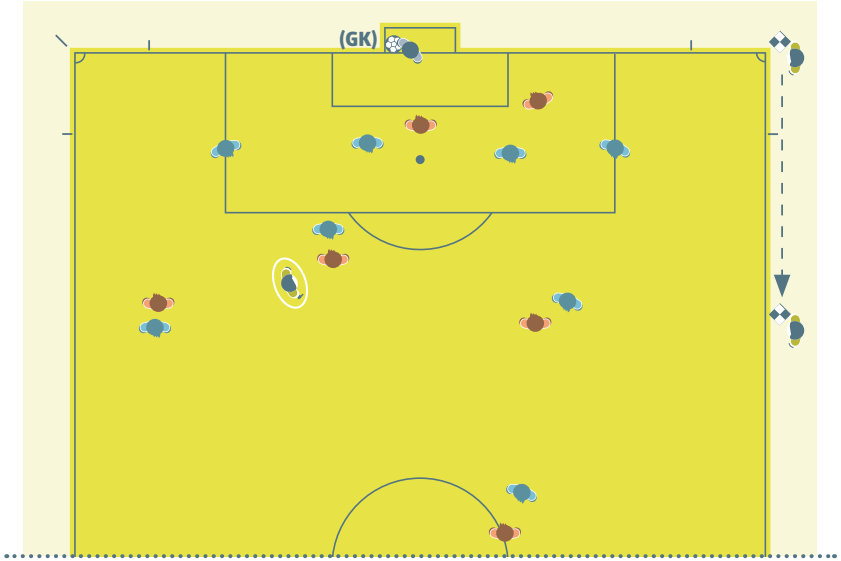


Goal/no goal

When a goal has been scored and there is no doubt about the decision, the referee and assistant referee must make eye contact and the assistant referee must then move quickly 25–30 metres along the touchline towards the halfway line without raising the flag.

When a goal has been scored but the ball appears still to be in play, the assistant referee must first raise the flag to attract the referee's attention then continue with the normal goal procedure of running quickly 25–30 metres along the touchline towards the halfway line.

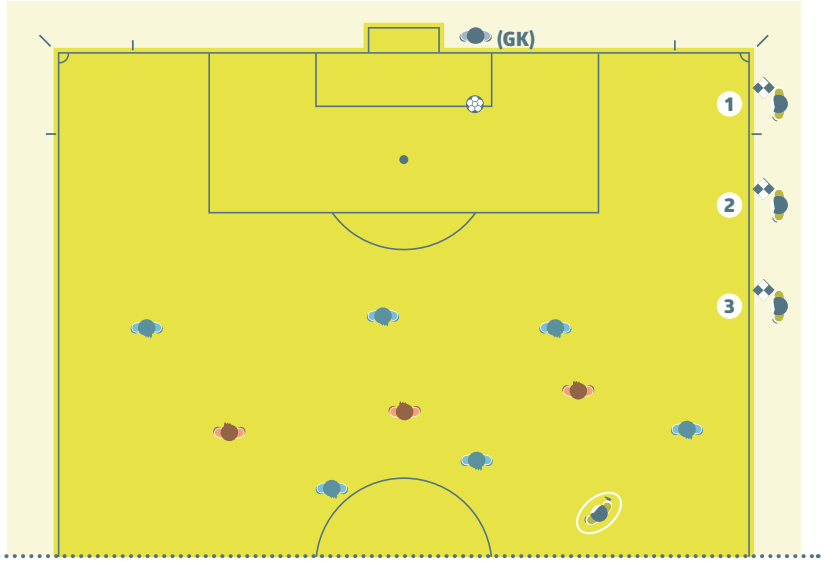
On occasions when the whole of the ball does not cross the goal line and play continues as normal because a goal has not been scored, the referee must make eye contact with the assistant referee and if necessary give a discreet hand signal.



Goal kick

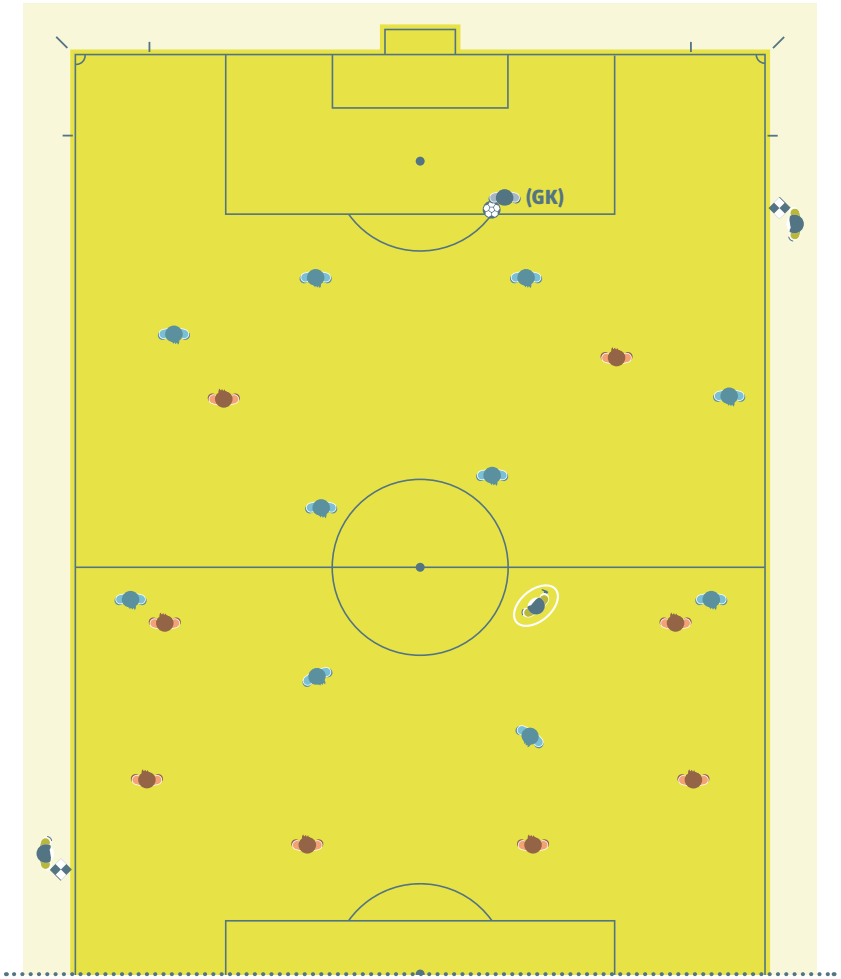
The AR must first check if the ball is inside the goal area. If the ball is not placed correctly, the AR must not move from the position, make eye contact with the referee and raise the flag. Once the ball is placed correctly inside the goal area, the AR must move to the edge of the penalty area to check that the ball leaves the penalty area (ball in play) and that the attackers are outside. Finally, the AR must take a position to check the offside line.

