

# Laws of the Game 2004

July 2004

Authorised by the International Football Association Board

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Published by  
Fédération Internationale de Football Association  
Hitzigweg 11, 8030 Zurich, Switzerland

## FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

President: Joseph S. Blatter (Switzerland)  
General Secretary: Urs Linsi (Switzerland)  
Address: FIFA House, Hitzigweg 11  
8030 Zurich, Switzerland  
Telephone: 41-(0)43-222 7777  
Telefax: 41-(0)43-222 7878  
Internet: [www.FIFA.com](http://www.FIFA.com)

## INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION BOARD (IFAB)

Members: The Football Association  
The Scottish Football Association  
The Football Association of Wales  
Irish Football Association  
(1 vote each)

Fédération Internationale  
de Football Association (FIFA)  
(4 votes)

Next meeting of the International F. A. Board:  
Vale of Glamorgan, Wales, 26 February 2005

### Modifications

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Subject to the agreement of the member association concerned and provided the principles of these Laws are maintained, the Laws may be modified in their application for matches for players of under 16 years of age, for women footballers, for veteran footballers (over 35 years) and for players with disabilities.

Any or all of the following modifications are permissible:

- size of the field of play;
- size, weight and material of the ball;
- width between the goalposts and height of the crossbar from the ground;
- duration of the periods of play;
- substitutions.

Further modifications are only allowed with the consent of the International Football Association Board.

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### Male and Female

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References to the male gender in the Laws of the Game in respect of referees, assistant referees, players and officials are for simplification and apply to both males and females.

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### Key

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Throughout the Laws of the Game the following symbols are used:

\* Unless covered by the Special Circumstances listed in Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

| Single line indicates new Law changes



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## LAW 1 – THE FIELD OF PLAY

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### Field surface

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Matches may be played on natural or artificial surfaces, according to the rules of the competition.

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### Dimensions

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The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touch line must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length:	minimum	90 m	(100 yds)
	maximum	120 m	(130 yds)
Width:	minimum	45 m	(50 yds)
	maximum	90 m	(100 yds)

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### International Matches

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Length:	minimum	100 m	(110 yds)
	maximum	110 m	(120 yds)
Width:	minimum	64 m	(70 yds)
	maximum	75 m	(80 yds)

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### Field Markings

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The field of play is marked with lines. These lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries.

The two longer boundary lines are called touch lines. The two shorter lines are called goal lines.

All lines are not more than 12 cm (5 ins) wide.

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line.

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

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## The Goal Area

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A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows:

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

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## The Penalty Area

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A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows:

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

Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made 11 m (12 yds) from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of 9.15 m (10 yds) from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

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## Flagposts

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A flagpost, not less than 1.5 m (5 ft) high, with a non-pointed top and a flag is placed at each corner.

Flagposts may also be placed at each end of the halfway line, not less than 1 m (1 yd) outside the touch line.

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## The Corner Arc

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

## LAW 1 – THE FIELD OF PLAY

### Goals

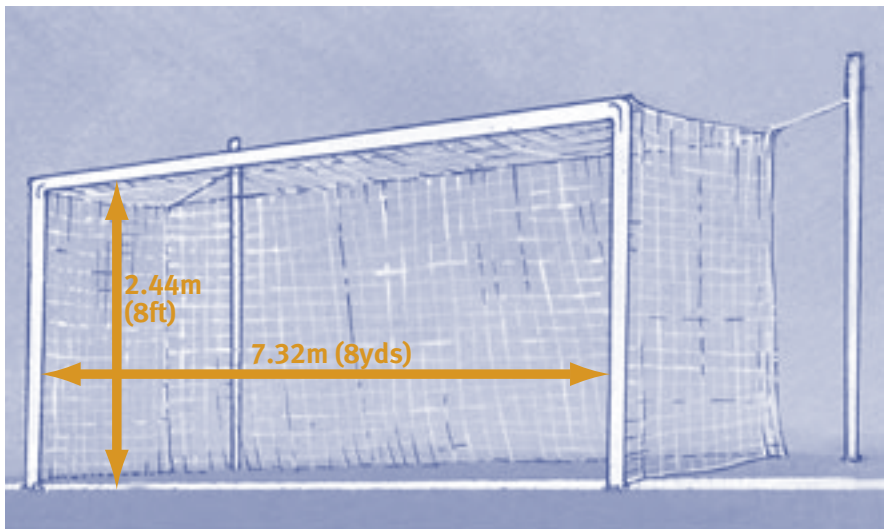
Goals must be placed on the centre of each goal line.

They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar.

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

Both goalposts and the crossbar have the same width and depth, which do not exceed 12 cm (5 ins). The goal lines are the same width as that of the goalposts and the crossbar. Nets may be attached to the goals and the ground behind the goal, provided that they are properly supported and do not interfere with the goalkeeper.

The goalposts and crossbars must be white.





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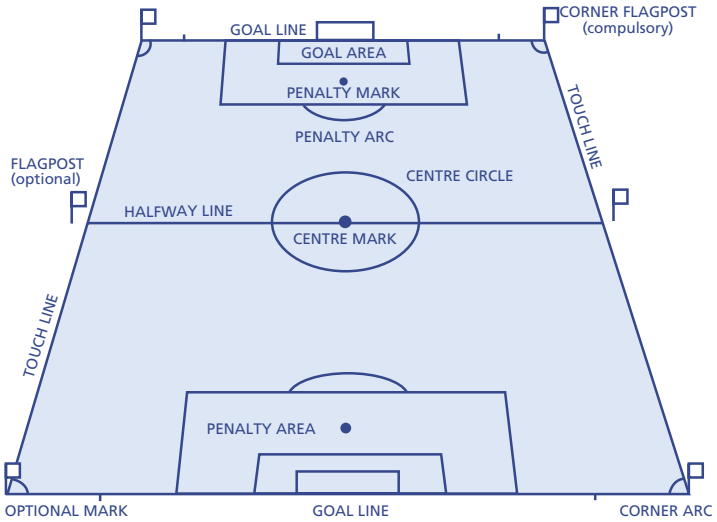
## **Safety**

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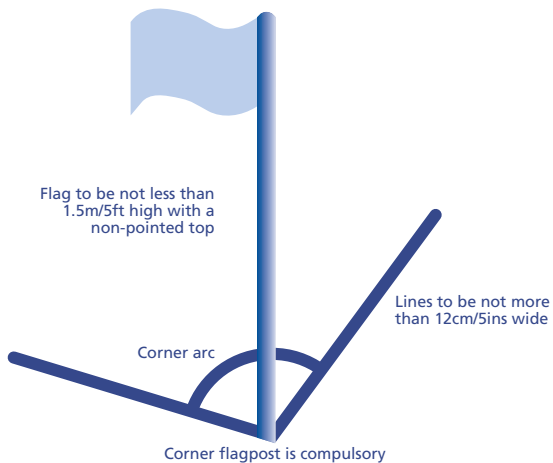
Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

## LAW 1 – THE FIELD OF PLAY

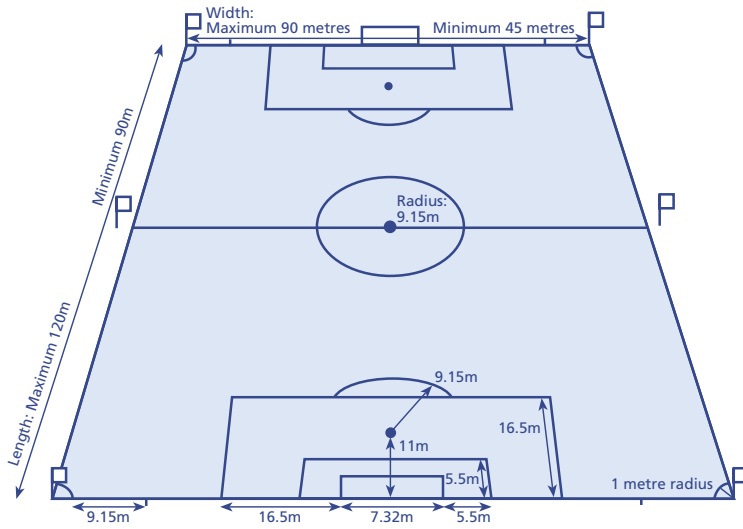
### The Field of Play



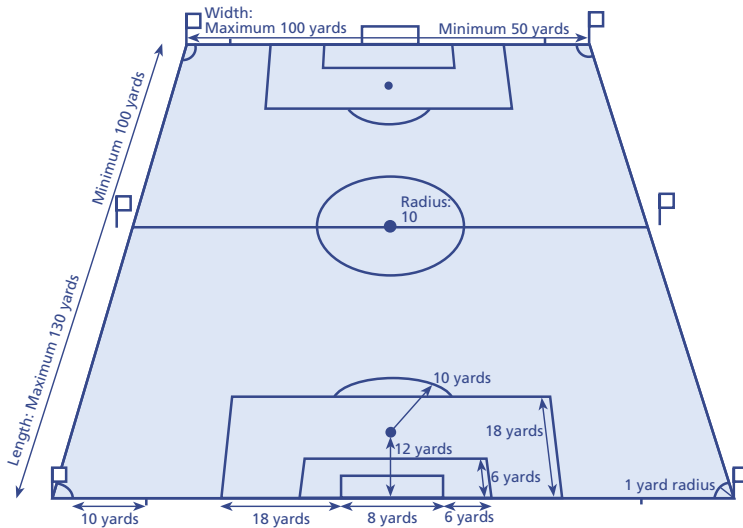
### Corner Flagpost



## Metric Measurements



## Imperial Measurements



### ***Decisions of the International F.A. Board***

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#### **Decision 1**

*If the crossbar becomes displaced or broken, play is stopped until it has been repaired or replaced in position. If a repair is not possible, the match is abandoned. The use of a rope to replace the crossbar is not permitted. If the crossbar can be repaired, the match is restarted with a dropped ball at the place where the ball was located when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)*

