



**2008**

**Additional Instructions  
and  
Guidelines for Referees and  
Assistant Referees**

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## **Additional Instructions and Guidelines for Referees and Assistant Referees**

This document replaces the Instructions for Referees and Resolutions Affecting Team Coaches and Players, formerly issued for Regional and National Cup Competitions and Tournaments. It will be updated annually to reflect changes in the Laws of the Game and memoranda, circulars, or positions papers issued by FIFA and the U. S. Soccer Federation. The information is taken from the Additional Instructions and Guidelines for Referees and Assistant Referees published in the FIFA edition of the Laws of the Game.

Various diagrams or charts referred to in this document will be found in the softcopy version of the Laws of the Game, which may be viewed or downloaded from the referee page at [www.ussoccer.com](http://www.ussoccer.com). References to “\* (see page 3)” are intended to mark where a restart may be affected by the special circumstances described in Law 8. The “page 3” reference is to page 3 of the Laws of the Game published by FIFA.

In some cases a “USSF Note” has been inserted to show clarification of the FIFA statement.

Note: Some of the text has been changed to reflect American usage. There has been **no alteration of the substance** of the original Additional Instructions and Guidelines for Referees.

## **ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES**

### **LAW 1 - THE FIELD OF PLAY**

It is not permissible to mark the field with broken lines or furrows.

If a player makes unauthorized marks on the field of play using foot, the player shall be cautioned for unsporting behavior. If the referee notices this being done during the match, the referee shall caution the offending player for unsporting behavior when the ball next goes out of play.

Only the lines indicated in law 1 are to be marked on the field of play.

#### **Artificial Turf**

The color of artificial pitches shall be green.

#### **Commercial advertising**

Commercial advertising shall be at least 1 meter/yard from the boundary lines of the field of play.

### **LAW 2 - THE BALL**

#### **Additional balls**

Additional balls may be placed around the field of play for use during a match provided that they meet the requirements of Law 2 and their use is under the control of the referee.

#### **Extra balls on the field of play**

If an extra ball enters the field of play during the match, the referee shall stop the match only if it interferes with play. Play shall be restarted by a dropped ball in the position where the match ball was at the time when the match was stopped. \* (see page 3)

If an extra ball enters the field of play during the match without interfering with play, the referee shall have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **LAW 3 - THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

#### **Substitution Procedure**

- A substitution may be made only during a stoppage in play
- The assistant referee signals that a substitution has been requested
- The player being substituted receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless he is already off the field of play for reasons that comply with the Laws of the Game
- Before entering the field of play, the substitute waits for the player he is replacing to leave the field
- The player being substituted is not obliged to leave the field of play on the halfway line
- Permission to proceed with a substitution may be refused under certain circumstances, e. g., if the substitute is not ready to enter the field of play
- A substitute who has not completed the substitution process by setting foot onto the field of play cannot restart play by taking a throw-in or corner kick

- If a player who is about to be replaced refuses to leave the field of play, play continues
- If a substitution is made during the half-time interval or before extra time, the process is to be completed before the second half or extra time kick-off.

### **Extra persons on the field of play**

#### **Outside Agents**

Anyone not indicated on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is deemed to be an outside agent as is a player who has been sent off.

If an outside agent enters the field of play:

- the referee shall stop play (although not immediately if the outside agent does not interfere with play)
- the referee shall have the person removed from the field of play and its immediate surroundings
- if the referee stops the match, play shall restart with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was at the time when the match was stopped. \*(see page 3)

#### **Team Officials**

If a team official enters the field of play:

- the referee shall stop play (although not immediately if the team official does not interfere with play or if the advantage can be applied)
- the referee shall have the team official removed from the field of play and if the behavior is irresponsible the referee shall expel the person from the field of play and its immediate surroundings
- if the referee stops the match, play shall be restarted with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was at the time when the match was stopped \* (see page 3)

#### **Player outside the field of play**

If a player re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission, after leaving the field of play to correct equipment or uniform, to be treated for an injury or bleeding, because of blood on the uniform or for any other reason with the referee's permission, the referee shall:

- stop play (although not immediately if the player does not interfere with play or if the advantage can be applied)
- caution the player for entering the field of play without permission
- order the player to leave the field of play if necessary (infringement of Law 4)

If the referee stops play, it shall be restarted

- with an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the position of the ball when play was stopped \* (see page 3) if there is no other infringement
- in accordance with Law 12 if the player infringes this Law

If a player accidentally crosses one of the boundary lines of the field of play, this is not deemed an infringement. Going off the field of play may be considered to be part of playing movement.

### **Substitute or a substituted player**

If a substitute or a substituted player enters the field of play without permission

- the referee shall stop play (although not immediately if the player in question does not interfere with play or if the advantage can be applied)
- the referee shall issue a caution for unsporting behavior
- the player shall leave the field of play

If the referee stops play, it shall be restarted with an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the position of the ball when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)

### **Goals scored with an extra person on the field of play**

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realizes, before play restarts, that there was an extra person on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- the referee shall disallow the goal if:
  - the extra person was an outside agent and interfered with play
  - the extra person was a player, substitute, substituted player or team official associated with the team that scored the goal
- the referee shall allow the goal if:
  - the extra person was an outside agent who did not interfere with play
  - the extra person was a player, substitute, substituted player or team official associated with the team that conceded the goal

### **Minimum number of players**

If the rules of a competition state that all of the players and substitutes must be named before kick-off and a team begins a match with fewer than 11 players, only the players named in the starting line-up may complete the 11 upon their arrival.