However, if there is an AAR, the AR should take up a position in line with the edge of the penalty area and then the offside line and the AAR must be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the goal area, and check if the ball is placed inside the goal area. If the ball is not placed correctly, the AAR must communicate this to the referee.



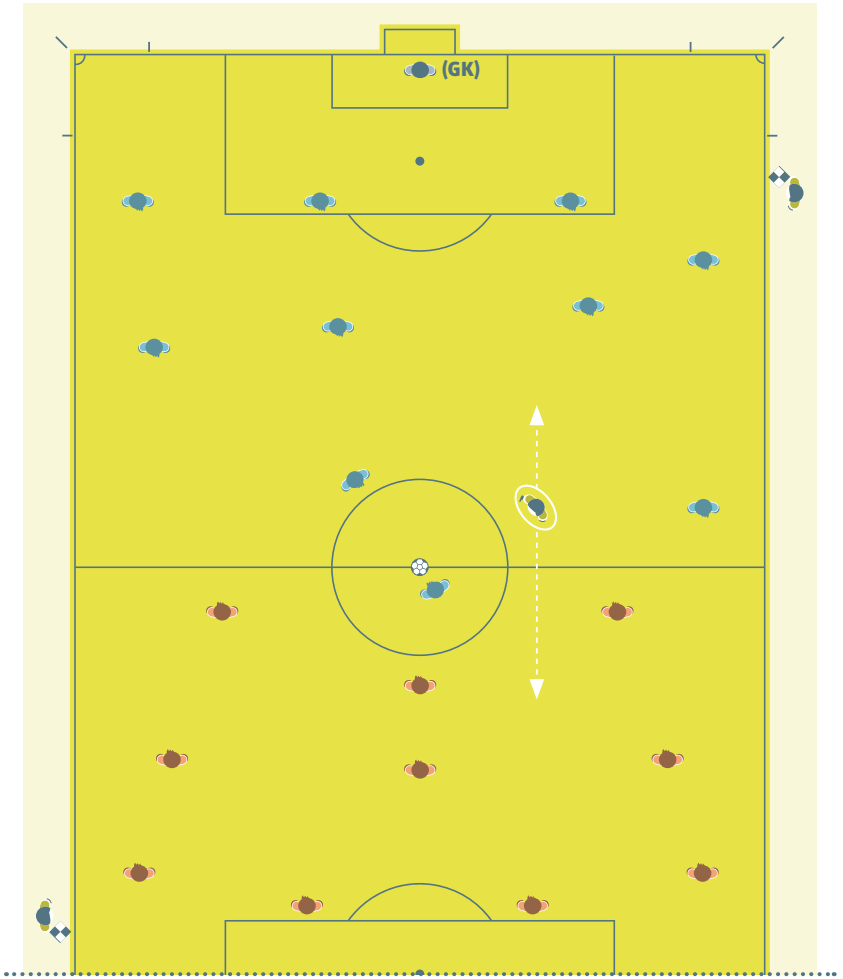
Goalkeeper releasing the ball

The AR must take a position in line with the edge of the penalty area and check that the goalkeeper does not handle the ball outside the penalty area.
Once the goalkeeper has released the ball, the AR must take a position to check the offside line.



