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The Laws of the Game

2017/18

Revision for 2017/18

The 2016/17 revision of the Laws of the Game was well-received and many have welcomed the emphasis on the importance of applying the 'spirit' of the Laws.

As with all major revisions, a second, follow-on, stage was necessary to extend the principles of the previous revision and to add clarifications. In addition, there were requests for additional/different wording from those who translate the Laws of the Game into other languages.

The Law changes and clarifications for 2017/18 approved at the 131st AGM of The IFAB at Wembley Stadium on 3 March 2017 represent the final stage of the major revision of the Laws of the Game.

The electronic version of the Laws of the Game 2017/18 and supporting documents can be found on The IFAB website: www.theifab.com

These changes are mandatory for competitions starting after 1st June 2017; they are optional for competitions starting before that date.



The Laws of the Game 2017/18

Changes



Law 1

Law 1 – The field of play

Field markings

Non-dangerous artificial turf can be used for field markings (especially the boundary lines)

New text

*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*





Law 3

Law 3 – The players

Player entering the field of play without permission

A player who enters the field of play without the referee's permission when it is needed (e.g. after injury, equipment change) is punished with direct FK if there is interference.

Requirement to leave the field after being cautioned is removed.

New text

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*
- ~~*order the player to leave the field of play (if necessary)*~~

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*



Law 4

Law 4 – The players' equipment

Electronic equipment

The IFAB AGM approved much clearer wording for Law 4 which allows use for the use of electronic equipment for medical reasons but reinforces the ban on the use of such equipment by players:

New text

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 not permitted except where it directly relates to player welfare or safety.

Consultation with national FAs and stakeholders

The AGM agreed to undertake a detailed consultation to consider

- what equipment should be allowed
- what should be communicated to/from the team officials in the technical area
- what issues may arise from the transmission of such information
- restrictions on coaches suspended from being in the technical area.

The focus should move from trying to ban/prevent the communication to dealing with the (bad) behaviour resulting the use of electronic equipment.



Law 5

Law 5 – The Referee

Respect

Law 5 contains a new statement requiring that match officials' decisions must always be respected.

New text

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.*



Law 8

Law 8 – Start and restart of play

The kick-off

The kicker can stand in the opposite half of the field of play

New text

For every kick-off:

- *all players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field of play*



Law 12

Law 12 – Fouls and misconduct

Penalty kick awarded for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity (DOGSO)

A more simple wording for DOGSO (no change in application or philosophy)

New text

- Where a player commits an offence against an opponent 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.

Law 12 – Fouls and misconduct

Cautions for unsporting behaviour

Last year's change to the DOGSO principles has been extended to 'stopping a promising attack' when a penalty is awarded for many offences which were an attempt to play the ball i.e. no caution (YC) in these situations

New text

- *There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, including if a player:*
- *commits a foul or handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack except where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which was an attempt to play the ball*

Law 12 – Fouls and misconduct

Offences off the field of play by or against a player

New text

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

NB This does not apply to offences not involving one of the 22 players e.g. substitute against substitute, coach against coach.

Law 12 – Fouls and misconduct

Throwing or kicking an object onto the field of play

New text

Direct free kick on boundary line where:

- a player throws an object at someone on the opponents' team list who is off the field

Direct free kick when:

- someone on the team list throw an object onto the field at an opponent, match official or which interferes with play

Direct free kick is taken where the interference occurs (or where the object struck or would have struck the person)

In both cases, it is a penalty kick if this is within the offender's penalty area



Law 13

Law 13 – Free kicks

Attacking player in or entering the penalty area

- *Same as for a goal kick – an opponent who is in (or enters the penalty area before the ball is in play) can not play or challenge for the ball until it has been touched by another player.*
- *If this occurs the free kick is re-taken*

Laws of the Game 2017/18

Clarifications

Law 11 - Offside

The 2017/18 edition clarifies the situations involves offences by/on a player in an offside position with additional text:

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;*

Law 11 - Offside

The 2017/18 edition will clarify the situations involves offences by/on a player in an offside position with additional text:

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.*

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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*

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- *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*

Other clarifications (*summary*)

ALL LAWS

- Replace 'infringement/infringe' etc. with 'offence/offend' etc.

