

Laws of the Game 2019/2020 Changes and Clarification

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The 133rd AGM of The International FA Board (The IFAB) approved a number of amendments to, and clarifications of, the Laws of the Game for 2019/2020, which are in effect as of June 1, 2019.

For NorCal games, these changes are in effect for the first game of the 2019 Fall season (August 24th).

Law 3 – The Players

- A player who is being substituted must leave the field at the nearest point on the boundary line, unless otherwise directed by the referee.

Explanation:

To stop a player who is being substituted ‘wasting’ time by leaving slowly at the halfway line (which is not a Law requirement) the player must leave at the nearest point (as with an injury) unless the referee indicates otherwise, e.g. if the player can leave quickly at the halfway line, there is a safety/security issue or the player leaves on a stretcher. The player must go immediately to the technical area or dressing room to avoid problems with substitutes, spectators, or the match officials. A player who infringes the spirit of this Law should be sanctioned for unsporting behavior i.e. delaying the restart of play.

Law 4 – The Player's Equipment

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

Law 5 – The Referee

- Referee cannot change a restart decision after play has restarted but, in certain circumstances, may issue a YC/RC for a previous incident.
- Team officials (Coach, Assistant Coach, Manager or trainer) guilty of misconduct or & “Inappropriate Bench Behavior” can be shown a YC/RC; if an offender cannot be identified, the senior coach in the technical area receives the YC/RC.
- 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.

Law 5* – The Referee (Continued)

Explanation in regards to showing YC/RC to Team officials for Referees:

- Please note that the term ASK-TELL-DISMISS is still very much in affect.
- ASK, is a way to use your personality and leadership to work with the coach to try to keep him/her in the game
- “TELL” is showing the yellow card, and “DISMISS” is showing the red card
- Depending on the circumstances, a coach MIGHT be shown a straight red card

*NorCal additional explanation

Law 5* – The Referee (Continue)

Explanation for Coaches in regards to receiving YC/RC:

If you have been shown a red card in a game:

- Please leave the technical area quickly and refrain from making any comments to the referee crew during or after the game.
- In order for the game to continue, you must have a team official that has a current US Club Staff pass.
- Refrain from coming back after the game to confront the referee crew. Referees are instructed to report all coach, team officials, and parents behavior to NorCal PAD. NorCal PAD will consider additional game suspensions if the behavior of the ejected coach is considered irresponsible after receiving a red card.

*NorCal additional explanation

Law 7 – The Duration of the match

Medical (Water/Hydration) Breaks

- Clarification of the difference between ‘cooling’ and ‘drinks’ breaks
- Medical stoppages permitted by competition rules e.g. ‘drinks’ breaks (which should not exceed one minute) and ‘cooling’ breaks (ninety seconds to three minutes)

Explanation: In the interest of player safety, competition rules may allow, in certain weather conditions (e.g. high humidity and temperatures), ‘cooling’ breaks (from ninety seconds to three minutes) to allow the body’s temperature to fall; they are different from ‘drinks’ breaks (maximum one minute) which are for rehydration.

Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play (Kick Off)

- The team that wins the toss of a coin decides which goal to attack in the first half or to take the kick-off
- Depending on the above, their opponents take the kick-off or decide which goal to attack in the first half
- The team that decided which goal to attack in the first half takes the kick-off to start the second half

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.

Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play (Dropped Ball)

The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:

- the ball was in the penalty area or
- the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area

In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent or, as outlined in Law 9.1, a match official.

All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play.

The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play (Dropped Ball) 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 8* - The Start and Restart of Play (7V7 U9 & U10)

When the keeper has the possession of the ball with his/her hand inside the penalty area:

- Once the keeper releases the ball, the ball is in play; it does not have to leave the penalty area before it can be played
- Keeper cannot punt the ball
- Keeper cannot drop kick the ball

Explanation

- Opponents must remain outside of Build Out line until the ball is in play
- Once the ball is released by the goal keeper, then the attackers may crash/cross the Build Out line
- A SECOND touch is not required for the attackers crossing the Build Out line as a consideration

*NorCal interpretation. IFAB does not address USSF modification for this age group.

Law 9 - The Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is OUT of play when it touches a match official, remains on the field of play and:

- A team starts a promising attack or
- The ball goes directly into the goal or
- The team in possession of the ball changes

In all these cases, play is restarted with a Dropped Ball.

