

# Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game



**United States Soccer Federation, Inc.**

# UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION



## ADVICE TO REFEREES

## ON THE LAWS OF THE GAME

# **UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION**

**Dan Flynn**  
**Executive Director/Secretary General**

**Julie Ilacqua**  
**Managing Director of Federation Services**

## **ADVICE TO REFEREES ON THE LAWS OF THE GAME**

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Alfred Kleinaitis  
Manager of Referee Development and Education  
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## Advice to Referees

In early 1997, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) issued a general rewrite of the Laws of the Game which took effect worldwide on July 1, 1997. This new text was the first complete revision of the Laws since the modern version was first issued about sixty years ago. In 2000, the IFAB issued a major revision of the Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game, which provided firm guidance on many principles behind the Laws of the Game.

Over that period, the seventeen Laws of the Game were augmented by IFAB decisions, interpretations, guidelines, instructions, and items of advice from both the IFAB and the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Further, the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) has issued additional instructions and guidance to clarify the IFAB's decisions and indicate how they were to be applied in the USA.

This book of Advice to Referees is specifically intended to give USSF referees, assistant referees, and fourth officials a reliable compilation of those international and national guidelines remaining in force, as modified or updated. **It is not a replacement for the Laws of the Game**, nor is it a "how to" book on refereeing. It is one of a number of sources of information:

- the Laws of the Game, published annually by USSF from the text provided by the IFAB through FIFA;
- the Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game;
- annual FIFA Circulars, as republished in designated USSF annual Memoranda;
- the USSF Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees, and Fourth Officials;
- entry-level referee clinics, in-service clinics, and referee recertification clinics taught by USSF instructors;
- other official publications from the USSF instructional program, including articles in Fair Play and specific subject memoranda; and
- constant and continuous experience as an official in actual match situations with feedback from assessors, senior officials, and others competent to coach and mentor the referee.

While every effort will be made to keep this Advice up to date through new editions, changes in the Law may result in an item becoming inaccurate or outdated. When this occurs, USSF will specify the relevant section of the Advice and will state clearly the necessary changes, so that referees can mark their copy appropriately until a new edition can be published.

Advice to Referees presents official USSF interpretations of the Laws of the Game. Affiliated leagues, associations, competitions, and officials must implement them to the fullest extent possible. Participants in affiliated matches must not impose personal, unsupported, or unofficial interpretations of any provisions of the Laws of the Game. If a point is not made in this Advice, look first to the relevant Law or Laws of the Game for the answer.

References to the male gender in this Advice in respect of referees, assistant referees, fourth officials, players, substitutes, or bench personnel are for simplification only and apply to both males and females.

Entries or portions of entries are italicized if they discuss matters which are less well known or less commonly understood.



## **Law 1 — The Field of Play**

### **1.1 DIMENSIONS**

The length of the field must always exceed the width. The dimensions of the field of play may vary to enable players of different levels of skill and physical attributes to play the game. The size of the field of play and the width between the goal posts and height of the crossbar from the ground may be modified for matches between players of under 16 years of age, for women, for players over 35, and for players with disabilities, provided USSF approves the modifications.

### **1.2 SAFETY**

Referees should arrive in plenty of time to inspect the field, goals, flags, and markings for accuracy and safety. No part of the field surface or the goals and flagposts may be dangerous to the players. If the field conditions are dangerous or unsuitable for play, the referee must refuse to officiate the game and, unless there is a possibility that the problem can be corrected, should leave immediately after announcing his decision to both sides. Unresolved problems with the field that do not involve safety should be reported to the competition authority, even if the game is played.

### **1.3 GOALS**

The goals must be securely anchored to the ground. For safety reasons, if the goals are not securely anchored to the ground, the match shall not be played.

### **1.4 FLAGPOSTS**

The compulsory corner flagposts and the optional halfway flagposts should be no less than 5 feet high; anything shorter is dangerous to the players. If used, the optional halfway flagposts must be at least 1m/1 yard outside the touch line.

### **1.5 FIELD MARKINGS**

The markings of the field should not be dangerous, must not protrude above the surface or be placed in ruts or hollows, and should be easily visible. The goal line should be the same width as the depth of the goal posts and the crossbar.

The lines belong to the areas of which they are the boundaries. The area beyond the goal line and crossbar and inside the goal net (if one is provided) is not part of the field of play.

The optional line drawn outside the field of play, 10 yards from the corner arc and at right angles to the goal line, may not touch the goal line. The line allows the officials to judge that defenders keep the proper distance at the taking of the corner kick.

If a photographer's line is provided, it must be marked behind the goal lines in accordance with the rules of the competition.

If the lines are not marked properly, the referee should try to have proper markings put down by the home team before starting the game, time permitting.

### **1.6 NO PLAYER MODIFICATIONS TO THE FIELD**

Goalkeepers or other players may not make unauthorized marks on the field of play. The player who makes such marks or alterations on the field to gain an unfair advantage may be cautioned for unsporting behavior. Players may return bent or leaning corner flags to the upright position, but they

may not bend or lean them away from the upright position to take a corner kick, nor may the corner flag be removed for any reason.

### 1.7 SUPERSTRUCTURE ON GOALS

It is not uncommon on public fields for the soccer goals to include structures attached to and above the crossbar (particularly where the goal is being used for other sports). *If the ball strikes any part of such a structure, apart from or in addition to striking a goal post or crossbar, the ball is considered to have left the field even if, as a result of the contact, the ball remains on the field.* The restart (goal kick or corner kick) is based on Laws 16 or 17.

### 1.8 DEALING WITH APPURTENANCES TO THE FIELD AND OUTSIDE AGENTS

#### (a) Required appurtenances

These are the goals, corner flags, and flagposts required by Law 1. Contact between these appurtenances and the ball or players is a normal part of play and requires no special consideration in determining the restart. In accordance with the Law, the restart is based on which team last played the ball. The referee and any assistant referee on the field are also considered to be part of the field of play.

#### (b) Non-regulation appurtenances (see 1.7)

These include superfluous items attached to the goal frame (such as the uprights on combination soccer/football goals) and not generally subject to movement. If the ball contacts these items, it is deemed to be automatically out of play and the restart is in accordance with the Law, based on which team last played the ball.

#### (c) Pre-existing conditions

These are things on or above the field which are not described in Law 1 but are deemed safe and not generally subject to movement. These include trees overhanging the field, wires running above the field, and covers on sprinkling or draining systems. They do not affect one team more adversely than the other and are considered to be a part of the field. If the ball leaves the field after contact with any item considered under the local ground rules of the field to be a pre-existing condition, the restart is in accordance with the Law, based on which team last played the ball. (Check with the competition for any local ground rules.)

#### (d) Outside agent

Tradition and common usage are very strong in soccer. Nowhere is this more true than in the definition of "outside agent." An "outside agent" (under any portion of the Laws of the Game) is anything that enters the field without the permission of the referee and plays or misdirects the ball or otherwise interferes with the game. This means that substitutes can be outside agents in some cases, as can dogs or coaches or spectators. Interference by an outside agent and the ball or players will result in the referee declaring a stoppage of play, restarting with a dropped ball where the ball was when play was stopped (subject to the special circumstances mentioned in Law 8). See ATR 10.7 and 14.7 for further guidance on dealing with outside interference.

*Note: The difference between non-regulation appurtenances and pre-existing conditions is that, if the ball makes contact with something like uprights or crossbar superstructure, it is ruled out of play even if the contact results in the ball remaining on the field. Where there is a pre-existing condition (such as an overhanging tree limb), the ball remains in play even if there is contact, as long as the ball itself remains on the field. Referees must be fully aware of and enforce any rules of the competition authority or field owner regarding non-regulation appurtenances.*

Referees should note all deviations from Law 1 during the pregame inspection of the field, include them specifically in their pregame conference and, where advisable, inform the teams as to how they will be handled in accordance with this guidance.

## **Law 2 — The Ball**

Law 2 does not require balls to be of a particular color or material. The referee may replace the original ball with one of a different color if this makes the ball more visible. The home team should supply the game ball, with several other suitable balls in reserve. At the higher levels of the game, leagues and competitions are urged to provide up to six balls around the field of play (together with persons whose responsibility it is to hand another ball to the players). When more than one game ball is provided for a match, the referee must inspect all balls to be used to ensure they meet the requirements of Law 2. If ball persons are available, the referee or fourth official should meet with them before the commencement of the match to brief them on their duties. Ball persons must serve both teams equally. Referees, assistant referees, and fourth officials must also ensure that extra balls do not enter the field.

## Law 3 — Number of Players

### 3.1 ROSTERS AND DESIGNATIONS OF SUBSTITUTES

Know the number of substitutes specified by the competition. The Law now allows a team to list up to 18 players on its game roster. All players' and nominated substitutes' names must be provided to the referee before the start of the match. The practice of obtaining rosters at halftime, after the game, or not at all, is not permissible. If the rules of competition do not specify the number of substitutions and if the teams cannot agree on a mutually acceptable number, apply the terms of Law 3 to the letter. If the rules of competition do not require rosters or team lists, the referee will consider anyone in the vicinity of the field wearing an identifiable uniform and subject to being called on to play to be a player or substitute and subject to his authority.

### 3.2 LATE-ENTERING PLAYER

If a player whose name was given to the referee prior to the match is not able to enter or re-enter the field in time for play to begin, due to late arrival or unreadiness of equipment or uniform, he may subsequently enter the field. Before doing so, his equipment must be checked by the referee. The referee may delegate this responsibility to the fourth official (if one has not been appointed, the assistant referees may be designated). If the inspection is performed by the referee, it can only occur at a stoppage of play and the player may enter the field at any point along the boundary lines. If the responsibility has been delegated, the player can enter the field during play after being checked by the designated official. In either case, the referee must beckon the player to enter the field.

### 3.3 MORE THAN THE ALLOWED NUMBER OF PLAYERS

If, while the game is in progress, the referee finds that a team has more than the allowed number of players on the field, he must stop play, and then caution (yellow card) and remove the extra player from the field. The person to be removed and cautioned would be whoever was not listed on the team roster as a "starter" or who had not already been formally substituted for a "starter"; in other words, probably a named substitute. The restart is an indirect free kick at the place where the ball was when play was stopped (subject to the special circumstances described in Law 8). (If the same person had been discovered immediately when entering the field without the referee's permission, the restart would be a dropped ball. It is a matter of timing.) In all competitions, especially those that allow multiple substitutions, the officials must be extremely vigilant in counting the number of players who leave and substitutes who enter to prevent problems of this nature.

*If a goal is scored by the team that had more than the allowed number of players and the referee discovers this before play is restarted, the goal is not valid and the restart is a goal kick. If the referee does not discover the extra player until after the kick-off, the goal remains valid and may not be taken away. The referee must report the incident to the proper authority.*

### 3.4 SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURE

After the player being replaced has left the field, the referee must signal his permission for the substitute to enter. A substitution is not complete and the substitute may not take part in the game until he has entered the field of play. Referees who deviate from the formal process by which a substitute becomes a player -- whether in the interest of saving time or because the steps are thought to be too complex and cumbersome -- do so at their own peril and will eventually discover that the Laws of the Game specify the procedure for very good reasons. Deviations may lead to situations that the referee cannot settle within the Law. For example, a substitute might commit a violent act after being allowed to enter the field before the player whom he is replacing has left. Then the referee must

decide whether the act was a foul or misconduct and, if the guilty party is dismissed, whether the team plays short.

Upon receiving permission from the referee, a player leaving the field is normally expected to exit from the closest point on the perimeter of the field. Referees should not permit exiting players to waste time by unnecessarily selecting a more distant exit point. Substitutes entering the field with the permission of the referee must do so at the halfway line.

Note: The Laws of the Game do not require that a player agree to be substituted even when the substitution has been requested by a team official or team captain. If the player refuses to leave the field, the substitution request must be denied.

### 3.5 PREVENTING DELAY DURING SUBSTITUTION

Referees should prevent unnecessary delays due to the substitution process. One source of delay is a request for a substitution that occurs just as a player starts to put the ball back into play. This often (incorrectly) results in the restart being called back and retaken. Another common source of delay is a substitute player who is not prepared to take the field when the request to substitute is made. In each case, the referee should order play to be restarted despite the request and inform the coach that the substitution can be made at the next opportunity.

The referee shall not prevent a team from restarting play if the substitute had not reported to the appropriate official before play stopped.

### 3.6 ALLOWING SUBSTITUTIONS AND ADDING TIME

With the above exception, referees may not ignore or deny permission for a legal substitution that is properly requested. Although Law 3 requires that the referee be "informed before any proposed substitution is made," this does not mean that the referee can deny permission for any reason other than to ensure that the substitution conforms to the Law. Even if it seems that the purpose is to waste time, the referee cannot deny the request, but should exercise the power granted in Law 7 to add time lost through "any other cause." (Rules of those competitions that permit multiple substitutions and re-entries can sometimes lead to confusion. Study the advice under 8.3 regarding the start of the second half.)

If, before the start of a match played under the rules of a competition, a player is replaced by a named substitute without the referee having been notified, this substitute, now a player, is permitted to play, but he should be cautioned for entering the field of play without the permission of the referee. This is considered to be an improper manipulation of the roster, rather than a substitution, and does not count against the number of substitutions the team is permitted to use.

### 3.7 TOO MANY SUBSTITUTIONS ALLOWED

If the referee allows more than the specified or agreed-upon number of substitutions and discovers this only after play has been restarted, this is a violation of Law 3. It is also a serious error by the referee. The referee must remove the illegal substitute at the earliest opportunity and replace him with the former player, restarting as appropriate to the reason the ball was out of play. The referee must file a complete report.

### 3.8 LEAVING THE FIELD WITHOUT PERMISSION

The referee may caution a player who leaves the field without waiting for the permission of the referee when his substitution is requested.

### 3.9 LEAVING THE FIELD IN THE COURSE OF PLAY

If a player accidentally passes over one of the boundary lines of the field of play or if a player in possession of or contesting for the ball passes over the touch line or the goal line without the ball to beat an opponent, he is not considered to have left the field of play without the permission of the referee. This player does not need the referee's permission to return to the field.

An opponent may exploit a situation in which the goalkeeper has temporarily left the field in the course of play by quickly and correctly taking a throw-in or a corner kick. Even though the goalkeeper may still be returning to the field, a goal scored under these circumstances is valid. No offense has been committed.

### 3.10 ILLEGALLY ENTERING THE GAME

If a person who is not a nominated substitute enters the game as a substitute, he will be considered "illegal" and must be removed from the game. Such a person cannot be cautioned, as he is neither a player nor a substitute. (However, if the person is a player who has been substituted out of the game, then he may be cautioned, as he is still under the authority of the referee.) If the referee stopped the game to deal with this person, the restart would be a dropped ball at the place where the ball was, subject to the special circumstances imposed in Law 8. The referee must remove the illegal substitute at the earliest opportunity and replace him with the former player, restarting as appropriate to the reason the ball was out of play. The referee must file a complete report.

### 3.11 REPLACED PLAYER ILLEGALLY RETURNING TO PLAY

The referee must stop play and caution and remove from the game a player who has been replaced and subsequently returns to the field as a substitute. The caution is given for unsporting behavior, as a substituted player is not permitted to take any further active part in the match. The referee must remove the illegal substitute at the earliest opportunity and replace him with the former player, restarting as appropriate to the reason the ball was out of play. The referee must file a complete report.

### 3.12 DEPARTING PLAYER MUST NOT INTERFERE WITH PLAY

If a player has received permission to leave the field, he must do so. If he interrupts his exit to play the ball as play continues, the player should be cautioned for unsporting behavior. The game must be restarted with an indirect free kick taken by a player of the opposing team, from the place where the infringement occurred (subject to the special circumstances outlined in Law 8).

### 3.13 APPLYING DISCIPLINE TO SUBSTITUTES

The referee's authority extends to all substitutes, whether called upon to play or not. While it is not possible for a substitute to commit or to be penalized for a foul, substitutes can be shown the appropriate card and cautioned or sent off for misconduct. (See Law 5 for dealing with coaches and other team personnel.)

Players who have already been substituted or sent from the field for misconduct remain under the authority of the referee as long as they are in the vicinity of their team.

