



Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game

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Authorised by the International Football Association Board

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LAW 1 – The Field of Play

1. If the crossbar breaks during a match played under the rules of a competition and there are no available means of repairing or replacing it, should the match be abandoned?

Yes. The crossbar is a part of the goal and must always be in place.

2. Is it necessary for flags to be placed at the half-way line?

No. Such flags are optional.

3. Is it permissible to mark the field of play with broken lines?

No. Law 1 does not allow broken lines.

4. A goalkeeper or another player draws unauthorised marks on the field of play with his foot. What action does the referee take?

If the referee notices this before the match starts the offending player is cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

If the referee notices this being done during the match he cautions the offending player for unsporting behaviour when the ball next goes out of play.

5. Are the goal nets compulsory?

No. They are recommended whenever possible and may be required under competitions rules.

6. Is the area enclosed by the goal line and the goal nets part of the field of play?

No. This area is outside of the field of play.

7. Is it permitted to have additional marks made on the field of play to assist the goalkeeper?

No.

LAW 2 – The Ball

1. After a corner kick has been taken, the ball is caught by an outside agent in the field of play without any player having previously played it. What action does the referee take?

*The referee stops play. Play is restarted by a dropped ball at the place where the ball was at the time the match was stopped.**

2. May additional balls be placed around the field of play for use during a match?

Yes. Provided they meet the requirements of Law 2 and their use is under the control of the referee.

3. Is the ball considered as an object when it is used to strike an opponent?

Yes.

LAW 3 – The Number of Players

1. A player accidentally passes over one of the boundary lines of the field of play. Is he considered to have left the field of play without the permission of the referee?

No.

2. A player in possession of the ball passes over the touch line or the goal line without the ball in order to beat an opponent. What action does the referee take?

Play continues. Going outside the field of play may be considered as part of a playing movement, but players are expected, as a general rule, to remain within the playing-area.

3. Is it permissible for a goalkeeper to take a throw-in, corner-kick, penalty-kick etc.?

Yes. He is a player of his team.

4. May a player who has been sent off stay in the technical area?

No. He must return to the dressing room.

5. A team with only seven players is penalised by the award of a penalty-kick and as a consequence one of their players is sent off, leaving only six in the team. Should the referee allow the penalty-kick to be taken or should he abandon the match before the kick is taken?

The game must be abandoned without allowing the penalty-kick to be taken unless the national association has decided otherwise with regard to the minimum number of players.

In the opinion of the International F.A. Board, a match should not be considered valid if there are fewer than seven players in either of the teams.

- 6.** A substitute, who is not participating in the match, runs onto the field of play and kicks an opponent. What action does the referee take?

*The referee stops the match, sends off the substitute, shows him the red card and restarts the match by dropping the ball at the place where it was when play was stopped.**

- 7.** A player, from a team with only seven players, leaves the field of play to receive medical attention. What action does the referee take?

The match continues to allow the player to return after treatment but if he fails to return the match may be abandoned subject to the decision of the national association.

- 8.** If, before the start of a match played under the rules of a competition, a player is replaced by a named substitute without the referee having been notified, may this substitute be permitted to continue to participate in the game?

Yes, but the player has to be cautioned for entering the field of play without the permission of the referee.

- 9.** When does a substitute become a player?

Immediately after he enters the field of play in accordance with the substitution procedure.

- 10.** The Board is of the opinion that a match cannot be considered as normal if one of the teams is playing with less than 7 players. In a competition where such a limitation applies, a team consisting of 11 players is playing against a team with only 7. When the team consisting of 11 players is about to take a shot at goal one of the players of the team of 7 deliberately leaves the field of play.

10.1 Does the referee have to stop play immediately?

No. The advantage clause should be considered.

10.2 If a goal is scored must he allow it?

Yes.

10.3 What further action should the referee take?

If the player who has left the field of play fails to return for the kick-off after the goal is scored, the match is abandoned and a report sent to the appropriate authority.

