

## FIFA Laws of the Game

### **Law 1: Field of Play**

For safety reasons, check the condition of the field, the integrity of the goals, the nets to make sure they are fastened to the ground, goal posts and crossbar prior to each game. Also be sure the nets do not interfere with the goal keeper. Tie up any gaping holes.

Lines should be well defined, but are often times obscured by weather elements. Try to make certain that the penalty area and half line are well marked, as the other field markings can be interpreted using visual clues, the ref stepping off the distance, and the like. All lines are in play. A ball is not out of play until the entire ball crosses over the line.

### **Law 2: The Ball**

The ball needs to be inflated properly. Hold the ball head high, after dropping it should reach waist level. Roundness can be determined by tossing it in the air while causing it to spin. No wobble should be seen. Try to have a referee approved ball that can be used if the game ball is damaged or lost. Use only safe soccer balls. Some balls become hard or heavy in cold and rain, respectively.

### **Law 3: Number of Players**

Each team should start with 11 players, with one of those being a goal keeper. Substitutes remain on the bench until requested to enter the field by the coach. The player has to be waved on by the referee. The AR's signal for substitution is a raised flag with the flag stretched with the other hand.

Realization that there are too many or too few players on the field. With too few, get the player to the half line, get the attention of the AR, and explain that there are not enough players on the field. The ref should allow the player to enter. With too many on the field, bring the extra player to the touch line, get the attention of the referee, and explain that there are too many on the field. The ref will issue a caution for too many on the field. If the player is pulled off, for the same reason, without the ref's approval, TWO cautions may be issued- too many players on the field and leaving the field without permission.

The referee must be informed of a keeper change, no matter when it happens.

### **Law 4: Player Equipment**

Players may not wear anything which could be harmful to himself or another player (specifically mentioned is jewelry). Players MUST wear: A shirt, shorts, stockings, shin guards and footwear.

Goalkeepers MUST wear colors that distinguish them from the other players and officials.

### **Law 5: The Referee**

The referee has full authority to enforce the 17 Laws. The decisions the referee makes regarding the facts of the Laws are final and not subject to appeal. This authority extends to the coaches and other spectators, if needed.

The referee has the right to call or not call any foul that is deemed necessary. This extends to the Advantage rule, which permits the attacking team to keep possession of the ball should there be a defensive foul. Think of this Advantage rule before blurting out disapproval of a call!

### **Law 6: Assistant Referees**

The assistant referees are present to 'assist' the referee. They do this by drawing the attention of the referee to a situation that he may not have seen. They are also critical in calling the ball in and out of play and alerting the referee to substitutions. Finally, they alert the referee to offside situations.

### **Law 7: Duration of the Match**

Consult local regulations for game length. The game consists of two equal halves. The clock does not stop, but the referee has the authority to add time to a match as a result of injuries, substitutions, delays putting the ball back into play or any other reason deemed necessary. The halves are separated by a half-time, which will not exceed 15 minutes.

The referee is the sole timekeeper and is the only official who can end a game. Coaches may opt to carry a stopwatch, which only gives them an estimated time remaining. If a ball is in flight and the referee signals the end of the game, the ball becomes dead at that point (a dead ball can't be scored).

Games can be shortened to facilitate play, only if both coaches and the referee agree. The halves must be shortened equally. In tournament play, the Field Marshal may institute a change in game length which will not require the agreement of the coaches.

Matches can end in a tie (draw). Most tournaments have regulations to determine what should be done in the event of a tie. Consult these regulations.

If a penalty kick is awarded, then time runs out immediately thereafter, the kick must take place before the match is over. The kicking team gets one touch on the ball in an attempt to score. Goal or not, the game is over after the kick.

### **Law 8: Start & Restart of Play**

A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off. The team winning the toss must decide which end to defend/attack. The opposing team automatically gets the kickoff. For the second half the teams switch ends. A kickoff is a method of start AND restart that is simply a DFK taken from the center spot. A kickoff must go forward and both teams must be in their respective halves and must be signaled by the ref. Should the initial kicker touch the ball a second time, the opponent is awarded an IFK. All other infringements on the kickoff result in a restart since the ball was not put in play. A kickoff that goes out of bounds results in a throw-in for the opponents. A goal can be scored from a kickoff.

Drop ball is a method of restart used when the game is stopped and the rules do not specify that a different restart should apply. Also used following an injury stoppage. Rules for a drop ball: Dropped at the spot where the ball was last played, ball has to touch the ground before being kicked, retaken if touched before the ball hits the ground, not taken within 6 yds. of the goal, no rule stating that there must be a representative from both teams taking the kick.

IFK- inside the defenders goal area: Not within 6 yds. of the goal, opponents have to be 10 yds. away, or on their goal line between the posts and can be taken without being signaled by the ref.

### **Law 9: Ball In & Out of Play**

The ball is in play following any of the prescribed methods of start and restart. The ball is out of play when it has "wholly crossed the goal line or touch line"[or] when the game has been stopped by the referee." A player may be outside of the field of play and still play the ball. The goalkeeper can be fully inside the goal while holding the ball outside, preventing a goal from being scored.

### **Law 10: Determination of a Goal**

For a goal to be scored the entire ball has to cross over the goal line, the ball has to pass through the goal and no foul occurred before the previous two restrictions. the goal keeper CAN be standing in his goal while holding the ball outside of the goal.

If the ball hits the referee, then goes into the goal, the goal is awarded as the referee is a part of the field. If the ball enters the goal after hitting something other than a player, the post or crossbar, or the ref, the goal will not be permitted.