### 3.14 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE GAME

Misconduct committed by a player or a substitute prior to the start of the match, during the match, during breaks between playing periods, and after the match has concluded is subject to a formal caution or a send-off, as appropriate. (After the start of the match, disciplinary procedures also apply to a player who has been substituted out during the game, a "substituted player.") Yellow and red cards, which are now mandatory indications of cautions and send-offs, may be shown only for

misconduct committed by players, substitutes, or substituted players during a match. "During a match" includes:

- (a) the period of time immediately prior to the start of play during which players and substitutes are physically on the field warming up, stretching, or otherwise preparing for the match;
- (b) any periods in which play is temporarily stopped;
- (c) half time or similar breaks in play;
- (d) required overtime periods;
- (e) kicks from the penalty mark if this procedure is used in case a winner must be determined; and
- (f) the period of time immediately following the end of play during which the players and substitutes are physically on the field but in the process of exiting.

Cautions issued prior to the start of the game or during breaks between periods are recorded and they are counted for purposes of sending a player from the field for receiving a second caution during the match. To prevent misunderstandings, the referee should inform officials of both teams before the first period of play begins of any cautions or send-offs occurring prior to the start of the match.

If a player or substitute is cautioned or dismissed for misconduct which has occurred during a break or suspension of play, the card must be shown on the field before play resumes.

If a player is dismissed before the match begins, he may be replaced by a named substitute, but the team is not allowed to add any names to its roster and its number of permissible substitutions is not reduced.

*Players or substitutes who have been sent off may not remain in the team area, but must be removed from the environs of the field. If this is not practical because of the age or condition of the player, the team authorities are responsible for the behavior of the player or substitute.*

*There can be no "temporary expulsion" of players who have been cautioned, nor may teams be forced to substitute for a player who has been cautioned.*

Postgame: Any misconduct committed by players or substitutes after the field has been cleared must be described in the game report and reported to the competition authority. Since such misconduct cannot result in a formal caution or send-off, no card may be displayed.

### 3.15 RESTARTING PLAY FOR INFRINGEMENTS OF LAW 3

If the game is stopped to deal with infringements of Law 3 (except for interference by persons who are not players), play is restarted with an indirect free kick taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was when play was stopped (subject to the special circumstances of Law 8).

### 3.16 NUMBER OF PLAYERS DURING KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK

Only the players who were on the field at the end of the game (or temporarily off the field for treatment of injury or repair of equipment) may participate in kicks from the penalty mark. The kicks from the mark phase of the match begins at the moment regulation play ends (including any overtime periods of play.) All players who are not injured must take a kick before anyone on the same team takes a second kick. Only the goalkeeper may be substituted in the case of injury during the kicks phase and only if the team has a substitution remaining from its permitted maximum. If a player is dismissed or seriously injured and thus removed from the field during the taking of the kicks, the contest continues without him. Under no circumstances will a team be required to "reduce to equate" if the opposing team loses one or more players due to injury or misconduct occurring during the kicks

phase of the match. *Although Law 3 requires that a match may not be started with fewer than seven players on each side, this does not apply to the taking of kicks from the penalty mark. If one of the teams is able to field only five or six players for the kicks, the taking of kicks may begin, and it may continue as long as there is one player left.* Until a result is produced, both teams must continue to use their eligible players without duplication until all (including the goalkeeper) have kicked, at which time players who have already kicked may kick again. If one team has fewer players than the other, it will need to begin using again its players who have already kicked sooner than will the opposing team.

### 3.17 MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Although Law 3 specifies a minimum of seven players in order to start and continue a match, it is not always necessary for all seven to be physically on the field. A match may be continued if a team drops below this minimum number as a result of a player requesting and receiving permission from the referee to leave the field temporarily for treatment of an injury or if instructed by the referee to leave the field to correct bleeding, blood on the uniform, or illegal equipment. In such cases, the referee should be satisfied that the team will be able to field the minimum number within a reasonable period of time. If this is not the case, the referee must abandon the match and describe the circumstances fully in his report.

### 3.18 RETURN OF A PLAYER TEMPORARILY OFF THE FIELD

If a player has received permission from the referee to leave the field during play for treatment of an injury, that player must have the referee's permission to return to the field. If the ball is in play, such a player may only re-enter the field across either of the touch lines. When the ball is out of play, the player may re-enter across any of the boundary lines. Only the referee is authorized to allow an injured player to re-enter the field whether the ball is in play or not. If the injured player has not been replaced (as would likely be the case when the substitution procedures in Law 3 are fully in effect), the referee must be aware of when the player is able to return and should give permission to do so at the earliest opportunity in order to bring the player's team up to its permitted number of players.

If a player has been instructed to leave the field to correct bleeding, blood on the uniform, or illegal equipment, the procedure for permitting that player to return to the field is described in 5.8.

### 3.19 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND THE REFEREE

The criteria for registering players in a league and/or for determining if a player is permitted to participate in any given match are set by the competition authority and may not be modified by the referee. The competition authority may require that the referee check rosters, player passes, and similar documentation as a prerequisite for allowing a player to participate in a match. Where the validity of any player's documentation or right to participate in the match is or becomes a matter of dispute between the two sides, with no resolution, the referee must allow the player to participate and to include all details in the match report. (An example would be the case where one team says that the opposing player has been suspended and is not eligible to play in this game, but the player's team disputes this.)

If there is an obvious discrepancy between the player documentation and the player himself, and the referee can verify that the player and the documentation do not match one another, the player will not play. The referee will retain the documentation and forward it to the competition authority with the match report. In the absence of an obvious discrepancy or fabrication of player credentials, the issue must be decided in favor of allowing the player to participate in the match, with full details included in the match report.

## **Law 4 — Players' Equipment**

### **4.1 WEARING UNIFORMS**

It is implicit in the Law that each side wear a distinctively colored jersey, that shorts and socks be uniform for each team, and that the uniforms be distinguishable from the uniforms worn by the other team. However, the details of the uniform are governed by the competition authority and can vary widely from one match to another. The referee must know and enforce the rules of each competition worked. Players' jerseys must remain tucked inside their shorts, socks must remain pulled up, and each player must wear shinguards under the socks. Slide pants or similar undergarments must be as close as possible to the main color of the shorts.

### **4.2 SAFETY**

The referee must inspect the players and their equipment to ensure that there is nothing dangerous to any player. Players may not wear anything that the referee considers dangerous to themselves or to their teammates or opponents. The referee may delegate all or part of this responsibility to one or both of the assistant referees.

### **4.3 JEWELRY**

All items of jewelry are normally considered dangerous; however, referees should consider carefully any item of clothing or jewelry that is clearly religious or medical in nature and permit it to be worn if it is not dangerous and not likely to provide the player with an unfair advantage.

### **4.4 GOALKEEPER UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

Under Law 4, goalkeepers must wear a jersey color distinct from the players of both teams. In addition, goalkeepers traditionally wear items of clothing besides those prescribed under Law 4. These items include soft hats or caps, gloves, pants with special hip or thigh pads, jerseys with pads along the elbows and arms, and separate pads for knees or elbows. There is no problem as long as these items of clothing do not present a danger to any players, are of a color distinct from the uniforms of players of either team and are, in the opinion of the referee, clearly related to the goalkeeper's function. The referee should prevent any player other than the goalkeeper from wearing an item of clothing or equipment that is permitted to the goalkeeper under these criteria.

If the two goalkeepers' shirts are the same color and neither has another shirt to change into, the referee shall allow the match to proceed.

### **4.5 FOOTWEAR**

Shoes are a required item of player equipment. If a player, due to a collision with an opponent or other cause, loses a shoe and immediately scores a goal, the goal would be valid. The player lost his shoe by accident and did not intentionally play without the shoe. It is within the referee's discretion to allow such a player to continue playing for a short while until he can recover his shoe and put it back on.

### **4.6 INCORRECT UNIFORM OR EQUIPMENT**

Instructing a player to leave the field to correct an illegal uniform or equipment does not require a report by the referee as this is not a "send-off" for misconduct. The inspection to confirm that the correction has been made is conducted by the referee or, if delegated by the referee in the pregame conference, by the fourth official or an assistant referee if a fourth official has not been appointed. The player must receive a signal from the referee before actually re-entering the field from the touch line.

## **Law 5 — The Referee**

### **5.1 REFEREE UNIFORM**

Referees may wear only the gold primary jersey or the black/white-, blue/black-, or red/black-striped alternate jerseys, and may wear only the approved socks. No other colors will be worn without express permission of the USSF. If the uniform colors worn by a goalkeeper and the referee or by a team (or both teams) and the referee are similar enough to invite confusion, the referee must attempt to have the goalkeeper or the team(s) change to different colors. If there is no way to resolve the color similarity, then the referee (and the assistant referees) must wear the colors that conflict least with the players. Referees and assistant referees must wear the same color jerseys and the same style of socks, and all must wear the same length sleeves. The referee uniform does not include a hat, cap, or other head covering, with the exception of religious head covering. Referees must wear the badge of the current registration year.

### **5.2 REFEREE'S AUTHORITY**

The referee's authority begins when he arrives at the area of the field of play and continues until he has left the area of the field after the game has been completed. The referee's authority extends to time when the ball is not in play, to temporary suspensions, to the half-time break, and to additional periods of play or kicks from the penalty mark required by the rules of the competition.

For a synopsis of when cards may be shown to players, substitutes, or substituted players, see Section 3.14.

### **5.3 PREGAME**

Before the game, the referee must discuss with his assistant referees and fourth official (if one has been assigned) the rules of the competition and the proper procedures and mechanics to be followed by each official (as prescribed in the USSF Guide to Procedures).

### **5.4 REFEREE SIGNALS**

Referee signals should be restricted to those authorized by IFAB/FIFA (play on — advantage, penalty kick, indirect free kick, direct free kick, goal kick, corner kick, and caution or expulsion when showing the card), unless there is a clear need to communicate other information to the players or to the assistant referees and fourth official. Other signals or methods of communication intended to supplement (not replace) those described in the USSF Guide to Procedures are permitted only if they do not conflict with established procedures and only if they do not intrude on the game, are not distracting, are limited in number and purpose, and are carefully described by the referee before the match. Such signals should be kept to an absolute minimum, and should not be demonstrative or draw undue attention to the referee (or the assistant referee).

When starting or restarting the game, the referee may signal to both teams by using his whistle, a hand signal, a word or two, or a simple nod or other acknowledgment. Such a signal should be clearly understood by both teams.

### **5.5 TRIFLING INFRACTIONS**

"The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with as little interference as possible, and in this view it is the duty of referees to penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law. Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of spectators."

(Former International F.A. Board Decision 8 to Law V, now considered an integral element of the "Spirit of the Game.")

## 5.6 ADVANTAGE

Referees have the power to apply (and signal) the advantage upon seeing a foul or misconduct committed if at that moment the terms of the advantage clause (Law 5, 11th item) were met. Applying advantage permits the referee to allow play to continue when the team against which the foul has been committed will actually benefit from the referee not stopping play.

The referee must remember that the advantage applies to the team of the fouled player and not just to the fouled player. Soccer is a team sport and the referee is expected to apply advantage if the fouled player's team is able to retain or regain control of the ball.

The referee may return to and penalize the original foul if the advantage situation does not develop as anticipated after a short while (2-3 seconds). If the ball goes out of play during this time, then play must be restarted in accordance with the Law. Referees should note that the "advantage" is not defined solely in terms of scoring a goal. Also, a subsequent offense by a player of the offending team must not be ignored while the referee allows the anticipated development of the advantage. Such an offense may either be recognized by stopping play immediately or by applying the advantage clause again. *Regardless of the outcome of the advantage call, the referee must deal appropriately with any misconduct at the next stoppage, before allowing play to be restarted. (See also 12.27.)*

The referee may also apply advantage during situations that are solely misconduct (both cautionable and send-off offenses) or to situations that involve both a foul and misconduct.

The advantage applies only to infringements of Law 12 (fouls and/or misconduct) and not to infringements of other Laws. For example, there can be no advantage during an offside situation, nor may advantage be applied in the case of an illegal throw-in that goes to an opponent.

Referees must understand that advantage is not an absolute right. It must be balanced against other issues. The giving of the advantage is not required in all situations to which it might be applied. The referee may stop play despite an advantage if other factors (e.g., game control, severity of a foul or misconduct, possibility of player retaliation, etc.) outweigh the benefit of play continuing.

A common misconception about advantage is that it is about deciding if a challenge is a foul. On the contrary, that decision has already been made because advantage cannot be applied to anything which is not a foul (meaning a violation of Law 12). Advantage, rather, is a decision about whether to stop play for the foul. Accordingly, giving the advantage is "calling the foul" and thus it must be as obvious to the players as signaling to stop play.

Inconspicuous advantage signals are as much to be avoided as a whistle which cannot be heard. Likewise, however, using the advantage signal to indicate that something is not a foul is equally wrong.

In determining whether there is persistent infringement, all fouls are considered, including those to which advantage has been applied.

## 5.7 STOPPING PLAY

The referee has the power to stop the match for any infringement of the Laws, to apply advantage under the appropriate conditions, or to decide that an infringement is trifling or doubtful and should not be called at all. However, the referee also has the power to stop play for other reasons, including misconduct for which the referee intends only to warn the player regarding his behavior and not to issue a caution. In these circumstances, the referee should take care that ordering such a stoppage would not disadvantage the opposing team. As the stoppage will not have occurred for a foul or misconduct, play would be restarted with a dropped ball.

## 5.8 RETURN AFTER BLEEDING OR EQUIPMENT REMEDY

If a player is bleeding or his uniform is blood-soaked, he must leave the field immediately to have the bleeding stopped and his skin and uniform cleaned as thoroughly as possible (replacing the uniform may be necessary to meet this requirement). Before the player can return to the field, the correction of the situation must be confirmed by an official -- the referee or, if delegated by the referee in the pregame conference, the fourth official or, if there is no fourth official, an assistant referee. Once the correction has been confirmed, the player can be permitted to return to the field if beckoned by the referee, even if play is continuing. The objective is to bring the team back to its authorized strength as soon as possible.

## 5.9 INJURIES

When the referee has stopped play due solely to the occurrence of a serious injury, he must ensure that the injured player is removed from the field of play (the refusal to do so could be considered a cautionable offense for delaying the restart of play). If play is stopped for any other reason, an injured player cannot be required to leave the field but may be permitted to do so by the referee. The determination of what constitutes a "serious injury" should take into account the age of the player." Only the referee may permit the return to the field of play of a player who was permitted to leave the field for treatment of an injury. This is not a substitution. The player who left the field for treatment of an injury may return during play with the permission of the referee, but only from the touch line. If the ball is out of play, the player may return with the permission of the referee across any boundary line.

## 5.10 BEHAVIOR OF COACH AND BENCH PERSONNEL

Coaches or other team officials, one at a time, may provide tactical advice to their players, including positive remarks and encouragement. *The referee should only take action against coaches or other team officials for irresponsible behavior or for actions that bring the game into disrepute. A coach or other team official may not be cautioned or sent off nor shown any card; however, at the discretion of the referee, such persons may be warned regarding their behavior or dismissed from the field of play and its immediate area. When a coach or other team official is dismissed, the referee must include detailed information about such incidents in the match report.*

## 5.11 TERMINATING A MATCH

The referee may terminate a match for reasons of safety (bad weather or darkness), for any serious infringement of the Laws, or because of interference by spectators. Only the competition authority, not the referee, has the authority to declare a winner, a forfeit, or a replay of the match in its entirety. The referee must report fully on the events.

## 5.12 ABANDONING A MATCH

The referee may abandon a match if there is an insufficient number of players to meet the requirements of the Law or the competition, if a team does not appear or leaves before completion of

the game, or if the field or any of its equipment do not meet the requirements of the Laws or are otherwise unsafe. An abandoned match is replayed unless the competition rules provide otherwise.

NOTE: The difference between terminating a match and abandoning a match is a subtle one, but it is historically correct and supported by traditional practice.

### 5.13 CHANGING A DECISION AFTER PLAY HAS RESTARTED

A displayed red or yellow card can be canceled by the referee only if play has not restarted. If play has been restarted or if the match is over (including required periods of additional play and/or kicks from the penalty mark), a displayed red or yellow card cannot be canceled by the referee for any reason.