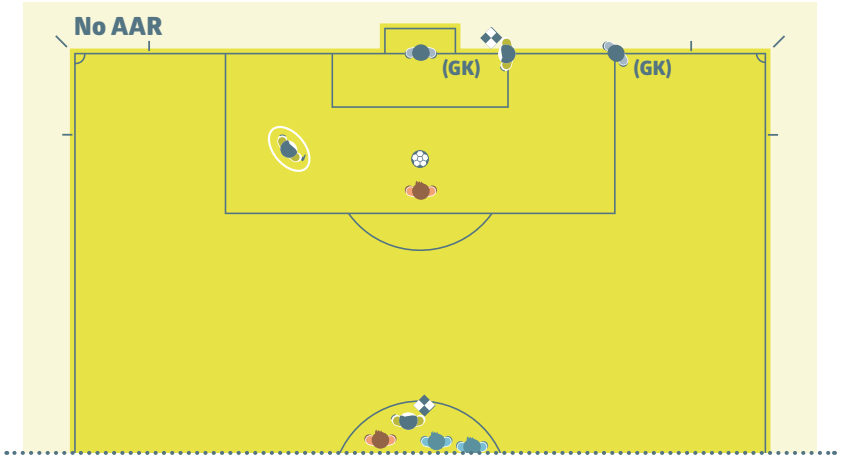
Kick-off

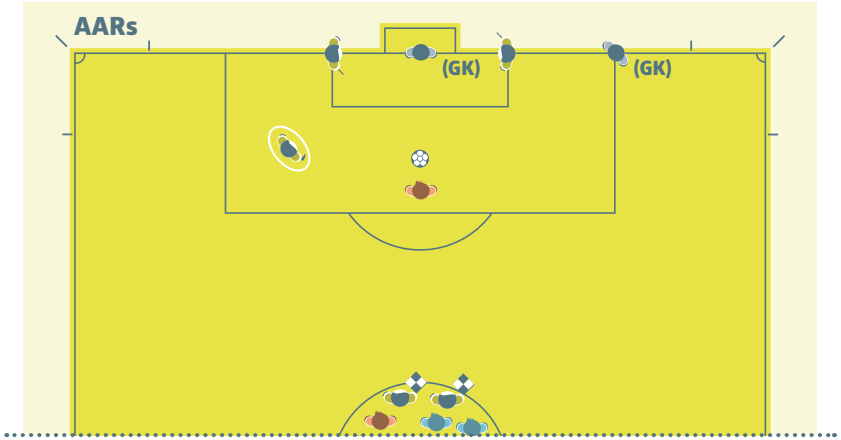
The ARs must be in line with the second-last defender.



Kicks from the penalty mark

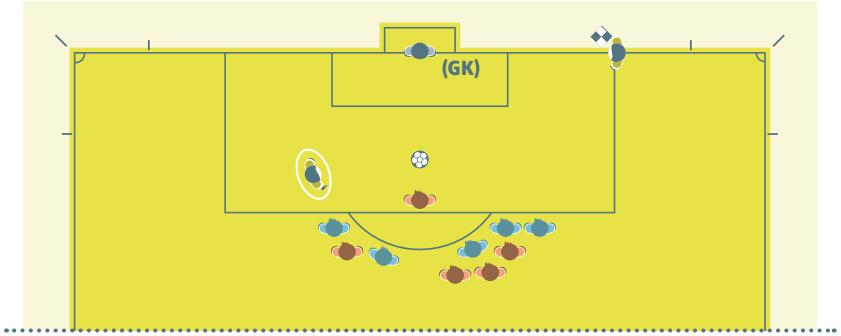
One AR must be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the goal area. The other AR must be situated in the centre circle to control the players. If there are AARs, they must be positioned at each intersection of the goal line and the goal area, to the right and left of the goal respectively, except where GLT is in use when only one AAR is required. AAR2 and AR1 should monitor the players in the centre circle and AR2 and the Fourth Official should monitor the technical areas.



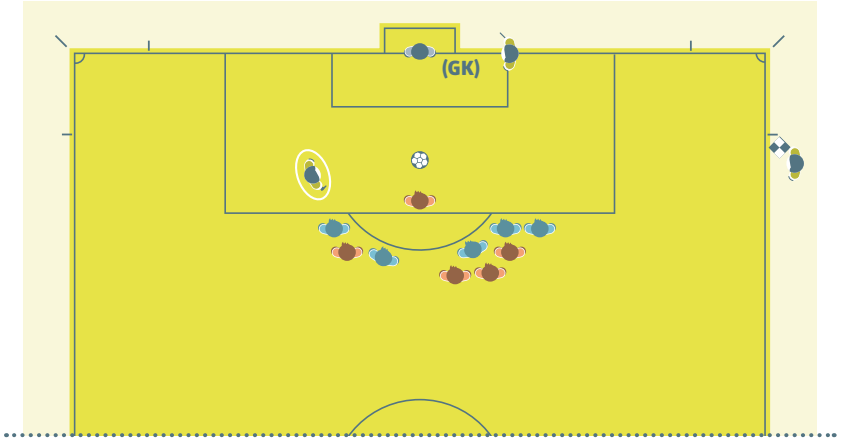


Penalty kick

The AR must be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the penalty area.



Where there are AARs the AAR must be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the goal area and the AR is positioned in line with the penalty mark (which is the offside line).



Mass confrontation

In situations of mass confrontation, the nearest AR may enter the field of play to assist the referee. The other AR must observe and record details of the incident. The fourth official should remain in the vicinity of the technical areas.

Required distance

When a free kick is awarded very close to the AR, the AR may enter the field of play (usually at the request of the referee) to help ensure that the players are positioned 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball. In this case, the referee must wait until the AR is back in position before restarting play.

Substitution

If there is no fourth official, the AR moves to the halfway line to assist with the substitution procedure; the referee must wait until the AR is back in position before restarting play.

If there is a fourth official, the AR does not need to move to the halfway line as the fourth official carries out the substitution procedure unless there are several substitutions at the same time in which case the AR moves to the halfway line to assist the fourth official.

Body Language, Communication and Whistle

1. Referees

Body language

Body language is a tool that the referee uses to:

- help control the match
- show authority and self-control

Body language is not an explanation of a decision.

Signals

See Law 5 for diagrams of signals

Whistle

The whistle is needed to:

- start play (first and second half of normal play and extra time), after a goal
- stop play:
  - for a free kick or penalty kick
  - if the match is suspended or abandoned
  - at the end of each half
- restart play for:
  - free kicks when the appropriate distance is required
  - penalty kicks
- restart play after it has been stopped for a:
  - caution or sending-off
  - injury
  - substitution

The whistle is NOT needed to:

- stop play for a clear:
  - goal kick, corner kick, throw-in or goal
- restart play from:
  - most free kicks, and a goal kick, corner kick, throw-in or dropped ball

A whistle which is used too frequently/unnecessarily will have less impact when it is needed.