- 11.** A player who is about to be replaced refuses to leave the field of play. What action does the referee take?

He allows play to continue.

- 12.** The referee allows a substitute who has not been nominated to enter the field of play and the latter scores a goal. What action does the referee take?

- 12.1** If he realises his mistake during the match?

He should require the player to leave the field of play, continue the match and report the situation to the appropriate authorities.

- 12.2** If he only realises his mistake after the match?

He should report the situation to the appropriate authorities.

- 13.** A substitute enters the field of play without having obtained the permission of the referee. While the ball is in play, an opponent punches him. What action should the referee take?

*The referee stops play, sends off the player guilty of violent conduct, cautions the substitute for entering the field of play without the permission of the referee and restart the game by an indirect free-kick against the team of the substitute at the place where the infringement occurred.**

- 14.** Player no. 8 is to be replaced by player no. 12. Player no. 8 leaves the field of play. Before entering the field of play player no. 12 strikes an opponent who is standing on the touch line. What action does the referee take?

Substitute no. 12 is sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card. Player no. 8 may be replaced by another eligible substitute or may continue as a player since the substitution has not been completed.

- 15.** A competition rule states that all players must be named before kick-off. A team lists only nine players and the match begins. May two other players who arrive after play has started take part?

No.

- 16.** The goalkeeper (no. 1) changes places with player no. 7 without notifying the referee, just before the end of the match. Both teams have already made their three eligible substitutions and player no. 7 has been cautioned. The ball is in play and the player no. 1 scores a goal for his team just as the normal time runs to an end. Immediately after the goal is scored, the referee blows the final whistle, without having been able to carry out the kick-off and without having been able to caution the offending players. What action does the referee take?

As the referee was unable to administer the sanctions before the end of the match, he informs a team official about the misconduct of the two players and includes details in his report to the appropriate authorities.

- 17.** A player changes places with the goalkeeper during half-time without informing the referee. The new goalkeeper then touches the ball with his hand during the second half. What action does the referee take?

He allows play to continue and cautions both players for unsporting behaviour when the ball goes next out of play.

- 18.** A player being substituted leaves the field of play and the referee signals to the substitute to enter the field. Before entering, however, he delivers a throw-in, ignoring the substitutions procedure stated in Law 3, regarding entering the field of play. Is this procedure permitted?

No, the substitution procedure stated in Law 3 must first be completed.

- 19.** If no substitutes have been named and a player is sent off before play has begun, may the team which is affected complete the side with a player who subsequently arrives?

The team may be completed with this player provided this is allowed by the rules of the competition.

- 20.** How many people may give tactical instructions from the technical area?

Only one person at any one time may give instructions. He may move forward to give instructions but must then return to the designated seated area. He may stand beside this area if he wishes, but must behave at all times in a responsible manner.

LAW 4 – The Players’s Equipment

1. If a player, following doctor’s orders, protects his elbow or any similar part of his body with a bandage to prevent further injury, has the referee the power to decide if the bandage constitutes a danger to the other players?

Yes

2. If, due to a collision with an opponent, a player loses a shoe and immediately scores a goal, is the goal valid or not?

Yes. The player did not intentionally play barefoot, but lost his shoe by accident.

3. If the colour of the shirts of the two goalkeepers is the same, what should the referee do if neither has another shirt to change into?

The referee allows play to begin.

4. May a referee allow a player wearing glasses to play in a match?

If, in the opinion of the referee, the glasses are dangerous to the player himself, or to an opponent, he does not allow the player to take part in the match.

LAW 5 – The Referee

1. If a referee is struck in the face by the ball which then enters the goal while he is temporarily incapacitated, should a goal be allowed although he has not seen it scored?

Yes. If in the opinion of a neutral assistant referee nearer to the incident the goal was properly scored.

2. An assistant referee signals that the ball has passed over the touch line, but before the referee has declared the ball out of play, a defending player inside the penalty-area strikes an attacking player. What action should the referee take?