If the referee discovers after play has restarted that an incorrect player was cautioned (yellow card) or sent off (red card), the display of the card cannot be changed and must be reported. The referee must provide in the match report all details relevant to the mistake. This situation must be distinguished from the referee's failure to display a red card and send off a player who has received a second caution in the same match. Upon discovering this error -- including being informed by an assistant referee or the fourth official -- *the red card may be shown and the player sent from the field even if play has been restarted.*

*The failure of the referee to include in the match report accurately and fully all cards displayed during play is a serious violation of the referee's responsibilities.*

Referees should note Question #9 under Law 12 in the IFAB Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game, which states specifically that the referee may not decide to rescind a caution if the player who has already been charged with misconduct apologizes.

### 5.14 CHANGING A DECISION ON AN INCORRECT RESTART

If the referee awards a restart for the wrong team and realizes his mistake before the restart is taken, then the restart may be corrected even though the decision was announced after the restart took place. This is based on the established principle that the referee's initial decision takes precedence over subsequent action. The visual and verbal announcement of the decision after the restart has already occurred is well within the Spirit of the Law, provided the decision was made before the restart took place.

### 5.15 REPORTING MISCONDUCT

When a player commits more than one form of misconduct at the same time (e. g., dissent and abusive language, denial of an obvious goalscoring opportunity and serious foul play, delaying the restart of play and failure to respect the required distance), the referee can use only one as the official reason for the caution or send off. The reason given should reflect whichever act of misconduct is considered the most serious (or, if committed in a professional match, had the highest point value). However, all misconduct committed by a player must be noted in the referee's report, including any behavior in addition to the official reason for the caution or send off. (See also ATR 12.38.)



## Law 6 — The Assistant Referees

### 6.1 ASSISTANT REFEREE DUTIES

"Assistant referees, where neutral, shall draw the referee's attention to any breach of the Laws of the Game of which they become aware if they consider that the referee may not have seen it, but the referee shall always be the judge of the decision to be taken."

(Former International F.A. Board Decision 1 to Law VI)

### 6.2 ASSISTANT REFEREE SIGNALS

Assistant referee signals should be restricted to those authorized by IFAB/FIFA (offside and the far, center, and near positions; throw-in; corner kick; goal kick; and substitution) or the USSF (foul, infringement inside the penalty area, or other signals described in the USSF Guide to Procedures), unless there is a clear need to communicate information to the players or to the referee that cannot be communicated in any other way. (For further guidelines, see Advice 5.4.)

### 6.3 NO SIGNAL FOR FOULS OBSERVED BY THE REFEREE

*Assistant referees should not signal at all for fouls or misconduct that clearly occur in the sight of the referee, that are doubtful or trifling, or for which the referee would likely have applied advantage. Assistant referees may, however, bring such events to the attention of the referee at a stoppage of play.*

### 6.4 MISSED ASSISTANT REFEREE SIGNALS

*If the assistant referee signals a ball out of play, but the referee does not see his signal for an extended period, during which play is stopped and restarted several times, the assistant referee should lower the flag.* The FIFA Referee Committee has declared that it is impossible for the referee to act on the assistant referee's signal after so much play. If the referee misses the assistant referee's signal for offside, the assistant referee should stand at attention with the flag raised until the defending team gains clear possession or until a goal kick or throw-in is awarded to the defending team. To avoid such situations, the referee should make eye contact with the assistant referees as often as possible. In addition, the assistant referees must be alert for and mirror each other's signals if needed to assist the referee.

The assistant referee should maintain his signal if a serious foul or misconduct is committed out of the referee's sight or when a goal has been scored illegally. The referee should cover this situation during the pregame conference with the assistant referees.

### 6.5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR OFFSIDE

Among the specifically stated responsibilities of the assistant referee is to indicate "when a player may be penalized for being in an offside position." Because "it is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position," *the assistant referee must interpret this responsibility to require that he determine not only if an attacker is in an offside position but also if that same player is involved in active play by interfering with play, interfering with an opponent, or gaining an advantage by being in the offside position (see Law 11).* The assistant referee should use his unique perspective on the touchline as a trained, neutral official and provide the appropriate signal so that the referee can make a final determination as to whether the attacker will be penalized for an offside infringement.

### 6.6 CLUB LINESMEN

Where neutral assistant referees are not available, the referee may use club linesmen. Club linesmen should report to the referee before the start of the game for instructions. The referee should make it clear that the decision of the referee is final and must not be questioned. The relationship of club linesmen to the referee must be one of assistance, without undue interference or any opposition. Club linesmen are to signal only when the ball is entirely over the goal line or touch-line.

## **Law 7 — The Duration of the Match**

### **7.1 LENGTH OF HALVES**

The referee may not arbitrarily shorten or lengthen the halves of a game where the time has been specified by the competition authority (league, tournament, etc.).

### **7.2 ADDING TIME**

The amount of time the referee allows for time lost in either half of a game or in any overtime period for the reasons listed in Law 7 (Allowance for Time Lost) is entirely at his discretion. Referees should remember that, in addition to the reasons listed in Law 7, there are “other causes” that consume time, such as kick-offs, throw-ins, dropped balls, free kicks, and replacement of lost or defective balls. Many of the reasons for stoppages in play and thus “lost time” are, however, entirely normal elements of the game. This should be taken into account in applying discretion regarding the time to be added. The main objective should be to restore playing time to the match which is lost due to excessively prolonged or unusual stoppages. The IFAB has strongly urged referees to take fully into account time lost due to injuries.

### **7.3 MISTAKEN ENDING**

If the referee ends play early, then the teams must be called back onto the field and the remaining time must be played as soon as the error is detected. The halftime interval is not considered to have begun until the first period of play is properly ended. If the ball was out of play when the period was ended incorrectly, then play should be resumed with the appropriate restart (throw-in, goal kick, etc.). If the ball was in play, then the correct restart is a dropped ball where the ball was when the referee incorrectly ended play (subject to the special circumstances in Law 8).

If the referee discovers that a period of play was ended prematurely but a subsequent period of play has started, the match must be abandoned and the full details of the error included in the game report.

### **7.4 DISCIPLINE DURING KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK OR EXTRA TIME**

The Laws of the Game apply when additional time must be played or kicks from the penalty mark must be taken to satisfy a requirement by the competition authority that there be a winner of a match. Misconduct during extra time or kicks from the penalty mark is treated as if it had occurred during regulation time.

## **Law 8 — The Start and Restart of Play**

### **8.1 COIN TOSS**

The decision made by the team winning the toss is only which end of the field to attack; the other team takes the kick-off. When extra time is played, the coin toss again decides only which end the team winning the toss will attack in the first extra period of play. The team that wins the toss at extra time also kicks off to start the second period of extra time (if it is necessary). A separate coin toss is required for kicks from the penalty mark; however, in this case, the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick.

### **8.2 THE KICK-OFF**

The ball must be kicked and move forward. Only minimal movement is needed to meet this requirement. The kick-off must be taken by a player competing in the match, in accordance with the Law, not by any non-player. Remember to note which team kicked off and in which direction the kick was taken.

### **8.3 PLAYER COUNT**

Count the number of players in both teams before the beginning of each half and after any substitution. The intelligent referee's signal to start the second half is a tacit acknowledgment that the persons on the field are players and the persons wearing a goalkeeper jersey are the goalkeepers -- so long as the persons themselves are not illegal and the team is fielding the proper number of players. This may not be possible during a match played strictly in accordance with the requirements of Law 3 — in other words, most matches other than youth games. During such a match, if the referee discovers that a player has changed places with the goalkeeper during the halftime break without informing the referee, under the letter of the Law the referee should allow play to continue and then caution both players for unsporting behavior when the ball next goes out of play.

### **8.4 INADVERTENT WHISTLE**

If the referee mistakenly blows the whistle to stop play, the proper restart is a dropped ball at the place where the ball was when the whistle was blown (keeping in mind the special circumstances outlined in Law 8).

### **8.5 DROPPED BALL**

There is no requirement that players from both teams -- or that any player -- must take part at a dropped ball.

A dropped ball must be "dropped," not thrown down. The referee should hold the ball in the palm of his hand at waist level with the other hand on top of the ball. At the proper moment, the referee should then pull away the hand beneath the ball and let it drop, taking care that the players do not play it until it has hit the ground. If the dropped ball leaves the field without having been played, the ball must be dropped again where it was previously dropped. The goalkeeper may participate at dropped balls.

The referee must not use the dropped ball to restart play as a crutch in those cases where there is some question about the correct restart. The referee must make a decision and announce it firmly. See ATR 9.3.

## 8.6 COMMON ELEMENTS OF THE EIGHT METHODS OF RESTARTING PLAY

RESTART	KICK-OFF	THROW-IN	GOAL KICK	CORNER KICK	INDIRECT FREE KICK	DIRECT FREE KICK	PENALTY KICK	DROPPED BALL
Reason for ball being out of play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start of game</li> <li>• Start of 2d half</li> <li>• Goal scored</li> </ul>	Ball passed completely over touch line	Ball passed completely over goal line last touched by attacking team	Ball passed completely over goal line last touched by defending team	Non-penal foul, misconduct, offside, and certain technical offenses	Penal foul, except when done by defending team in own penalty area	Penal foul by defending team inside own penalty area	Any other temporary stoppage of the game by the referee
Where is restart taken?	Center of the field	Within 1 meter of the point where the ball crossed the touch line	From within the goal area	Quarter circle at nearest corner flag	Where offense occurred (see special circumstances in Law 8)	Where foul occurred, with exception of penalty area (spec. circs in Law 8)	Penalty mark	Where ball was when play was stopped (see special circumstances in Law 8)
Distance opponent must be from ball	10 yards	No specific distance; may not interfere	Outside penalty area	10 yards, with exception of quick kick	10 yards, or on own goal line between posts, except on quick kick	10 yards, with exception of quick kick (spec. circs in Law 8)	10 yards, outside penalty area and behind penalty mark	No distance requirement
When ball is in play	When ball moves forward	When ball enters field	When ball leaves penalty area	When ball moves	When ball moves, with exception of defender's kick in own penalty area	When ball moves, with exception of defender's kick in own penalty area	When ball moves forward	When ball touches ground
Can player who receives ball directly be declared offside?	Does not apply	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Treat as violation of Law 14	No
Can a goal be scored directly?	Yes	No	Yes, but only against opponent	Yes, but only against opponent	No	Yes, but only against opponent	Yes	Only after ball hits ground

## Law 9 — The Ball In and Out of Play

### 9.1 BALL OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed the goal line or touch line, or when the referee has stopped play. The commission of a "supposed infringement" does not stop play; play can be stopped for any infringement only by the referee's signal.

However, while it is the signal of the referee that announces a decision, play is considered to have stopped when the decision is made, not when the decision is announced. Thus, no act can be considered a foul if it occurs after the referee has decided to stop play (or after the ball has left the field) but before the signal has actually been given. The referee is the sole judge of when he has decided to stop play. If the referee is acting on a signal from an assistant referee, the stoppage is considered to have occurred at the time of the assistant referee's signal.

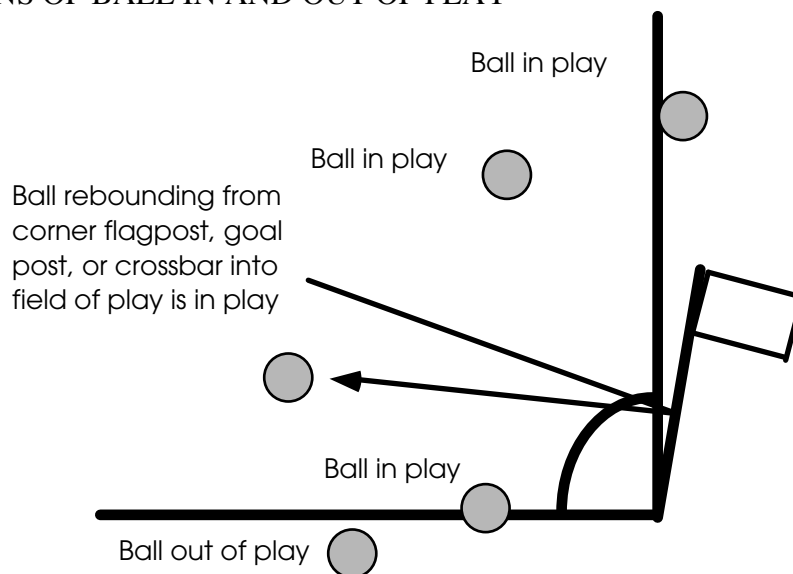
### 9.2 PLAY THE REFEREE'S WHISTLE

The Laws of the Game were not written to compensate for the mistakes of players. If a spectator blows a whistle and any player, thinking it was the referee, then illegally handles the ball, the referee could award a direct free kick (or penalty kick) to the opposing team. The same would be true if the player reacted to a referee's whistle from an adjacent field. If these things occur, the referee should exercise common sense and the guidance provided in Advice 5.5 in dealing with the action.

### 9.3 SIMULTANEOUS TOUCHES

*The referee should promptly signal his best decision on the direction for the restart when the ball appears to have gone into touch from "simultaneous" touches by members of both teams. Under the Laws of the Game, it is not permissible to give a dropped ball restart in situations where the referee cannot decide which team has possession. The players quickly identify referee indecision, and will use it to their advantage.*

### 9.4 ILLUSTRATIONS OF BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY



## **Law 10 — The Method of Scoring**

### **10.1 ONLY GOALS SCORED DURING PLAY ARE VALID**

Only goals scored during playing time are valid. Balls that enter the goal after time has expired -- in other words, after the referee has blown the whistle -- cannot be scored as goals.

### **10.2 SIGNALING A GOAL**

Law 10 defines the only method by which a goal can be scored. Referees should signal a goal only when it is absolutely clear that the ball has wholly crossed the goal line, beneath the crossbar and between the goal posts. If a referee signals a goal before the ball has wholly crossed the goal line, the goal is not valid. The game must then be restarted with a ball dropped in accordance with the special circumstances outlined in Law 8.

### **10.3 STOPPING PLAY BEFORE A POSSIBLE GOAL**

If a referee whistles for an infringement of the Laws and then the ball wholly crosses the goal line, beneath the crossbar and between the goal posts, the goal is not valid. The game must be restarted in accordance with the nature of the infringement, keeping in mind the special circumstances outlined in Law 8.

### **10.4 FOULS COMMITTED WHILE A GOAL IS SCORED**

If a defender infringes Law 12 in an attempt to prevent a goal but the ball continues into the goal and the referee has not signaled to stop play, the goal is valid and the player may be cautioned or sent off, depending on the nature of the misconduct. It would be improper under these circumstances to base the send-off on preventing a goal or denying a goalscoring opportunity, because a goal was actually scored. If the attacking team infringes the Laws of the Game before scoring a goal, then the goal is not valid. For dealing with obvious goalscoring opportunities, see the section on Law 12.

### **10.5 GOAL SCORED OFF AN OFFICIAL**

If the ball accidentally hits the referee or an assistant referee on the field of play and rebounds into goal, the referee must award the goal. To avoid being touched by the ball or interfering with play, assistant referees should remain off the field of play as much as possible and referees should avoid the immediate area where players are contesting for the ball.

### **10.6 OWN GOAL**

An "own goal" scored by a team against itself is valid and is given to the opposing team.