If the referee wants the player(s) to wait for the whistle before restarting play (e.g. when ensuring that defending players are 9.15m at a free kick) the referee must clearly inform the attacking player(s) to wait for the whistle.

If the referee blows the whistle in error and play stops, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

2. Assistant referees

Beep signal

The beep signal system is an additional signal which is only used to gain the referee's attention. Situations when the signal beep may be useful include:

- offside
- offences (outside the view of the referee)
- throw in, corner kick, goal kick or goal (tight decisions)

Electronic communication system

Where an electronic communication system is used, the referee will advise the ARs as to when it may be appropriate to use the communication system with, or instead of, a physical signal.

Flag technique

The AR's flag must always be unfurled and visible to the referee. This usually means the flag is carried in the hand closest to the referee. When making a signal, the AR stops running, faces the field of play, makes eye contact with the referee and raises the flag with a deliberate (not hasty or exaggerated) motion. The flag should be like an extension of the arm. The ARs must raise the flag using the hand that will be used for the next signal. If circumstances change

and the other hand must be used, the AR should move the flag to the opposite hand below the waist. If the AR signals that the ball is out of play, the signal must be maintained until the referee acknowledges it.

If the AR signals for a sending-off offence and the signal is not seen immediately:

- if play has been stopped, the restart may be changed in accordance with the Laws (free kick, penalty kick, etc.)
- if play has restarted, the referee may still take disciplinary action but not penalise the offence with a free kick or penalty kick

Gestures

As a general rule, the AR should not use obvious hand signals. However, in some instances, a discreet hand signal may assist the referee. The hand signal should have a clear meaning which should have been agreed in the pre-match discussion.

Signals

See Law 6 for diagrams of signals

Corner kick/goal kick

When the ball wholly passes over the goal line the AR raises the flag with the right hand (better line of vision) to inform the referee that the ball is out of play and then if it is:

- near to the AR – indicate whether it is a goal kick or a corner kick
- far from the AR – make eye contact and follow the referee's decision

When the ball clearly passes over the goal line the AR does not need to raise the flag to indicate that the ball has left the field of play. If the goal kick or corner kick decision is obvious, it is not necessary to give a signal, especially when the referee gives a signal.

Fouls

The AR must raise the flag when a foul or misconduct is committed in the immediate vicinity or out of the referee's vision. In all other situations, the AR must wait and offer an opinion if it is required and then inform the referee what was seen and heard, and which players were involved.

Before signalling for an offence, the AR must determine that:

- the offence was out of the referee's view or the referee's view was obstructed
- the referee would not have applied the advantage

When an offence occurs which requires a signal from the AR, the AR must:

- raise the flag with the same hand that will also be used for the remainder of the signal – this gives the referee a clear indication as to who will be awarded the free kick
- make eye contact with the referee
- give the flag a slight wave back and forth (avoiding any excessive or aggressive movement)

The AR must use the "wait and see technique" to allow play to continue and not raise the flag when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from the advantage; it is therefore very important for the AR to make eye contact with the referee.

Fouls inside the penalty area

When a foul is committed by a defender inside the penalty area out of the vision of the referee, especially if near to the AR's position, the AR must first make eye contact with the referee to see where the referee is positioned and what action has been taken. If the referee has not taken any action, the AR must signal with the flag, use the electronic beep signal and then visibly move down the touchline towards the corner flag.

Fouls outside the penalty area

When a foul is committed by a defender outside the penalty area (near the boundary of the penalty area), the AR should make eye contact with the referee, to see the referee's position and what action has been taken, and signal with the flag if necessary. In counter-attack situations, the AR should be able to give information such as whether or not a foul has been committed and whether a foul was committed inside or outside the penalty area, and what disciplinary action should be taken. The AR should make a clear movement along the touchline towards the halfway line to indicate when the offence took place outside the penalty area.

Goal – no goal

When it is clear that the ball has wholly passed over the goal line in the goal, the AR must make eye contact with the referee without giving any additional signal.

When a goal has been scored but it is not clear whether the ball has passed over the line, the AR must first raise the flag to attract the referee's attention and then confirm the goal.

Offside

The first action of the AR for an offside decision is to raise the flag (using the right hand, giving the AR a better line of vision) and then, if the referee stops play, use the flag to indicate the area of the field of play in which the offence occurred. If the flag is not immediately seen by the referee, the AR must maintain the signal until it has been acknowledged or the ball is clearly in the control of the defending team.

Penalty kick

If the goalkeeper blatantly moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and a goal is not scored, the AR must raise the flag.

Substitution

Once the AR has been informed (by the fourth official or team official) that a substitution is requested, the AR must signal this to the referee at the next stoppage.

Throw-in

When the ball wholly passes over the touchline:

- near to the AR – a direct signal should be made to indicate the direction of the throw-in
- far from the AR and the throw-in decision is an obvious one – the AR must make a direct signal to indicate the direction of the throw-in
- far from the AR and the AR is in doubt about the direction of the throw-in – the AR must raise the flag to inform the referee that the ball is out of play, make eye contact with the referee and follow the referee's signal

3. Additional assistant referees

The AARs use a radio communication system (not flags) to communicate with the referee. If the radio communication system fails to work, the AARs will use an electronic signal beep flagstick. AARs do not usually use obvious hand signals but, in some instances, a discreet hand signal may give valuable support to the referee. The hand signal should have a clear meaning and such signals should be agreed in the pre-match discussion.