The defending player is sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card. The referee shall restart the game with a throw-in because the ball was out of play when the offence occurred.

3. What action should a referee take against a player who lights a cigarette or uses a mobile phone during the game?

Caution him for unsporting behaviour.

4. Can a captain send off one of his own teammates for serious misconduct?

No. Only the referee can send off a player from the field of play.

5. What should a referee do if two captains agree to forego the half-time interval and one of the players insists on his right to 5 minutes rest?

Players have a right to 5 minutes interval and the referee must grant it.

6. Is the referee empowered to order team officials away from the boundary lines of the field of play?

Yes. The referee has the right to take such measures even if the match is being played on public ground.

7. How should a referee react if, during the course of a match, he realises that one of the teams is deliberately trying to lose? Should he draw the attention of the team in question to the fact that if they continue to play in that way, he will terminate the game in accordance with the provisions of Law 5?

The referee has no right to stop the game in this case.

- 8.** During a free-kick the referee gives a signal to continue even though an opponent is only 4.5m away from the ball and the opponent intercepts it. What should the referee's decision be?
Play is allowed to continue.
- 9.** Is the referee authorised to stop play, if in his opinion, the floodlights are inadequate?
Yes.
- 10.** Does a team captain have the right to question a decision of the referee?
No. Neither the captain nor any other player has the right to show disagreement with a decision taken by the referee.
- 11.** Some matches are played under floodlights. If the floodlights fail, does the match have to be replayed in its entirety or only for the remaining time of play, if the lighting cannot be repaired?
If, for any reasons mentioned under Law 5, the referee terminates a match before normal time, it must be replayed in its entirety unless the rules of the competition provide for the score to be valid at the time the match was abandoned.
- 12.** During a match the referee or one of the assistant referees or a player is hit by an object thrown by a spectator. Play is stopped for this person to receive medical attention. May the referee continue the match?
If it is an isolated incident, the referee may continue the match but should submit a report to the responsible authorities.
- 13.** During a match a player is hit by an object(s) thrown by spectators. The player(s) receives medical treatment. What action does the referee take?
Depending on the severity of the incident, the referee may allow the match to continue, suspend play or abandon the match. He must report the incident(s) to the appropriate authorities.
- 14.** The referee applies advantage but the anticipated advantage does not develop. May he penalise the original offence?
Yes, but only if the anticipated advantage does not occur immediately (as a guideline within 3 seconds).

- 15.** A coach is guilty of irresponsible behaviour. What action does the referee take?

He sends the coach from the technical area and its vicinity behind the boundary fences (where such a fence exists). The referee reports his conduct to the appropriate authorities.

LAW 6 – The Assistant Referees

1. May a referee ask a neutral assistant referee to give an opinion as to whether or not the ball crossed the goal line between the posts?

Yes.

2. A player is in an offside position and an assistant referee raises his flag. The referee does not see the signal and a defending player denies an opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity. The referee stops play and only then sees the signal of the assistant referee. What action does the referee take?

a) *If he accepts the signal for offside from the assistant referee he does not send off the defender, since no obvious goal-scoring opportunity has occurred. Play is restarted with an indirect free kick for the defending team.*

b) *If he does not accept that an offside offence has occurred the defending player is sent off for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity and play is restarted with a direct free kick for the attacking team.*

3. A player is in an offside position and an assistant referee raises his flag. The referee does not see the signal and a defending player punches an opponent. The referee stops the play and only then sees the signal of the assistant referee. What action does the referee take?

a) *If he accepts the signal for offside from the assistant referee he sends off the defender for violent conduct and restarts play with an indirect free kick for the defending team.*

b) *If he does not accept that an offside offence has occurred, the defending player is sent off for violent conduct and play is restarted with a direct free kick for the attacking team.*

LAW 7 – The Duration of the match

1. During the match a player advancing in counterattack eludes the second last defender about half-way along the field of play and near the touch line. The goalkeeper sprints from the goal to stop the opponent but succeeds only in clearing the ball away from the field of play. Because of his speed the goalkeeper also carries on running off the field and a forward exploits the situation by taking a throw-in quickly and correctly, with the goalkeeper still off the field, and play ends in a goal. What sanction should the referee take?