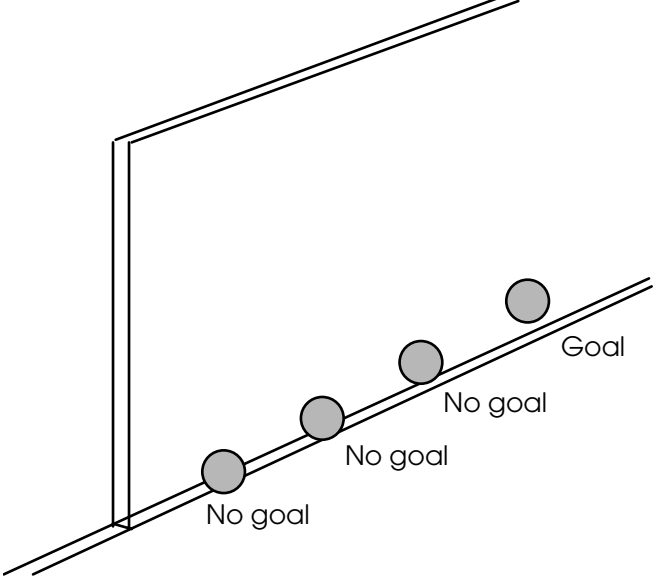
### **10.7 OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE AND RESTART**

If a spectator or other outside agent enters the field when the ball is going into goal and tries to prevent a score before the ball passes wholly over the goal line, a goal shall be allowed if the ball goes into goal, unless the spectator or outside agent has made contact with the ball or has interfered with play. *If that occurs, the referee shall stop the game and restart it by dropping the ball at the place where the contact or other interference took place (keeping in mind the special circumstances outlined in Law 8).* A goal may not be allowed based on where the ball might have gone in the absence of such contact or interference. See Advice 14.7 for a different approach to handling burst ball and outside interference situations at the taking of a penalty kick.

### **10.8 TIED SCORE**

A game may end with the score tied unless the rules of the competition state otherwise.

10.9 ILLUSTRATION OF GOAL OR NO GOAL



## Law 11 — Offside

### 11.1 OFFSIDE POSITION

An offside position exists when a player is nearer the opponents' goal line than the last two opponents and is ahead of the ball when the ball is touched/played by a teammate. Measure relative position by players' torsos, not their arms or legs. The torso of the attacking player must be no nearer the opponents' goal line than that of the second-last defender. It is not necessary to "see daylight" between them for one to be considered nearer than the other. . A player cannot be considered to be in an offside position under any circumstances when it is the player himself who last played the ball.

Here are two examples:



### 11.2 JUDGMENT OF OFFSIDE POSITION

The referee and assistant referees must judge offside position only when the ball is played by a teammate of the attacking player. The referee's decision to penalize the player for being in that position can be made at the moment the offside position is judged if the other requirements of Law 11 are met, but it can also be made at any time from that point forward until a new action on the field puts the attacker "onside" (see 11.15). The condition of being in an offside position (and the possibility of being penalized) continues no matter where that player may move, no matter where the ball may move, and no matter where the defenders may move. Only the occurrence of one of the events described in 11.15 can end this period.

It is not an offense to be in an offside position; it is an offense to interfere with play or with an opponent or to gain an advantage when in such a position. In such cases the referee is the sole judge and makes the final decision accordingly.

### 11.3 ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

*A player becomes "actively involved" in the play only when he is in the "area of active play." This area shifts, widens, narrows, lengthens, or shortens, according to where the ball is going and who is "involved." Involvement includes attempting to play the ball or preventing others from having a fair play at the ball. Active involvement can occur without the ball being directly nearby. There are three elements in "active involvement." They are "interfering with an opponent," "interfering with play," and "gaining an advantage."*

Active involvement may begin at any moment during the sequence of play. Here is a series of pictures showing how a player (A1) could be penalized for being offside, depending upon how the action unfolds.



In the first diagram, A moves toward his opponents' goal while player A1 looks on. When A shoots and the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper to A1 (second diagram), the subsequent goal attempt by A1 must be disallowed because A1, who was in an offside position when the ball was last played by A, was in active play and gained an advantage by being in that position. The offside position was noted when A shot the ball, but the offside infringement did not occur until the ball rebounded from the goalkeeper and was clearly moving toward A1. (The indirect free kick would be awarded where A1 was when his teammate shot at goal, just outside the goal area.) However, if A shoots for goal and scores (third diagram), the goal must be allowed. Although A1 is in an offside position, he is not involved in active play.

#### 11.4 INTERFERING WITH AN OPPONENT

*"Interfering with an opponent" means preventing an opponent from moving towards the ball. Interference can also include active physical or verbal distraction of the goalkeeper by an opponent as well as blocking the view of the goalkeeper.*

#### 11.5 INTERFERING WITH PLAY

*"Interfering with play" means moving towards the opponent or the ball and thereby affecting how play develops. It is not necessary for a player to make contact with the ball or with an opponent to be judged as interfering with play.*

The referee should only decide that a player is interfering with play or with an opponent if that player—in the opinion of the referee, not in the opinion of the opponents—truly interferes with play or with an opponent in the area of active play. If so, then he should be called offside. *Mere presence anywhere on the field should not be considered a distraction for the opponents.*

#### 11.6 GAINING AN ADVANTAGE

*"Gaining an advantage" means being near enough to the play to capitalize immediately on a defender's mistake, having gained the advantage solely by being in the offside position. It is most often seen in situations where the ball rebounds from the crossbar, goalposts, or keeper (whose contact with the ball is not controlled).*

#### 11.7 MAKING THE OFFSIDE DECISION

The assistant referee must not signal simply because a player is in an offside position, but must look for active involvement. Furthermore, if an assistant referee is in any doubt as to whether a player is actively involved or not, he is expected to decide in favor of the attacker; in other words, he should refrain from signaling offside. The referee, too, must be certain that there is active involvement before deciding for offside.

### 11.8 LEAVING THE FIELD TO AVOID OFFSIDE

If a player on the attacking side moves a little way beyond the boundary of the field of play to clearly show the referee that he is not interfering with play, he does not infringe the Laws. However, if the referee considers that such a movement has a tactical aim or is in any way a feint, and the player takes part in the game immediately after, the referee may deem his conduct to be unsporting behavior and caution him (yellow card). Play should be restarted in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

### 11.9 RETURNING TO THE FIELD TO PLAY THE BALL

If an attacking player passes beyond the boundary line for a moment in order to avoid an offside, but then re-enters the field of play and joins in the game and plays the ball that has been passed to him by a teammate, he should be penalized for offside. His momentary departure from the field of play is not considered as leaving the field without the referee's permission and does not warrant a caution.

### 11.10 PUTTING AN OPPONENT IN AN OFFSIDE POSITION UNFAIRLY

If a defending player moves beyond his own goal line or across a touch line to place an opponent in an offside position, the referee should not stop play immediately to caution the defending player, but should allow play to continue. The attacker should not be punished for the position in which he has been unfairly placed; however, the referee should caution the defending player for unsporting behavior at the next stoppage of play.

### 11.11 DEFENDER LEGALLY OFF THE FIELD OF PLAY

*A defender who leaves the field during the course of play and does not immediately return must still be considered in determining where the second to last defender is for the purpose of judging which attackers are in an offside position. Such a defender is considered to be on the touch line or goal line closest to his off-field position. A defender who leaves the field with the referee's permission (and who thus requires the referee's permission to return) is not included in determining offside position.*

### 11.12 OPPOSING ATTACKER ENTERS THE GOAL

If a forward in an offside position enters the goal (see illustration below) and one of his teammates kicks the ball into the goal, the goal is valid and the forward should not be punished if he remains stationary as the ball enters the goal and does not interfere with the opponents. If the forward moves or shouts as the ball enters the goal, and the referee believes this interference contributed to the scoring of the goal, the goal would not be valid. In this case, the forward would be punished for misconduct, not for offside, and the restart would be a dropped ball in accordance with the special circumstances of Law 8, as the forward was off the field of play.



### 11.13 LOCATION OF THE RESTART FOR OFFSIDE

Offside is punished where the infringement occurred. In other words, the indirect free kick should be taken from the place where the offside player was when his teammate played the ball. The kick should

not be taken from the place where the second-to-last defender was nor where the player was at the moment the offside was called. If the player being penalized for offside was legally off the field when his teammate last played the ball, the restart will be taken from the point on the touch line where the player re-entered the field.

#### 11.14 WHEN IS A PLAYER IN AN OFFSIDE POSITION AT THE HALFWAY LINE?

Keeping in mind the requirement for active involvement in play, here are some guidelines for judging offside position at the halfway line:

1. (a) If the player's toes are on the halfway line, but not over the line, there would be no offside.  
(b) If the player's feet are on the halfway line, with the toes over the line (heels on his own side), there could be offside (if there is active involvement).
2. If the player has one foot over the line and one foot completely on his own side, there could be offside (if there is active involvement).
3. If the player has both feet on his own side of the line, but his head or hands extend over the line, there would be no offside. (It would not be justifiable to count the head or hands, as we usually judge offside based on the torso. An instance of a player with both feet completely on his own side and his body over and beyond the line and still ready to take an active part in play would be improbable at best.)

#### 11.15 BECOMING "ONSIDE"

A player who is in an offside position at the moment the ball is played by a teammate can become "onside" in only four ways: (1) The player is not in front of the ball when it is next played by one of his team, (2) the positions of the opponents change so the player is no longer in an offside position when the ball is next played by one of his team, (3) an opponent intentionally plays or gains possession of the ball, and (4) the ball goes out of play. The key point for all of these, other than the obvious case (4), is that someone other than the player in the offside position has to play the ball; he cannot put himself "onside."

Further regarding point number (4): *If there was a valid offside infringement but the ball left the field in favor of the defense, the referee would not call the offside but would award the throw-in or goal kick restart as appropriate. (If the player in the offside position was not involved in play, there would be no offside and the restart would be for the reason the ball went out of play.) On the other hand, if there was a valid offside infringement but the ball left the field in favor of the attacking team, the referee would ignore the reason the ball left the field, call the offside infringement, and restart with an indirect free kick in favor of the defending team.*

#### 11.16 ILLUSTRATIONS OF "NOT OFFSIDE"

These pictures illustrate three situations where there can be no offside. In the first, the player realizes he is in an offside position; he does not want to interfere with the opponents or with play, so the player stands still. His action is correct and should not be penalized. The second and third pictures illustrate that a player cannot be declared offside if he receives the ball directly from a corner kick or a throw in. Note that this exemption applies only to the first player to receive the ball; any subsequent play of the ball to a teammate could result in an offside decision by the referee.





## Law 12 — Fouls and Misconduct

### Part A. Fouls

#### 12.1 WHAT IS A FOUL?

A foul is an unfair or unsafe action committed by a player against an opponent or the opposing team, on the field of play, while the ball is in play. Deliberate handling of the ball is committed against the opposing team, not against a particular opponent. If any of these three requirements is not met, the action is not a foul; however, the action can still be misconduct.

Under the terms of Law 12, the word "deliberate" in the sense of deliberately committing a foul does not mean that the player *intentionally* set out to kick, push, trip, hold or otherwise foul his opponent. If that were so, the referee would have to be capable of reading a player's mind. Under Law 12, the referee makes a decision based upon what he *sees a player actually do* — the result of the player's action — not upon what he thinks is in the player's mind.

#### 12.2 THE DIRECT FREE KICK FOULS

Ten offenses are described in Law 12 for which, if play is stopped as a result, the restart is a direct free kick (or a penalty kick if committed by a team within its own penalty area). These offenses are referred to as direct free kick fouls. They are divided into two groups:

1. Six actions (kick, trip, jump at, charge, strike, or push, including the attempt to kick, trip, or strike) for which the referee must evaluate *how the act was committed*; and
2. Four actions (making contact with an opponent during a tackle prior to contacting the ball, holding, spitting, deliberately handling the ball) for which the referee need *only* decide *if the act occurred*.

Referees should not punish actions that are accidental or inadvertent. In the case of the first group, the action becomes an offense only if the referee decides that it was committed carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force. In the case of the second group, the action alone is an offense, no matter how it was committed.

#### 12.3 CARELESS, RECKLESS, INVOLVING EXCESSIVE FORCE

*"Careless" indicates that the player has not exercised due caution in making his play.*

*"Reckless" means that the player has made unnatural movements designed to intimidate an opponent or to gain an unfair advantage.*

*"Involving excessive force" means that the player has far exceeded the use of force necessary to make a fair play for the ball and has placed his opponent in considerable danger of bodily harm.*

If the foul was careless, simply a miscalculation of strength or a stretch of judgment by the player who committed it, then it is a normal foul, requiring only a direct free kick (and possibly a stern talking-to). If the foul was reckless, clearly outside the norm for fair play, then the referee must award the direct free kick and also caution the player for unsporting behavior, showing the yellow card. If the foul involved the use of excessive force, totally beyond the bounds of normal play, then the referee must send off the player for serious foul play or violent conduct, show the red card, and award the direct free kick to the opposing team.

## 12.4 TRIPPING

Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent includes those situations in which the player moves under the opponent and uses his body to upset or upend the opponent. This is also known as "bridging." Referees must carefully distinguish an act of tripping from the fact of being tripped. Tripping or attempting to trip is an offense if it is clearly directed at an opponent and causes the opponent to falter or fall. Players, however, may trip over or fall over an opponent as a result of natural play and no infringement of the Law has been committed.

## 12.5 CHARGING

The act of charging an opponent can be performed without it being called as a foul. Although the fair charge is commonly defined as "shoulder to shoulder," this is not a requirement and, at certain age levels where heights may vary greatly, may not even be possible. Furthermore, under many circumstances, a charge may often result in the player against whom it is placed falling to the ground (a consequence, as before, of players differing in weight or strength). The Law does require that the charge be directed toward the area of the shoulder and not toward the center of the opponent's back (the spinal area): in such a case, the referee should recognize that such a charge is at minimum reckless and potentially even violent. It is a violation of Law 12 to perform an otherwise fair charge against an opponent who is already being fairly charged by another player. Such an action is at minimum a careless challenge. It is also holding and is commonly referred to as a "sandwich."

## 12.6 STRIKING

Striking can include the use of any object (including the ball) as well as hands, arms, head, or knees (if feet are used, the offense would be called as kicking). In most cases, the restart for striking, either with a body part or with an object, is punished at the place where the contact occurred or, if unsuccessful, would have occurred. However, there are exceptions to this rule.

- (a) If the striking or attempted striking was a foul, i. e., occurred on the field, while the ball was in play, and involved players, the restart will be a direct free kick from the point of contact or a penalty kick if the contact occurred inside the penalty area of the player who committed the foul. The guilty player should be sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card.
- (b) If the striking or attempted striking was misconduct (i. e., the actual striking contact occurred off the field or was committed against someone other than an opposing player or substitute), the restart is an indirect free kick from the point of initiation. The guilty player should be sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card.
- (c) If a substitute, standing outside the field of play, strikes or attempts to strike a player on the field of play, the restart is a dropped ball at the place where the ball was when the blow was struck. The substitute is sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card.

In cases (a)–(c), if the ball was out of play at the time of the offense, the restart would be appropriate to the reason the ball was out of play.

- (d) If a player, taking a throw-in, throws the ball at an opponent, the referee is presented with a gray area involving sound reading of the conditions of the game. This throw could be considered to be trifling, unsporting behavior, or violent conduct, depending on the force used. If the throw-in was correctly taken and the referee considers that a foul has been committed, the restart would be a direct free kick from the point of contact. If the throw-in was not correctly taken and the referee considers

that misconduct has been committed, the restart would be a retake of the throw-in, because the game was not restarted properly.

#### 12.7 HOLDING

Holding an opponent includes the act of stretching the arms out to prevent an opponent from moving past or around. A player who *blatantly* holds onto and pulls his opponent's clothing to play the ball or to gain possession of the ball should be cautioned and shown the yellow card for unsporting behavior.

#### 12.8 MAKING CONTACT WITH THE OPPONENT

Making contact with the opponent before the ball when making a tackle is unfair and should be penalized. However, the fact that contact with the ball was made first does not automatically mean that the tackle is fair. *The declaration by a player that he has played the ball is irrelevant if, while tackling for the ball, the player carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force commits any of the prohibited actions.*

A foul committed while tackling an opponent with little or no concern for the safety of the opponent shall be cause for the player to be sent from the field and shown the red card for serious foul play.

