

Revision of The Laws of the Game

(Summary of the Law changes for 2016/17*)

**effective from 1 June 2016*

Laws of the Game 2016/17

The 130th IFAB AGM held in Cardiff on 5 March 2016 unanimously approved the IFAB Technical Sub Committee's extensive revision of the Laws of the Game.

This revision is probably the most comprehensive in The IFAB's 130 year history and has reorganised and updated the Laws of the Game book to make it far more easy to read, understand and use not just for referees but for anyone interested in the Laws and in football.

The IFAB has redesigned the Law book so that its appearance and content is appropriate for football in the 21st century.

The IFAB is the body responsible for the Laws of the Game worldwide and national football associations, confederations and competitions are not permitted to change the Laws without the permission of The IFAB AGM.

New structure of the Laws of the Game book

INTRODUCTION

NOTES ON THE LAWS OF THE GAME

LAWS OF THE GAME

LAW CHANGES FOR 2016/17 EXPLAINED

- OLD TEXT
- NEW TEXT
- EXPLANATION

GLOSSARY

- FOOTBALL BODIES
- FOOTBALL TERMS
- REFEREE TERMS

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR MATCH OFFICIALS

- INTRODUCTION
- POSITIONING, MOVEMENT AND TEAMWORK
- BODY LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION AND WHISTLE
- OTHER ADVICE (INCLUDING OFFSIDE)

Changes of Structure and Language

The ultimate aim of the revision of the Laws, which is probably the most comprehensive in The IFAB's history, is *"...to increase the universality of the Laws by making them easily understood so football throughout the world benefits from consistent interpretation and application"*

The major areas of change are:

- **A more simple structure** - Law and Interpretation have been combined - all information for each Law is in the same place and not in 2 different parts of the Law book
- **Updated titles** - some of the Laws have been renamed to reflect the modern game e.g. Law 6 - ***The Assistant Referees*** has become **The Other Match Officials**
- **Language and phraseology** - the vocabulary has been reduced, unnecessary words and repetitions have been removed, contradictions have been resolved. The 'masculine' wording has become 'gender neutral' to reflect involvement of women players, referees etc..
- **Updated content** - many changes were needed for the Laws to be able to deal with modern football e.g. use of synthetic/artificial surfaces, drinks breaks for health reasons in hot weather
- Overall, more than 10,000 words have been removed for the Law+ Interpretations sections

Law Changes and Glossary

The 2016/17 Law book contains 2 important new sections:

- **Glossary** – this section contains the definition of key words/phrases which are not always easily understood by non-English speakers and sometimes are difficult to translate. There are 3 sections:
 - *Football bodies*
 - *Football terms*
 - *Referee terms*
- **Law changes** – this section contains all the notable changes to the Laws and each change has:
 - *The 'old' text (the 2015/16 text)*
 - *The 'new' text (the 2016/17 text)*
 - *An explanation of the change and, where necessary, the thinking/reasoning for the change*

The IFAB Technical Sub Committee (TSC) strongly believes that these 2 sections will help everyone to understand the changes. They contain very useful education material for referees, other participants and the wider football public.

Main changes to Laws 1 – 17*

**effective from 1 June 2016*

Law 1 – The Field of Play

- Artificial and natural surfaces may not be combined on the field but 'hybrid' systems are allowed
- Competitions may determine field size for their competitions (within limits of Law 1)
- All commercial advertising on the ground must be at least 1m (1 yd) from boundary lines
- Logos/emblems of FAs, competitions etc... are allowed on corner flags (but no advertising)