No offence has been committed. The goal is valid.

2. Is it left to the referee's discretion to decide whether lost time (injuries or other causes) is to be compensated or not?

No, the referee must add on in each half of the game for all the time lost. However, the amount of such time is at the discretion of the referee.

LAW 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

1. May the kick-off be taken by a person other than one of the players taking part in the match?

No. If, in certain matches (e.g. charity or exhibition matches) a ceremony is arranged for a person not taking part in the game to kick the ball, it must be brought back to the centre of the field and kicked off in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

2. When extra time is played, which team kicks off?

A coin is tossed and the team which wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the extra-time. The other team takes the kick-off.

3. If the ball is kicked straight into the opponents' goal from the kick-off, what decision does the referee give?

A goal.

4. What action does the referee take if, at kick-off the ball is not played forward?

The kick-off is retaken.

LAW 9 – The Ball in and out of Play

1. Is the ball out of play if any part of the ball overlaps either the goal line or the touch line?

No, the whole of the ball must cross the line.

2. A player asks to leave the field of play and, as he is walking off, the ball comes towards him and he kicks the ball into the goal. What action does the referee take?

*The player is cautioned. The game is restarted by an indirect free kick, taken by a player of the opposing team, from the place where the infringement occurred.**

3. A spectator blows a whistle and a defender inside his own penalty area picks up the ball, assuming that play has been stopped. What action does the referee take?

He awards a penalty kick.

4. The referee fails to see an assistant referee signal an offside offence and the ball enters the goal. Play is restarted with a kick-off and only then the referee sees the assistant referee's signal. What action does the referee take?

He allows play to continue since he cannot change the decision to award a goal after play has restarted.

5. When play is about to be started with a dropped ball the players of one team refuse to take part. What action does the referee take?

He merely restarts play by dropping the ball. It is not necessary for each team to be present for the restart with a dropped ball.

6. When the ball is dropped to restart play it bounces across the touch line without having been touched by a player. What action does the referee take?

He restarts play with a dropped ball at the same position as before.

7. The ball accidentally hits the referee on the field of play and rebounds into the goal. Is a goal scored?

Yes.

8. May a goalkeeper join other players at a dropped ball situation?

Yes. Any player may take part.

LAW 10 – The Method of Scoring

1. If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line and immediately realises his error, what action should he take?

*Play is restarted with a dropped ball.**

2. A neutral assistant referee signals a player is guilty of violent conduct. The referee sees neither the offence nor the signal and the offending player's team scores a goal. He then sees the assistant referees' signal. What action does the referee take?

*As long as play has not restarted, the goal is disallowed, the guilty player is sent off and the match continues with a free kick.**

3. A goal is scored. The referee then notices a signal from his assistant referee. The assistant referee tells the referee that a few seconds before the ball entered the goal, the goalkeeper of the team which scored the goal punched an opponent inside his own penalty area. What action does the referee take?

The goal is disallowed, the goalkeeper is sent off for violent conduct and a penalty kick is awarded to the opposing team.

LAW 11 – Offside

1. Does a referee penalise a player who is in an offside position and moves off the field of play to show the referee that he is not involved in active play?

No. It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position and there is no need for the player to leave the field of play.

However, if the referee considers that he has left the field for tactical reasons and has gained an unfair advantage by re-entering the field of play the player should be cautioned.

2. Is a teammate allowed to stand in an offside position when a penalty kick is being taken?

No. Players must be behind the penalty mark.

3. A defending player moves beyond his own goal line in order to place an opponent in an offside position. What action does the referee take?