In the opinion of the International F. A. Board a match shall not be considered valid and shall be abandoned by the referee if fewer than seven players remain on either team.

However, if a team has fewer than seven players because one or more players has deliberately left the field of play, the referee is not obliged to stop the match and the advantage may be played. In such cases, the referee should not allow the match to resume after the ball has gone out of play if a team does not have the minimum number of 7 players.

## **LAW 4 - THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT**

### **Basic equipment**

Colors:

- All players including goalkeepers must wear a jersey with colors that distinguish them from the referee and the assistant referees
- If the jerseys of the two goalkeepers are the same color and neither has another jersey to change into, the referee shall allow play to begin

If a player's footwear is lost accidentally and the player immediately plays the ball and/or scores a goal, there is no infringement and the goal is awarded because the footwear was lost by accident.

Goalkeepers may wear track suit bottoms as part of their basic equipment.

### **Other equipment**

A player may use equipment other than the basic equipment provided that its sole purpose is physical protection and it poses no danger to any player.

All items of clothing or equipment other than the basic equipment must be inspected by the referee and determined not to be dangerous.

Modern protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material are not considered dangerous and are therefore permitted.

In view of the new technology that has made sports spectacles much safer, both for the wearer and for other players, referees should show tolerance when authorizing their use, particularly for younger players.

If an item of clothing or equipment that has been inspected at the start of a match and determined not to be dangerous becomes dangerous or is used in a dangerous manner during the match, its use must no longer be allowed.

The use of radio communication systems between players and/or technical staff is not permitted.

### **Jewelry**

All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands etc.) are strictly forbidden and must be removed.

Using tape to cover jewelry is not acceptable.

Referees are also prohibited from wearing jewelry (except for a watch or similar device for timing the match).

### **Disciplinary sanctions**

The players are to be inspected before the match begins and substitutes before they enter the field of play. If a player is discovered to be wearing unauthorized clothing or jewelry during play, the referee shall:

- inform the player that the item in question must be removed
- order the player to leave the field of play at the next stoppage upon inability or unwillingness to comply
- caution the player upon willful refusal to comply or, having been told to remove the item, is discovered to be wearing the item again

If play is stopped to caution the player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the position of the ball when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)

## **LAW 5 - THE REFEREE**

### **Powers & Duties**

The referee is authorized to stop play if, in the referee's opinion, the floodlights are inadequate. If an object thrown by a spectator hits the referee or one of the assistant referees or a player or team official, the referee may allow the match to continue, suspend play or abandon the match depending on the severity of the incident. The referee shall, in all cases, report the incident(s) to the appropriate authorities.

The referee has the power to show yellow or red cards during the half-time interval and after the match has finished as well as during extra time and kicks from the penalty mark, since the match remains under the referee's jurisdiction at these times. [USSF Note: During the match includes

the period of time immediately prior to the start of play during which players and substitutes are physically on the field warming up, stretching, or otherwise preparing for the match.]

If a referee is temporarily incapacitated for any reason, play may continue under the supervision of the assistant referees until the ball next goes out of play.

If a spectator blows a whistle and the referee considers the whistle interfered with play (e.g. a player picks up the ball with the hands, assuming that play has been stopped), the referee shall stop the match and restart the play with a dropped ball from the position of the ball when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)

### **Advantage**

Referees should consider the following circumstances in deciding whether to apply the advantage or stop play:

- The severity of the offense. If the infringement warrants an expulsion, the referee shall stop play and send the player off unless there is a subsequent opportunity to score a goal.
- The position where the offense was committed: the closer to the opponent's goal, the more effective it can be.
- The chances of an immediate, dangerous attack on the opponents' goal.
- The atmosphere of the match.

The decision to penalize the original offense must be taken within the next few seconds.

If the offense warrants a caution, it shall be issued at the next stoppage.

However, unless there is a clear advantage, it is recommended that the referee stops play and cautions the player immediately. If the caution is NOT issued at the next stoppage, it cannot be shown later.

### **Injured players**

The referee shall adhere to the following procedure when dealing with injured players:

- Play is allowed to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in the opinion of the referee, only slightly injured
- Play is stopped if, in the opinion of the referee, a player is seriously injured
- After questioning the injured player, the referee may authorize one, or at most two doctors, to enter the field of play to assess the injury and arrange the player's safe and swift removal from the field of play
- The stretcher-bearers should enter the field of play with a stretcher at the same time as the doctors to allow the player to be removed as quickly as possible
- The referee shall ensure an injured player is safely removed from the field of play
- A player is not allowed to receive treatment on the field of play
- Any player bleeding from a wound must leave the field of play and may not return until the referee is satisfied that the bleeding has stopped. A player is not permitted to wear clothing with blood on it
- As soon as the referee has authorized the doctors to enter the field of play, the player must leave the field of play, either on a stretcher or on foot. If a player does not comply, a caution shall be given for unsporting behavior
- An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted
- When the ball is in play, an injured player must re-enter the field of play from the touch line. When the ball is out of play, the injured player may re-enter from any of the boundary lines

- Irrespective of whether the ball is in play or not, only the referee is authorized to allow an injured player to re-enter the field of play
  - The referee may give permission for an injured player to return to the field of play if an assistant referee or the fourth official verifies that the player is ready
  - 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 shall restart play with a dropped ball
  - The referee shall allow for the full amount of time lost through injury to be played at the end of each period of play
  - Once the referee has decided to issue a card to a player who is injured and has to leave the field of play for treatment, the referee shall issue the card before the player leaves the field of play
- Exceptions to this ruling are to be made only when:
- a goalkeeper is injured
  - a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need immediate attention
  - a severe injury has occurred, e.g. swallowed tongue, concussion, broken leg.