The AAR, having assessed that the ball has wholly passed over the goal line within the goal, must:

- immediately inform the referee via the communication system that a goal should be awarded
- make a clear signal with the left arm perpendicular to the goal line pointing towards the centre of the field (flagstick in the left hand is also required). This signal is not required when the ball has very clearly passed over the goal line.

The referee will make the final decision.

Other advice

1. Advantage

The referee may play advantage whenever an offence occurs but should consider the following in deciding whether to apply the advantage or stop play:

- the severity of the offence – if the offence warrants a sending-off, the referee must stop play and send off the player unless there is a clear opportunity to score a goal
- the position where the offence was committed - the closer to the opponent's goal, the more effective the advantage can be
- the chances of an immediate, promising attack
- the atmosphere of the match

2. Allowance for time lost

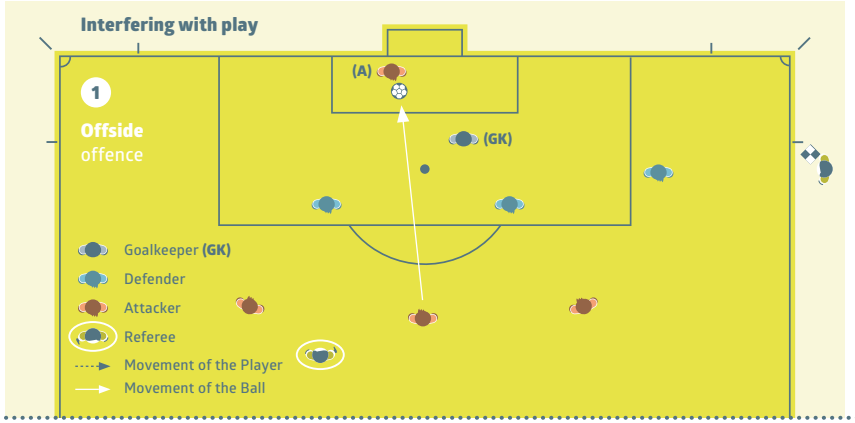
Many stoppages in play are entirely natural (e.g. throw-ins, goal kicks). An allowance is made only when delays are excessive.

3. Holding an opponent

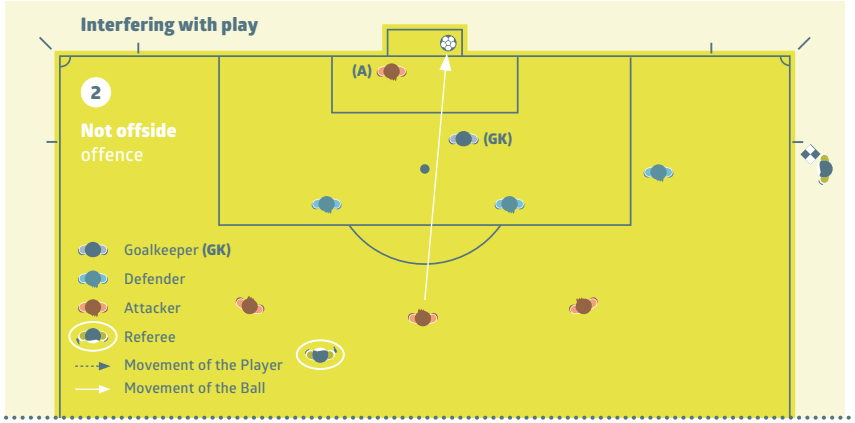
Referees are reminded to make an early intervention and to deal firmly with holding offences, especially inside the penalty area at corner kicks and free kicks. To deal with these situations:

- the referee must warn any player holding an opponent before the ball is in play
- caution the player if the holding continues before the ball is in play
- award a direct free kick or penalty kick and caution the player if it happens once the ball is in play

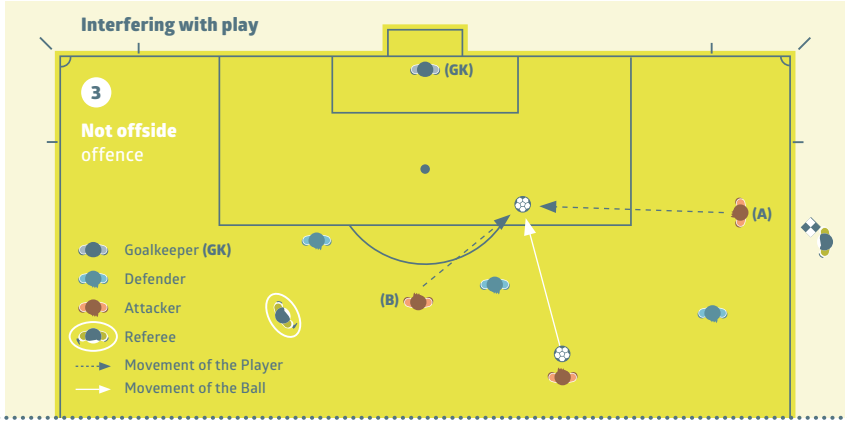
4. Offside



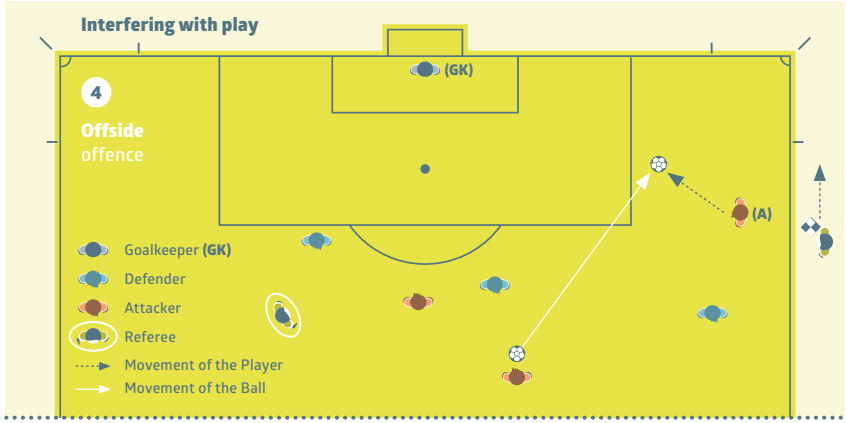
An attacker **in an offside position** (A), not interfering with an opponent, **touches the ball**. The assistant referee must raise the flag when the player **touches the ball**.