#### 12.9 DELIBERATE HANDLING

The offense known as "handling the ball" involves deliberate contact with the ball by a player's hand or arm (including fingertips, upper arm, or outer shoulder). "Deliberate contact" means that the player could have avoided the touch but chose not to, that the player's arms were not in a normal playing position at the time, or that the player deliberately continued an initially accidental contact for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage. Moving hands or arms instinctively to protect the body when suddenly faced with a fast approaching ball does not constitute deliberate contact unless there is subsequent action to direct the ball once contact is made. Likewise, placing hands or arms to protect the body at a free kick or similar restart is not likely to produce an infringement unless there is subsequent action to direct or control the ball. The fact that a player may benefit from the ball contacting the hand does not transform the otherwise accidental event into an infringement. A player infringes the Law regarding handling the ball even if direct contact is avoided by holding something in the hand (clothing, shinguard, etc.).

#### 12.10 RULE OF THUMB FOR "HANDLING"

The rule of thumb for referees is that it is handling if the player plays the ball, but not handling if the ball plays the player. The referee should punish only deliberate handling of the ball, meaning only those actions when the player (and not the goalkeeper within his own penalty area) strikes or propels the ball with his hand or arm (shoulder to tip of fingers).

#### 12.11 USE OF THE SHOULDER

For purposes of determining deliberate handling of the ball, the "hand" is considered to be any part of the arm-hand from fingertip to shoulder. Using the top of the shoulder is not considered as using the hand. (A diagram showing the area of "the hand" is shown below.)



## 12.12 THE INDIRECT FREE KICK FOULS

A second group of offenses is described in Law 12 for which the correct restart is an indirect free kick. These are referred to as "indirect free kick" fouls.

## 12.13 PLAYING IN A DANGEROUS MANNER

Playing "in a dangerous manner" can be called only if the act, in the opinion of the referee, meets three criteria: the action must be dangerous to someone (including the player himself), it was committed with an opponent close by, and the dangerous nature of the action caused this opponent to cease his active play for the ball or to be otherwise disadvantaged by his attempt not to participate in the dangerous play. Merely committing a dangerous act is not, by itself, an offense (e.g., kicking high enough that the cleats show or attempting to play the ball while on the ground). Committing a dangerous act while an opponent is near by is not, by itself, an offense. The act becomes an offense only when an opponent is adversely and unfairly affected, usually by the opponent ceasing to challenge for the ball in order to avoid receiving or causing injury as a direct result of the player's act. Playing in a manner considered to be dangerous when only a teammate is nearby is not a foul. Remember that fouls may be committed only against opponents or the opposing team.

In judging a dangerous play offense, the referee must take into account the experience and skill level of the players. Opponents who are experienced and skilled may be more likely to accept the danger and play through. Younger players have neither the experience nor skill to judge the danger adequately and, in such cases, the referee should intervene on behalf of their safety. For example, playing with cleats up in a threatening or intimidating manner is more likely to be judged a dangerous play offense in youth matches, without regard to the reaction of opponents.

## 12.14 IMPEDING AN OPPONENT

"Impeding the progress of an opponent" means moving on the field so as to obstruct, interfere with, or block the path of an opponent. Impeding can include crossing directly in front of the opponent or running between him and the ball so as to form an obstacle with the aim of delaying his advance. There will be many occasions during a game when a player will come between an opponent and the ball, but in the majority of such instances, this is quite natural and fair. It is often possible for a player not playing the ball to be in the path of an opponent and still not be guilty of impeding.

The offense requires that the ball not be within playing distance or not capable of being played, and physical contact between the player and the opponent is normally absent. If physical contact occurs, the referee should, depending on the circumstances, consider instead the possibility that a charging infringement has been committed (direct free kick) or that the opponent has been fairly charged off the ball (indirect free kick, see ATR 12.22). However, nonviolent physical contact may occur while

impeding the progress of an opponent if, in the opinion of the referee, this contact was an unavoidable consequence of the impeding (due, for example, to momentum).

#### 12.15 PLAYING DISTANCE

The referee's judgment of "playing distance" should be based on the player's ability to play the ball, not upon any arbitrary standard.

#### 12.16 GOALKEEPER POSSESSION OF THE BALL

The goalkeeper is considered to be in possession of the ball while bouncing it on the ground or while throwing it into the air. Possession is given up if, while throwing the ball into the air, it is allowed to strike the ground. As noted in ATR 12.10, handling extends from shoulder to tip of fingers. While the ball is in the possession of the keeper, it cannot be lawfully played by an opponent, and any attempt to do so may be punished by a direct free kick.

#### 12.17 PREVENTING THE GOALKEEPER FROM RELEASING THE BALL INTO PLAY

An opponent may not interfere with or block the goalkeeper's release of the ball into play. While players have a right to maintain a position achieved during the normal course of play, they may not try to block the goalkeeper's movement while he is holding the ball or do anything which hinders, interferes with, or blocks the goalkeeper who is throwing or punting the ball back into play. An opponent does not violate the Law, however, if he takes advantage of a ball released by the goalkeeper directly to him, in his direction, or even deflecting off him nonviolently.

#### 12.18 THE "SIX-SECOND" RULE

The goalkeeper has six seconds to release the ball into play once he has taken possession of the ball with his hands. However, this restriction is not intended to include time taken by the goalkeeper while gaining control of the ball or as a natural result of momentum. The referee should not count the seconds aloud or with hand motions. If the goalkeeper is making a reasonable effort to release the ball into play, the referee should give him the "benefit of the doubt." Before penalizing a goalkeeper for violating this time limit, the referee should warn the goalkeeper about his actions and then should penalize the violation only if the goalkeeper continues to waste time or commits a comparable infringement again later in the match. Opposing players should not be permitted to attempt to prevent the goalkeeper from moving to release the ball into play.

#### 12.19 SECOND TOUCH BY THE GOALKEEPER

A goalkeeper who has taken hand control of the ball and then released it back into play may not handle the ball again until it has been played by an opponent anywhere on the field or by a teammate who is outside of the penalty area. Referees should note carefully Decision 2, which defines "control" and distinguishes this from an accidental rebound or a save.

#### 12.20 BALL KICKED TO THE GOALKEEPER

A goalkeeper infringes Law 12 if he touches the ball with his hands directly after it has been deliberately kicked *to him* by a teammate. The requirement that the ball be kicked means only that it has been played with the foot. The requirement that the ball be "kicked to" the goalkeeper means only that the play is to or toward a place where the keeper can legally handle the ball. The requirement that the ball be "deliberately kicked" means that the play on the ball is deliberate and does not include situations in which the ball has been, in the opinion of the referee, accidentally deflected or misdirected. The goalkeeper has infringed the Law if he handles the ball after initially playing the ball in some other way (e.g., with his feet).

### 12.21 BALL THROWN TO THE GOALKEEPER

A goalkeeper infringes Law 12 if he touches the ball with his hands after he receives it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate. The goalkeeper is considered to have received the ball directly even if he plays it in any way (for example, by dribbling the ball with his feet) before touching it with his hands. Referees should take care not to consider as trickery any sequence of play that offers a fair chance for opponents to challenge for the ball before it is handled by the goalkeeper from a throw-in.

### 12.22 CHARGING AN OPPONENT AWAY FROM THE BALL

A player who charges an opponent in an otherwise legal manner (i.e., not carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force) but with the ball not within playing distance has infringed the Law. Such an "off the ball" charge is considered a form of impeding the progress of an opponent (even though contact has occurred) and is thus penalized with an indirect free kick restart for the opposing team. If the referee considers the charge to be careless, reckless, or involving excessive force, the restart is a direct free kick.

### 12.23 CHARGING THE GOALKEEPER

Referees must carefully observe any charge against the goalkeeper and call as an infringement of Law 12 only those charges which are performed carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force (direct free kick), are performed in a dangerous manner (indirect free kick), or prevent the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands (indirect free kick). Charging the keeper who is in possession of the ball must be considered an offense because, by definition, the charge cannot be for the purpose of challenging for control of the ball (see Advice 12.16).

## **Part B. Misconduct**

### **12.24 CATEGORIES OF MISCONDUCT**

Law 12 identifies seven categories of action for which a player may be cautioned and shown the yellow card. Another seven categories of action are identified for which a player may be sent off the field (expelled or dismissed) and shown the red card. A player sent from the field under Law 12 may not be replaced (i.e., the team must continue the match with one fewer player) if the send-off occurs once play has begun. A substitute sent from the field for misconduct that occurs once play has begun also may not be replaced, but this does not alter the number of players his team may field. See Advice 3.14 for misconduct occurring prior to the start of play.

### **12.25 RESTARTS FOR MISCONDUCT**

If play is stopped solely to deal with misconduct committed by a player on the field, the proper restart is an indirect free kick taken from the location of the misconduct (subject to the conditions imposed by Law 8 and Law 13). If play is stopped solely to deal with misconduct committed by a substitute, for misconduct committed off the field of play, or for team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner, the restart is a dropped ball taken from where the ball was when play was stopped (subject to the special circumstances of Law 8). If play is stopped for a foul in addition to misconduct, the restart is determined by the foul. The restart cannot be a direct free kick unless the reason for the stoppage included a direct free kick foul. If misconduct occurs while play is stopped, the restart is determined by the original reason for the stoppage.

### **12.26 WHEN TO PUNISH MISCONDUCT**

Law 5 empowers the referee to take “disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offenses. He is not obligated to take this action immediately, but must do so when the ball next goes out of play.” If the referee has applied advantage and delayed punishment for misconduct until the next stoppage, he must normally act quickly to prevent play from restarting when the next stoppage occurs so that the punishment will be recorded and the proper card displayed. In cases of serious misconduct where a sending-off will be ordered, the referee must be certain that he has the full opportunity to take the necessary actions despite any apparent loss of advantage due to a quick restart opportunity being denied. However, if the misconduct was less serious and the team that suffered the misconduct wishes to put the ball back into play quickly, the referee should weigh the value of the quick restart against the necessity to deal with the misconduct. If a quick restart is in the best interest of the game, then the referee should not interfere. In such a case, the referee must remember that by giving an immediate restart he no longer has the authority to caution the offender. However, he should take the next opportunity to warn the offending player about his conduct.

Where advantage has been applied to misconduct and the next stoppage of play corresponds to the conclusion of the match (including any extra periods of play or procedures to decide a tie), the referee should display the appropriate card on the field as soon as possible before players leave the area of the field.

See also ATR 3.14 on when cards may be shown.

### **12.27 MANDATORY CAUTIONS**

The decision to issue a caution and display the yellow card for an act of misconduct is, in most cases, a matter of discretion based on the opinion of the referee. However, there are various specific instances of misconduct for which the Laws of the Game mandate that a caution be given. The mandatory

cautions are not in addition to the seven cautionable offenses listed in Law 12, but are simply those that are explicitly required by specific Laws.

As of the publication of this document, there were eight mandatory cautions: 3 in Law 3, 1 in Law 4, 3 in Law 12, and 1 in Law 15.

Referees must carefully distinguish between those relatively few actions for which a caution is specifically mandated and the remaining actions for which a caution is discretionary. In most cases, the referee exercises discretion in deciding if the act he has observed comes under one of the seven categories of cautionable offenses found in Law 12.

## 12.28 CAUTIONABLE OFFENSES

### 12.28.1 UNSPORTING BEHAVIOR

The following specific actions are considered cautionable as unsporting behavior. A player . . .

- Commits a direct free kick foul in a reckless manner
- Commits a direct free kick foul while tackling for the ball from behind without endangering the safety of an opponent
- Commits a tactical foul designed to interfere with or impede an opposing team's attacking play (e.g., pushing an opponent, blatantly holding an opponent or an opponent's uniform, handling the ball deliberately)
- Commits an act deemed by the referee as bringing the game into disrepute (e.g., aggressive attitude, inflammatory behavior, or taunting)
- Handles the ball deliberately to score a goal
- Fakes an injury or exaggerates the seriousness of an injury
- Fakes a foul (dives) or exaggerates the severity of a foul
- Interferes with or prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands into play
- Verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart
- Unfairly distracts or impedes an opponent performing a throw-in
- Changes jerseys with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission (both players must be cautioned)
- Engages in trickery to circumvent the goalkeeper's limitation on handling the ball played from a teammate's foot (the defender who initiates the "trickery" is cautioned, the decision does not require that the goalkeeper actually handles the ball, and the misconduct can occur during dynamic play or at a restart)

- Makes unauthorized marks on the field.
- Uses tobacco or a cellular or other mobile phone
- Engages in celebration of a goal which involves provocative, derisory or inflammatory actions.

#### 12.28.2 DISSENT

Dissent is committed by words, actions (including gestures), or a combination of the two. The referee should evaluate dissent in terms of content (what exactly is said or done), loudness (the extent to which the dissent can be seen or heard widely), and whether it is clearly directed at an official (including assistant referees and fourth officials). The objective in dealing with dissent is to support the spirit of the game, to maintain the authority of the officials, and to reduce the likelihood of such behavior becoming widespread. A goalkeeper who leaves the penalty area (not beckoned by the referee) to engage the referee or an assistant referee in debate regarding a decision has committed dissent.

#### 12.28.3 PERSISTENT INFRINGEMENT

Persistent infringement occurs either when a player repeatedly commits fouls or infringements or participates in a pattern of fouls directed against the same opponent. Persistent infringement also occurs if a player repeatedly fouls multiple opponents. It is not necessary for the multiple fouls to be of the same type or all to be direct free kick fouls, but infringements must be among those covered in Law 12 or involve repeated violations of Law 14. In most cases, the referee should warn the player that the pattern has been observed and, upon a subsequent violation, must then issue the caution.

*Where the referee sees a pattern of fouls directed against a single opponent, it is proper to warn the team that the pattern has been seen and then to caution the next player who continues the pattern, even if this specific player may not have previously committed a foul against this single opponent. If the pattern is quickly and blatantly established, then the warning should be omitted and the referee should take immediate action. In determining whether there is persistent infringement, all fouls are considered, including those to which advantage has been applied.*

Examples of persistent infringement include a player who:

- Violates Law 14 again, having previously been warned
- Fails to start or restart play properly or promptly, having previously been warned
- If playing as a goalkeeper, wastes time, having previously been warned or penalized for this behavior

#### 12.28.4 DELAYS THE RESTART OF PLAY

The following are specific examples of this form of misconduct:

- Kicks or throws the ball away or holds the ball to prevent or delay a free kick, throw-in, or corner kick restart by an opponent
- Fails to restart play after being so instructed by the referee
- Excessively celebrates a goal

- Fails to return to the field from a midgame break, fails to perform a kick-off when signaled by the referee, or fails to be in a correct position for a kick-off
- Performing a throw-in improperly with the apparent intention of being required to perform the throw-in again, thus wasting time
- Unnecessarily moving a ball which has already been properly placed on the ground for a goal kick

#### 12.28.5 FAILS TO RESPECT THE REQUIRED DISTANCE

This category of misconduct covers the requirement to be at least ten yards away from an opponent's free kick or corner kick. Cautions under this category are at the discretion of the referee. (See Law 13 for a more detailed discussion. See also the remarks under entry 12.29.3.)

#### 12.28.6 ENTERS OR RE-ENTERS THE FIELD OF PLAY WITHOUT THE REFEREE'S PERMISSION

Players who leave the field with the referee's permission will also require the referee's permission to return to the field. (This permission may be delegated. See Advice 3.2, 4.6, 5.8, 5.9.) Examples of this include a player who attempts to come onto the field:

- After being instructed to leave the field to correct equipment (mandatory caution)
- After leaving to receive treatment for an injury
- After leaving to receive treatment for bleeding or to replace a blood-soaked uniform
- After being substituted (except under youth substitution rules)
- Before receiving permission to enter as a substitute

#### 12.28.7 DELIBERATELY LEAVES THE FIELD OF PLAY WITHOUT PERMISSION

This category of misconduct normally refers to a situation in which an opponent leaves the field in an attempt, in the opinion of the referee, to place an attacker in an apparent offside position.

#### 12.29 SENDING-OFF OFFENSES

A player who commits serious foul play, violent conduct, a deliberate handling of the ball which denies a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, or a foul which denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity must be sent from the field. These categories of misconduct are discussed in more detail in Sections C and D below. A player who commits any of the following actions will also be sent from the field:

- Spits at an opponent or any other person
- Uses offensive, insulting, or abusive language (including nonverbal language or actions)
- Receives a second caution in the same match

#### 12.30 HOW TO ADMINISTER THE SEND-OFF FOR A SECOND CAUTION

A player who receives a second caution must first be shown the yellow card for the second caution and then must be shown the red card for the sending-off offense. The second caution leading to dismissal

from the field can occur at any time during the match (including the half time interval, additional periods of play, and kicks from the penalty mark). The accepted procedure is to display the cards in sequence, not at the same time.

