

Outline summary of Law changes

Law 3 – The Players

- Clarification relating to extra person(s) on the field of play when a goal is scored

Law 6 – The Other Match Officials

- Reserve assistant referee (RAR) now permitted to assist the referee in the same way as the other ‘on-field’ match officials

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

- ‘Goal celebrations’ to become a separate bullet point in the list of causes of time lost for which the referee makes allowance

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

- The term ‘kicks from the penalty mark’ to be replaced by ‘penalties (penalty shoot-out)’
- Clarification that warnings and cautions for team officials, as well as for players, are not carried forward into penalties (penalty shoot-out)

Law 11 – Offside

- Clarification of guidelines to distinguish between ‘deliberate play’ and ‘deflection’, as outlined in circular 26 (July 2022)

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- Clarification that if the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which involved a defending team player challenging an opponent for the ball (excluding holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball etc.), the same sanction should be issued to the player as for an attempt to play the ball, i.e. if the offence stops or interferes with a promising attack – no caution (no yellow card); DOGSO offence – caution (yellow card)

Law changes 2023/24

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- Clarification that the senior team coach present in the technical area cannot be sanctioned for an offence committed by an 'unidentified' player

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

- Clarification that the goalkeeper must not behave in a manner that fails to show respect for the game and the opponent, i.e. by unfairly distracting the kicker

Video assistant referee (VAR) protocol

- Confirmation that the VAR 'light' system does not involve a replay operator (RO)



Details of all Law changes

The following are the changes to the Laws of the Game for the 2023/24 edition. For each change, the amended or additional wording is provided together with the previous wording, where appropriate, followed by an explanation of the change.

Key

The main Law changes are underlined in yellow and highlighted in the margin. Editorial changes are underlined.

YC = yellow card (caution); RC = red card (sending-off).

Law 3 – The Players

9. Goal scored with an extra person on the field of play

Additional text

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realises, before play restarts, that an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, and that person interfered with play:

- the referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:
 - a player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that scored the goal; play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position of the extra person
 - an outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in ‘Extra persons on the field of play’; play is restarted with a dropped ball
- the referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:
 - a player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that conceded the goal
 - an outside agent who did not interfere with play

Explanation

Clarification that the referee should take action against an extra person on the field of play when a goal is scored only if the person affected the play, e.g. the Law does not expect the referee to penalise encroachment onto the field of play if it does not impact the play.

Law 6 – The Other Match Officials

Amended text

Other match officials (two assistant referees, a fourth official, two additional assistant referees, a reserve assistant referee, a video assistant referee (VAR) and at least one assistant VAR (AVAR)) may be appointed to matches. (...)

The referee, assistant referees, fourth official, additional assistant referees and reserve assistant referee are the ‘on-field’ match officials.

(...)

~~With the exception of the reserve assistant referee, the,~~ The other ‘on-field’ match officials assist the referee with offences when they have a clearer view than the referee (...)

Explanation

The use of reserve assistant referees has increased significantly, and it is therefore logical that they should be able to give the same assistance to the referee as the other ‘on-field’ match officials.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

3. Allowance for time lost

Amended text

Allowance is made by the referee in each half for all playing time lost in that half through:

- substitutions
- (...)
- goal celebrations
- any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart (e.g. ~~goal celebrations~~ due to interference by an outside agent)

Explanation

Goal celebrations will henceforth be listed separately to emphasise that they often result in a significant amount of time being lost, for which the referee makes allowance.

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

2. Winning team

Amended text

(...)

When competition rules require a winning team after a drawn match (...), the only permitted procedures to determine the winning team are:

- away goals rule
- two equal periods of extra time not exceeding 15 minutes each
- ~~kicks from the penalty mark~~ penalties (penalty shoot-out)

A combination of the above procedures may be used.

3. ~~Kicks from the penalty mark~~ Penalties (penalty shoot-out)

~~Kicks from the penalty mark~~ Penalties (penalty shoot-out) are taken after the match has ended (...); warnings and cautions issued to players and team officials during the match are not carried forward into ~~kicks from the penalty mark~~ penalties (penalty shoot-out).

Procedure

~~Before kicks from the penalty mark~~ penalties (penalty shoot-out)

- (...)