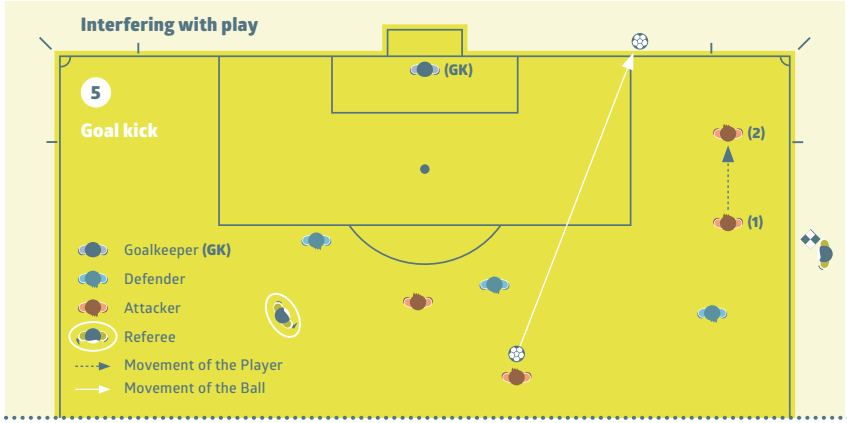
An attacker **in an offside position** (A), not interfering with an opponent, **does not touch the ball**. The player did not touch the ball, so cannot be penalised.



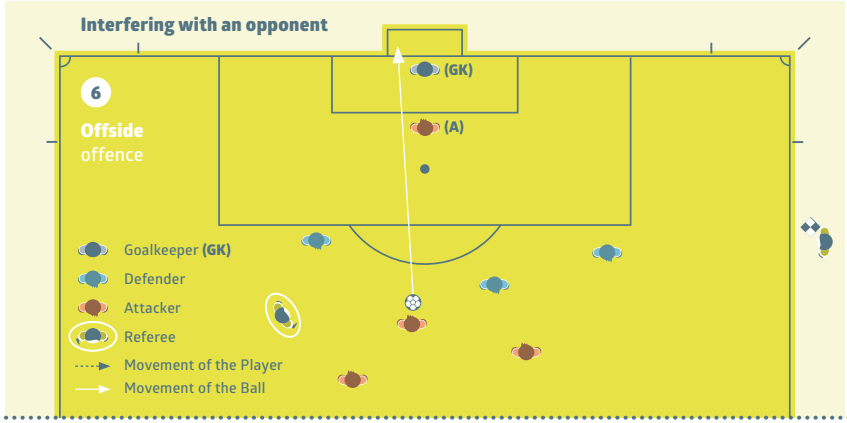
An attacker **in an offside position** (A) runs towards the ball and a team-mate **in an onside position** (B) also runs towards the ball and plays it. (A) did not touch the ball, so cannot be penalised.



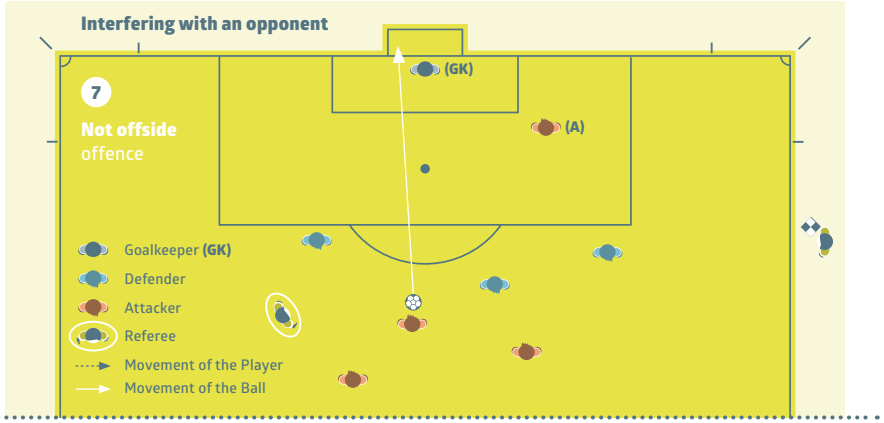
A player **in an offside position** (A) may be penalised before playing or touching the ball, if, in the opinion of the referee, no other team-mate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball.