### **Law 11: Offsides**

This law provides a distinction between being in an offside position (OP) and the infraction of offside.

Being in an OP is not a foul. This means that a player is across the halfway line and in his opponent's half of the field. That player is closer to the goal line of the goal being attacked than the second-to-last-defender (2LD), is also ahead of the ball and is not receiving the ball directly from goal kick, corner kick or throw-in. Finally, his team is in possession of the ball, so that the ball is being played forward by one of his teammates. Referring to the 2LD, the goalkeeper is considered a defender.

The OP is determined at the moment the ball is last played by one of the other attackers. It is not determined when the ball is received. For a player in an OP to be called for the infraction he must interfere with play- typically playing or attempting to play the ball. Or interfere with an opponent as to make him less able to play the ball. Finally, gaining an advantage.

To signal the infraction, the assistant referee will snap his flag so that it is held straight up. He will be in the line of the infraction. By pointing his flag high, he is indicating the ball should be placed on the far side, flag straight out means middle and low means near side. An indirect Free Kick is the method of restart.

### **Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct**

Direct Free Kick Fouls:

Kicking or attempting to kick, tripping or attempting to kick, striking or attempting to strike, jumping at (attempting to play the player not the ball), charging (physically moving an opponent away from the ball. A fair charge is shoulder-to-shoulder) and pushing. These fouls when conducted in a "careless, reckless or with excessive force" are going to be called. Also included in DFK are holding, spitting (a sending off foul) and handling the ball (using the arms or hands intentionally and deliberately to guide the ball).

Indirect Free Kick Fouls:

Obstruction (impeding the progress of an opponent by not allowing him to get within playing distance of the ball), dangerous play (performing an act that is dangerous to self or opponent. Typically kicking to the head or torso. Playing on the ground is not a foul, only when done in the close proximity of other players)

Misconduct:

Yellow Card: Cautionary. Two yellow cards are equal to a red card. It's possible that a yellow will not be shown immediately, especially when 'advantage' is being applied. With advantage, the ref will show the yellow at the next stoppage in play.

Red Card: The individual is sent off the field and not permitted to return. The affected team plays short that player. If more than one player, from the same team, is sent off, that team will play that number down. Red cards are given immediately following the foul.

### **Law 13: Free Kicks**

INDIRECT- The ball has to be touched by a second player before a goal will be awarded. Distinguished by the ref holding one arm straight over head, which will not be lowered until the second touch takes place.

DIRECT- The kicker can score directly on the kick.

Ball placement is at the site of the foul and must be stationary, opposing players must be 10 yards away and the ball needs to only move in any direction to be considered in play. A foul within the goal area is moved to the line forming the goal area. Opponents must be outside the Penalty Area for the kick and wait for the ball to clear the area before it is in play.

The kicking team can't score into their goal on a free kick. The result is a corner kick.

Free kicks can be taken immediately, not allowing the opponents to recover.

#### **Law 14: Penalty Kicks**

This is simply a direct free kick taken 12 yards from the goal. There should be a penalty mark, if there isn't the referee will step-off the distance.

The noteworthy distinctions for a PK:

The defending players can't form a wall. All players except the penalty taker and the goal keeper are to remain outside the penalty area and 10 yds away (the penalty arc gives 10 yds from the penalty mark). The ball must be kicked forward and the defending keeper must remain on his goal line until the ball is kicked.

This final ruling permits the keeper to move between the goal posts, just not forward. The ball can not be touched a second time by the penalty taker until the ball has been touched by another player, meaning if the ball hits the crossbar or goal post, the ball must be touched by someone other than the kicker. Infringement results in an indirect free kick from the spot of the second touch.

The penalty taker must wait for the referee's signal before taking the kick.

#### **Law 15: Throw-Ins**

This is a method of restart when the opposing team touches the ball over the touch line. The thrower must: Face the field, have part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line, use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over his head. As long as these parameters are met, flip throws are permitted.

The throwing team's goalkeeper is not permitted to handle a ball that was thrown to him. The thrower can't touch the ball until the ball has been touched by another player. Stationing a player in front of the thrower is permitted, but that person is not permitted to take any actions that will impede the throw.

#### **Law 16: Goal Kicks**

A method of restart used when the ball, having last been touched by an attacking player, passes over the goal line at any point except between the goal posts. The defending team takes the kick.

The ball must be placed anywhere inside the goal area. The ball is not in play until it exits the penalty area (PA). Some refs may allow younger players to place the ball outside the goal area to facilitate the ball exiting the PA. The opponents must remain outside the PA until the ball is in play. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until the ball has been touched by another player, after the ball was put back in play.

A goal can be scored, but only against the attacking team.

## **Law 17: Corner Kicks**

A method of restart used when the ball, having last been touched by the defending team, passes over the goal line at any point except between the goal posts. The attacking team takes the kick.

Essentially, this is a direct free kick (DFK) taken from the corner of the field in the attacking area. The only difference between this restart and a DFK is that an attacking player can not be offside when the kick is taken. Though the kicker may be called offside if the ball is returned to him prior to getting himself out of the OP.

The attacking team is permitted to station players near the goalkeeper, but they are not permitted to interfere with his attempt to get the ball. This means that the players who are near the keeper **MUST** go after the ball, or in some other way become involved with the play.

The corner flags may not be removed, even if the corner arc seems too small. It may be easiest to teach players that they need to place the ball so that their kicking shoulder is next to the flag. This way, the flag will not interfere with the approach to the ball.

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