#### **Decision 2**

*Goalposts and crossbars must be made of wood, metal or other approved material. Their shape may be square, rectangular, round or elliptical and they must not be dangerous to players.*

#### **Decision 3**

*No kind of commercial advertising, whether real or virtual, is permitted on the field of play and field equipment (including the goal nets and the areas they enclose) from the time the teams enter the field of play until they have left it at half-time and from the time the teams re-enter the field of play until the end of the match. In particular, no advertising material of any kind may be displayed on goals, nets, flagposts or their flags. No extraneous equipment (cameras, microphones, etc.) may be attached to these items.*

#### **Decision 4**

*There shall be no advertising of any kind within the technical area or within one metre of the touch line and outside the field of play on the ground. Further, no advertising shall be allowed in the area between the goal line and the goal nets.*

#### **Decision 5**

*The reproduction, whether real or virtual, of representative logos or emblems of FIFA, confederations, member associations, leagues, clubs or other bodies is forbidden on the field of play and field equipment (including the goal nets and the areas they enclose) during playing time, as described in Decision 3.*

**Decision 6**

*A mark may be made off the field of play, 9.15 metres (10 yds) from the corner arc and at right angles to the goal lines, to ensure that this distance is observed when a corner kick is being taken.*

**Decision 7**

*Where artificial surfaces are used in either competition matches between representative teams of member associations affiliated to FIFA or international club competition matches, the surface must meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Concept for Artificial Turf or the International Artificial Turf Standard, unless special dispensation is given by FIFA.*

**Decision 8**

*Where a technical area exists, it must meet the requirements approved by the International F.A. Board, which are contained in this publication.*

## LAW 2 – THE BALL

### Qualities and Measurements

The ball is:

- spherical;
- made of leather or other suitable material;
- of a circumference of not more than 70 cm (28 ins) and not less than 68 cm (27 ins);
- not more than 450 g (16 oz) in weight and not less than 410 g (14 oz) at the start of the match;
- of a pressure equal to 0.6 – 1.1 atmosphere (600 – 1100 g/cm<sup>2</sup>) at sea level (8.5 lbs/sq in – 15.6 lbs/sq in).

### Replacement of a Defective Ball

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during the course of a match:

- the match is stopped;
- the match is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the first ball became defective. \* (see page 3)

If the ball bursts or becomes defective whilst not in play at a kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, free kick, penalty kick or throw-in:

- the match is restarted accordingly.

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



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## **Decisions of the International F.A. Board**

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### **Decision 1**

*In competition matches, only footballs that meet the minimum technical requirements stipulated in Law 2 are permitted for use.*

*In FIFA competition matches, and in competition matches organised under the auspices of the confederations, acceptance of a football for use is conditional upon the football bearing one of the following three designations:*

- *the official “FIFA APPROVED” logo, or*
- *the official “FIFA INSPECTED” logo, or*
- *the reference “International Matchball Standard”*

*Such a designation on a football indicates that it has been tested officially and found to be in compliance with specific technical requirements, different for each category and additional to the minimum specifications stipulated in Law 2. The list of the additional requirements specific to each of the respective categories must be approved by the International F.A. Board. The institutes conducting the tests are subject to the approval of FIFA.*

*Member association competitions may require the use of balls bearing any one of these three designations.*

*In all other matches, the ball used must satisfy the requirements of Law 2.*

### **Decision 2**

*In FIFA competition matches and in competition matches organised under the auspices of the confederations and member associations, no kind of commercial advertising on the ball is permitted, except for the emblem of the competition, the competition organiser and the authorised trademark of the manufacturer. The competition regulations may restrict the size and number of such markings.*



**IMS**  
INTERNATIONAL  
MATCHBALL  
STANDARD.

## LAW 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

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### Players

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A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players.

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### Official Competitions

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Up to a maximum of three substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, the confederations or the member associations.

The rules of the competition must state how many substitutes may be nominated, from three up to a maximum of seven.

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### Other Matches

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| In other matches, up to six substitutes may be used.

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### All Matches

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In all matches, the names of the substitutes must be given to the referee prior to the start of the match. Substitutes not so named may not take part in the match.

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### Substitution Procedure

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

- the referee is informed before any proposed substitution is made;
- a substitute only enters the field of play after the player being replaced has left and after receiving a signal from the referee;
- a substitute only enters the field of play at the halfway line and during a stoppage in the match;
- a substitution is completed when a substitute enters the field of play;





- from that moment, the substitute becomes a player and the player he has replaced ceases to be a player;
- a player who has been replaced takes no further part in the match;
- all substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee, whether called upon to play or not.

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### **Changing the Goalkeeper**

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Any of the other players may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that:

- the referee is informed before the change is made;
- the change is made during a stoppage in the match.

### Infringements/Sanctions

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If a substitute enters the field of play without the referee's permission:

- play is stopped;
- the substitute is cautioned, shown the yellow card and required to leave the field of play;
- play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place it was located when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)

If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission before the change is made:

- play continues;
- the players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card when the ball is next out of play.

For any other infringements of this Law:

- the players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card.
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### Restart of Play

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If play is stopped by the referee to administer a caution:

- the match is restarted by an indirect free kick, to be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was located when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)
- 

### Players and Substitutes Sent Off

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A player who has been sent off before the kick-off may be replaced only by one of the named substitutes.

A named substitute who has been sent off, either before the kick-off or after play has started, may not be replaced.

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## ***Decisions of the International F.A. Board***

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### ***Decision 1***

*Subject to the overriding conditions of Law 3, the minimum number of players in a team is left to the discretion of member associations. The Board is of the opinion, however, that a match should not continue if there are fewer than seven players in either team.*

### ***Decision 2***

*A team official may convey tactical instructions to the players during the match and he must return to his position after giving these instructions. All officials must remain within the confines of the technical area, where such an area is provided, and they must behave in a responsible manner.*

## LAW 4 – THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

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### Safety

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A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewellery).

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### Basic Equipment

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The basic compulsory equipment of a player is:

- a jersey or shirt;
  - shorts – if thermal undershorts are worn, they are of the same main colour as the shorts;
  - stockings;
  - shinguards;
  - footwear.
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### Shinguards

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- are covered entirely by the stockings;
  - are made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, or similar substances);
  - provide a reasonable degree of protection.
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### Goalkeepers

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Each goalkeeper wears colours that distinguish him from the other players, the referee and the assistant referees.



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## **Infringements/Sanctions**

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For any infringement of this Law:

- play need not be stopped;
- the player at fault is instructed by the referee to leave the field of play to correct his equipment;
- the player leaves the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play, unless he has already corrected his equipment;
- any player required to leave the field of play to correct his equipment does not re-enter without the referee's permission;
- the referee checks that the player's equipment is correct before allowing him to re-enter the field of play;
- the player is only allowed to re-enter the field of play when the ball is out of play.

A player who has been required to leave the field of play because of an infringement of this Law and who enters (or re-enters) the field of play without the referee's permission is cautioned and shown the yellow card.

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## **Restart of Play**

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If play is stopped by the referee to administer a caution:

- the match is restarted by an indirect free kick taken by a player of the opposing side, from the place where the ball was located when the referee stopped the match. \* (see page 3)

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## ***Decisions of the International F.A. Board***

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### ***Decision 1***

- *Players must not reveal undershirts that contain slogans or advertising.*

*A player removing his jersey to reveal slogans or advertising will be sanctioned by the competition organiser.*

- *Jerseys must have sleeves.*

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### The Authority of the Referee

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Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed.

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### Powers and Duties

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The Referee:

- enforces the Laws of the Game;
- controls the match in co-operation with the assistant referees and, where applicable, with the fourth official;
- ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2;
- ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4;
- acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match;
- stops, suspends or terminates the match, at his discretion, for any infringements of the Laws;
- stops, suspends or terminates the match because of outside interference of any kind;
- stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that he is removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted;
- allows play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured;
- ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped;
- allows play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalises the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time;
- punishes the more serious offence when a player commits more than one offence at the same time;
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences. He is not obliged to take this action immediately but must do so when the ball next goes out of play;

- takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds;
- acts on the advice of assistant referees regarding incidents that he has not seen;
- ensures that no unauthorised persons enter the field of play;
- restarts the match after it has been stopped;
- provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players, and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match.

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### **Decisions of the Referee**

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The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final.

The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he has not restarted play.