### 12.31 EVALUATING LANGUAGE

The referee should judge offensive, insulting, or abusive language according to its content (the specific words or actions used), the extent to which the language can be heard by others beyond the immediate vicinity of the player, and whether the language is directed at officials, opponents, or teammates. In evaluating language as misconduct, the referee must take into account the particular circumstances in which the actions occurred and deal reasonably with language that was clearly the result of a momentary emotional outburst.

*Referees must take care not to inject purely personal opinions as to the nature of the language when determining a course of action.* The referee's primary focus must be on the effective management of the match and the players in the context of the overall feel for the Spirit of the Game.

### 12.32 SEQUENTIAL INFRINGEMENTS OF THE LAW

If the referee has decided to stop play for an infringement of the Law (foul, misconduct, offside, or other reason) and another infringement of the Law occurs between the making of this decision and the actual signal to stop play, this subsequent violation must be treated as misconduct and handled appropriately.

## Part C. Serious Foul Play and Violent Conduct

Soccer is a tough, combative, contact sport where the contest to gain possession of the ball should nonetheless be fair and sporting. Serious Foul Play and the related offense of Violent Conduct are strictly forbidden. They violate the Spirit of the Game and the referee must respond to them by stringently applying the Laws of the Game: The punishment is sending-off (players) or dismissal (nonplayers).

Referees must be particularly vigilant regarding offenses which are too severe for a caution and which include one or more of the following additional elements:

- Retaliation
- Tackling from behind
- One or both feet, with cleats showing, above the ground
- Violent or excessive force
- No chance of playing the ball

Such offenses are completely unacceptable to the Spirit of the Game, the enjoyment of spectators, the education of youth players, and the safety of the players themselves. All violations of the Law which meet these criteria must be called (stopping play or applying advantage) and the appropriate further punishment for misconduct must be administered.

*When misconduct includes violent behavior, advantage should be used very sparingly as it is normally better to deal with such behavior quickly, regardless of the impact of stopping play, in an effort to prevent any widening of the conflict through retaliation or opponents seeking justice which they might perceive was being denied by allowing play to continue.*

### 12.33 SERIOUS FOUL PLAY

It is serious foul play when a player uses violence (excessive force; formerly defined as "disproportionate and unnecessary strength") when challenging for the ball on the field against an opponent. There can be no serious foul play against a teammate, the referee, an assistant referee, a spectator, etc. The use of violence or excessive force against an opponent under any other conditions must be punished as violent conduct.

### 12.34 VIOLENT CONDUCT

It is violent conduct when a player (or substitute) is guilty of aggression towards an opponent (when they are not contesting for the ball) or towards any other person (one of his teammates, the referee, an assistant referee, a spectator, etc.). The ball can be in or out of play. The aggression can occur either on or off the field of play.

### 12.35 RESTARTS

The restart for serious foul play is either a direct free kick or a penalty kick. Restarts are more complicated for violent conduct. This chart illustrates the restarts appropriate to incidents of violent conduct:

OFFENSE COMMITTED	ON FIELD BY PLAYER		OFF FIELD BY ANYONE OR ON FIELD BY NONPLAYER
AGAINST	OPPONENT	ANY OTHER PERSON	OPPONENT OR ANY OTHER PERSON
RESTART	DFK FROM SPOT OF OFFENSE (PK)	IFK FROM SPOT OF OFFENSE*	DROPPED BALL AT SPOT WHERE BALL WAS*
PUNISHMENT	SEND OFF		
<p style="text-align: center;">BALL OUT OF PLAY?  RESTART MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO REASON  BALL WAS OUT OF PLAY</p>			
* SUBJECT TO THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES LISTED IN LAW 8			

## **Part D. Denying an Obvious Goalscoring Opportunity**

### **12.36 DENYING A GOAL OR AN OBVIOUS GOALSCORING OPPORTUNITY**

There are two sending-off offenses that deal with denying an opponent a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity. These occur in cases where a player: (a) "denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area)" or (b) "denies an obvious goalscoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick." This would apply to any player other than the goalkeeper in his own penalty area who handles a ball to prevent it from entering the goal, whether the ball was last played by the opposing team or not.

### **12.37 PUNISHMENT**

The denial of an obvious goalscoring opportunity is punished by sending off (red card) the guilty player, even though there may have been no contact between the players involved.

### **12.38 CRITERIA FOR AN OBVIOUS GOALSCORING OPPORTUNITY (4 Ds)**

In order for a player to be sent off for denying an "obvious goalscoring opportunity," four elements must be present:

- Number of Defenders -- not more than one defender between the foul and the goal, not counting the defender who committed the foul
- Distance to goal -- the closer the foul is to the goal, the more likely it is an obvious goalscoring opportunity
- Distance to ball -- the attacker must have been close enough to the ball at the time of the foul to have continued playing the ball
- Direction of play -- the attacker must have been moving toward the goal at the time the foul was committed

If any element is missing, there can be no send off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity. Further, the presence of each of these elements must be "obvious" in order for the send-off to be appropriate under this provision of Law 12

However, the foul might, by itself, warrant a card -- a caution for unsporting behavior, for example, if the challenge was reckless or a send off if the challenge was violent. If the foul by the defender is both violent and qualifies as an obvious goalscoring opportunity offense misconduct, the referee should include both facts in the game report but must only list one official reason for the red card.

Referees are reminded that offenses which deny a goalscoring opportunity are not limited to those punishable by a direct free kick or penalty kick but may include misconduct or those fouls for which the restart is an indirect free kick.

Even if all these criteria are met, it is still the judgment and opinion of the referee that determines if the event was an obvious goalscoring opportunity.

### **12.39 APPLYING THE ADVANTAGE**

Even if the referee makes use of the advantage clause during an obvious goalscoring opportunity, he can still punish the offender after the fact. If a goal is scored directly despite the attempted intervention by a defender handling the ball, fouling an opponent, or committing misconduct, the offender cannot be sent off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity, but he can still be cautioned for unsporting behavior or sent off for serious foul play if the foul involved excessive force. However, if in these circumstances the goal was scored following a second or immediately subsequent

play of the ball, the offender must nevertheless be sent off because his action prevented a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity during the first play when the infringement occurred.

#### 12.40 ILLUSTRATIONS

Here are some illustrations to aid you in understanding the difference between situations that are obvious goalscoring opportunities and those that are not.

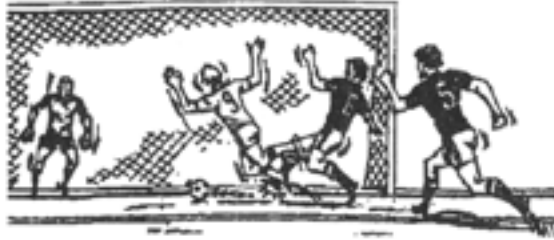


Figure 1



Figure 2

- In Figure 1, attacking player No. 9 is moving towards his opponents' goal. He has beaten defender No. 6 and has only the goalkeeper between himself and the goal. He has therefore an obvious goalscoring opportunity. No. 6 trips him from behind, denying him an obvious goalscoring opportunity. The referee should send off No. 6 (red card) and award a penalty kick to No. 9's team. It would be a direct free kick if it had been committed outside the penalty area.
- Figure 2 shows the same situation as described in Figure 1, but with other defenders in addition to the goalkeeper between No. 9 and the opponents' goal. In this case there would be no sending-off, but a penalty kick would be awarded to No. 9's team. The referee retains the option to caution No. 6 for unsporting behavior.

The same punishments would have been given for any other direct free kick foul by the defending team in either of these situations. Impeding an opponent can also mean denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity, and this is covered in Figures 3 and 4, which illustrate holding and impeding, respectively.



Figure 3



Figure 4

- In Figure 3, attacking player No. 9 is moving towards his opponents' goal. The last defender (in addition to the goalkeeper) deliberately moves in front of No. 9 and makes contact to stop him from reaching the ball, therefore taking away from him an obvious opportunity to score a goal. The referee should send off the last defender and restart with a direct free kick for No. 9's team. If the offense had occurred in the penalty area, the proper restart would be a penalty kick. If there had been more defenders behind the defender, the referee would simply award a direct free kick to No. 9's team.

- Figure 4 is similar to the previous one, except that in this case the last defender (other than the goalkeeper) moves in front of No. 9 and impedes him without making physical contact, so that he is prevented from reaching the ball, thus denying him the goalscoring opportunity. The referee should send off the last defender and restart with an indirect free kick. If there had been other defenders behind this defender, he would not be sent off.

The Diagrams published in the 1996-1997 Laws of the Game (then labeled "Serious Foul Play," but now called "denies a goal," etc.) continue to be valid guidance for judging obvious goalscoring opportunities and referees should continue to consult them. Diagrams 1-10 illustrate issues involved in deciding if a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity has been denied.



Diagram 1

In Diagram 1, the attacker, No. 9, is making his way towards goal with an obvious goalscoring opportunity when a defender trips him. The defender must be sent off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity.

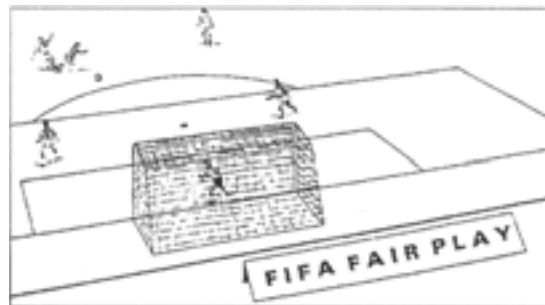


Diagram 2

In Diagram 2, an attacker is making his way towards goal when an opponent trips him. He does not, however, have an obvious goalscoring opportunity, because there are too many defenders between him and the goal.

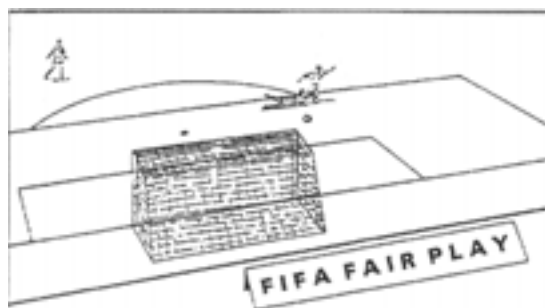


Diagram 3

In Diagram 3, an attacker making his way to goal with an obvious goalscoring opportunity attempts to move past the goalkeeper, who holds him. A penalty kick is awarded and the goalkeeper must be sent off. (The referee must distinguish between this case and one in which the goalkeeper obviously

attempts to play the ball, misses the ball, and thus trips the attacker who is not heading directly for goal. That offense would still result in a penalty kick, but the goalkeeper would not be sent off.)



Diagram 4

In Diagram 4, the goalkeeper inside the penalty area holds an attacker and a penalty kick is awarded. The attacker is moving away from goal and so does not have an obvious goalscoring opportunity.



Diagram 5

In Diagram 5, the attacker is tripped inside the penalty area and a penalty kick is awarded. There is, however, no obvious goalscoring opportunity since the player is moving away from goal.



Diagram 6

In Diagram 6, the attacker, No. 11, is tripped but there is no obvious goalscoring opportunity since he is not moving towards goal. Direct free kick.



Diagram 7

In Diagram 7, an attacker shoots for goal, but an outfield player punches the ball over the bar, thus preventing a goal being scored. This player must be sent off for denying a goal by deliberately handling the ball. If the defender had punched or handled the ball and the ball had entered the goal, he would not have been sent off according to Law 12, but he should be cautioned for unsporting behavior.



Diagram 8

In Diagram 8, an attacker, No. 10, plays the ball and a defender inside the penalty area deliberately handles it. A penalty kick is awarded. The defender would not be sent off, as there were too many defenders between the offense and the goal. If the ball had struck the defender on the hand accidentally, no offense would have been committed and play would have been allowed to continue.



Diagram 9

In Diagram 9, the attacker, No. 11, is running on to a forward pass and has an obvious goalscoring opportunity. A defender jumps up and deliberately handles the ball, thus preventing an obvious goalscoring opportunity. The defender must be sent off and the game restarted with a direct free kick for No. 11's team.

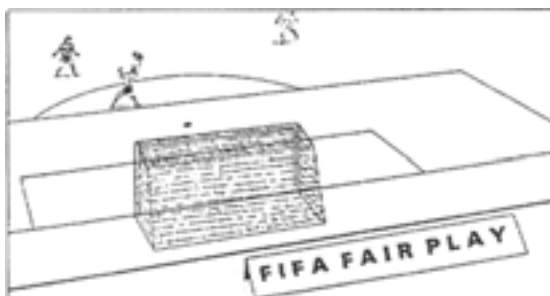


Diagram 10

In Diagram 10, an attacker is running on to a forward pass with an obvious goalscoring opportunity when the goalkeeper rushes from his goal and deliberately handles the ball outside the penalty area. The goalkeeper must be sent off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity by handling the ball outside the penalty area. The game is restarted with a direct free kick for the attacker's team.

## **Law 13 — Free Kicks**

### **13.1 FREE KICKS**

This restart is called a "free kick" because it may be taken "freely" by the team to which it has been awarded -- without interference, hindrance, or delay. Free kicks are awarded for fouls, misconduct, a combination of the two, or offside. A direct free kick is given if play is stopped for a direct free kick foul committed by a player against an opponent on the field of play (except when it is committed by a defender within his own penalty area -- see Law 14, Penalty Kick). An indirect free kick is given if play is stopped for any other foul or if play is stopped solely to deal with misconduct committed on the field by a player, or for offside. A free kick may be taken in any direction.

### **13.2 REQUIRED DISTANCE FOR OPPONENTS**

All opponents must be at least ten yards away in all directions from the location of the free kick. Exceptions to the required distance are noted below (free kick for defenders inside their own penalty area, indirect free kick for the attacking team within ten yards of the opponents' goal, or a quick free kick by the attacking team). Referees should use discretion in cautioning for an infringement.

### **13.3 QUICK FREE KICK**

The referee should move quickly out of the way after indicating the approximate area of the restart and should do nothing to interfere with the kicking team's right to an immediate free kick. At competitive levels of play, referees should not automatically "manage the wall," but should allow the ball to be put back into play as quickly as possible, unless the kicking team requests help in dealing with opponents infringing on the minimum distance.

### **13.4 RESTARTS WITHIN THE GOAL AREA**

Special rules in Law 8 govern free kick restarts within the goal area or by defenders within their own penalty area.

### **13.5 ENFORCING THE REQUIRED DISTANCE**

If the referee decides to delay the restart and to enforce the required minimum distance, he must quickly and emphatically indicate to the attackers that they may not now restart play until given a clear signal to do so. Under these circumstances, an attacker who restarts play without a signal should be verbally warned and, upon repetition, be cautioned for unsporting behavior. An opponent who moves closer to the spot of the kick (from any direction) before it is taken must be cautioned and shown the yellow card if the referee has delayed the restart to ensure that the opponents are at the minimum distance.

If one or more opponents fail to respect the required distance before the ball is properly put into play, the referee should stop the restart to deal with this infringement. The free kick must be retaken even if the momentum of play causes the ball to be kicked before the referee signals. The infringement plus the referee's decision to deal with it cancel any apparent restart regardless of a delay in announcing the decision. However, referees are also expected to consider whether the infringement on the minimum distance was trifling (had no effect on the freedom of the attackers to restart) and, if so, to refrain from issuing a caution and to allow play to proceed.

The referee is expected to deal with opponents who fail to respect the required distance, even in situations in which they were induced to do so by attackers appearing to put the ball into play, but where the ball was not kicked (touched with the foot and moved).

An attacking team which chooses to take a free kick with an opponent closer than the minimum distance may not thereafter claim infringement of the distance requirement, even if the ball is kicked to the infringing opponent, who thereby is able to control the ball without moving toward it. In such a case, the referee cannot caution the opponent who has not remained the required distance from the ball.