**More than one offense occurring at the same time**

- Offenses committed by two players from the same team:
  - The referee shall punish the most serious offense when players commit more than one offense at the same time.
  - Play shall be restarted according to the most serious offense committed.
- Offenses committed by players from different teams:
  - The referee shall stop play and restart it with a dropped ball from the position of the ball at the time of the stoppage \* (see page 3) [USSF Note: Referees should take care not to use this option as a means of avoiding a difficult but necessary decision as to which player committed an offense first and which player retaliated. The referee must not use the dropped ball to restart play as a crutch in those cases where there is some question about the correct restart. The referee must make a decision and announce it firmly.]



# **GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES**

## **1. Positioning with ball in play**

### Recommendations

- The play should be between the referee and the lead assistant referee.
- The lead assistant referee should be within the referee's field of vision. The referee should use a wide diagonal system.
- Staying toward the outside of the play makes it easier to keep play and the lead assistant referee within the referee's field of vision
- The referee should be close enough to see play without interfering with play
- "What needs to be seen" is not always in the vicinity of the ball.

The referee should also pay attention to:

- Aggressive individual player confrontations off the ball
- Possible offenses in the area towards which play is heading
- Offenses occurring after the ball is played away

## **2. Positioning in dead-ball situations**

The best position is one from which the referee can make the right decision. All recommendations about positioning are based on probabilities and must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players, and events in the match up to that point. The positions suggested in the following graphics are basic and recommended to referees. The reference to a "zone" is intended to emphasize that every recommended position is actually an area within which the referee is most likely to optimize effectiveness. The zone may be larger, smaller, or differently shaped depending on circumstances at the moment in question.

[See book for diagrams for all positioning situations]

3. Positioning for dead-ball situations – corner kick (1)
4. Positioning for dead-ball situations – corner kick (2)
5. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (1)
6. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (2)
7. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (3)
8. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (4)
9. Positioning for dead-ball situations – penalty kick

## **REFEREE SIGNALS**

Direct free kick, Advantage, Indirect free kick, Yellow card, Red card

### **Use of whistle**

The whistle is needed to:

- start play (1st, 2nd half), after a goal
- stop play
  - for a free kick or penalty kick
  - if match is suspended or terminated
  - when a period of play has ended due to the expiration of time
- restart play at
  - free kicks when the opponents are ordered back the appropriate distance

- penalty kicks
- restart play after it has been stopped due to
  - the issue of a yellow or red card for misconduct
  - injury
  - substitution

The whistle is NOT needed

- to stop play for:
  - a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in
  - a goal
- to restart play from
  - a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, throw-in

A whistle which is used too frequently unnecessarily will have less impact when it is needed.

When a discretionary whistle is needed to start play, the referee should clearly announce to the players that the restart may not occur until after that signal.

### **Body language**

Body language is a tool that the referee uses to:

- help control the match
- show authority and self-control

Body language is not:

- an explanation of a decision

## **LAW 6 - THE ASSISTANT REFEREE**

### **Duties and responsibilities**

The assistant referees help the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game. They also assist the referee in all other matters involving the running of the match at the request and direction of the referee. This commonly includes such matters as:

- inspecting the field, the balls used, and players' equipment
- determining if problems with equipment or bleeding have been resolved
- monitoring the substitution process
- maintaining back-up records of time, goals and misconduct

### **Positioning and team work**

#### **1. Kick-off**

The assistant referees shall be in line with the second last defender

#### **2. General positioning during the match**

The assistant referees shall be in line with the second last defender or the ball, if it is nearer the goal line than the second last defender. The assistant referees shall always face the field of play.

#### **3. Goal kick**

1. The assistant referees shall check first if the ball is inside the goal area:

- If the ball is not placed correctly, the assistant referee shall not move from the current position, but shall make eye contact with the referee and raise the flag

2. Once the ball is placed correctly inside the goal area, the assistant referee shall move to the edge of the penalty area to check that the ball leaves the penalty area (ball in play) and the attackers are outside:

- If the second last defender takes the goal kick, the assistant referee shall move directly to the edge of the penalty area

3. Finally, the assistant referee shall take a position to check the offside line, which is a priority in any case

#### **4. Goalkeeper releasing the ball**

The assistant referees shall take a position in line with the edge of the penalty area and check that the goalkeeper does not touch the ball with the hands outside penalty area.

Once the goalkeeper has released the ball, the assistant referees shall take a position to check the offside line, which is a priority in any case.

#### **5. Penalty kick**

The assistant referee shall be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the penalty area. If the goalkeeper blatantly moves forward before the ball is kicked and a goal is not scored, the assistant referee shall raise the flag. [USSF Note: Assistant referees in the United States must follow the instructions given by the referee in the pregame conference.]

#### **6. Kicks from the penalty mark**

One assistant referee shall be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the goal area. The main duty is to check if the ball crosses the line.