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### ***Decisions of the International F.A. Board***

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#### ***Decision 1***

*A referee (or where applicable, an assistant referee or fourth official) is not held liable for:*

*any kind of injury suffered by a player, official or spectator;*

*any damage to property of any kind;*

*any other loss suffered by any individual, club, company, association or other body, which is due or which may be due to any decision that he may take under the terms of the Laws of the Game or in respect of the normal procedures required to hold, play and control a match.*

*This may include:*

- a decision that the condition of the field of play or its surrounds or that the weather conditions are such as to allow or not to allow a match to take place;
- a decision to abandon a match for whatever reason;
- a decision as to the condition of the fixtures or equipment used during a match including the goalposts, crossbar, flagposts and the ball;
- a decision to stop or not to stop a match due to spectator interference or any problem in the spectator area;
- a decision to stop or not to stop play to allow an injured player to be removed from the field of play for treatment;
- a decision to request or insist that an injured player be removed from the field of play for treatment;
- a decision to allow or not to allow a player to wear certain apparel or equipment;
- a decision (in so far as this may be his responsibility) to allow or not to allow any persons (including team or stadium officials, security officers, photographers or other media representatives) to be present in the vicinity of the field of play;
- any other decision that he may take in accordance with the Laws of the Game or in conformity with his duties under the terms of FIFA, confederation, member association or league rules or regulations under which the match is played.



**Decision 2**

*In tournaments or competitions where a fourth official is appointed, his role and duties must be in accordance with the guidelines approved by the International F.A. Board, which are contained in this publication.*

**Decision 3**

*Facts connected with play shall include whether a goal is scored or not and the result of the match.*

### Duties

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Two assistant referees are appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- when the whole of the ball has passed out of the field of play;
- which side is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in;
- when a player may be penalised for being in an offside position;
- when a substitution is requested;
- when misconduct or any other incident has occurred out of the view of the referee;
- when offences have been committed whenever the assistants are closer to the action than the referee (this includes, in particular circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area);
- whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper has moved forward before the ball has been kicked and if the ball has crossed the line.

### Assistance

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The assistant referees also assist the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game. In particular, they may enter the field of play to help control the 9.15m distance.

In the event of undue interference or improper conduct, the referee will relieve an assistant referee of his duties and make a report to the appropriate authorities.



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### Periods of Play

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The match lasts two equal periods of 45 minutes, unless otherwise mutually agreed between the referee and the two participating teams. Any agreement to alter the periods of play (for example to reduce each half to 40 minutes because of insufficient light) must be made before the start of play and must comply with competition rules.

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### Half-Time Interval

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Players are entitled to an interval at half-time. The half-time interval must not exceed 15 minutes. Competition rules must state the duration of the half-time interval. The duration of the half-time interval may be altered only with the consent of the referee.

## LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

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### Allowance for Time Lost

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Allowance is made in either period for all time lost through:

- substitution(s);
- assessment of injury to players;
- removal of injured players from the field of play for treatment;
- wasting time;
- any other cause.

The allowance for time lost is at the discretion of the referee.

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### Penalty Kick

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If a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the duration of either half is extended until the penalty kick is completed.

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### Abandoned Match

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An abandoned match is replayed unless the competition rules provide otherwise.

### Preliminaries

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A coin is tossed and the team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match.

The other team takes the kick-off to start the match.

The team that wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half of the match.

In the second half of the match, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.

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### Kick-off

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A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- at the start of the match;
- after a goal has been scored;
- at the start of the second half of the match;
- at the start of each period of extra time, where applicable.

A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off.

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### Procedure

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- All players are in their own half of the field.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is stationary on the centre mark.
- The referee gives a signal.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.
- The kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.

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### Infringements/Sanctions

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If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

For any other infringement of the kick-off procedure:

- the kick-off is retaken.

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### Dropped Ball

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A dropped ball is a way of restarting the match after a temporary stoppage that becomes necessary, while the ball is in play, for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game.



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## Procedure

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The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)

Play restarts when the ball touches the ground.

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## Infringements/Sanctions

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The ball is dropped again:

- if it is touched by a player before it makes contact with the ground;
  - if the ball leaves the field of play after it makes contact with the ground, without a player touching it.
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## Special Circumstances

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A free kick awarded to the defending team inside its own goal area is taken from any point within the goal area.

An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team in its opponents' goal area is taken from the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

A dropped ball to restart the match after play has been temporarily stopped inside the goal area takes place on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

## LAW 9 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

### Ball Out of Play

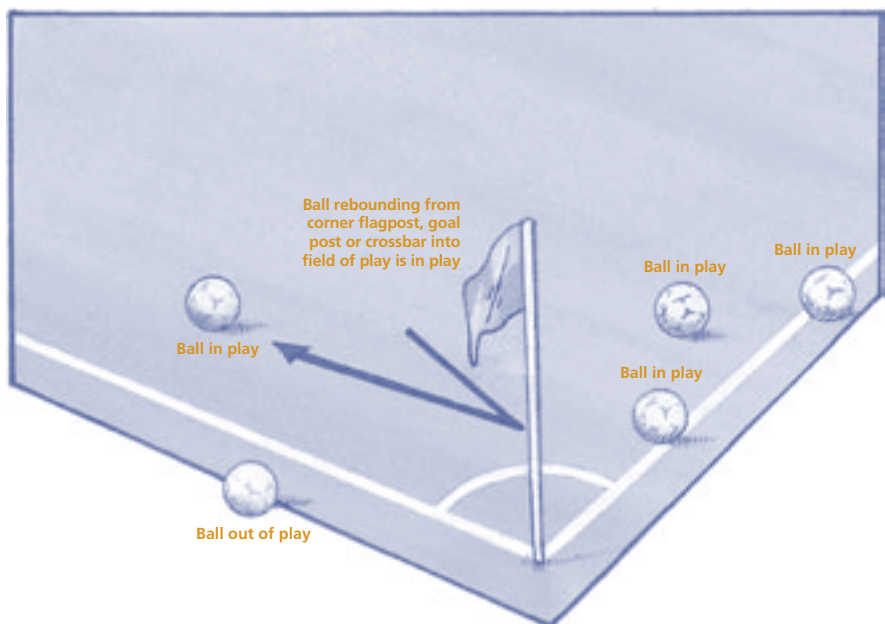
The ball is out of play when:

- it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air;
- play has been stopped by the referee.

### Ball In Play

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- it rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play;
- it rebounds from either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play.





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### Goal Scored

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

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### Winning Team

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The team scoring the greater number of goals during a match is the winner. If both teams score an equal number of goals, or if no goals are scored, the match is drawn.

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### Competition Rules

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When competition rules require there to be a winning team after a match has been drawn, only the following procedures, which have been approved by the International F.A. Board, are permitted

- Away goals rule;
- Extra time;
- Kicks from the penalty mark.

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### Decisions of the International F.A. Board

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#### **Decision 1**

*Only procedures to determine the winner of a match, which are approved by the International F.A. Board and contained in this publication, are permitted in competition rules.*



### Offside Position

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

A player is in an offside position if:

- he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.

A player is not in an offside position if:

- he is in his own half of the field of play; or
  - he is level with the second last opponent; or
  - he is level with the last two opponents.
- 

### Offence

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A player in an offside position is only penalised if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- interfering with play; or
  - interfering with an opponent; or
  - gaining an advantage by being in that position.
- 

### No Offence

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

- a goal kick; or
  - a throw-in; or
  - a corner kick.
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### Infringements/Sanctions

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For any offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

*Fouls and misconduct are penalised as follows:*

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### **Direct Free Kick**

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

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent;
- trips or attempts to trip an opponent;
- jumps at an opponent;
- charges an opponent;
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent;
- pushes an opponent.

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four offences:

- tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball;
- holds an opponent;
- spits at an opponent;
- handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area).

A direct free kick is taken from where the offence occurred. \* (see page 3)

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### **Penalty Kick**

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A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

### Indirect Free Kick

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An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following four offences:

- takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it from his possession;
- touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player;
- touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate;
- touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate.

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

- plays in a dangerous manner;
- impedes the progress of an opponent;
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands;
- commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player.

The indirect free kick is taken from where the offence occurred. \* (see page 3)

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### Disciplinary Sanctions

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

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## Cautionable Offences

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A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following seven offences:

1. is guilty of unsporting behaviour;
2. shows dissent by word or action;
3. persistently infringes the Laws of the Game;
4. delays the restart of play;
5. fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick;
6. enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission;
7. deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission.

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## Sending-Off Offences

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A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following seven offences:

1. is guilty of serious foul play;
2. is guilty of violent conduct;
3. spits at an opponent or any other person;
4. 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);
5. 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;
6. uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures;
7. receives a second caution in the same match.