Law 2 – The Ball

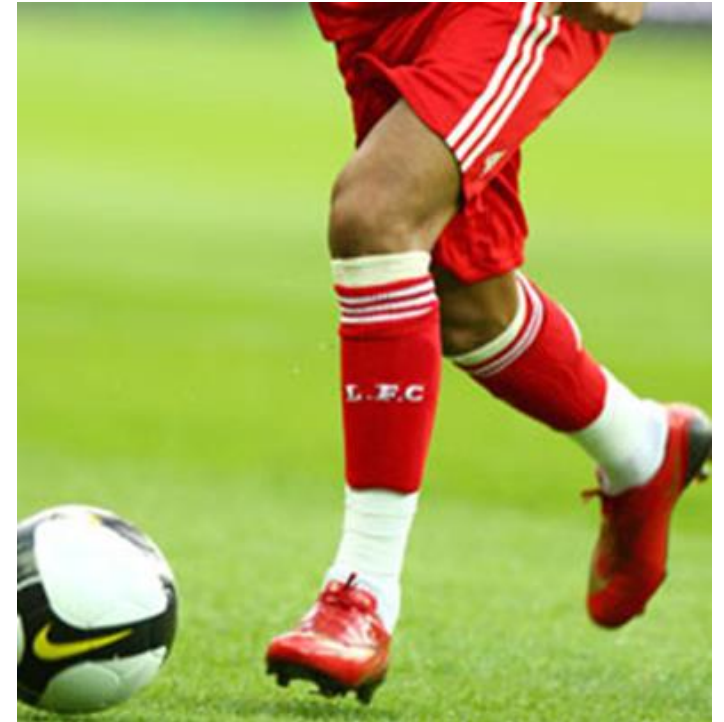
- None

Law 3 – The Players

- A match may not start/continue if a team has fewer than 7 players
- Substitutes may take a restart but must first step onto the field
- Law 5 now allows the referee to send a player off before the kick-off (from the pre-match inspection of the field of play onwards) and in terms of the player being replaced, a player sent off:
 - before the team list has been submitted - can not appear on team list in any capacity
 - after team list submitted but before kick-off - can be replaced by named substitute (*who can not be replaced; team may still make full number of substitutions as is the current Law*)
 - after the kick-off - can not be replaced:
- Direct FK (or penalty) if a substitute/team official/sent off player interferes with play
- If something/someone (other than a player) touches a ball going into the goal, the referee can award the goal if the ball goes in the goal and the touch had no impact on the defenders (unless in opponents' goal)
- If a goal is scored with an extra person on the field and referee has restarted play, the goal stands and the match continues

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

- Any tape or other material on/covering socks must be same colour as the sock (*photos below show what will no longer be permitted*)



Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

- Any tape or other material on/covering socks must be same colour as the sock Electronic communication with substitutes is forbidden
- Player can return during play after changing/correcting equipment, once equipment has been checked (by referee, 4th official or AR) and referee signals
- Undershorts must be colour of shorts or hem; team must all wear same colour

Player on left may wear black or light green undershorts/tights but the whole team must wear same colour



Law 5 – The Referee

- Clear statement about referee's opinion and discretion
- Reference to the 'spirit of the game'
- Referee can not change a decision once play has restarted or the referee has left the field of play at the end of the half
- If several offences occur at the same time the most serious is punished. Order of seriousness:
 - *Disciplinary sanction (RC more serious than YC etc...)*
 - *Direct FK more serious than Indirect FK*
 - *Physical offence (foul) more serious than non-physical (handball, offside)*
 - *Tactical impact*
- Referee can 'send off' a player from pre-match pitch inspection onwards (see Law 3)
- Referee can only use RC + YC after entering the field of play at the start of the match
- Player injured by RC/YC foul can be **quickly** assessed/treated and stay on field (*detailed guidelines will be in Practical Guidelines section*)
- Reference to equipment referees can and can not use
- Diagrams of referee signals included

Law 6 – The Other Match Officials

- More details about the usual duties of the assistants, AARs and 4th official
- If AARs have been appointed, at a penalty kick the AR takes a position in line with the penalty mark (ball) as this is the offside line
- Diagrams of assistant referee and AAR signals included

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

- More reasons for additional time (e.g. medical drinks breaks)

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

- All restarts included (previously only kick-off and dropped ball were mentioned)
- Ball must clearly move to be in play for all kicked restarts
- Referee can not 'manufacture' outcome of a dropped ball
- Player who first touches a drop ball cannot touch it again until someone else touches it (IDFK)
- Ball can be kicked in any direction at kick-off:

- referees must make sure that players are in their own half as now no need for one to be in the opposing half



Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play

- If a ball rebounds off any match official it is in play unless it wholly passes over the boundary line (this includes AARs)

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

Kicks from the penalty mark:

- Referee will toss a coin to choose the goal (unless there are weather, field of play, safety considerations etc...)
- Coin will be tossed a 2nd time to determine who takes the first kick
- Goalkeeper can be replaced at any time
- Player temporarily off the field (e.g. injured) at the final whistle can take part
- Both teams must have same number of players before and during the kicks
- Referee does not need to know the names/numbers or the order of kickers
- A kick is over/completed when it goes over a boundary line or stops moving (including held by GK) (See Law 14)
- Kicks are not delayed if a player leaves the field; if the player is not back in time their kick is forfeited (missed)