- When it is clear that the ball has crossed the goal line, the assistant referee shall make eye contact with the referee without giving any additional signal.
- When a goal has been scored but it is not clear whether the ball has crossed the line, the assistant referee shall first raise the flag to attract the referee's attention and then confirm the goal.

The other assistant referee shall be situated in the center circle to control the remaining players from both teams.

#### **7. "Goal – No Goal" situations**

When a goal has been scored and there is no doubt about the decision, the referee and assistant referee shall make eye contact and the assistant referee shall then run quickly a short distance along the touchline towards the halfway line without raising the flag.

When a goal has been scored but the ball appears still to be in play, the assistant referee shall first raise the flag to attract the referee's attention then continue with the normal goal procedure of running quickly 25-30 meters along the touchline towards the halfway line.

On occasions when the whole of the ball does not cross the goal line and play continues as normal because a goal has not been scored, the referee shall make eye contact with the assistant referee and if necessary give a discreet hand signal.

#### **8. Corner kick**

The assistant referee's position for a corner kick is behind the corner flag in line with the goal line. In this position the assistant referee shall not interfere with the player taking the corner kick and shall check that the ball is properly placed inside the corner arc.

#### **9. Free kick**

The assistant referee's position for a free kick shall be in line with the second last defender in order to check the offside line which is a priority in any case. However, the assistant referee shall be ready to follow the ball by moving down the touchline towards the corner flag if there is a direct shot on goal.

## **Gestures**

As a general rule, the assistant referee shall give no obvious hand signals. However, in some instances a discreet hand signal may give valuable support to the referee. The hand signal should have a clear meaning. The meaning should have been discussed and agreed upon in the pre-match discussion.

## **Running technique**

As a general rule the assistant referee should face the pitch when running. Side-to-side movement should be used for short distances, this is especially important when judging offside and gives the assistant referee a better line of vision.

## **Signal beep**

Referees are reminded that the signal beep system is an additional signal to be used only when necessary in order to gain the attention of the referee.

Situations when the signal beep is useful include:

- Offside
- Fouls (outside the view of the referee)
- Throw-in, corner kick or goal kick (tight decisions)
- Goal situations (tight decisions)

## **Signals**

Substitution, Throw-In for the attacker, Throw-In for the defender, Goal kick, Corner kick, Offside, Offside on the near side of the field, Offside on the center of the field, Offside on the far side of the field, Foul by defender, Foul by attacker

## **Flag technique and teamwork**

The assistant referee's flag shall always be visible to the referee, unfurled and still while running. When making a signal, the assistant referee shall stop running, face the field of play, make eye contact with the referee and raise the flag with deliberate (not hasty or exaggerated) motions. The flag should be like an extension of the arm.

The assistant referees shall raise the flag using the hand that will also be used for the next signal in a sequence. If circumstances change and the other hand must be used for the next signal, the assistant referee should move the flag to the opposite hand below the waist.

Whenever the assistant referee signals that the ball is out of play, the assistant shall continue to signal until the referee acknowledges it.

Whenever the assistant referee signals for violent conduct and the signal is not seen immediately,

- if play has been stopped for disciplinary action to be taken, the restart must be in accordance with the laws (free kick, penalty kick, etc.)

- if play has restarted, only disciplinary action may be taken.

Throw-in

When the ball crosses the touchline near to the assistant referee's position, the assistant shall make a direct signal to indicate the direction of the throw-in.

When the ball crosses the touchline far from the assistant referee's position and the throw-in decision is an obvious one, the assistant referee shall also make a direct signal to indicate the direction of the throw-in.

When the ball crosses the touchline far from the assistant referee's position but the ball appears still to be in play or if the assistant referee is in any doubt, the assistant shall raise the flag to inform the referee that the ball is out of play, make eye contact with the referee and follow the referee's signal.

### **Corner kick / Goal kick**

When the ball crosses the goal line near to the assistant referee's position, the assistant shall make a direct signal with the right hand (better line of vision) to indicate whether it is a goal kick or a corner kick.

When the ball crosses the goal line near to the assistant referee's position but the ball appears still to be in play, the assistant shall first raise the flag to inform the referee that the ball is out of play, then indicate whether it is a goal kick or a corner kick.

When the ball crosses the goal line far from the assistant referee's position, the assistant shall raise the flag to inform the referee that the ball is out of play, make eye contact and follow the referee's decision. The assistant may also make a direct signal if the decision is an obvious one.

### **Offside**

The first action the assistant referee makes after an offside decision is to raise the flag. The assistant referee then uses the flag to indicate the area of the field in which the offense occurred. If the referee does not immediately see the flag, the assistant referee shall keep signaling until it has been acknowledged or the ball is clearly in the control of the defending team.

The flag shall be raised using the right hand, giving the assistant a better line of vision.

### **Substitution**

When dealing with substitutions, the assistant referee shall first be informed by the fourth official. The assistant referee shall then signal to the referee at the next stoppage in the match. The assistant referee does not need to move to the halfway line as the fourth official carries out the substitution procedure.

If there is no fourth official, the assistant referee shall assist with substitution procedures. In this case, the referee shall wait until the assistant referee is back in position before restarting play.

### **Fouls**

The assistant referee shall raise the flag when a foul or misconduct is committed in the immediate vicinity or out of the referee's vision. In all other situations, the assistant shall wait and offer an opinion if it is required.

If this is the case, the assistant referee shall report to the referee what has been seen and heard and which players are involved.