### 13.6 BALL IN PLAY

*The ball is in play (able to be played by an attacker other than the kicker or by an opponent) when it has been kicked and moved. The distance to be moved is minimal and the "kick" need only be a touch of the ball with the foot. Under these circumstances, however, the referee must judge carefully whether any particular touch of the ball and subsequent movement was indeed reasonably taken with the intention of putting the ball into play rather than with the intention merely to position the ball for the restart. Referees should not penalize a kicker unfairly by calling as a restart a touch and movement of the ball which, either at the time or based on the kicker's immediately subsequent actions, was clearly not intended as such. Likewise, referees should not unfairly punish "failing to respect the required distance" when an opponent was clearly confused by a touch and movement of the ball which was not a restart.*

### 13.7 FREE KICK IN OWN PENALTY AREA

When the free kick is awarded to the defending team inside its own penalty area, the minimum distance requirement applies in all directions around the location of the restart and all opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball has gone into play.

A free kick taken by the defending team from within its own penalty area must be kicked out of the penalty area and into the field of play. The ball has not been properly put into play if, under these circumstances, it leaves the field of play before leaving the penalty area. Such a kick must be retaken as no infringement has occurred.

### 13.8 INDIRECT FREE KICK WITHIN 10 YARDS OF OPPONENTS' GOAL

Defenders (including the goalkeeper) may be closer than ten yards from an indirect free kick restart only if they are standing on the goal line and are between the goal posts. Referees must exercise special care not to restrict the kicking team's right to a quick indirect free kick simply in order to enforce this exception to the minimum distance requirement.

### 13.9 STOPPAGE FOR MISCONDUCT

When play is stopped solely to deal with misconduct committed by a player on the field, the indirect free kick is taken from the place where the misconduct occurred. If the referee applies advantage to the misconduct and subsequently stops play when the advantage no longer exists, the restart is still taken from the place where the original misconduct occurred.

### 13.10 SIGNAL FOR INDIRECT FREE KICK

The failure of the referee either to give the correct signal for an indirect free kick or to hold it for the required period of time does not change the nature of the restart, nor does it alter the requirement for a subsequent touch of the ball for a goal to be scored.

Note: This does not apply to the incorrect signal for a direct free kick. Suppose a DIRECT free kick is awarded just outside the opposing team's penalty area and the referee raises his arm as if to signal for an INDIRECT free kick. If a defender were to touch the ball on its way to goal, a goal would be scored. To avoid that, the defenders deliberately make no attempt to play the ball, with the

expectation that the referee, who is clearly signaling that the free kick is INDIRECT, would cancel the goal. In such a case, the referee CANNOT award the goal, even though it was scored directly from a DIRECT free kick restart. The decision on the restart was correct, but the signal was not. If the referee had indicated a direct free kick first, rather than signaling for an indirect free kick, there would be no problem, but he cannot change his mind this time, as he has misled the defending team by raising his arm to indicate the indirect free kick. The only fair and correct thing to do here is to retake the kick as a direct free kick.



## **Law 14 — The Penalty Kick**

### **14.1 PENALTY KICK DEFINED**

The penalty kick is a ceremonial restart which is awarded when the defending team commits a direct free kick foul within its own penalty area. There is no requirement as to the severity or seriousness of the foul, the score of the game, the amount of time remaining in the period of play, the direction play was moving, the likelihood of a goal being scored, or any factor other than the commission of the foul itself inside the defender's penalty area. Referees are reminded that it is the location of the foul, not the position of the ball, which determines whether a penalty kick is the correct restart.

### **14.2 PLACEMENT OF THE BALL**

The ball must be placed correctly at the penalty mark, regardless of the state of the pitch at this location. Moving the ball elsewhere, even with the apparent agreement of the players, is not permitted.

### **14.3 WHEN THE PENALTY KICK MAY BE TAKEN**

The referee will not signal for the penalty kick to be taken until and unless the goalkeeper is on the goal line between the goal posts and facing the field, the attacking player taking the penalty kick is clearly identified to the referee and the goalkeeper, and all players other than the kicker and goalkeeper are outside the penalty area, outside the penalty arc, and not nearer the goal line than the penalty mark. If the penalty kick is taken before the referee signals, the kicker should be warned and, upon repetition, cautioned for unsporting behavior. The kick must be retaken.

### **14.4 GOALKEEPER MOVEMENT**

Once the referee signals for the penalty kick, the goalkeeper may move from side to side on the goal line, but may not move off the goal line (into the field or backward) until the ball has been kicked. The requirement to be "on the goal line" is met even if one or both of the goalkeeper's feet are not physically touching the ground, so long as the goalkeeper has not moved forward or backward from the plane of the goal line.

### **14.5 RETAKING THE PENALTY KICK**

If a penalty kick is ordered retaken, it is not necessary for the same player to perform the restart.

### **14.6 KICKING THE BALL FORWARD FOR A TEAMMATE**

The identified kicker may play the ball forward for a teammate, who was properly positioned at the time the kick occurred, to run forward and play the ball.

### **14.7 BALL BURSTS/OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE DURING A PENALTY KICK**

If, after the ball has been put into play, it is stopped or interfered with on its way to the goal by an outside agent or if it bursts on its way to the goal, the kick shall be retaken. Although the ball was put into play, the team given the penalty kick is deemed not to have had a fair opportunity to score under these circumstances. However, if the ball bursts or the interference occurs after the ball rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar, or goalkeeper or has been played legally in any other manner, the proper action is to restart with a dropped ball where the ball was when it burst or when the interference occurred. The referee is the sole judge of when a penalty kick is completed or was interfered with on its way to the goal.

#### 14.8 PENALTY KICKS AT THE END OF THE HALF

Penalty kicks, once awarded, are taken regardless of the amount of time remaining in the half. If time expires or will expire before the restart can occur, the referee should announce this fact and indicate clearly that the penalty kick is now being taken "in extended time." No player other than the goalkeeper can participate in play after the penalty kick is taken. In case of an "extended time" penalty kick, the goalkeeper may be replaced, if necessary, by a substitute if the maximum number of substitutions has not been exceeded, or he may be replaced by an eligible player on the field. All players must remain on the field until the penalty kick has been completed. The referee has no authority to make the players leave the field or the vicinity of the penalty area for the taking of a penalty kick in extended time.

#### 14.9 INFRINGEMENTS OF LAW 14

Other than the situation covered in 14.7 and a "second touch" violation by the player taking the penalty kick, infringements of Law 14 occur only between the referee's signal for the restart and the ball being put into play (kicked and moved forward). Violations of the Law prior to the referee's signal are handled the same as any other misconduct occurring while the ball is not in play. Violations after the ball has been put into play are handled the same as any other similar event occurring during regular play.

Infringements after the referee's signal but before the ball is in play may be committed by the kicker, the goalkeeper, or by any of their teammates. In all such cases, the referee should let the kick proceed and deal with the violation in accordance with the chart below, which outlines the proper restarts for clear infringements of Law 14.

If the kicker plays the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has been played by another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opponents (subject to the special circumstances described in Law 8). If any player, including the kicker (and other than the goalkeeper in his own penalty area) deliberately handles the ball, this is treated as a violation of Law 12. If that player were a defender who rushed forward and handled the ball while it was on its way to the goal, the kick would be retaken.

See also Advice 14.7

This chart illustrates the proper restarts for clear infringements of Law 14:

RESULT OF KICK	NO INFRINGEMENT	INFRINGEMENT BY KICKING TEAM	INFRINGEMENT BY DEFENDING TEAM	INFRINGEMENT BY BOTH TEAMS
ENTERS GOAL	GOAL	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>	GOAL <sup>1</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>
GOES DIRECTLY OUT OF PLAY	GOAL KICK	GOAL KICK <sup>1</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>
REBOUNDS INTO PLAY FROM GOAL/GOALKEEPER	PLAY CONTINUES	PLAY CONTINUES <sup>1,2</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>
SAVED AND HELD BY GOALKEEPER	PLAY CONTINUES	PLAY CONTINUES <sup>3</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>
DEFLECTED OUT OF PLAY BY GOALKEEPER	CORNER KICK	CORNER KICK <sup>1</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>	RETAKE <sup>1</sup>
<sup>1</sup> WARNING ON FIRST OFFENSE; CAUTION TO OFFENDER FOR PERSISTENT INFRINGEMENT ON SECOND OFFENSE. <sup>2</sup> IF REBOUND TO INFRINGING ATTACKER, STOP PLAY, IFK TO DEFENDING TEAM. <sup>3</sup> WARNING GIVEN AS PLAY CONTINUES; CAUTION, WHEN GIVEN, AT NEXT STOPPAGE				

NOTE: A penalty kick being the punishment for an infringement which would otherwise be given a direct free kick restart, the kicker is allowed that same latitude in performing this kick as he would be given in performing a free kick restart. Based on new guidance from the International Board, referees should not consider various deceptive maneuvers to be a violation of Law 14. They should ensure that the run to the ball is initiated from behind the ball and the kicker is not using deception to delay unnecessarily the taking of the kick.

Cautions should not be given for first offenses under Law 14. This includes failure by members of either team to maintain their required positions before the ball is in play, infringements by the kicker prior to the penalty kick being taken, or the goalkeeper who infringes on the requirement not to come off the goal line prior to the penalty kick being taken. In all cases, referees should caution for persistent infringement if the same player infringes the requirement again. (See Advice 14.10.)

#### 14.10 CAUTIONING FOR SUBSEQUENT INFRINGEMENTS OF LAW 14

If any requirement of Law 14 is infringed after the referee signals for the kick, the referee should warn the player committing the violation and, upon a repetition (then or subsequently), caution him for persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game. Such infringements include moving into the penalty area or the penalty arc, moving nearer the goal line than the penalty mark, having the kick taken by someone other than the identified player, and the goalkeeper moving off the goal line before the ball is in play. At all times, however, the referee is expected to distinguish between clear infringements of Law 14 and those which are merely doubtful or trifling.

If in fact a player does repeat an infringement of Law 14 on the same or a subsequent penalty kick, the referee must follow the same procedure as for first infringements, except that if play is stopped at any time during the process, the caution must be given before the restart. If play does not stop “naturally” for a goal, corner kick, goal kick, etc., the referee must stop the game, issue the caution, and then restart with an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the spot where the misconduct occurred (subject to the special circumstances described in Law 8).

#### 14.11 GOALKEEPER DEFLECTS BALL OVER GOAL LINE AND NOT INTO GOAL

If a teammate of the kicker infringes any requirement of Law 14 and a goal is not scored, but the goalkeeper saves the shot by deflecting the ball over the crossbar or outside the goal posts, the correct restart is a corner kick.

#### 14.12 BALL REBOUNDS TO ATTACKER WHO INFRINGES LAW 14

If a teammate of the kicker infringes Law 14 by entering any of the prohibited areas after the signal to take the kick has been given but before the ball has been put into play and the ball subsequently rebounds from the crossbar, goalposts, or the goalkeeper to that infringing player, the referee will stop play, warn the infringing player (and caution upon repetition), and restart with an indirect free kick for the opposing team from where the infringing player received the ball.

## Law 15 — The Throw-In

### 15.1 LOCATION OF THROW-IN

Although the throw-in is to be taken "from the point where [the ball] crossed the touch line," this requirement is satisfied if the restart occurs within approximately one yard (one meter) of this location, farther upfield or downfield or back from the touch line. A throw-in taken beyond this limit is an infringement of Law 15.

### 15.2 BALL IN PLAY FROM A THROW-IN

The ball is considered to have entered the field and is therefore in play if it touches, while still in the air, the outer edge of the vertical plane of the touch line and has left the thrower's hands.

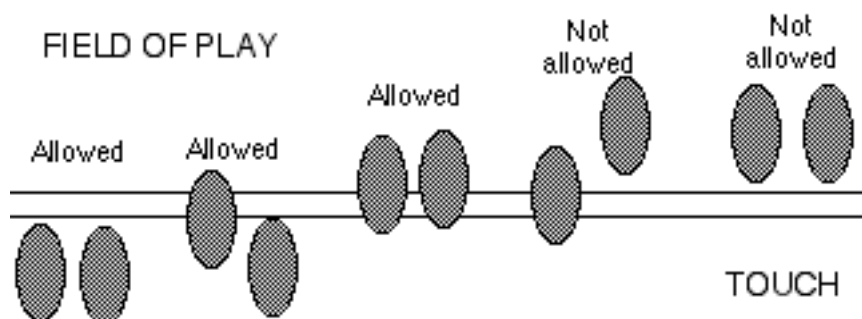
### 15.3 PROPERLY TAKEN THROW-IN

A throw-in must be performed while the thrower is facing the field, but the ball may be thrown into the field in any direction. Law 15 states that the thrower "delivers the ball from behind and over his head." This phrase does not mean that the ball must leave the hands from an overhead position. A natural throwing movement starting from behind and over the head will usually result in the ball leaving the hands when they are in front of the vertical plane of the body. The throwing movement must be continued to the point of release. A throw-in directed straight downward (often referred to as a "spike") has traditionally been regarded as not correctly performed; if, in the opinion of the referee such a throw-in was incorrectly performed, the restart should be awarded to the opposing team. *There is no requirement in Law 15 prohibiting spin or rotational movement.* Referees must judge the correctness of the throw-in solely on the basis of Law 15.

The acrobatic or "flip" throw-in is not by itself an infringement so long as it is performed in a manner which meets the requirements of Law 15.

*A player who lacks the normal use of one or both hands may nevertheless perform a legal throw-in provided the ball is delivered over the head and provided all other requirements of Law 15 are observed.*

Here are some illustrations of foot positioning that is allowed or not allowed. The shaded areas indicate where the thrower's foot touches the ground.



### 15.4 ILLEGAL OR IMPROPERLY TAKEN THROW-IN

Referees must distinguish between a throw-in which infringes on the requirements of Law 15 and one which is performed improperly such that the restart is said not to have been taken. In the first case (infringement), possession of the restart is given to the opponents and taken from the same location;

under no circumstances may advantage be applied to a throw-in performed illegally. In the case of a throw-in which is not properly completed, the restart must be taken again by the same team from the same location.

A throw-in may not be performed from a kneeling position under any circumstances.

If the ball touches the ground outside the field before entering the field or if it does not enter the field at all, the throw-in has not properly been taken and must be performed again.

A throw-in which has been performed illegally, for which the referee has stopped play, cannot be given back to the same team in order to perform the restart again. The referee must either decide that the offense was trifling and not stop play, or award the throw-in to the opposing team.

#### 15.5 TRIFLING INFRINGEMENTS OF LAW 15

Referees are reminded that the primary function of the throw-in is to put the ball back into play as quickly as possible. At competitive levels of play, therefore, apparent technical infringements of Law 15 should often be deemed trifling or doubtful so long as an advantage is not obtained by the team performing the throw-in and the restart occurs with little or no delay.

#### 15.6 NO GOAL DIRECTLY FROM A THROW-IN

Neither team may score a goal directly from a throw-in. If the ball is thrown directly into a team's own goal (no intervening touch or play), the correct restart is a corner kick. If the ball is thrown directly into the opposing team's goal, play is restarted with a goal kick.

#### 15.7 OPPONENT BEHAVIOR AT A THROW-IN

Opponents are prohibited from unfairly distracting or impeding the thrower (violations are punished by a mandatory caution for unsporting behavior). This means that an opponent may not jump about or wave his arms in a distracting manner, move to block the freedom of movement of the thrower, stand directly in front of the thrower so as to harass him, or move to block a throw in a particular direction.

#### 15.8 THROW-IN STRIKES AN OPPONENT

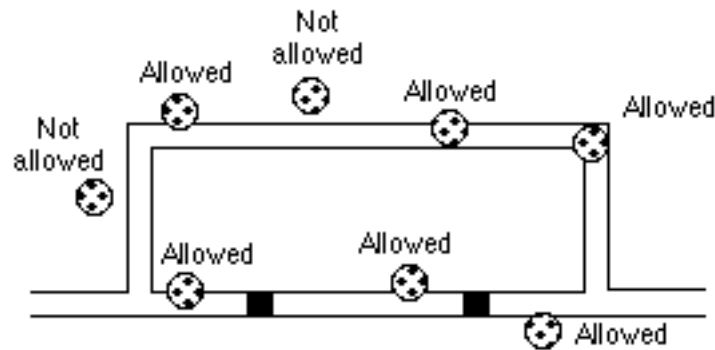
A throw-in taken in such a way that the ball strikes an opponent is not by itself a violation of the Law. The act must be evaluated separately as a form of striking and dealt with appropriately if judged to be unsporting behavior (caution) or violent conduct (send off from the field). In either event, if deemed a violation, the restart is located at the place where the throw-in struck the opponent. If the throw-in is deemed to have been taken incorrectly, the correct restart is a throw-in.