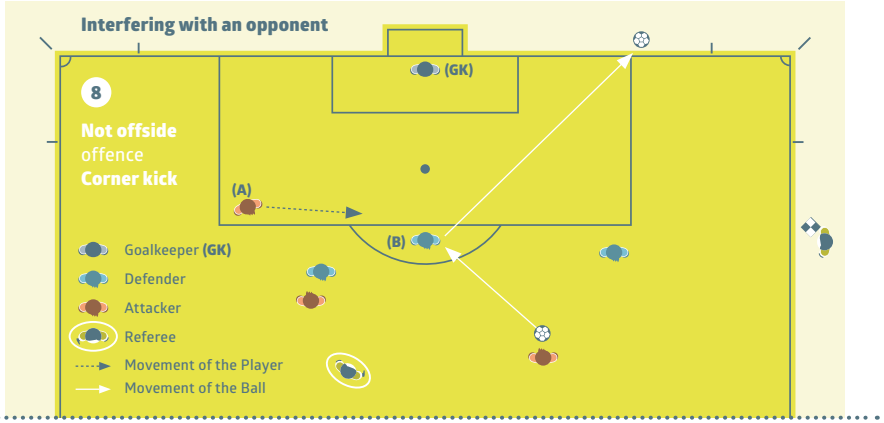
An attacker **in an offside position** (1) runs towards the ball and **does not touch** the ball. The assistant referee must signal **"goal kick"**.



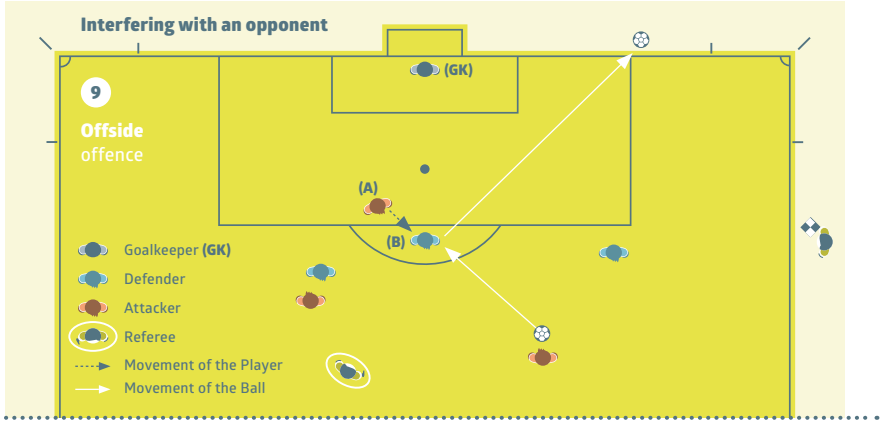
An attacker **in an offside position** (A) is clearly obstructing the goalkeeper's line of vision. The player must be penalised for preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball.



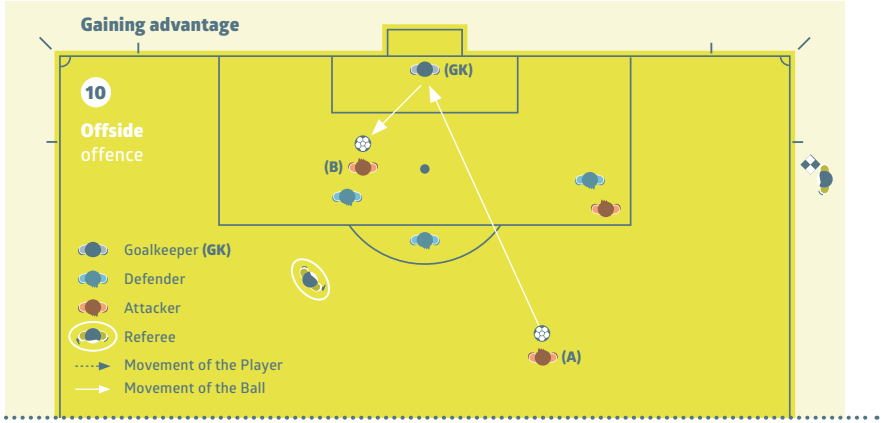
An attacker **in an offside position** (A) is **not** clearly obstructing the goalkeeper's line of vision or challenging an opponent for the ball.



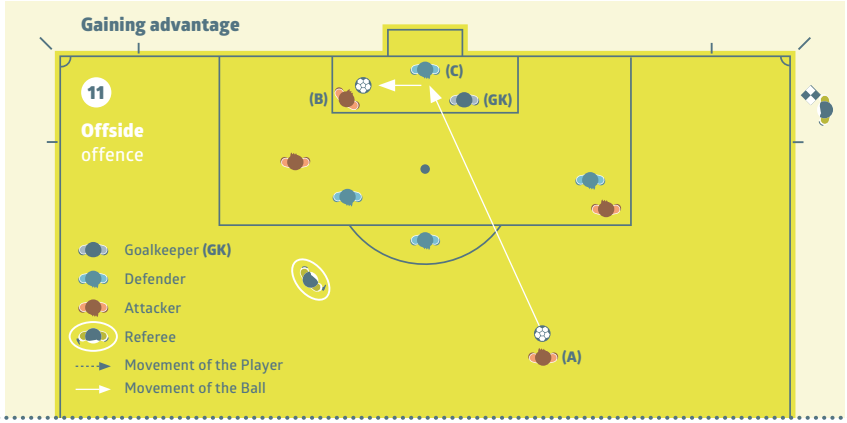
An attacker **in an offside position** (A) runs towards the ball but does not prevent the opponent from playing or being able to play the ball.
(A) is **not** challenging an opponent (B) for the ball.