Before signaling for an offense, the assistant referee shall determine that:

- the offense occurred closer to the assistant referee than to the referee (this applies, in certain circumstances, to offenses committed in the penalty area)
- the offense was out of the view of the referee or the referee's view was obstructed
- the referee would not have applied advantage if the referee had seen the offense

When a foul or misconduct is committed, the assistant referee shall:

- raise the flag with the same hand that will also be used for the remainder of the signal, this gives the referee a clear indication as to who was fouled,
- make eye contact with the referee,

- give the flag a slight wave back and forth (avoiding any excessive or aggressive movement)
- use the electronic BEEP signal, if necessary.

The assistant referee shall use the “wait and see technique” in order to allow play to continue and not raise the flag when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from the advantage.

In this case, it is very important for the assistant referee to make eye contact with the referee

### **Fouls outside the penalty area**

When a foul is committed outside the penalty area (near the boundary of the penalty area), the assistant referee shall make eye contact with the referee to see where the referee is positioned and what action has been taken. The assistant referee shall stand in line with the penalty area and raise the flag if necessary.

In counter-attack situations, the assistant referee should be able to give information such as whether or not the foul has been committed and whether the foul was committed inside or outside the penalty area, which is a priority in any case, and what disciplinary action shall be taken.

### **Fouls inside the penalty area**

When a foul is committed inside the penalty area out of the vision of the referee, especially if near to the assistant referee’s position, the assistant referee shall first make eye contact with the referee to see where the referee is positioned and what action has been taken. If the referee has not taken any action, the assistant referee shall raise the flag and use the electronic BEEP signal and then visibly move down the touchline towards the corner flag. [USSF Note: Assistant referees should indicate a penal foul by the defense inside its penalty area and out of the referee’s sight by holding the flag across the lower body.]

### **Mass confrontation**

In situations of mass confrontation, the nearest assistant referee may enter the field of play to assist the referee. The other assistant referee shall also observe and record details of the incident.

### **Consultation**

When dealing with disciplinary issues, eye contact and a basic discreet hand signal from the assistant referee to the referee may be enough in some cases.

On occasions when direct consultation is required, the assistant referee may advance 2-3 meters/yards onto the field of play if necessary. When talking, the referee and assistant referee shall both turn to face the pitch to avoid being heard by others.

### **Wall distance**

When a free kick is awarded very close to the touchline near the assistant referee’s position, the assistant referee may enter the field of play to help ensure that the wall is positioned 9.15 m/10 yards from the ball. The assistant referee will assert the distance from the position of the ball. In this case, the referee shall wait until the assistant is back in position before restarting play.

## **LAW 7 - THE DURATION OF THE MATCH**

### **Additional Time Allowance for Time Lost**

Many stoppages in play are entirely natural (e.g. throw-ins, goal kicks). An allowance is to be made only when these delays are excessive.

The fourth official indicates the minimum additional time decided by the referee at the end of the final minute of each period of play.

The announcement of the additional time does not indicate the exact amount of time left in the match. The time may be increased if the referee considers it appropriate but never reduced.

The referee shall not compensate for a timekeeping error during the first half by increasing or reducing the length of the second half.

## **LAW 8 - THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY**

### **Dropped Ball**

Any player may challenge for the ball (including the goalkeeper). There is no minimum or maximum number of players required to contest a dropped ball. The referee cannot decide who may or may not contest a dropped ball.

## **LAW 9 - THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

### **The ball inside the field of play touches a person other than a player**

If, when the ball is in play, it touches the referee or an assistant referee who is temporarily on the field of play, play continues because the referee and the assistant referees are part of the match.

[USSF Note: If the ball touches an outside agent on the field, other than at a penalty kick, restart with a dropped ball.]

## **LAW 10 - THE METHOD OF SCORING**

### **No Goal**

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line and immediately realizes the error, play shall be restarted with a dropped ball. \* (see page 3)

## **LAW 11 - OFFSIDE**

### **Infringements**

When an offside offense occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played to that player by a teammate.

If a defending player steps behind the player's own goal line in order to place an opponent in an offside position, the referee shall allow play to continue and caution the defender for deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission when the ball is next out of play.

It is not an offense in itself for a player who is in an offside position to step off the field of play to show the referee non-involvement in active play. However, if the referee considers that the player has left the field of play for tactical reasons and has gained an unfair advantage by reentering the field of play, the player shall be cautioned for unsporting behavior. The player needs to ask for the referee's permission to reenter the field of play.

If an attacking player remains stationary between the goal posts and inside the goal net as the ball enters the goal, a goal shall be awarded. However, if the attacking player distracts an opponent, the goal shall be disallowed, the player cautioned for unsporting behavior and play shall be restarted with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was located. \* (see page 3)

[SERIES OF DIAGRAMS, 1-12; SEE BOOK ONLINE]



## **LAW 12 - FOULS AND MISCONDUCT**

### **Basis requirements for a foul**

The following conditions must be met for an offense to be considered a foul.

- It must be committed by a player [against an opponent]
- It must occur on the field of play
- It must occur while the ball is in play

If the referee stops play due to an offense committed outside the field of play (when the ball is in play), play shall be restarted with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was located. \* (see page 3)

### **Careless, reckless, using excessive force**

“**Careless**” means that the player has shown a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acted without precaution.

- No further disciplinary sanction is needed if a foul is judged to be careless

“**Reckless**” means that the player has acted with complete disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent

- A player who plays in a reckless manner shall be cautioned.

“**Using excessive force**” means that the player has far exceeded the necessary use of force and is in danger of injuring the opponent.

- A player who uses excessive force shall be sent off.

### **Charging an opponent**

The act of charging is a challenge for space using physical contact within playing distance of the ball without using arms or elbows.

It is an offense to charge an opponent

- in a careless manner
- in a reckless manner
- using excessive force

### **Holding an opponent**

Holding an opponent includes the act of preventing the opponent from moving past or around using the hands, the arms or the body.

Referees are reminded to make an early intervention and to deal firmly with holding offenses especially inside the penalty area at corner kicks and free kicks.

To deal with these situations,

- the referee shall warn any player holding an opponent before the ball is in play
- caution the player if the holding continues before the ball is in play
- award a direct free kick or penalty kick and caution the player if it happens once the ball is in play.

If a defender starts holding an attacker outside the penalty area but continues holding the opponent inside the penalty area, the referee shall award a penalty kick.

### **Disciplinary sanctions**

- A caution for unsporting behavior shall be issued when a player holds an opponent to prevent the opponent gaining possession of the ball or taking up an advantageous position

- A player shall be sent off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity by holding an opponent
  - No further disciplinary action shall be taken in other situations of holding an opponent
- Restart of play
- Direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred \* (see page 3) or a penalty kick if the offense occurred inside the penalty area.

### **Handling the ball**

Handling the ball involves a deliberate act of a player making contact with the ball with the hand or arm. The referee shall take the following into consideration:

- The movement of the hand towards the ball (not the ball towards the hand)
- The distance between the opponent and the ball (unexpected ball)
- Position of the hand does not necessarily mean that there is an infringement
- Touching the ball with an object held in the hand (clothing, shinguard etc.) counts as an infringement
- Hitting the ball with a thrown object (a shoe, shinguard etc.) counts as an infringement

### Disciplinary sanctions

There are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behavior is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, 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

A player is sent off, however, if that player prevents a goal or an obvious goalscoring 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.

### Restart of play

- Direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred  
\* (see page 3) or penalty kick

Outside the goalkeeper's own penalty area, the goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as does any other player. Inside the goalkeeper's own penalty area, the goalkeeper cannot be guilty of a handling offense incurring a direct free kick or any misconduct related to handling the ball. He or she can, however, be guilty of several offenses that incur an indirect free kick.

### **Offenses by goalkeepers**

Goalkeepers are not permitted to keep possession of the ball in their hands for more than six seconds. The goalkeeper is considered to be in possession of the ball:

- while the ball is between the hands or between the hand and any surface (e.g., ground, own body)
- while holding the ball in the outstretched open hand.
- while in the act of bouncing it on the ground or tossing it into the air

When a goalkeeper has gained possession of the ball with the hands the goalkeeper cannot be challenged by an opponent.

A goalkeeper is not permitted to touch the ball with the hand inside the goalkeeper's own penalty area in the following circumstances:

- If the goalkeeper handles the ball again after it has been released from possession and has not touched any other player.
  - The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of the hands or arms except if the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after making a save
  - Possession of the ball includes the goalkeeper deliberately parrying the ball,
- If the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands after it has been deliberately kicked by a teammate to a place where the goalkeeper can retrieve it.
- If the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.

Restart of play

- Indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred \* (see page 3)

### **Offenses against goalkeepers**

- It is an offense for a player to prevent a goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands
- A player must be penalized for playing in a dangerous manner if the player kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- It is an offense to restrict the movement of the goalkeeper by unfairly impeding the goalkeeper, e. g., at the taking of a corner kick

### **Playing in a dangerous manner**

Playing in a dangerous manner is defined as any action that, while trying to play the ball, threatens injury to someone (including that player). It is committed with an opponent nearby and prevents the opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury. The action becomes an offense only when an opponent is adversely affected.

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

Playing in a dangerous manner involves no physical contact between the players. If there is physical contact, the action becomes an offense punishable with a direct free kick or penalty kick. In case of physical contact, the referee should carefully consider the high probability that misconduct has also been committed.

Disciplinary sanctions

- If a player plays in a dangerous manner in a “normal” challenge, the referee should not take any disciplinary action. If the action is made with obvious risk of injury, the referee should caution the player.
- If a player denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity playing in a dangerous manner, the referee should send off the player.

Restart of play

- Indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred \* (see page 3)
- If there is contact, a different offense has been committed, punishable by a direct free kick or penalty kick.

### **Impeding the progress of an opponent**

Impeding the progress of an opponent means moving into the path of the opponent to obstruct, block, slow down or force a change of direction by an opponent when the ball is not within playing distance of either player.

All players have a right to their position on the field of play; being in the way of an opponent is not the same as moving into the way of an opponent.

Shielding the ball is permitted. A player who places him- or herself between an opponent and the ball for tactical reasons has not committed an offense as long as the ball is kept in playing distance and the player does not hold off the opponent with the arms or body. If the ball is within playing distance, the player may be fairly charged by an opponent.

### **Delaying the restart of play to issue a card**

Once the referee has decided to issue a card, whether to caution or send off a player, play shall not be restarted until the sanction has been administered.