Law 11 – Offside

- Halfway line 'neutral' for offside; player must be in opponents' half
- Arms of all players (including goalkeepers) are not considered when judging offside position
- Offside position not offence judged at the moment the ball is played
- Offside FK is always taken where the offside offence occurs (even in own half)
- Interfering with an opponent after a save or rebound is an offence
- A defender off the field is only 'active' until play stops or the defending team clears the ball out of their penalty area towards the halfway line
- Same for attacker returning; before that the player's point of return to the field of play is the offside position
- Of a goal is scored, an attacking player in the goal can be penalised for an offside offence

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- If a foul involves contact it is always a direct FK
- If the referee plays advantage for a RC offence and the offending player then gets involved in play it is an indirect F
- Change of wording for handball so that not every handball is a YC – YC for handball now linked to stopping/interfering with a promising attack (like other fouls)
- Attempted violent conduct is a RC, even if no contact
- Striking on head/face when not challenging an opponent is a RC unless the contact is minimal/negligible
- Offence on the field against substitutes, team officials, match officials etc... is now a direct FK
- Foul off the field as part of normal play will be penalised with a direct FK on the boundary line at the point nearest to the offence (penalty kick if in offender's own penalty area)

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct (continued)

- Some DOGSO offences in the penalty area are now punished with a YC - RC remains for: handball, holding, pulling, pushing, not attempting or no possibility to play the ball

New wording:

Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.

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 offending player is cautioned unless:

- The offence is holding, pulling or pushing or
- The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball or
- The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc..)

In all the above circumstances the player is sent off

Law 13 – Free kicks

- Clarification of the difference between 'stopping' a FK being taken and 'intercepting' the ball after FK has been taken
- Ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

- Clear statement of when a PK is over/completed
- Some offences are always an IDFK whether or not the PK results in a goal:
 - Indirect FK if wrong player deliberately takes the penalty (+ YC to player who took the kick)
 - Indirect FK if ball kicked backwards
 - If 'illegal' feinting occurs it is always an indirect FK (and YC to the kicker)
- If the GK infringes and the PK is missed/re-taken the GK will now receive a YC

Law 15 – The Throw-in

- New wording makes it clear that ball must be thrown with **both** hands
- Clarification of action to be taken when a player moves within 2m (2 yds) of the throw-in and interferes

Law 16 – The Goal Kick

- The ball must be stationary! (*current Law does not require this!*)
- If a GK is kicked into the kicker's own goal it is a corner kick to opponents
- An opponent who is in the penalty area when the goal kick is taken can not play the ball until touched by another player

Law 16 – The Corner Kick

- If a CK is kicked into the kicker's own goal it is a corner kick to opponents

Law Changes explained

In keeping with the aim of making the Laws more easily understood and accessible, in addition to highlighting changes more clearly in the Law section, a new section has been added where any changes made at The IFAB AGM will be clearly shown

The following are the main changes to the Laws of the Game which are not related to English/phrasology. For each change the old wording (where appropriate) and the new/changed wording are given followed by an explanation for the change.

Law 01- The Field of Play

Explanation
Clarifies that for safety reasons mixing natural and artificial surfaces is not permitted on the field of play. A different surface is permitted on the surrounding areas e.g. artificial turf for the assistant referees' patrol area. An integrated mix of natural and artificial material throughout the whole field is permitted.

Explanation
Clarifies that competitions have the authority to determine the length of the touchlines and goal lines for their matches within the parameters of Law 1.

of 4 Goal Line Technology (GLT) information moved into Law 1 from Law 10 Explanation Goal Line Technology (GLT) (moved from Law 10

Explanation
Clarifies that restrictions on commercial advertising on the ground relate to the area behind the goal lines as well as the touchlines.

Glossary

Glossary

English is the prime language for the Laws of the Game but some English words do not easily translate into other languages and this can lead to misunderstanding and differences in Law interpretation in different parts of the world.

The introduction of a Glossary aims to help translators and reduce the potential for dispute, confusion and thus differences in Law application and interpretation.