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

### ***Decisions of the International F.A. Board***

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#### ***Decision 1***

*A player who commits a cautionable or sending-off offence, either on or off the field of play, whether directed towards an opponent, a team-mate, the referee, an assistant referee or any other person, is disciplined according to the nature of the offence committed.*

#### ***Decision 2***

*The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his hand or arms. Possession of the ball includes the goalkeeper deliberately parrying the ball, but does not include the circumstances where, in the opinion of the referee, the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after he has made a save.*

#### ***Decision 3***

*Subject to the terms of Law 12, a player may pass the ball to his own goalkeeper using his head or chest or knee, etc. If, however, in the opinion of the referee, a player uses a deliberate trick while the ball is in play in order to circumvent the Law, the player is guilty of unsporting behaviour. He is cautioned, shown the yellow card and an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)*

*A player using a deliberate trick to circumvent the Law while he is taking a free kick is cautioned for unsporting behaviour and shown the yellow card. The free kick is retaken.*

*In such circumstances, it is irrelevant whether the goalkeeper subsequently touches the ball with his hands or not. The offence is committed by the player in attempting to circumvent both the letter and the spirit of Law 12.*

**Decision 4**

*A tackle from behind, which endangers the safety of an opponent, must be sanctioned as serious foul play.*

**Decision 5**

*Any simulating action anywhere on the field, which is intended to deceive the referee, must be sanctioned as unsporting behaviour.*

**Decision 6**

*A player who removes his jersey when celebrating a goal must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour.*



### Types of Free Kicks

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Free kicks are either direct or indirect.

For both direct and indirect free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

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### The Direct Free Kick

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- If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded.
  - If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.
- 

### The Indirect Free Kick

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#### *Signal*

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising his arm above his head. He maintains his arm in that position until the kick has been taken and the ball has touched another player or goes out of play.

#### *Ball Enters the Goal*

A goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal.

- If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded.
- If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.



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## Position of Free Kick

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### *Free Kick Inside the Penalty Area*

Direct or indirect free kick to the defending team:

- All opponents are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball.
- All opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the penalty area.
- A free kick awarded in the goal area is taken from any point inside that area.

### *Indirect Free Kick to the Attacking Team:*

- All opponents are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- An indirect free kick awarded inside the goal area is taken from that part of the goal area line which runs parallel to the goal line, at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

### *Free Kick Outside the Penalty Area*

- All opponents are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- The free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

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## Infringements/Sanctions

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If, when a free kick is taken, an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance:

- the kick is retaken.

If, when a free kick is taken by the defending team from inside its own penalty area, the ball is not kicked directly into play:

- the kick is retaken.

### *Free Kick Taken by a Player Other than the Goalkeeper*

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the kicker's penalty area.

### *Free Kick Taken by the Goalkeeper*

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper touches the ball a second time (except with his hands), before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

### The Penalty Kick

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A penalty kick is awarded against a team that commits one of the ten offences for which a direct free kick is awarded, inside its own penalty area and while the ball is in play.

A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half or at the end of periods of extra time.

### Position of the Ball and the Players

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The ball:

- is placed on the penalty mark.

The player taking the penalty kick:

- is properly identified.

The defending goalkeeper:

- remains on his goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.

The players other than the kicker are located:

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

### The Referee

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- does not signal for a penalty kick to be taken until the players have taken up position in accordance with the Law;
- decides when a penalty kick has been completed.

### Procedure

---

- The player taking the penalty kicks the ball forward.
- He does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.

When a penalty kick is taken during the normal course of play, or time has been extended at half-time or full time to allow a penalty kick to be taken or retaken, a goal is awarded if, before passing between the goalposts and under the crossbar:

- the ball touches either or both of the goalposts and/or the crossbar, and/or the goalkeeper.

### Infringements/Sanctions

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*If the referee gives the signal for a penalty kick to be taken and, before the ball is in play, one of the following situations occurs:*

The player taking the penalty kick infringes the Laws of the Game:

- The referee allows the kick to proceed.
- If the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken.
- If the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is not retaken.

The goalkeeper infringes the Laws of the Game:

- The referee allows the kick to proceed.
- If the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded.
- If the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken.

A team-mate of the player taking the kick enters the penalty area or moves in front of or within 9.15 m (10 yds) of the penalty mark:

- The referee allows the kick to proceed.
- If the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken.
- If the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is not retaken.
- If the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper, the crossbar or the goalpost and is touched by this player, the referee stops play and restarts the match with an indirect free kick to the defending team.

A team-mate of the goalkeeper enters the penalty area or moves in front of or within 9.15 m (10 yds) of the penalty mark:

- The referee allows the kick to proceed.
- If the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded.
- If the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken.

A player of both the defending team and the attacking team infringe the Laws of the Game:

- the kick is retaken.

*If, after the penalty kick has been taken:*

The kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

The kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

The ball is touched by an outside agent as it moves forward:

- the kick is retaken.

The ball rebounds into the field of play from the goalkeeper, the cross-bar or the goalposts, and is then touched by an outside agent:

- the referee stops play;
- play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place where it touched the outside agent. \* (see page 3)

## LAW 15 – THE THROW-IN

A throw-in is a method of restarting play.

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

A throw-in is awarded:

- when the whole of the ball passes over the touch line, either on the ground or in the air;
- from the point where it crossed the touch line;
- to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball.

---

### Procedure

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At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- faces the field of play;
- has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line;
- uses both hands;
- delivers the ball from behind and over his head.

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

The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

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### Infringements/Sanctions

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*Throw-in taken by a player other than the goalkeeper:*

If, after the ball is in play, the thrower touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

If, after the ball is in play, the thrower deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the thrower's penalty area.

*Throw-in taken by the goalkeeper:*

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper touches the ball a second time (except with his hands), before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

If an opponent unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower:

- he is cautioned for unsporting behaviour and shown the yellow card.

For any other infringement of this Law:

- the throw-in is taken by a player of the opposing team.



## LAW 16 – THE GOAL KICK

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

A goal kick is awarded when:

- the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the attacking team, passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10.

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### Procedure

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- The ball is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team.
- Opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
- The kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the penalty area.

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### Infringements/Sanctions

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If the ball is not kicked directly into play beyond the penalty area:

- the kick is retaken.

*Goal kick taken by a player other than the goalkeeper:*

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)



If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the kicker's penalty area.

*Goal kick taken by the goalkeeper:*

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

For any other infringement of this Law:

- the kick is retaken.

## LAW 17 – THE CORNER KICK

A corner kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

A corner kick is awarded when:

- the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10.

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### Procedure

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- The ball is placed inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flagpost.
- The corner flagpost is not moved.
- Opponents remain at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is kicked by a player of the attacking team.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- The kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.



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## Infringements/Sanctions

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*Corner kick taken by a player other than the goalkeeper:*

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the kicker's penalty area.

*Corner kick taken by the goalkeeper:*

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.\* (see page 3)

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred; \* (see page 3)
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred. \* (see page 3)

For any other infringement:

- the kick is retaken.

## PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE THE WINNER OF A MATCH

Away goals, extra time and taking kicks from the penalty mark are methods of determining the winning team where competition rules require there to be a winning team after a match has been drawn.

### Away Goals

Competition rules may provide that where teams play each other home and away, if the scores are equal after the second match, any goals scored at the ground of the opposing team will count double.

### Extra Time

Competition rules may provide for two further equal periods, not exceeding 15 minutes each, to be played. The conditions of Law 8 will apply.

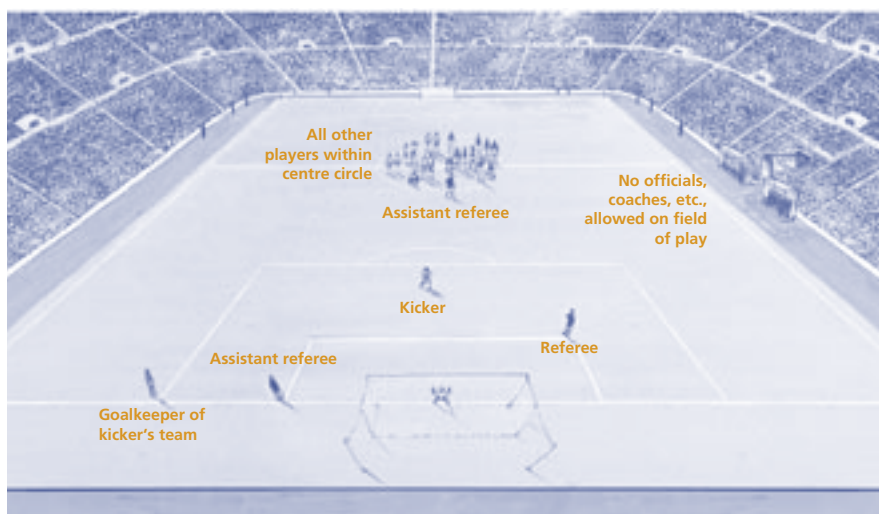
## Kicks from the Penalty Mark

### Procedure

- The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.
- The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick.
- The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
- Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks.
- The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
- If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken.
- If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks continue to be taken in the same order until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
- A goalkeeper who is injured while kicks are being taken from the penalty mark and is unable to continue as goalkeeper may be replaced by a named substitute provided his team has not used the maximum number of substitutes permitted under the competition rules.

- With the exception of the foregoing case, only players who are on the field of play at the end of the match, which includes extra time where appropriate, are allowed to take kicks from the penalty mark.
- Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.
- An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- Only the eligible players and match officials are permitted to remain on the field of play when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- All players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the centre circle.
- The goalkeeper who is the team-mate of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area in which the kicks are being taken, on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.
- Unless otherwise stated, the relevant Laws of the Game and International F.A. Board decisions apply when Kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.

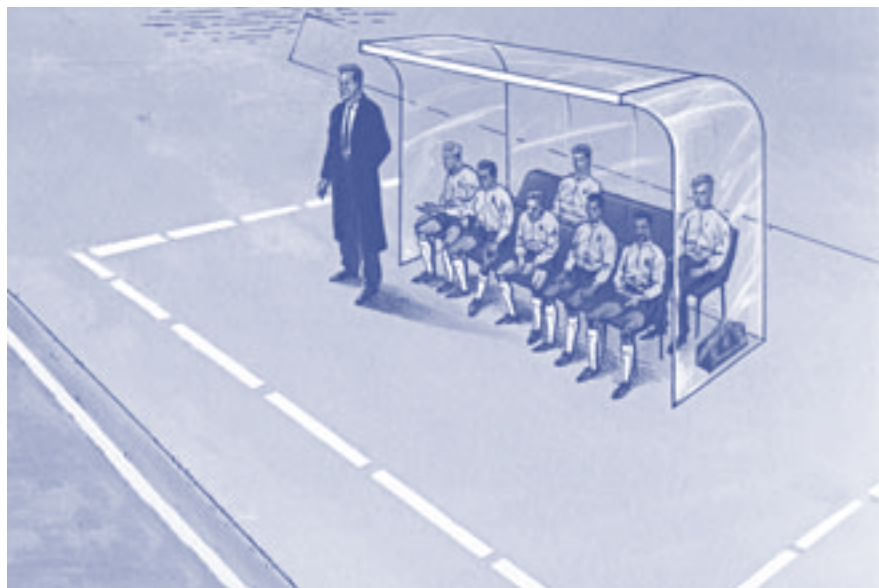
### TAKING KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK



## PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE THE WINNER OF A MATCH

- When a team finishes the match with a greater number of players than their opponents, they shall reduce their numbers to equate with that of their opponents and inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded. The team captain has this responsibility.
- Before the start of kicks from the penalty mark the referee shall ensure that only an equal number of players from each team remain within the centre circle and they shall take the kicks.

## THE TECHNICAL AREA



The technical area described in Law 3, International F.A. Board Decision no. 2 relates particularly to matches played in stadia with a designated seated area for technical staff and substitutes as shown above.

Technical areas may vary between stadia, for example in size or location, and the following notes are issued for general guidance.

The technical area extends 1 m (1 yd) on either side of the designated seated area and extends forward up to a distance of 1 m (1 yd) from the touch line.

- It is recommended that markings are used to define this area.
- The number of persons permitted to occupy the technical area is defined by the competition rules.

## THE TECHNICAL AREA

- The occupants of the technical area are identified before the beginning of the match in accordance with the competition rules.
- Only one person at a time is authorised to convey tactical instructions and he must return to his position after giving these instructions.
- The coach and other officials must remain within the confines of the technical area except in special circumstances, for example, a physiotherapist or doctor entering the field of play, with the referee's permission, to assess an injured player.
- The coach and other occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner.



## THE FOURTH OFFICIAL

- The fourth official may be appointed under the competition rules and officiates if any of the three match officials is unable to continue. He assists the referee at all times.
- Prior to the start of the competition, the organiser states clearly whether, if the referee is unable to continue, the fourth official takes over as the match referee or whether the senior assistant referee takes over as referee with the fourth official becoming an assistant referee.
- The fourth official assists with any administrative duties before, during and after the match, as required by the referee.
- He is responsible for assisting with substitution procedures during the match.
- He supervises the replacement footballs, where required. If the match ball has to be replaced during a match, he provides another ball, on the instruction of the referee, thus keeping the delay to a minimum.
- He has the authority to check the equipment of substitutes before they enter the field of play. If their equipment does not comply with the Laws of the Game, he informs the referee.
- He must indicate to the referee when the wrong player is cautioned because of mistaken identity or when a player is not sent off having been seen to be given a second caution or when violent conduct occurs out of the view of the referee and assistant referees. The referee, however, retains the authority to decide on all points connected with play.
- After the match, the fourth official must submit a report to the appropriate authorities on any misconduct or other incident that has occurred out of the view of the referee and the assistant referees. The fourth official must advise the referee and his assistants of any report being made.
- He has the authority to inform the referee of irresponsible behaviour by any occupant of the technical area.

## REFEREE SIGNALS



Indirect free kick



Advantage



Direct free kick



Caution



Sending off

## ASSISTANT REFEREE SIGNALS



**Substitution**



**Offside**



**Throw-in**



**Offside on the near side of the field**



**Offside on the centre of the field**

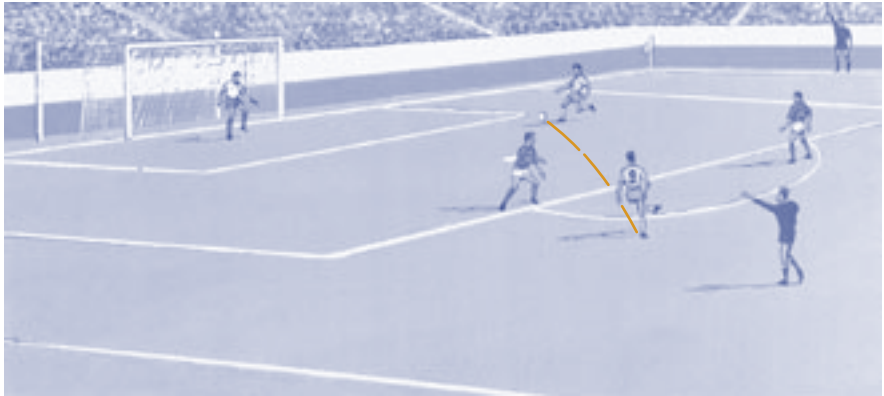


**Offside on the far side of the field**

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***Offside***

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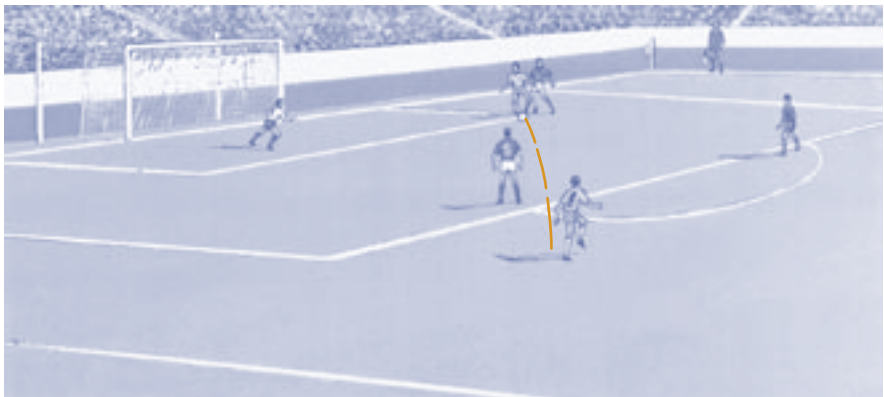


The attacker who receives the ball from his team-mate, number 9, is offside since he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than the ball and the second last defender and gains an advantage by being in that position.

---

***Not Offside***

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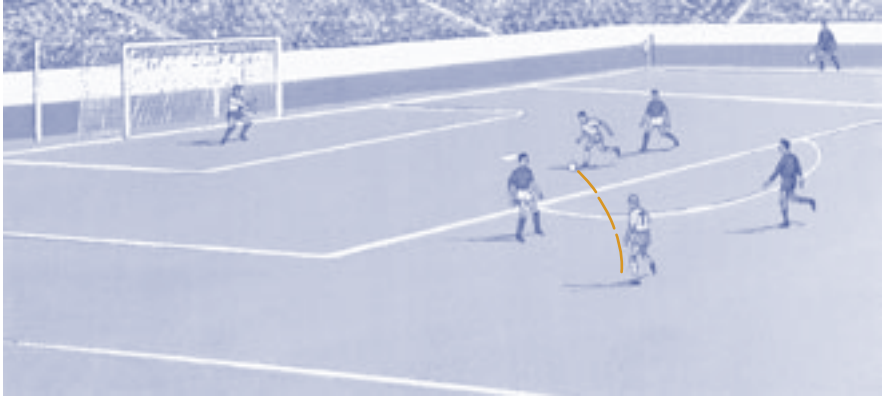


The attacker who receives the ball from his team-mate, number 8, is not offside because, when the ball is kicked, he is level with the second last defender.

---

***Not Offside***

---



The attacker, number 9, is not offside because, when the ball is played to him by his team-mate, number 7, he is level with the second last defender.

---

***Not Offside***

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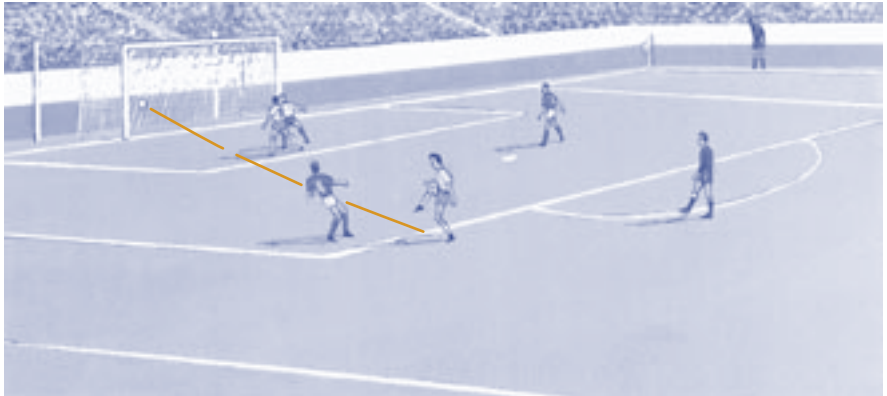


A player cannot be offside from a throw-in.

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***Offside***

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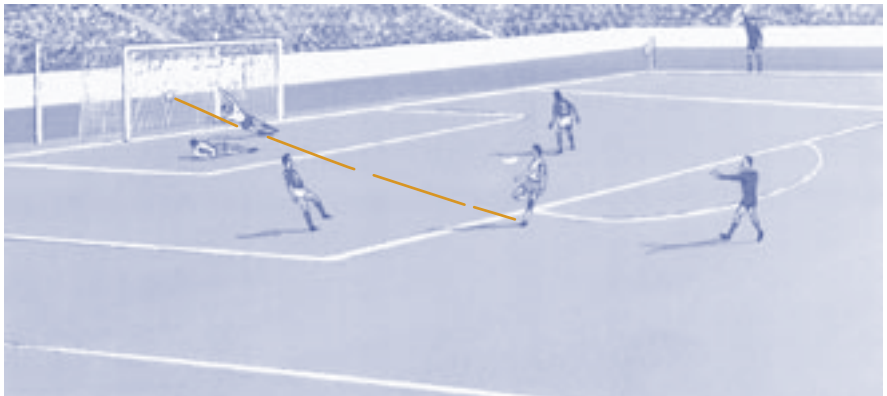


The attacker, number 9, is offside because he is involved in active play and is interfering with the goalkeeper.

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***Offside***

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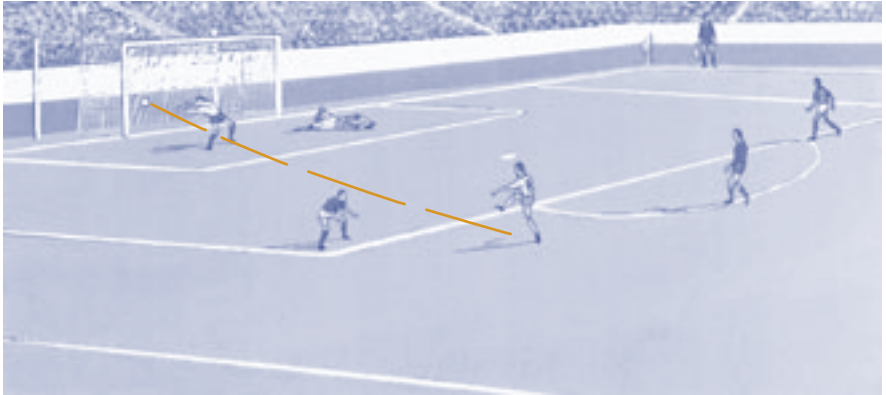


The attacker, number 9, is offside because he is in an offside position and is interfering with the goalkeeper.

---

***Not Offside***

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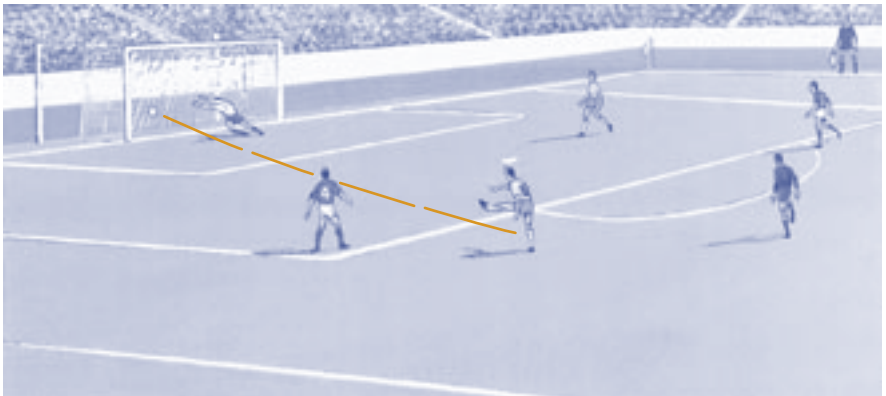


The player lying in the goal area is not offside since he is not involved in active play and is not interfering with the goalkeeper.

---

***Not Offside***

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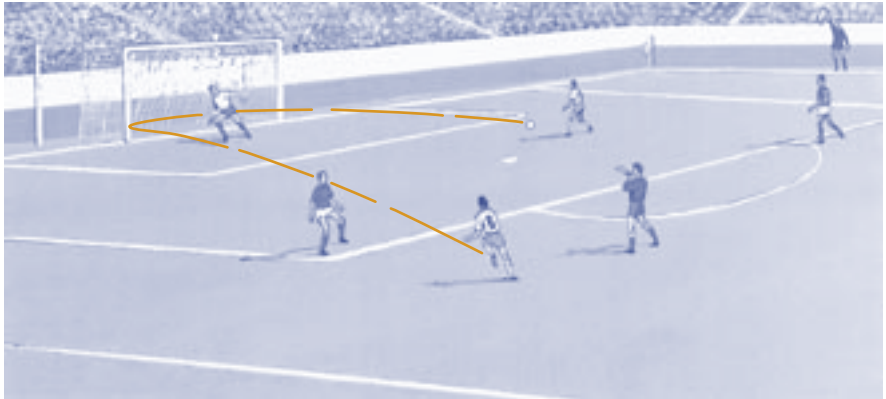


Although the attacker is in an offside position when the ball is kicked by his teammate, number 10, he is not penalised because he is not involved in active play and does not gain an advantage by being in that position.

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**Offside**

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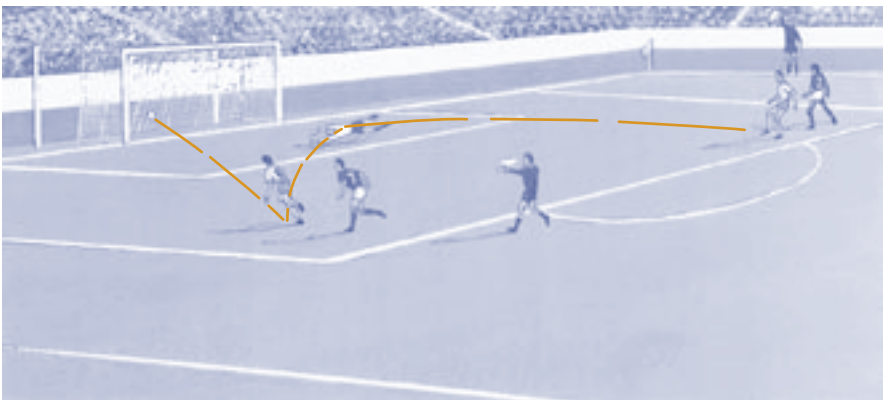


The shot by number 6 rebounds from the goalpost to a team-mate, who is penalised for being in an offside position, because when the ball is played, he is involved in active play and gains an advantage by being in that position.

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**Offside**

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The shot by a team-mate rebounds from the goalkeeper to number 8, who is penalised for being in an offside position because, when the ball is played, he is involved in active play and gains an advantage by being in that position.



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**Not Offside A**

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The ball is kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate and an attacking player moves to challenge him.

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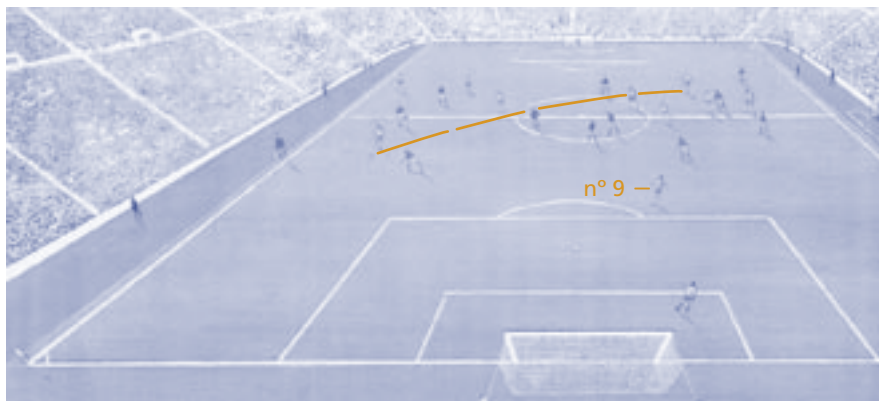
**Not Offside B**

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The goalkeeper kicks the ball upfield and the attacking player, number 9, turns to take up an inside position.

### *Not Offside C*

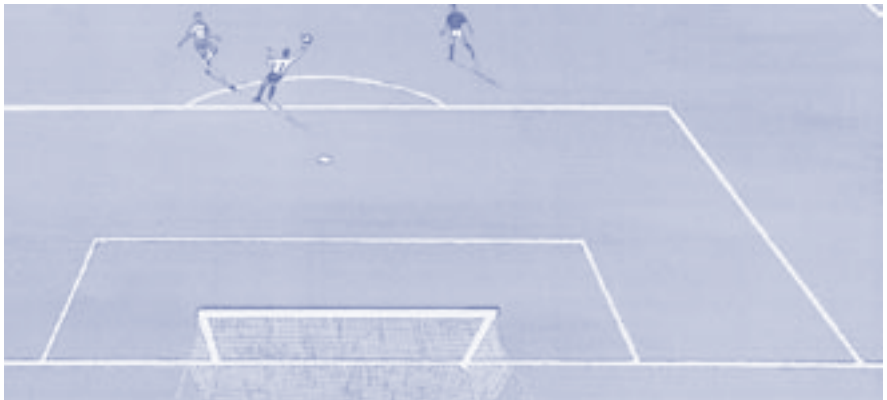


The ball is intercepted by a team-mate of the attacking player and played to another team-mate on the wing. The attacking player, number 9, is not penalised for being in an offside position because he is not involved in active play and does not gain an advantage from being in that position.

## LAW 12 – ILLUSTRATIONS

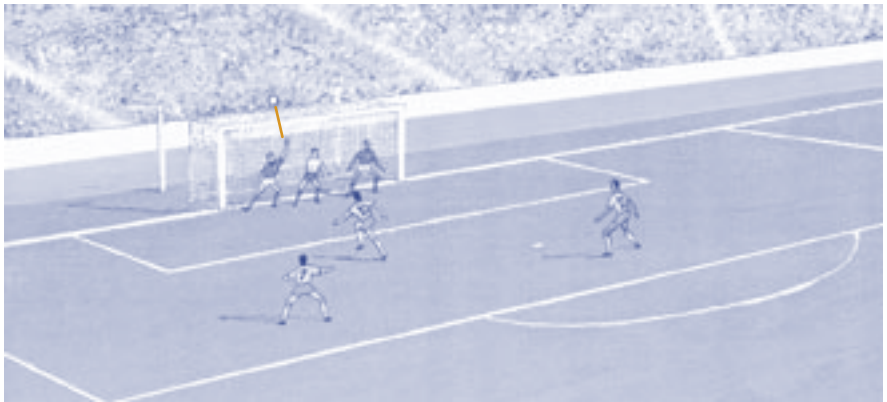


The ball is played towards goal by the attacking team and a defender jumps and handles it as the attacking player moves towards the ball. The defender is sent off for denying the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.



The ball is played forward to an attacking player and the goalkeeper handles it outside the penalty area. The goalkeeper is sent off for denying the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

## LAW 12 – ILLUSTRATIONS



An attacker, number 10, shoots the ball towards goal. Just before it crosses the goal line into the goal, a defender punches the ball over the bar. A penalty kick is awarded and the defender is sent off for denying the opposing team a goal.



A defender intentionally handles the ball inside his own penalty area and the referee awards a penalty kick. He does not send off the defender since no obvious goalscoring opportunity has been denied. If the ball strikes the defender accidentally, no offence is committed.



The goalkeeper pulls down an attacking player inside his penalty area and a penalty kick is awarded.

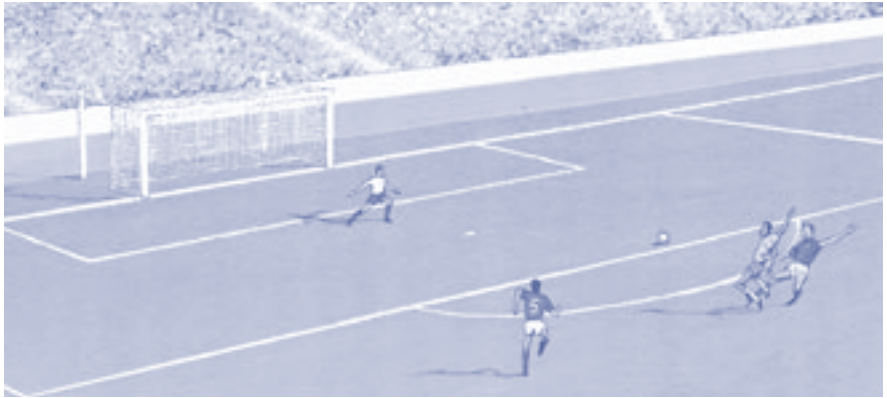
The goalkeeper is not sent off since the attacking player is moving away from goal and does not have an obvious goalscoring opportunity.



An attacking player, number 10, is moving forward near the touch line when he is tripped by a defender.

Number 10 does not have an obvious goalscoring opportunity and so the defender is not sent off.

## LAW 12 – ILLUSTRATIONS



An attacker is moving towards goal with an obvious goalscoring opportunity when he is tripped by a defender.  
The defender is sent off for denying an opponent a goalscoring opportunity.

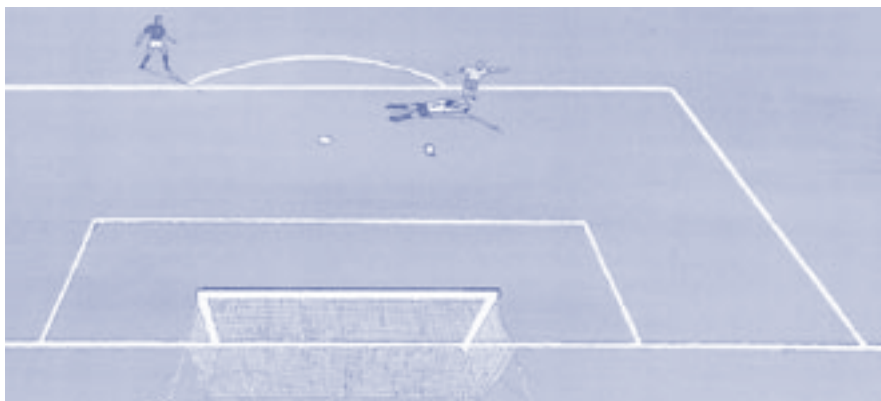


An attacker is making his way towards goal when he is tripped by a defender.  
He does not have an obvious goalscoring opportunity, however, and the defender is not sent off.



An attacker is tripped by a defender inside the penalty area and a penalty kick is awarded.

The defender is not sent off because the attacker is moving away from goal and does not have an obvious goalscoring opportunity.



An attacker is making his way towards goal when he is held by the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper is sent off for denying an opponent an obvious goalscoring opportunity.

## ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR REFEREES, ASSISTANT REFEREES AND FOURTH OFFICIALS

The following additional instructions for referees, assistant referees and fourth officials are intended to clarify the correct application of the Laws of the Game.

Football is a competitive sport and physical contact between players is a normal and acceptable part of the game, however players must play within the Laws and respect the principles of fair play.

Serious foul play and violent conduct are two sending-off offences in Law 12 involving unacceptable levels of physical aggression.

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### Serious Foul Play

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A player is guilty of serious foul play if he uses excessive force or brutality against an opponent when challenging for the ball when it is in play.

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

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### Violent Conduct

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Violent conduct may occur either on the field of play or outside its boundaries, whether the ball is in play or not. A player is guilty of violent conduct if he uses excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball.

He is also guilty of violent conduct if he uses excessive force or brutality against a team-mate or any other person.



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## Offences Against Goalkeepers

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Referees are reminded that:

- it is an offence for a player to prevent a goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands;
- a player must be penalised for playing in a dangerous manner if he kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it;
- it is an offence to restrict the movement of the goalkeeper by unfairly impeding him at the taking of a corner kick.

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## Screening the Ball

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It is not an offence if a player, with the ball under control within playing distance, screens the ball from an opponent without using his arms.

If, however, he prevents an opponent challenging for the ball by illegal use of the hand, arm, legs or body, he must be penalised by a direct free kick, or a penalty kick if the offence was committed inside the penalty area.

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## Scissors or Bicycle Kick

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A scissors kick is permissible provided, in the opinion of the referee, it is not dangerous to an opponent.

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## Deliberately Handling the Ball

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Referees are reminded that deliberately handling the ball is normally punished only by a direct free kick or penalty kick if the offence occurred inside the penalty area. A caution or dismissal is not normally required.

### **Preventing a Goal or an Obvious Goalscoring Opportunity**

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A player is sent off, however, if he prevents a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball. This punishment arises not from the act of the player deliberately handling the ball but from the unacceptable and unfair intervention that prevented a goal being scored.

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### **Cautions for Unsporting Behaviour by Deliberately Handling the Ball**

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There are circumstances when, in addition to a free kick being awarded, a player must also be cautioned for unsporting behaviour e.g. when a player:

- deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession;
  - attempts to score a goal by deliberately handling the ball.
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### **Holding an Opponent**

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A common criticism of referees is their failure to correctly identify and punish the offence of holding an opponent. The failure to deal appropriately with shirt-pulling and arm-holding can result in confrontation situations developing and referees are instructed to make an early intervention and to deal firmly with the situation in accordance with Law 12.