~~During kicks from the penalty mark~~ penalties (penalty shoot-out)

- (...)

Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks

- (...)
- ~~Kicks from the penalty mark~~ Penalties (penalty shoot-out) must not be delayed for a player who leaves the field of play. (...)

Substitutions and sendings-off during ~~kicks from the penalty mark~~ penalties (penalty shoot-out)

The change from ‘kicks from the penalty mark’ to ‘penalties (penalty shoot-out)’ will also apply to the following:

- Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)
- Law 2.2 – Replacement of a defective ball
- Law 3.5 – Offences and sanctions
- Law 5.3 – Powers and duties
- Law 12.3 – Disciplinary action
- Glossary
- Practical guidelines for match officials

Explanation

- The term ‘kicks from the penalty mark’ is outdated and rarely used. Most people refer to ‘penalties’ or a ‘penalty shoot-out’
- Clarification that warnings and cautions for team officials, as well as for players, are not carried forward into penalties (penalty shoot-out)

Law 11 – Offside

2. Offside offence

Additional text

(...)

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately ~~plays~~ played* the ball, including by deliberate handball, is not considered to have gained an advantage, unless it was a deliberate save by any opponent.

*‘Deliberate play’ (excluding deliberate handball) is when a player has control of the ball with the possibility of:

- passing the ball to a team-mate;
- gaining possession of the ball; or
- clearing the ball (e.g. by kicking or heading it)

If the pass, attempt to gain possession or clearance by the player in control of the ball is inaccurate or unsuccessful, this does not negate the fact that the player ‘deliberately played’ the ball.

The following criteria should be used, as appropriate, as indicators that a player was in control of the ball and, as a result, can be considered to have ‘deliberately played’ the ball:

- The ball travelled from distance and the player had a clear view of it
- The ball was not moving quickly
- The direction of the ball was not unexpected
- The player had time to coordinate their body movement, i.e. it was not a case of instinctive stretching or jumping, or a movement that achieved limited contact/control
- A ball moving on the ground is easier to play than a ball in the air

Explanation

The additional wording clarifies the guidelines for distinguishing between ‘deliberate play’ and ‘deflection’ based on the expectation that a player who is clearly in an offside position should not become onside on all occasions when an opponent moves and touches the ball. This wording was published in The IFAB’s circular 26 (July 2022).

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

3. Disciplinary action

Additional text

(...)

Cautions for unsporting behaviour

There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, including if a player:

- (...)
- handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack
- commits any other offence which interferes with or stops a promising attack, except where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball
- denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offence which was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball and the referee awards a penalty kick

(...)

Denying an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO)

Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is cautioned if the offence was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball; in all other circumstances (e.g. holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball etc.), the offending player must be sent off.

Explanation

It is not always clear whether an action was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball (or both). The same principle should apply for challenging for the ball as attempting to play the ball. Where the referee awards a penalty for a DOGSO offence, the offending player is only sent off if the offence was committed without the possibility to play the ball.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

3. Disciplinary action

Additional text

(...)

Team officials

Where an offence is committed by someone from the technical area (substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official) and the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.

Explanation

Clarification that the senior team official can be sanctioned only for an offence committed by an ‘unidentified offender’ who is in/from the technical area, i.e. this does not apply to an offence committed by an ‘unidentified player’.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

1. Procedure

Additional text

(...)

The defending goalkeeper must remain on the goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts, ~~without touching the goalposts, crossbar or goal net,~~ until the ball ~~has been~~ kicked. The goalkeeper must not behave in a way that unfairly distracts the kicker, e.g. delay the taking of the kick or touch the goalposts, crossbar or goal net.

Explanation

Clarification that the goalkeeper must not behave in a manner that fails to show respect for the game and the opponent, i.e. by unfairly distracting the kicker.

Video assistant referee (VAR) protocol

3. Practicalities

Amended text

The use of VARs during a match involves the following practical arrangements:

- The VAR watches the match in the video operation room (VOR) assisted by one or more assistant VARs (AVARs) and replay operator (RO)
- Depending on the number of camera angles (and other considerations), there may be more than one AVAR and one or more replay operators (ROs)
- (...)

Explanation

Amended wording reflects the VAR ‘light’ system, which does not involve a replay operator.