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.

Law 10 - Determining the Outcome of a Match

- If the goalkeeper throws the ball directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct (Handling the Ball)

It is an offense 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

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct (Handling the Ball)

Part 2

It is usually an offense 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.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct (Handling the Ball)

Part 3

Except for the previous offenses, it is not usually an offense 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

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct (Handling the Ball)

Explanation

Greater clarity is needed for handball, especially on those occasions when ‘non-deliberate’ handball is an offense. 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 penalized 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

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct (Goal Celebrations)

- A YC for an 'illegal' celebration (e.g. removing the shirt) 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.

Law 13 – Free Kicks (Indirect Free Kick Signal)

- The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising the arm above the head; this signal is maintained until the kick has been taken and the ball touches another player or goes out of play or it is clear that a goal cannot be scored directly

Explanation:

Many indirect free kicks are too far from the opponents' goal for a goal to be scored directly (e.g. IDFKs for offside); in these cases, the referee only needs to maintain the signal until the kick is taken because running whilst showing the signal is not easy.

Law 13* – Free Kicks (Indirect Free Kick Signal) Continued

Explanation/Examples:

Referee just saw his/her AR flag raised for an offside:

- a whistle blown for an offside
- AR gives a flag signal for the location
- Referee raises his/her arm for IDFK signal
- If no quick start taken then referee drops his arm and waits for the kicker to get ready for the kick. Right before the kick is taken, the referee raises his/her arm.
- Once the ball is kicked then the referee drops his/her arm

*NorCal additional explanation

Law 13* – Free Kicks (Indirect Free Kick Signal) Continued

Explanation/Examples:

Referee just called a foul that the restarts is an IDFK. The location of this foul is either in the penalty area or roughly 25 yards away from the goal line.

- A whistle should be blown for a foul followed by a direction for the foul
- Referee raises his/her arm for IDFK signal
- If a quick start is taken then referee has no choice but to keep his/her arm up till the ball is touched by another player or ball has left the FOP, goal keeper saves the ball or a goal is scored
- If no quick start taken then referee drops his arm and waits for the kicker to get ready for the kick. Right before the kick is taken then the referee raises his/her arm. Referee must keep raises his/her arm up till the ball is touched by another player or ball has left the FOP, goal keeper saves the ball or a goal is scored.

*NorCal additional explanation

Law 13 – Free Kicks (Forming of the Wall)

- When there is a 'wall' of three or more defenders, the attackers are not allowed within 1m (1 yd) of the wall; an attacker less than 1m (1yd) from the 'wall' when the kick is taken will be penalized with an indirect free kick

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.

Law 13 – Free Kicks

When the defending team takes a free kick in their own penalty area, the ball is in play once the kick is taken; it does not have to leave the penalty area before it can be played

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 (10 yards) away until the ball is in play. The same change has been made to the goal kick (see Law 16)

Law 13* – Free Kicks (7V7 U9 & U10)

When the defending team takes a free kick in their own penalty area, the ball is in play once the kick is taken; it does not have to leave the penalty area before it can be played

Explanation:

- Opponents must remain outside of Build Out line until the ball is in play.
- Once the ball is kicked and moved by either the goal keeper or a defender, then the attackers may crash/cross the Build Out line.
- A SECOND touch is not required for the attackers crossing the Build Out line as a consideration.

*NorCal interpretation. IFAB does not address USSF modification for this age group.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

- The ball must be stationary on the penalty mark. 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 goal 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.
- The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward; backheeling is permitted provided the ball moves forward.

Law 15 – The Throw-In

- All opponents must stand at least 2m (2 yds) from the point on the touchline where the throw-in is to be taken.

Explanation:

This covers situations where a player takes a throw-in some distance from the touchline.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick

- The ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played before leaving 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.

Law 16* – The Goal Kick (7V7 U9 & U10)

- The ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played before leaving the penalty area.

Explanation:

- Opponents must remain outside of Build Out line until the ball is in play.
- Once the ball is kicked and moved by either the goal keeper or a defender, then the attackers may crash/cross the Build Out line.
- A SECOND touch is not required for the attackers crossing the Build Out line as a consideration.

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