The Glossary has 3 sections:

- Football bodies - defining IFAB, FIFA, Confederations, National Associations
- Football terms - defining words such as brutality, challenge, playing distance, reckless, technical area etc..
- Referee terms - defining the different match official roles e.g. 4th official, AAR etc..

Practical Guidelines

Practical Guidelines for Match Officials

Moving all the Law interpretation into the relevant Law has allowed the Practical Guidelines at the back of the book to be reorganised into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Positioning, Movement and Teamwork
- Body Language, Communication and Whistle
- Other Advice (*Advantage, Allowance for lost time, Holding an opponent, Offside, Treatment/assessment after a caution/send off offence*)

Some changes have been made to ensure consistency with the Law changes or to update agreed techniques.

An important statement has been added that referees should officiate within the ‘spirit of the game’ and the ‘spirit of the Laws’ as too many referees (and instructors/observers) apply the Laws too strictly for minor matters which, especially at lower levels of football, does not benefit the game.

This is especially true in situations where a minor ‘breach’ of the Laws does not affect the conduct of the match or create a danger e.g. a missing corner flag. In such cases, referees should use common sense and, if at all possible, play/continue the match. The football authorities can then decide what further action should be taken.

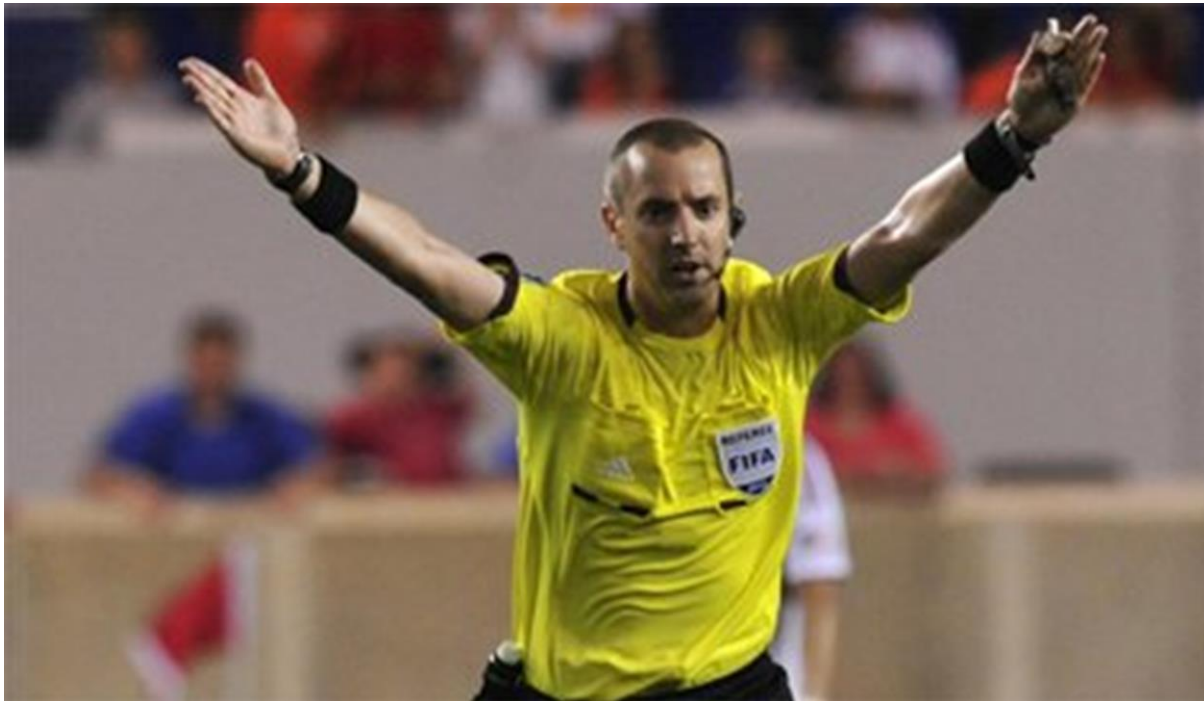
New signals

(See Laws 5 + 6)

Referee signals

Advantage signal

In addition to the current 'two armed' referee signal for advantage, a 'one arm signal' is now permitted as there is agreement that running with both arms extended can restrict a referee's running action-



AAR signals

AAR signal for a goal - in October an AAR signal in the event of a goal/no goal situation was approved:

