

LAWS OF THE GAME HANDBOOK 2019/2020 CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS



NOTHING
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03/ INTRODUCTION

The 133rd AGM of The International FA Board (The IFAB) in Aberdeen, Scotland on 2 March 2019 approved a number of amendments to, and clarifications of, the Laws of the Game for 2019/20. Three changes were approved following 2 years of worldwide experiments:

- The introduction of yellow and red cards for misconduct by team officials
- A player being substituted leaving the field at the nearest point on the boundary line
- At a goal kick and a free kick for the defending team in their own penalty area, the ball is in play as soon the kick is taken (it can be played before it leaves the penalty area)

Other changes include: clearer wording for 'handball', attacking team players must be at least 1m away from a defensive 'wall', the goalkeeper only has to have one foot on the goal line at a penalty kick, and a new dropped ball procedure (including a dropped ball being awarded if the ball hits a match official and goes into the goal, team possession changes or a promising attack starts).

This document summarises the main changes and clarifications.

A more detailed document is also available on The IFAB's website (www.theifab.com) along with a shorter 'Law Changes 2019-20 – At a Glance' document which summarises only the major changes.

All changes come into force on 1st June 2019.

04/ OUTLINE SUMMARY OF LAW CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

LAW 4

Undershirts can be multi-coloured/patterned if exactly the same as the sleeve of the main shirt

EXPLANATION

Manufacturers now make patterned undershirts whose sleeves are the same as the main shirt sleeve; these should be allowed as they help match officials' decision-making.

LAW 5

Referee cannot change a restart decision after play has restarted but, in certain circumstances, may issue a YC/RC for a previous incident

EXPLANATION

Sometimes a match official indicates/communicates a YC/RC offence (e.g. AR flagging for violent conduct off the ball) but the referee does not see the indication/hear the communication until after play has restarted. The referee can still take the appropriate disciplinary action, but the restart associated with the offence does not apply.

Referee can delay issuing a YC/RC until the next stoppage if the non-offending team takes a quick free kick and creates a goal-scoring opportunity

EXPLANATION

Occasionally, an attack is stopped by a cautionable or sending-off offence and the attacking team takes a quick free kick which restores the 'lost' attack; it is clearly 'unfair' if this 'new' attack is stopped to issue the YC/RC. However, if the referee has distracted the offending team by starting the YC/RC procedure, the quick free kick is not allowed. For a DOGSO offence, the player will be cautioned and not sent-off because the attack was re-started (as when advantage is applied for a DOGSO offence).

Team officials guilty of misconduct can be shown a YC/RC; if an offender cannot be identified, the senior coach in the technical area receives the YC/RC

EXPLANATION

The experiment with YC/RC for misconduct by team officials has been successful and has revealed many benefits at all levels, including for young referees dealing with 'difficult' adult coaches. If the offender cannot be identified, the senior team official (usually the main coach) in the technical area will receive the YC/RC (as the person responsible for the other team officials).

05/ OUTLINE SUMMARY OF LAW CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

If a penalty kick is awarded, the team's penalty taker can receive assessment or treatment and then stay on the field and take the kick

EXPLANATION

It is unfair if the kicker needs assessment/treatment and then has to leave the field and cannot take the penalty kick.

LAW 8

The team that wins the toss may choose to take the kick-off

EXPLANATION

Recent Law changes have made the kick-off more dynamic (e.g. a goal can be scored directly from the kick-off) so captains winning the toss often ask to take the kick-off.

Dropped ball – ball dropped for goalkeeper (if play stopped in penalty area) or for one player of team that last touched the ball at the location of the last touch; all other players (of both teams) must be at least 4m (4.5 yds) away.

EXPLANATION

The current dropped ball procedure often leads to a 'manufactured' restart which is 'exploited' unfairly (e.g. kicking the ball out for a throw-in deep in the opponents' half) or an aggressive confrontation. Returning the ball to the team that last played it restores what was 'lost' when play was stopped, except in the penalty area where it is simpler to return the ball to the goalkeeper. To prevent that team gaining an unfair advantage, all players of both teams, except the player receiving the ball, must be at least 4m (4.5 yds) away.

LAW 9

Dropped ball if the ball touches the referee (or other match official) and goes into the goal, possession changes or an attacking move starts

EXPLANATION

It can be very unfair if a team gains an advantage or scores a goal because the ball has hit a match official, especially the referee.

06/ OUTLINE SUMMARY OF LAW CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

LAW 12

Handball text re-written for greater clarity/consistency with clear guidelines for when 'non-deliberate' handball should (and should not) be penalised

It is an offence if a player:

- deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball
- gains possession/control of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then:
- scores in the opponents' goal
- creates a goal-scoring opportunity
- scores in the opponents' goal directly from their hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper

It is usually an offence if a player:

- touches the ball with their hand/arm when:
- the hand/arm has made their body unnaturally bigger
- the hand/arm is above/beyond their shoulder level (unless the player deliberately plays the ball which then touches their hand/arm)

The above offences apply even if the ball touches a player's hand/arm directly from the head or body (including the foot) of another player who is close.

Except for the above offences, it is not usually an offence if the ball touches a player's hand/arm:

- directly from the player's own head or body (including the foot)
- directly from the head or body (including the foot) of another player who is close
- if the hand/arm is close to the body and does not make the body unnaturally bigger
- when a player falls and the hand/arm is between the body and the ground to support the body, but not extended laterally or vertically away from the body

EXPLANATION

Greater clarity is needed for handball, especially on those occasions when 'non-deliberate' handball is an offence. The re-wording follows a number of principles:

- football does not accept a goal being scored by a hand/arm (even if accidental)
- football expects a player to be penalised for handball if they gain possession/control of the ball from their hand/arm and gain a major advantage e.g. score or create a goal-scoring opportunity
- it is natural for a player to put their arm between their body and the ground for support when falling.
- having the hand/arm above shoulder height is rarely a 'natural' position and a player is 'taking a risk' by having the hand/arm in that position, including when sliding
- if the ball comes off the player's body, or off another player (of either team) who is close by, onto the hand/arm it is often impossible to avoid contact with the ball.

07/ OUTLINE SUMMARY OF LAW CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

Confirmation that an 'illegal' handball offence by a goalkeeper in their own penalty area is not sanctioned with a YC/RC

EXPLANATION

Goalkeepers cannot handle the ball in their penalty area from a deliberate pass or throw-in from a team-mate, or having released the ball from their hands. If they do, it is an IDFK but this and any other 'illegal' handling does not incur any disciplinary sanction even if it stops a promising attack or denies a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

If, after a throw-in or deliberate pass from a team-mate, the goalkeeper unsuccessfully kicks or tries to kick the ball to release it into play, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball

EXPLANATION

When the GK clearly kicks or tries to kick the ball into play, this shows no intention to handle the ball so, if the 'clearance' attempt is unsuccessful, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball without committing an offence.

The YC for an 'illegal' goal celebration remains even if the goal is disallowed

EXPLANATION

Cautions for inappropriate goal celebrations apply even if the goal is disallowed as the impact (safety, image of the game etc.) is the same as if the goal was awarded.

Kicking an object is punished in the same way as throwing an object

EXPLANATION

Kicking an object at someone or the ball is punished the same as throwing an object.

08/ OUTLINE SUMMARY OF LAW CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

List of the warning/YC/RC offences for team officials

Where an offence is committed and the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.

WARNING

The following offences should usually result in a warning; repeated or blatant offences should result in a caution or sending off:

- entering the field of play in a respectful/non-confrontational manner
- failing to cooperate with a match official e.g. ignoring an instruction/request from assistant referee or the fourth official
- minor/low-level disagreement (by word or action) with a decision
- occasionally leaving the confines of the technical area without committing another offence.

CAUTION

Caution offences include (but are not limited to):

- clearly/persistently not respecting the confines of their team's technical area
- delaying the restart of play by their team
- deliberately entering the technical area of the opposing team (non-confrontational)
- dissent by word or action including:
 - throwing/kicking drinks bottles or other objects
 - gestures which show a clear lack of respect for the match official(s) e.g. sarcastic clapping
 - excessively/persistently gesturing for a red or yellow card
 - gesturing or acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner
 - persistent unacceptable behaviour (including repeated warning offences)
 - showing a lack of respect for the game

SENDING-OFF

Sending-off offences include (but are not limited to):

- delaying the restart of play by the opposing team e.g. holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a player
- deliberately leaving the technical area to:
 - show dissent towards, or remonstrate with, a match official
 - act in a provocative or inflammatory manner
 - enter the opposing technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner
 - deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field of play

09/ OUTLINE SUMMARY OF LAW CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

- entering the field of play to:
 - confront a match official (including at half-time and full-time)
 - interfere with play, an opposing player or match official
 - physical or aggressive behaviour (including spitting or biting) towards an opposing player, substitute, team official, match official, spectator or any other person (e.g. ball boy/girl, security or competition official etc.)
 - receiving a second caution in the same match
 - using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
 - using unauthorised electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as the result of using electronic or communication equipment
 - violent conduct

EXPLANATION

The correct use of the YC/RC for misconduct by team officials will be assisted by including the main warning /YC/RC offences in the Laws.

LAW 13

For defending team free kicks in their penalty area, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area

EXPLANATION

The experiment where, at a defending team free kick in the penalty area, the ball is in play once it is kicked and does not have to leave the penalty area, has produced a faster and more constructive restart. Opponents must remain outside the penalty area and at least 9.15m away until the ball is in play. The same change has been made to the goal kick (see Law 16).

When there is a defensive 'wall' of at least 3 players, all attacking team players must be at least 1m from the 'wall'; IDFK if they encroach.

EXPLANATION

Attackers standing very close to, or in, the defensive 'wall' at a free kick often cause management problems and waste time. There is no legitimate tactical justification for attackers to be in the 'wall' and their presence is against the 'spirit of the game' and often damages the image of the game.

10/ OUTLINE SUMMARY OF LAW CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

LAW 14

Goalposts, crossbar and nets must not be moving when a penalty is taken and the goalkeeper must not be touching them

Goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on, or in line with, the goal line when a penalty kick is taken; cannot stand behind the line

If an offence occurs after the referee signals for a penalty kick to be taken but the kick is not taken, it must then be taken after any YC/RC is issued

EXPLANATION

The referee must not signal for the penalty kick to be taken if the goalkeeper is touching the goalposts, crossbar or net, or if they are moving e.g. the goalkeeper has kicked/shaken them

Goalkeepers are not permitted to stand in front of or behind the line. Allowing the goalkeeper to have only one foot touching the goal line (or, if jumping, in line with the goal line) when the penalty kick is taken is a more practical approach as it is easier to identify if both feet are not on the line. As the kicker can 'stutter' in the run, it is reasonable that the goalkeeper can take one step in anticipation of the kick

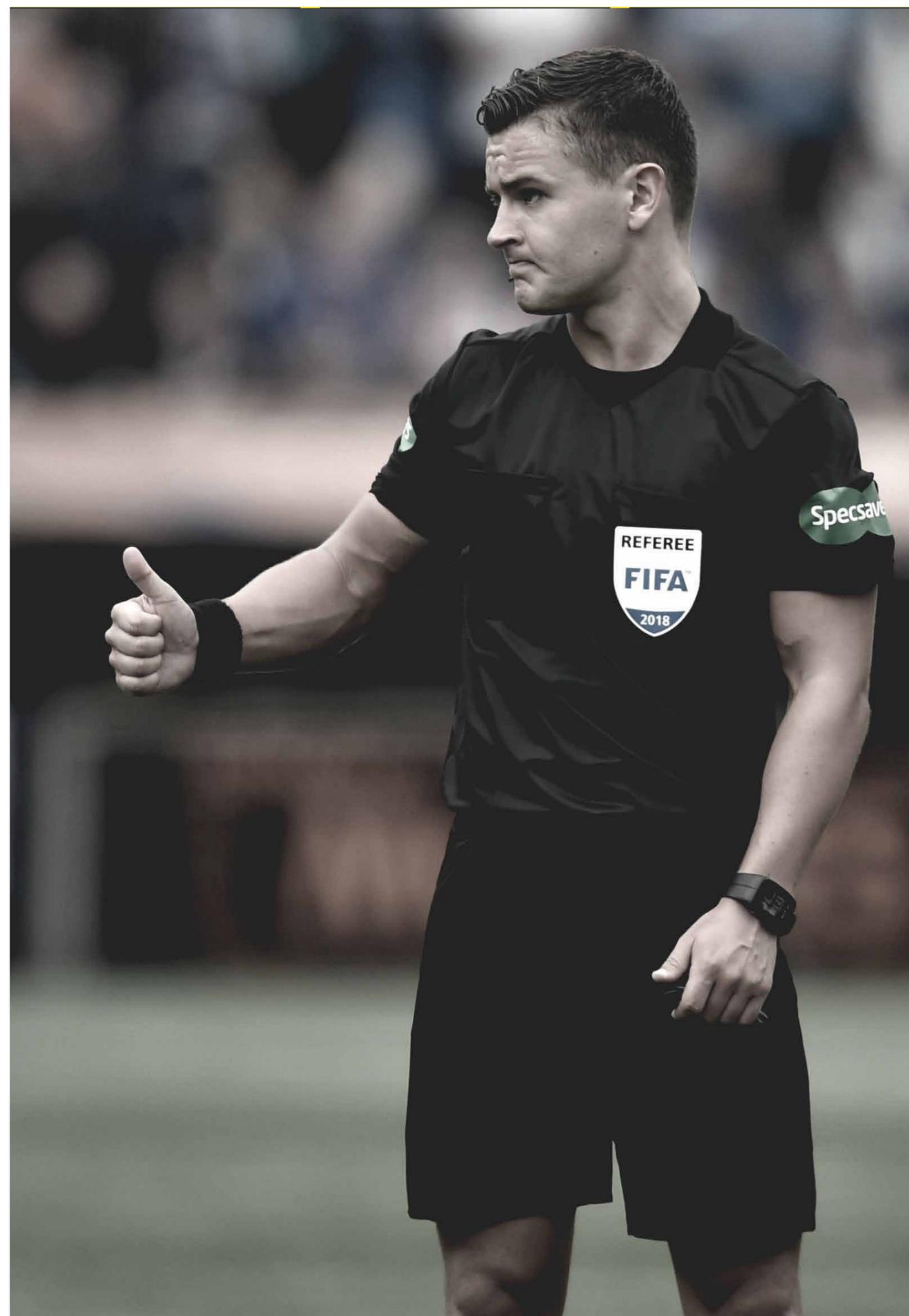
If an offence occurs after the referee has signalled for a penalty kick to be taken but the kick is not taken, a free kick cannot be awarded as the ball has not been put into play; the necessary disciplinary action can still be taken.

LAW 16

At goal kicks, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area

EXPLANATION

The experiment that at a goal kick the ball is in play once it is kicked, and does not have to leave the penalty area, has created a faster and more dynamic/constructive restart to the game. It has reduced the time 'lost/wasted' including stopping the tactic of 'wasting' time when a defender deliberately plays the ball before it leaves the penalty area knowing that all that will happen is the goal kick will be retaken. Opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.





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