

2019-2020 Changes to the Laws of the Game - Summary

LAW 3 – The Players

- Players being substituted must leave the field at the closest point of the boundary line (goal line or touch line).
 - Failure to do so could, under appropriate circumstances and in the opinion of the referee, be construed as delaying the restart of play (a cautionable offense). Substitutes must still enter at the midfield line. The referee may designate another exit point for safety or security reasons.

Law 5 – The Referee

- Showing cards to Team Officials – also see Law 12
 - If an offence occurs and the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach who is in the technical area at the time of the offence will, as the person responsible for the other technical area occupants, receive the YC/RC.
- Exceptions to the requirement for an injured player to leave the field of play only when a penalty kick has been awarded and the injured player will be the kicker

LAW 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

- The coin toss prior to the match will now result in the winner of the toss deciding to take the kickoff or to select the goal they will attack.
 - If the winner chooses to kickoff, the decision of which goal to attack will be made by the team which did not win the toss.
- The dropped ball restart will now involve one and only one player – regardless of the reason of the restart. The procedure has been changed so the dropped ball is ‘uncontested’.
 - That player will be from the team which last made contact with the ball if the drop is taken anywhere on the field outside the penalty area.
 - If the drop is inside the penalty area, only the goalkeeper defending that penalty area will participate.

LAW 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play

- Changes to when a ball is out of play. The ball is now out of play when it touches a match official, remains on the field of play and any of the following results:
 - A team starts a promising attack (even the team in possession), the ball goes directly into the goal, or the team in possession of the ball changes – Restart is a dropped ball for the team that last possessed the ball where the ball touched the official
 - The ball is in play at all other times when it touches a match official and when it rebounds goalpost, crossbar or corner flag post and remains on the field of play.

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LAW 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- Updated language to what does and does not constitute a handball offense for greater clarity
 - The ball touching the hand/arm does not necessarily mean that a handball offense occurred – see IFAB review and full law changes. The position of the hand/arm matters and if the player made a legal touch (with body including foot) before the player's hand/arm touched the ball.
- Updated language for showing red and yellow cards to team officials as well as additional offenses listed for warnings, cautions and send-offs.
- The referee may delay giving a card if, at that next stoppage, the offended team is clearly ready to start quickly and wants to start as doing so would give them a goal-scoring opportunity. Where a card is not given, under these circumstances, at the next stoppage, it must be given at the following stoppage.
- If a player temporarily off the field commits an offense against anyone on his/her own team who is also off the field, the restart is an indirect free kick closest on the touchline to where the off-field offense occurred.
- Other new language stating that kicking an object at someone is punished the same way as the Law prescribes for throwing an object at someone.
- The “pass-back” and “throw-to” offenses for goalkeepers are still offenses if the goalkeeper's handling of the ball follows directly from the deliberate kick or throw-in by a teammate, but does not apply if the goalkeeper kicks or attempts to kick the ball initially and, having failed to clear the ball, thereafter handles the ball.

LAW 13 – Free Kicks

- Any free kick given to a team from within its own penalty area is in play the moment the ball is kicked and clearly moves.
 - The requirement that the ball must leave the penalty area has been removed. Goal Kicks addressed in Law 16
- A new requirement in the Law applies to the defensive “wall”.
 - If a “wall” includes three or more defenders, players on the kicking team are not allowed to be in it (within or at either end) and, additionally, must be at least one yard away from any part of the “wall.”
 - If a player on the kicking team does not respect this one-yard minimum distance, the offense is punished by an indirect free kick for the defending team.

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LAW 14 – The Penalty Kick

- The goalkeeper defending against a penalty kick will be allowed to have one foot into the field prior to the ball being in play provided that some part of the other foot is on and remains on the goal line - the goalkeeper is not permitted to stand behind the goal line.
 - It is expected that the kicker initiates the kick upon hearing the referee's whistle. If the kicker fails to do so by an extended or unfair delay, disciplinary action may be taken (caution for delaying the restart) prior to taking the penalty kick.

LAW 16 – The Goal Kick

- The Law no longer requires that the ball leave the penalty area before it can be played by anyone on either team.
 - The ball is considered to be "in play" the moment it is kicked and clearly moves.

- **Several Clarifications have been made to the Laws of the Game (LOTG)**
 - Changing the term "terminated" to "abandoned"
 - Show a late card after play has restarted
 - Difference between "cooling break" and "drink break"
 - Clearer wording to confirm that a goalkeeper cannot receive a YC/RC for an 'illegal' handling offence within their own penalty area
 - Confirmation that a YC for an inappropriate goal celebration still applies even if the goal is disallowed, as the impact (safety, image of the game etc.) of the offence is the same as if the goal was awarded
 - Confirmation that verbal offences are penalized with an indirect free kick
 - Many IDFKs are too far from the opponents' goal for a goal to be scored directly (e.g. an IDFK for offside in the defensive third of the field of play) – when that is the case, the referee can stop the IDFK signal once the kick has been taken

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- The referee must not signal for the penalty kick to be taken if the goalkeeper is touching the goalposts, crossbar or net, or if they are moving e.g. because the goalkeeper has shaken them in an attempt to distract the kicker
- Clarification that an offence committed off the field of play results in a free kick on the boundary line closest to where the offence occurs; this will result in a penalty kick if this is in the offender's penalty area
- If an offence occurs after the referee has signaled for a penalty kick to be taken, but the kick is not taken, the penalty kick cannot be cancelled as the ball is not in play, but a YC/RC can be issued
- Clarification on distance opponents must be when a throw-in is taken