

2019/2020 IFAB (International Football Association Board)

Laws of the Game changes

Here is a simple outline of the main changes/clarifications.

Law 3

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

Law 5

- Referee cannot change a restart decision after play has restarted but, in certain circumstances, may issue a Yellow Card/Red Card for a previous incident
- Team officials guilty of misconduct can be shown a Yellow Card/Red Card; if an offender cannot be identified, the senior coach in the technical area receives the Yellow Card/Red Card
- 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 8

- The team that wins the toss may choose 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

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

Law 10

- Goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball into the opponents' goal

Law 12

- An 'illegal' handball offence by a goalkeeper in their own penalty area is not sanctioned with a Yellow Card/Red Card
- 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
- Referee can delay issuing a Yellow Card/Red Card until the next stoppage if the non-offending team takes a quick free kick and creates a goal-scoring opportunity
- The Yellow Card for an 'illegal' goal celebration remains even if the goal is disallowed
- All verbal offences are punished with an Indirect Free Kick
- Kicking an object is punished in the same way as throwing an object

Law 13

- Once an Indirect Free Kick has been taken, the referee can stop showing the Indirect Free Kick signal if it is clear that goal cannot be scored directly (e.g. from most offside Indirect Free Kicks)
- 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

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

Law 14

- Goalkeeper must not be touching goalposts, crossbar or net when a penalty is taken
- 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 Yellow Card/Red Card is issued

Law 15

- Opponents must be at least 2m from the point on the touchline where a throw-in is to be taken, even if the thrower is back from the line

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