### **Cautions for unsporting behavior**

There are different circumstances when a player is cautioned for unsporting behavior, e.g. if a player

- commits in a reckless manner one of the six offenses punishable by a direct free kick
- commits a foul for the tactical purpose of interfering with or breaking up a promising attack
- holds an opponent for the tactical purpose of pulling the opponent away from the ball or preventing the opponent from getting to the ball
- handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession or developing an attack (other than the goalkeeper within the goalkeeper's own penalty area)
- handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal (irrespective of whether or not the attempt is successful).
- attempts to deceive the referee by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (simulation)
- changes places with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission
- acts in a manner which shows a lack of respect for the game
- plays the ball when walking off the field of play after being granted permission to leave the field of play
- verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart
- makes unauthorized marks on the field of play

### **Celebration of a goal**

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

Reasonable celebrations are allowed, but the practice of choreographed celebrations is not to be encouraged when it results in excessive time-wasting and referees are instructed to intervene in such cases.

A player must be cautioned if:

- in the opinion of the referee, the player makes gestures which are provocative, derisory or inflammatory
- the player climbs on to a perimeter fence to celebrate a goal being scored
- the player removes the shirt or covers the head with the shirt.
- the player covers the head or face with a mask or other similar item

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

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

### **Showing dissent by word or action**

A player who is guilty of dissent by protesting (verbally or non-verbally) against a referee's decision must be cautioned.

The captain of a team has no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game but does have a degree of responsibility for the behavior of the team.

### **Delaying the restart of play**

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 a teammate to take
- 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 of play when being substituted
- provoking a confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has stopped play

### **Persistent infringement**

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 offenses, the player must still be cautioned for persistently infringing the Laws.

There is no specific number of infringements which constitutes "persistence" or the presence of a pattern – this is entirely a matter of judgment and must be reached in the context of effective game management.

### **Serious foul play**

A player is guilty of serious foul play for using 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.

Advantage should not be applied in situations involving serious foul play unless there is a clear subsequent opportunity to score a goal.

The referee shall send off the player guilty of serious foul play when the ball is next out of play

A player who is guilty of serious foul play should be sent off and play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred \* (see page 3) or a penalty kick (if the offense occurred inside the offender's penalty area)

### **Violent conduct**

A player is guilty of violent conduct for using excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball.

A player is also guilty of violent conduct for using excessive force or brutality against a teammate, spectator, match official or any other person.

Violent conduct may occur either on the field of play or outside its boundaries, whether the ball is in play or not.

Advantage should not be applied in situations involving violent conduct unless there is a clear subsequent opportunity to score a goal. The referee shall send off the player guilty of violent conduct when the ball is next out of play

Referees are reminded that violent conduct often leads to mass confrontation therefore they must try to avert this with active intervention.

A player, substitute or substituted player who is guilty of violent conduct shall be sent off.

Restart of play:

- If the ball is out of play, play is restarted according to the previous decision.
- If the ball is in play and the offense occurred outside the field of play
  - if the player is already off the field of play and commits the offense play is restarted with a dropped ball\* from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped. \*
  - if the player leaves the field of play to commit the offense, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped. \*
- If the ball is in play and a player commits an offense inside the field of play
  - against an opponent, play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred \* or a penalty kick.
  - against a teammate, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred. \*
  - against a substitute or substituted player, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped\*
  - against the referee or an assistant referee, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred \*
  - against another person, play is restarted with a dropped ball from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped \*

\* (see page 3)

### **Offenses where an object (or the ball) is thrown**

If while the ball is in play, a player, substitute or substituted player throws an object at an opponent or other person in a reckless manner, the referee shall stop play and caution player, substitute or substituted player.

If while the ball is in play, a player, substitute or substituted player throws an object at an opponent or other person using excessive force, the referee shall stop play and send off the player, substitute or substituted player for violent conduct.

Restart of play:

- If a player standing inside the team's own penalty area throws an object at an opponent standing outside the penalty area, play is restarted with a direct free kick to the opponents' team taken from the position where the object struck or would have struck the opponent.
- If a player standing outside the team's own penalty area throws an object at an opponent standing inside the penalty area, the referee restarts play with a penalty kick.

- If a player standing inside the field of play throws an object at any person standing outside the field of play, the referee restarts play with an indirect free kick taken from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped \* (see page 3)
- If a player standing outside the field of play throws an object at an opponent standing inside the field of play, the referee restarts play with a direct free kick to the opponents' team taken from the position where the object struck or would have struck the opponent or with a penalty kick.
- If a substitute or substituted player standing outside the field of play throws an object at an opponent standing inside the field of play, the referee restarts play with an indirect free kick to the opposing team from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped. \* (see page 3)

### **Denying a goal or a goalscoring opportunity**

There are two sending-off offenses that deal with denying an opponent an obvious opportunity to score a goal. It is not necessary for the offense to occur inside the penalty area.

If the referee applies advantage during an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and a goal is scored directly, despite the opponent's handling the ball or fouling an opponent, the player cannot be sent off but may still be cautioned.

Referees should consider the following circumstances when deciding whether to send off a player for denying a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity:

- The distance between the offense and the goal
- The likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
- The direction of the play
- The location and number of defenders
- The offense which denies an opponent an obvious goalscoring opportunity may be an offense punished by a direct free kick or an indirect free kick.

## **LAW 13 - FREE KICKS**

### **Procedure**

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.

A free kick can be taken by lifting the ball with a foot or both feet simultaneously.