LAW 3 – THE PLAYERS

- A substitution at half-time without informing referee is not a caution (YC)
- Changing the goalkeeper at half-time without informing the referee is not a caution (YC)

LAW 5 – THE REFEREE

- A medical official guilty of a dismissible offence may stay and treat players if there is no one else

LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

- A short drinks break is permitted at half-time of extra time

Other clarifications (*summary*)

LAW 10 – DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH

Kicks from the penalty mark

- Kicker may not play the ball a second time
- **Clarification of the outcome if both the goalkeeper and the kicker offend at same time:**
 - *Penalty missed/save: retake and YC for goalkeeper and kicker*
 - *Penalty scored – YC for kicker and PK recorded as missed (NB GK offence is not a YC offence as PK was not missed/saved)*

LAW 11 – OFFSIDE

- Offside player receiving the ball from a rebound off a match official can be penalised
- Clarification of 'save' – words 'attempts to save' added

Other clarifications (*summary*)

LAW 12 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- Verbal offences are punished with an indirect FK
- If the referee plays advantage for a sending-off (RC) it is IDFK unless more serious offence occurs
- Wording for goal celebration YC offences includes causing safety/security issues
- Clearer wording for, and clarification of, movement of attacker in a DOGSO situation i.e. if player goes diagonally past the last player this does stop the offence being a DOGSO (judge overall movement)
- Entering the field of play without permission and stopping a goal or DOGSO is a sending-off (even if no other offence is committed)

LAW 14 – THE PENALTY KICK

- Clarification of when a penalty is completed in extended time
- Clarification of the outcome if both the goalkeeper and the kicker offend (*see Law 10*)

LAW 16 – THE GOAL KICK

- Attacker entering the penalty area cannot play or challenge for the ball until it is touched by another player

Practical Guidelines for Match Officials Changes

Practical Guidelines – changes

Position and teamwork – Kicks from the Penalty Mark

- Only one AAR is needed to monitor the goalkeeper's movement when goal line technology (GLT) is used

Body language, Communication and Whistle: AR signals goal kick/corner kick

- It is not necessary for the AR to signal when it is a very clear goal kick or corner kick, especially when:
 - the referee has already signalled and/or
 - the ball goes out of play on the opposite side of the goal from the AR



Modifications by National FAs

Modifications to the Laws of the Game

The Laws of the Game should encourage people to take part in football. Therefore, national FAs (+ confederations and FIFA) will have more freedom to modify the 'organisational' Laws for their domestic football (except the highest levels) when they believe this will increase participation and enjoyment.

For competitions involving youth, disability, veterans and grassroots football, national FAs may allow modifications of the Laws of the game relating to:

- 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 2 equal halves of extra time)
- the use of return substitutes
- use of temporary dismissals (sin bins) for all or some caution (YC) offences within guidelines provided by The IFAB

Modifications to the Laws of the Game

In addition, national FAs (+ confederations and FIFA) may allow the following modification:

For all football except Men and Women competitions involving the 1st team of clubs in the top division and for senior 'A' international teams:

- number of substitutions each team is permitted to use, up to a maximum of 5

Categories of football

Women's football will no longer be categorised as a 'minority' category and will be included with Men's football

The definition of 'youth' as u16 and of 'veterans' as 35+ will be removed to give national FAs flexibility in these area (for domestic football)

The future

For the next 2 years, there will be a special focus on some crucial areas, including:

- Player behaviour (especially the role of the captain)*
- Increasing playing time/reducing time wasting*
- Different order for kicks from the penalty mark (KFPM)*
- Handball*