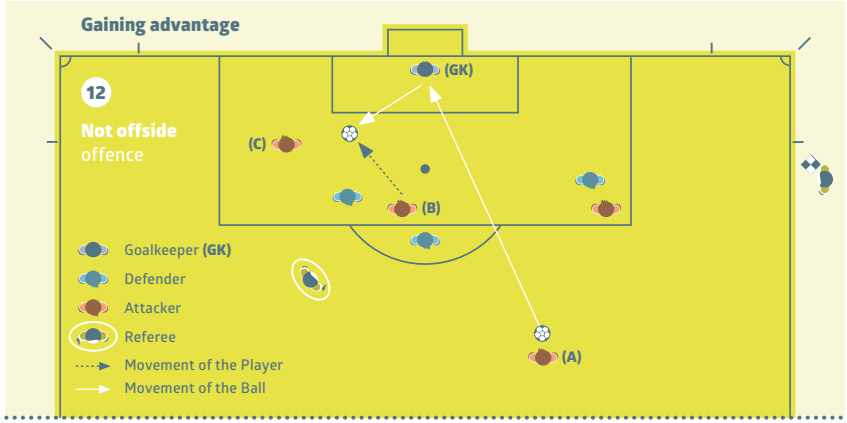
An attacker **in an offside position** (A) runs towards the ball preventing the opponent (B) from playing or being able to play the ball by challenging the opponent for the ball. (A) is challenging an opponent (B) for the ball.



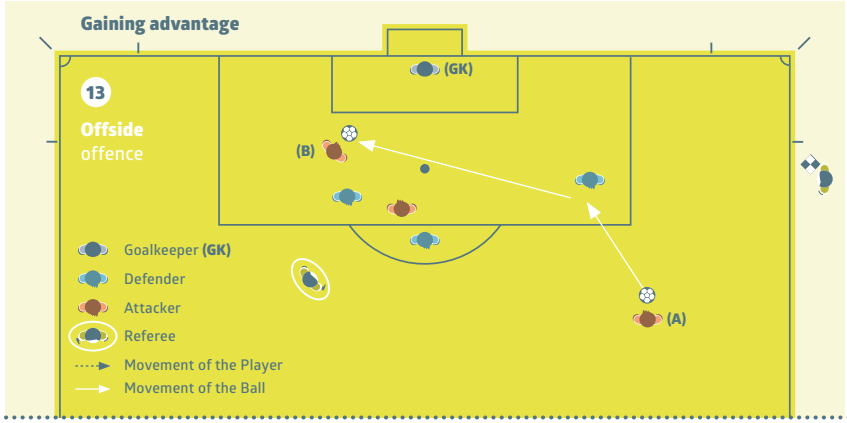
An attacker **in an offside position** (B) is penalised for **playing or touching the ball** that rebounds, is deflected or is played from a deliberate save by the goalkeeper having been **in an offside position** when the ball was last touched or is played by a team-mate.



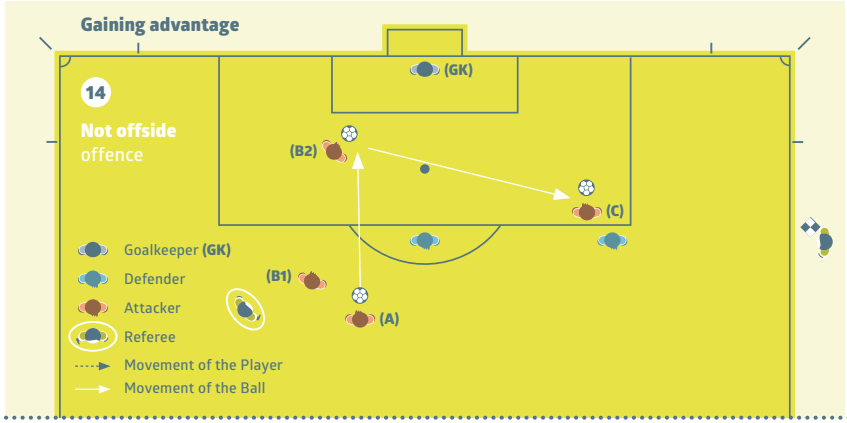
An attacker **in an offside position** (B) is penalised for **playing or touching the ball** that rebounds or is deflected from a deliberate save by a player from the defending team (C) having been **in an offside position** when the ball was last touched or is played by a team-mate.



The shot by a team-mate (A) rebounds from the goalkeeper, (B) is in an onside position and plays the ball, (C) **in an offside position** is not penalised because the player did not gain an advantage from being in that position because the player did not touch the ball.



The shot by a team-mate (A) rebounds off or is deflected by an opponent to attacker (B) who is penalised for **playing or touching the ball** having previously been **in an offside position**.



An attacker (C) is **in an offside position**, not interfering with an opponent, when a team-mate (A) passes the ball to player (B1) in an onside position who runs towards the opponents' goal and passes the ball (B2) to team-mate (C). Attacker (C) was **in an onside position** when the ball was passed, so cannot be penalised.

5. Treatment/assessment after a caution/sending-off

Previously, an injured player who received medical attention on the field of play must leave before the restart. This can be unfair if an opponent caused the injury as the offending team has a numerical advantage when play restarts.

However, this requirement was introduced because players often unsportingly used an injury to delay the restart for tactical reasons.

As a balance between these two unfair situations, The IFAB has decided that only for a physical offence where the opponent is cautioned or sent off, an injured player can be quickly assessed/treated and then remain on the field of play.

In principle, the delay should not be any longer than currently occurs when a medical person(s) comes on the field to assess an injury. The difference is that the point at which the referee used to require the medical person(s) and the player to leave is now the point at which the medical staff leave but the player can remain.

To ensure the injured player does not use/extend the delay unfairly, referees are advised to:

- be aware of the match situation and any potential tactical reason to delay the restart
- inform the injured player that if medical treatment is required it must be quick
- signal for the medical person(s) (not the stretchers) and, if possible, remind them to be quick

When the referee decides play should restart either:

- the medical person(s) leaves and the player remains or
- the player leaves for further assessment/treatment (stretcher signal may be necessary)

As a general guide, the restart should not be delayed for more than about 20–25 seconds beyond the point when everyone was ready for play to restart.

The referee must make full allowance for the stoppage.

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