## Law 16 — The Goal Kick

### 16.1 BALL PLACEMENT AT A GOAL KICK

The ball is placed so that it touches the ground within the goal area, including the lines which enclose it. The outer edge of the ball could extend beyond or outside the goal area itself and still meet this requirement.

Here are some examples of ball positions for goal kicks:



### 16.2 BALL IN PLAY FROM A GOAL KICK

The ball is in play when it is kicked beyond the penalty area into the field of play. A goal kick which results in the ball leaving the field before exiting the penalty area has not been properly taken and must be retaken. No infringement of any Law occurring before the ball leaves the penalty area can result in any restart other than a retaking of the goal kick.

### 16.3 SCORING DIRECTLY FROM A GOAL KICK

Only the team taking a goal kick can score a goal directly from this restart. There can be no "own goal" on a goal kick. If a properly taken goal kick goes directly into the goal of the kicking team (i. e., the ball left the penalty area into the field of play but was blown back), the proper restart is a corner kick for the opposing team. *Because a team cannot score directly against itself from a goal kick, no infringement of the Law by a member of the kicking team can be considered to have prevented a goal or a goalscoring opportunity within the meaning of Law 12 without some intervening play of the ball.*

### 16.4 OPPONENTS MUST REMAIN OUTSIDE THE PENALTY AREA

An opponent who infringes on the requirement to remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play should be warned and, upon a repetition, cautioned for persistent infringement. In any event, the goal kick is retaken.

### 16.5 TIME WASTING BY THE KICKING TEAM

Upon being awarded a goal kick, the defending team wastes time if the ball is clearly placed within the goal area in preparation for the restart and then is moved unnecessarily to another location. The referee may caution and show the yellow card for either persistent infringement or delaying the restart of play in situations where the offense is committed a second time by the same team after a warning is given.

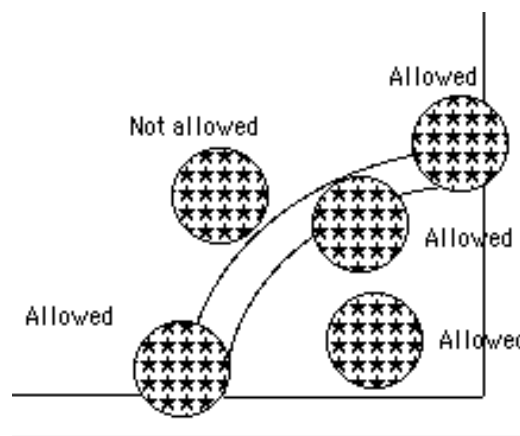
## Law 17 — The Corner Kick

### 17.1 BALL PLACEMENT FOR A CORNER KICK

The corner kick restart is taken from the corner on the side of the field nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. In cases where the selection of the correct corner may be doubtful, the referee will decide and announce the correct corner clearly and firmly.

The requirement that the ball be placed within the corner arc is satisfied if the ball rests on the ground at any point inside the corner arc or on any part of the lines which enclose the corner arc. In practice, this means that a ball properly placed for a corner kick could extend beyond the area of the corner arc, including beyond the field itself.

Here are some examples of ball positioning for corner kicks:



### 17.2 LOCATION OF THE KICKER AT A CORNER KICK

Law 17 does not limit where the player taking the corner kick must initiate this restart. The kicker may be off the field, either beyond the touch line or beyond the goal line.

### 17.3 BALL IN PLAY FROM A CORNER KICK

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. The act of kicking the ball includes any play of the ball with the foot, and only minimal movement is needed to meet the requirement.

### 17.4 RESTARTS IF BALL LEAVES FIELD FROM A CORNER KICK

If the ball is properly placed and, as a result of the kick, immediately leaves the field across the goal line, the correct restart is a goal kick. If the ball immediately goes across the touch line, the correct restart is a throw-in for the opposing team. Any movement of the ball is sufficient to put it into play.

### 17.5 KICKING TEAM MAY NOT SCORE AGAINST ITSELF

If the ball enters the attacking team's own goal directly from a corner kick, the correct restart is a corner kick for the opposing team. The kicking team cannot score against itself directly from a corner kick.

## **"Law 18" — Common Sense**

"Law 18, still unwritten but frequently quoted as the ultimate goal of refereeing: Intelligence in the perception of the game, the attitude of the players, the place and the moment of the offense."  
(Michel Vautrot, FIFA Referee Committee, FIFA Magazine, June 1997)

## 19. Miscellaneous Matters

### 19.1 LAWS GOVERNING KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK

All Laws of the Game, except for those clearly modified in the separate section of the Laws dealing with kicks from the penalty mark, are in effect during this procedure. In particular, this means that the player uniform requirements in Law 4 must be enforced. It also means that the officials must continue to enforce the requirement that no one except for the players taking part in this procedure may enter or be on the field of play once the procedure has begun.

The procedure for kicks from the penalty mark does not require that players kick in any particular order, that an order be established ahead of time, nor that a list of kickers must be provided to the referee. The only requirement the referee must enforce is that no player may kick again until all eligible players on his team have kicked. This principle continues into subsequent rounds of the procedure, if necessary. If a kick from the penalty mark must be retaken, it is not required that the same player perform the kick so long as the principle described here is applied in this case as well. In subsequent rounds, the players do not need to kick in the same order as they did in the previous round.

### 19.2 PLAYERS LEAVING THE FIELD DURING KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK

Once the procedure of taking kicks from the penalty mark has begun, players are not permitted to leave the field, even if they have already taken a kick. If a player leaves the field and is not available to take his prescribed kick (either for the first time or subsequently), the referee must stop the taking of kicks and declare the match abandoned. A full report regarding the situation must be submitted.

If a player leaves the field with the referee's permission to attend to an equipment problem, bleeding, or blood on the uniform, all requirements of the Law must still be followed in order for the player to return to the field (see Advice 5.8 and 5.9). If an injured player cannot return to the field, as declared by the captain of his team, or is sent from the field for misconduct, the kicks from the mark continue without him.

### 19.3 FOURTH OFFICIAL DUTIES

In addition to performing such other duties as the referee may discuss during the pregame conference (see USSF's *Guide for Fourth Officials*, 2001), the fourth official is expected to manage substitutions; report on violent conduct, irresponsible behavior in the technical area, and other misconduct which occurred outside the view of the referee and assistant referees; and advise the referee of any error in identifying players to be cautioned or sent from the field for misconduct.

### 19.4 THE ROLE OF THE TEAM CAPTAIN

The role of the team captain is not defined in the Laws of the Game. He usually wears an armband. The captain is responsible to the referee for his team, but has no special rights or privileges. By practice and tradition, certain duties fall upon the team captain:

- to see that the referee's decisions are respected by the captain's teammates and by team officials;
- to counsel a teammate who may be reluctant to leave the field at a substitution — but neither the captain nor the referee may insist that the player leave;
- to represent his or her team at the coin toss to determine which direction the team will attack to begin the game (and subsequent overtime periods) or which team will take first kick in kicks from the penalty mark;
- to be the team representative to whom the referee must go to obtain the name or names of members of that team who must be withdrawn from participating in kicks from the penalty mark in order to

match the size of the opposing team (which has fewer players on the field before or during the kicks from the penalty mark procedure as a result of injury or misconduct).

#### 19.5 WATER

Players who wish to drink water while play continues may do so only from the touchline and without leaving the field. If water containers are left along the touchline outside the field, they must not interfere with the movement of the assistant referee or block his view of the length of the touchline. Under no circumstances may water containers of any sort be thrown onto the field, either during play or at stoppages (including the halftime break).



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# **UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION**



**A SYLLABUS**

**FOR THE**

**ADVICE TO REFEREES**

**ON THE LAWS OF THE GAME**

## **Introduction**

This syllabus is intended to provide a guide to those sections of the "Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game" which are generally lesser known and which can lend themselves to misinterpretation by officials, match participants, and spectators.

It is recommended that after reading any one of the questions in the syllabus, the reader should formulate an answer before checking in the "Advice to Referees." The syllabus is not intended to replace the "Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game" published by FIFA. It may be particularly useful as a teaching and learning tool in a small group setting and to motivate referees at all levels to carefully study the "Advice to Referees".

This syllabus for the "Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game" was prepared by Ulrich Strom. Other contributors were Bob Wertz, Dan Heldman, Gil Weber, Wally Beaumont, and Jim Allen.

Alfred Kleinaitis  
Manager of Referee Development and Education  
2003

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See Section 1.2

## **Law 2 - The Ball**

1. Who provides the game balls and what is the recommended number of game balls?  
See Section 2.1

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2. A goal is scored by a team that has more than the allowed numbers of players and the referee discovers this before play has restarted. What will be the referee's decision?  
See Section 3.3
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See Section 3.7
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See Section 5.6
4. A player has left the field of play to adjust his equipment. The player is inspected and approved by the assistant referee and the referee beckons him back into play. Is this permitted?  
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5. Same situation as 4 above, except the player has left the field of play to treat a bleeding injury. Can the referee delegate the inspection of the player to the assistant referee?  
See Section 5.8
6. Under what circumstances can a match be terminated?  
See Section 5.11
7. Under what circumstances can a match be abandoned? What is one essential difference in the outcome of an abandoned and a terminated match?  
See Section 5.12
8. Can the referee change his decision for scoring a goal after the play has been restarted? Is this also true for decisions other than scoring a goal?  
See Section 5.13

## **Law 6 - The Assistant Referee**

1. Under what circumstances should the assistant referee hold his signal for offside if the referee missed it? How long should the assistant referee hold a signal missed by the referee for a ball out of play? How long should the assistant referee hold a signal for a serious foul committed out of the referee's sight?  
See Section 6.4

## **Law 7 - The Duration of the Match**

1. The referee ends the half three minutes early while the ball was in play. The assistant referee points out the mistake. What does the referee do now?  
See Section 7.3

## **Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play**

1. Is there a requirement that players from both teams—or any player—must take part at a dropped ball?  
See Section 8.5

## **Law 9 - The Ball In and Out of Play**

1. The assistant referee signals for offside. The referee is about to blow his whistle to stop play, but, before he can signal, an attacker is punched by an opponent inside the defender's penalty area. How is the game restarted?  
See Section 9.1

## **Law 10 - The Method of Scoring**

1. The ball is about to enter the goal, but before it crosses the goal line the referee inadvertently blows his whistle. What is the restart?  
See Section 10.2
2. A spectator enters the field of play and attempts to prevent a ball from entering the goal. The spectator does not succeed in stopping the ball from entering the goal. Under what circumstances is the goal allowed?  
See Section 10.7

## **Law 11 - Offside**

1. Judgment to penalize a player who is in an offside position can only occur at the moment the ball is played by a teammate. True or false?  
See Section 11.2
2. What is meant by "active involvement"? Can it occur without the ball being directly nearby?  
See Section 11.3
3. Can interfering with an opponent include verbal distraction of the goalkeeper by an opponent?  
See Section 11.4
4. An opposing forward enters the goal and one of his teammates kicks the ball into the goal. Should the goal be considered valid?  
See Section 11.12
5. Same as 4, but the forward shouts or moves as the ball enters the goal. What is the referee's decision? What is the restart?  
See Section 11.12
6. Offside is punished (the indirect free kick is taken) from which place: (a) where the second-to-last defender was, or (b) where the offside player was when his teammate played the ball?  
See Section 11.13
7. A player has his toes on the halfway line but not over the line. Can this player be in an offside position?  
See Section 11.14
8. How can a player who is in an offside position at the moment the ball is played by a teammate become "onside" again?  
See Section 11.15

## **Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct**

1. A player fairly charges an opponent (shoulder to shoulder) who is already being charged fairly by another player. Is this an offense?  
See Section 12.5
2. A goalkeeper throws the ball intentionally and forcefully from inside the penalty against an opponent outside the penalty area. What is the call and what is the restart?  
See Section 12.6
3. A player takes a correct throw in but intentionally and forcefully directs the ball at an opponent. What is the restart and where is it located?  
See Section 12.6 (d)

4. Does moving the hands or arms instinctively to protect the body when suddenly faced with a fast approaching ball constitute intentional handling if the ball is touched?  
See Section 12.9
5. A player uses his hands to bend a corner flag, stopping the ball from going out. The ball does not touch his hand. Is there a foul?  
See Section 12.9 and 1.6
6. A player who is on the ground is attempting to play the ball with his feet. Is the player considered to be "playing in a dangerous manner"?  
See Section 12.13
7. A player plays recklessly by nearly kicking his own teammate in the head. Can the player be charged with "playing in a dangerous manner"?  
See Section 12.13
8. A player impedes the progress of an opponent. If, in addition, there is physical contact, will it require that a direct free kick be awarded?  
See Section 12.14
9. Does "playing distance" vary with the age of the players or the speed of play?  
See Section 12.15
10. Does the goalkeeper have possession of the ball when he tosses it upwards and catches it again?  
See Section 12.16
11. Will goalkeepers who hold the ball for longer than 5-6 seconds normally be warned by the referee before any more serious action is taken?  
See Section 12.18
12. Can the goalkeeper be charged (shoulder to shoulder) when he is holding the ball?  
See Section 12.23
13. Identify which two of the following four fouls call for a mandatory caution: (a) A player handles the ball deliberately to score a goal; (b) a player without the referees permission changes jerseys with the goalkeeper; (c) a player unfairly distracts an opponent performing a throw-in; and (d) a player interferes with the goalkeeper's release of the ball from his hands into play.  
See Section 12.27 and 12.28.1
14. If the referee notes a pattern of different players fouling the same opponent, can the referee warn the entire team that the next offense may result in a caution to the offending player?  
See Section 12.28.3
15. A defender fouls an attacker who has an obvious goal scoring opportunity. The referee applies advantage and the goal is scored. Under what circumstances will the defender be sent off, and when does he not need to be sent off?  
See Section 12.37 through 12.39

### **Law 13 - Free Kicks**

1. An attacking team chooses to take a free kick with an opponent six yards away. The ball goes directly to the infringing opponent who gains control of the ball. Should the referee require the kick to be retaken?  
See Section 13.5
2. The referee applies advantage to a misconduct occurrence but subsequently stops play when the advantage no longer exists. The restart is taken from (a) where the ball was when play was stopped or (b) from the spot of the original misconduct?  
See Section 13.9
3. The referee fails to raise his hand for an indirect free kick. The ball goes directly into the opponents' goal without touching any other player. What is the restart?  
See Section 13.10

### **Law 14 - Penalty Kick**

1. If a teammate of the kicker enters the penalty area before the kick is taken and a goal is not scored but the goalkeeper saves the ball by deflecting it over the crossbar, what is the correct restart?  
See Section 14.11

### **Law 15 - The Throw-In**

1. May a throw-in be performed from a spot off the field two yards from the touch line?  
See Section 15.1
2. When is the ball considered to be in play on a throw-in?  
See Section 15.2
3. Is "spin" on the ball explicitly prohibited by the law?  
See Section 15.3
4. Can a player who lacks use of one arm perform a legal throw-in?  
See Section 15.3
5. Can a throw-in be performed from a kneeling position?  
See Section 15.4

### **Law 16 - The Goal Kick**

1. A properly kicked goal kick (after the ball has left the penalty area) goes directly into the goal of the kicking team. What is the restart?  
See Section 16.3

## **Law 17 - The Corner Kick**

1. If the ball is properly placed and, as a result of the kick, immediately leaves the field across the goal line, what is the correct restart?  
See Section 17.4
2. The ball enters the goal of the attacking team (the one who took the kick) directly from a corner kick. What is the restart?  
See Section 17.5

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