A direct free kick or a penalty kick is normally all that is required as punishment, but in certain circumstances, an additional sanction is required e.g.:

- a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player holds an opponent to prevent him gaining possession of the ball or taking up an advantageous position;
- a player must be sent off if he denies an obvious goalscoring opportunity by holding an opponent.

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## **The Taking of Free Kicks**

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Referees are reminded that a player must be cautioned if:

- he delays the restart of play;
- he fails to respect the required distance when play is being restarted.

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## **The Penalty Kick**

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It is an infringement to enter the penalty area before the kick has been taken. The goalkeeper also infringes the Laws if he moves from his goal line before the ball has been kicked. Referees must ensure that when players infringe this Law, appropriate action is taken.

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## **Offside Signals**

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

Assistant referees must only indicate for an offside position if the player has to be penalised for being in that position.

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## **Offences by Goalkeepers**

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Referees are reminded that goalkeepers are not permitted to keep possession of the ball in their hands for more than six seconds. A goalkeeper guilty of this offence is punished by an indirect free kick.

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## **Persistent Offenders**

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Referees should be alert at all times to players who persistently infringe the Laws. In particular, they must be aware that even if a player commits a number of different offences, he must still be cautioned for persistently infringing the Laws.

### **Attitude Towards Referees**

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The captain of a team has no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game but he has a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of his team.

A player who is guilty of dissent by protesting at a referee's decision must be cautioned.

A player who assaults a referee or who is guilty of using offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures must be sent off.

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### **Simulation**

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A player who attempts to deceive the referee by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled is guilty of simulation and must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

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### **Delaying the Restart of Play**

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

- taking a free kick from the wrong position with the sole intention of forcing the referee to order a retake;
- appearing to take a throw-in but suddenly leaving it to one of his team-mates to throw in;
- kicking the ball away or carrying it away with the hands after the referee has stopped play;
- excessively delaying the taking of a throw-in or free kick;
- delaying leaving the field when being substituted.

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## Celebration of a Goal

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While it is permissible for a player to demonstrate his joy when a goal has been scored, the celebration must not be excessive.

FIFA recognised in Circular No. 579 that such reasonable celebrations are allowed. The practice of choreographed celebrations is not to be encouraged when it results in excessive timewasting and referees are instructed to intervene in such cases.

A player must be cautioned when:

- in the opinion of the referee, he makes gestures which are provocative, derisory or inflammatory;
- he climbs on to a perimeter fence to celebrate a goal being scored;
- he removes his shirt over his head or covers his head with his shirt.

Leaving the field to celebrate a goal is not a cautionable offence in itself, but it is essential that players return to the field as soon as possible.

Referees are expected to act in a preventative mode and to exercise common-sense in dealing with the celebration of a goal.

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## Liquid Refreshments

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Players are entitled to take liquid refreshments during a stoppage in the match but only on the touch line. It is not permitted to throw plastic water bags or any other water containers onto the field.

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## Jewellery

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Referees are reminded that, in accordance with Law 4, players may not wear any kind of jewellery that is dangerous for himself or another player. If it is dangerous it must be removed. It cannot be taped.

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### **Indication of Additional Time Allowed**

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Fourth officials are reminded that when, on the instruction of the referee, the minimum additional time to be allowed at the end of each half is being indicated, this indication should only be made at the end of the final minute in each period of play.

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### **Dealing with Injured Players**

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Referees must follow the instructions below when dealing with injured players:

- Play is allowed to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured.
- Play is stopped if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured.
- After questioning the injured player, the referee authorises one, or at most two doctors, to enter the field to ascertain the type of injury and to arrange the player's safe and swift removal from the field.
- The stretcher-bearers should enter the field with a stretcher at the same time as the doctors to allow the player to be removed as soon as possible.
- The referee ensures an injured player is safely removed from the field of play.
- A player is not allowed to be treated on the field.
- Any player bleeding from a wound must leave the field of play. He may not return until the referee is satisfied that the bleeding has stopped. A player cannot wear clothing with blood on it.
- As soon as the referee has authorised the doctors to enter the field, the player must leave the field, either on the stretcher or on foot. If a player does not comply he is cautioned for unsporting behaviour.
- An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted.
- An injured player may only re-enter the field from the touch line when the ball is in play. When the ball is out of play, the injured player may re-enter from any of the boundary lines.
- The referee alone is authorised to allow an injured player to re-enter the field, whether the ball is in play or not.

- If play has not otherwise been stopped for another reason, or if an injury suffered by a player is not the result of a breach of the Laws of the Game, the referee restarts play with a dropped ball.
- The referee allows for the full amount of time lost through injury to be played at the end of each period of play.

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### **Exceptions**

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Exceptions to this ruling are made only:

- for injury to a goalkeeper;
- when a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need immediate attention;
- when a severe injury has occurred e.g. swallowed tongue, concussion, broken leg etc.

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### **The Technical Area**

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Fourth officials are expected to control the technical area in a preventative rather than a confrontational manner.

However, if the occupants of the technical area indulge in serious misconduct, the fourth official must inform the referee immediately.

*(Approved by the International Football Association Board – February 1993)*

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### **Name and Constitution**

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The title of the Board shall be the International Football Association Board. The Football Association (England), The Scottish Football Association, The Football Association of Wales, The Irish Football Association and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), hereafter called associations, shall constitute the Board and each shall be entitled to be represented by four delegates.

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### **Objects**

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The objects of the Board shall be to discuss and decide proposed alterations to the Laws of the Game and such other matters affecting association football as required to be referred to the Board after consideration by the Annual General Meetings or other appropriate meetings of the associations forming the Board or confederations or member associations.

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### **Meetings of the Board**

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The Board shall meet bi-annually. The Annual General Meeting shall take place in the month of February or March, as agreed. The Annual Business Meeting shall take place in the month of September or October, as agreed. The date and venue of both the Annual General Meeting and the Annual Business Meeting shall be decided at the previous Annual General Meeting of the Board. In each current year, both the Annual General Meeting and the Annual Business Meeting shall be hosted by the same member association. A representative of the host association shall preside. The responsibility for hosting both meetings shall be passed in rotation to each association.



### *Annual General Meeting*

The Annual General Meeting is authorised to discuss and decide on proposed alterations to the Laws of the Game and other relevant matters affecting association football that fall within the remit of the Board.

### *Annual Business Meeting*

The Annual Business Meeting shall take place in the month of September or October, as agreed. The meeting shall have the authority to consider general business submitted to the Board. It may provide decisions on such items but the Annual Business Meeting shall not have the authority to alter the Laws of the Game.

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## **Procedures**

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### *Annual General Meeting*

Each association shall forward in writing, not later than 1 December, to the secretary of the association hosting the meeting, suggestions or proposed alterations to the Laws of the Game, requests for experimentation to the Laws of the Game and other items for discussion, which shall be printed and distributed not later than 14 December. Any amendments to such proposed alterations must be submitted in writing to the secretary of the host association not later than 14 January, and such proposals and amendments shall be printed and distributed to member associations for consideration not later than 1 February.

### *Annual Business Meeting*

Each association shall forward in writing to the secretary of the host association, at least four weeks before the date of the meeting, any proposals, requests for experimentation regarding the Laws of the Game and other items for discussion.

The agenda and relevant papers shall be distributed to all member associations of the Board two weeks before the meeting.

Any confederation or other member association may forward in writing to the General Secretary of FIFA, proposals, requests or items for discussion in good time to ensure that they may be considered by FIFA and, if acceptable, forwarded to the secretary of the host association at least four weeks before the meeting.

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### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting shall be recorded by the secretary of the host association and shall be reported in the official Minute Book, which shall be forwarded to the association next in rotation before the first day of February ensuing.

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### **Quorum and Voting Powers**

The business of a meeting shall not be proceeded unless four associations, one of which shall be FIFA, are represented. FIFA shall have four votes on behalf of all affiliated member associations in membership. The other member associations shall each have one vote. For a proposal to succeed, it must receive the support of at least three-quarters of those present and entitled to vote.

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### **Alterations to the Laws of the Game**

No alterations shall be made to the Laws of the Game, except in the Annual General Meeting of the Board and then only if agreed by at least three-quarters of those present and entitled to vote.

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## Special Meetings

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The association hosting the Board meetings for the current year\* shall, on receiving a written requisition signed by FIFA or by any two of the other member associations, accompanied by a copy of the proposals to be submitted, call a special meeting of the Board. Such special meetings shall be held within twenty-eight days of the requisition and the associations forming the Board shall receive twenty-one days' notice together with a copy of the proposals.

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## Decisions of the Board

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The decisions of the Annual Business Meeting of the Board shall be effective from the date of the meeting, unless agreed otherwise. The decisions of the Annual General Meeting of the Board regarding changes to the Laws of the Game shall be binding on confederations and member associations as from 1 July following each Annual General Meeting of the Board but confederations or member associations whose current season has not ended by 1 July may delay the introduction of the adopted alterations to the Laws of the Game for their competitions until the beginning of their next season. No alteration to the Laws of the Game shall be made by any confederation or member association unless they have been passed by the Board.\*\*

*\* The current year shall be understood to commence on the day following the previous Annual General Meeting.*

*\*\* It was agreed that for international matches, any such decisions would be effective from 1 July following the Annual General Meeting of the Board at which they were reached.*