Feinting to take a free kick to confuse opponents is permitted as part of football. However, if in the opinion of the referee the feinting is considered an act of unsporting behavior, the player shall be cautioned.

If a player, while correctly taking a free kick, intentionally kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball a second time but neither in a careless nor a reckless manner nor using excessive force, the referee shall allow play to continue.

An indirect free kick should be retaken if the referee fails to raise the arm to indicate that the kick is indirect and the ball is kicked directly into the goal. The initial indirect free kick is not nullified by the referee's mistake.

### **Distance**

If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent who is less than 9.15 m/10 yds from the ball intercepts it, the referee shall allow play to continue.

If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent near the ball deliberately prevents the taking of the kick, the referee shall caution the player for delaying the restart of play.

If, when a free kick is taken by the defending team from inside its own penalty area, one or more opponents remain inside the penalty area because the defender decides to take the kick quickly and the opponents did not have time to leave the penalty area, the referee shall allow play to continue.

**LAW 14- THE PENALTY KICK**

**Procedure**

Feinting to take a penalty kick to confuse opponents is permitted as part of football. However, if in the opinion of the referee the feinting is considered an act of unsporting behavior, the player shall be cautioned.

**Preparing for the penalty kick**

The referee shall confirm the following requirements before the penalty kick is taken:

- The kicker is identified
- The ball is properly placed on the penalty mark
- The goalkeeper is on the goal line between the goal posts and facing the kicker
- The teammates of the kicker and the goalkeeper are
  - outside the penalty area
  - outside the penalty arc
  - behind the ball

**Infringements – After the whistle and before ball in play**

<i>Who infringed Law 14?</i>	<i>What was the outcome of the kick?</i>	
	<i>Ball goes into goal</i>	<i>Ball does <b>not</b> go into goal</i>
<i>Attacker (including the kicker)</i>	<b>RETAKE PENALTY KICK</b>	<b>INDIRECT FREE KICK*</b>
<i>Defender (including the goalkeeper)</i>	<b>GOAL (KICK-OFF)</b>	<b>RETAKE PENALTY KICK</b>
<i>Both attacker and defender</i>	<b>RETAKE PENALTY KICK</b>	<b>RETAKE PENALTY KICK</b>

\*From where the infringement occurred

**LAW 15 - THE THROW-IN**

**Procedures – Infringements**

Referees are reminded that opponents may be no closer than 2 m/yds from the point at which the throw-in is taken. Where necessary, the referee should warn any player within this distance before the throw-in is taken and caution the player if the player subsequently fails to retreat to the correct distance. Play shall be restarted with a throw-in.

If a player, while correctly taking a throw-in, intentionally throws the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball a second time but neither in a careless nor a reckless manner nor using excessive force, the referee shall allow play to continue.



If the ball enters the opponents' goal directly from a throw-in, the referee shall award a goal kick. If the ball enters the thrower's own goal directly from a throw-in, the referee shall award a corner kick.

If the ball touches the ground before entering the field of play, the throw-in shall be retaken by the same team from the same position provided that it was taken in line with the correct procedure. If the throw-in is not taken in line with the correct procedure, it shall be retaken by the opposing team.

## **LAW 16 - THE GOAL KICK**

### **Procedures – Infringements**

If a player who has taken a goal kick correctly, deliberately plays the ball a second time when the ball has left the penalty area before another player has touched it, this shall be penalized with an indirect free kick from the position where the second touch occurred. \* (see page 3) However, if the player touches the ball with the hand, this should be penalized with a direct free kick and a disciplinary sanction if required.

If an opponent enters the penalty area before the ball is in play and is fouled by a defender, the goal kick shall be retaken and the defender may be cautioned or sent off depending on the nature of the offense.

## **LAW 17 - THE CORNER KICK**

### **Procedures – Infringements**

Referees are reminded that opponents must remain at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the corner arc until the ball is in play (the optional marks off the field of play may be used for assistance).

Where necessary, the referee should warn any player within this distance before the corner kick is taken and caution the player who subsequently fails to retreat to the correct distance.

If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team in the position where the second touch occurred. \* (see page 3)

If a player, while correctly taking a corner kick, intentionally kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball a second time but neither in a careless nor a reckless manner nor using excessive force, the referee shall allow play to continue.

The ball shall be placed inside the corner arc and is in play when it is kicked, therefore the ball does not need to leave the corner arc to be in play.

The diagram shows some correct and incorrect positions.

## **PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE THE WINNER OF A MATCH OR HOME-AND-AWAY**

### **Kicks from the penalty mark**

#### **Procedure**

- The kicks from the penalty mark are not part of the match.
- The goal may be changed only if it becomes unusable.
- Once all eligible players have taken a kick from the penalty mark, the same sequence does not have to be followed as in the first round of kicks.
- Each team is responsible for selecting the players from those on the field of play at the end of the match and the order in which they will take the kicks.

- A player other than the goalkeeper who is injured may not be substituted during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.
- If the goalkeeper is sent off during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, the goalkeeper shall be replaced by a player who finished the match.
- A player, substitute or substituted player may be cautioned or sent off during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.
- The referee shall not abandon the match if a team remains with less than 7 players during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.
- If a player is injured or sent off during the taking of kicks from the penalty marks and the team has one player less, the referee should not reduce the number of players taking kicks for the other team. An equal number of players from each team is required only at the start of the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.