The referee allows play to continue and cautions the defender when the ball is next out of play.

4. A player's movement takes him between the goal posts into the goal net and at the same time a teammate kicks the ball into the goal. What action does the referee take if:

- a) the player who is between the goal posts remains stationary as the ball enters?

No action should be taken. A goal is awarded.

- b) the actions of the player distract an opponent?

The goal is disallowed and the player is cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

*Since the offence was committed off the field of play, play is restarted by a dropped ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped.**

5. A player moving quickly towards his opponent's goal is penalised for an offside offence. From what position is the resulting indirect free kick taken?

The kick is taken from his position when the ball was last played to him by one of his teammates.

6. A player plays a corner to a teammate. The teammate touches the ball and the player who took the corner kick runs from an offside position and plays the ball once again. Should this player be penalised?

Yes. He is penalised for offside. When the player who took the kick, kicks it a second time, he is in an offside position and has gained an advantage by being in that position.

LAW 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

1. An attacker in an offside position inside his opponents' penalty area but not involved in active play is violently struck by an opponent. What action does the referee take?

The opponent is sent off for violent conduct and a penalty kick is awarded.

2. A player who has left the field of play to receive treatment trips an opponent inside the field. What action does the referee take?

The player is cautioned for unsporting behaviour and play is restarted with a direct free kick.

3. A goalkeeper standing inside his penalty area deliberately handles the ball just outside the penalty area. What action does the referee take?

He awards a direct free kick to the opposing team. If, in the opinion of the referee, the goalkeeper is also guilty of unsporting behaviour or denying an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, he would receive further appropriate sanction.

4. A player of the defending team, other than the goalkeeper, standing outside the penalty-area, deliberately handles the ball within the penalty-area. What action does the referee take?

A penalty kick is awarded. If, in the opinion of the referee, the player is also guilty of unsporting behaviour or denying a goal-scoring opportunity, he would also receive further appropriate sanction.

5. A player intentionally lies on the ball for an unreasonable length of time. What action does the referee take?

He stops play, cautions the player for unsporting behaviour and restarts play with an indirect free kick.

6. When the ball is about to be dropped within the penalty area, a defending player violently strikes an opponent before the ball touches the ground. What action does the referee take?

The player is sent off for violent conduct and play restarts with a dropped ball.

- 7.** While the ball is in play, two players of the same team commit unsporting behaviour or violent conduct towards each other on the field of play. What action does the referee take?

The referee cautions them or sends them off and restarts play with an indirect free kick to the opposing team.

- 8.** A player enters the field of play without receiving a signal from the referee and then deliberately handles the ball. What action does the referee take?

The player is cautioned for entering the field of play without the permission of the referee. Play is restarted with a direct free kick which punishes the more serious offence.

If, in the opinion of the referee, the player is also guilty of unsporting behaviour, by deliberately handling the ball, he is sent off for receiving a second caution in the same match.

- 9.** A referee cautions a player who then apologises for his misconduct. Can the referee decide not to report the incident?

No. All cautions must be reported.

- 10.** A player leaves the field of play while celebrating a goal. What action if any, does the referee take?

Celebrating a goal is an accepted part of football. A caution is only warranted if a player gives an excessive demonstration of jubilation (e.g. by jumping over the boundary fence, gesticulating at his opponents or spectators, ridiculing them by pointing to his shirt, removing his shirt or similar provocative action).

- 11.** The goalkeeper controls the ball with his hands in the penalty area, and passes it to a teammate who is also within the penalty area. The latter miskicks the ball towards his own goal. The goalkeeper touches it with his hands but fails to stop it entering the goal. What action does the referee take?

The referee awards the goal.

- 12.** The goalkeeper in his penalty area holds the ball in his hands then places it on the ground and takes it outside the penalty area. He then decides to re-enter the penalty area and touches the ball again with his hands. What action does the referee take?

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

- 13.** While the ball is in play, the goalkeeper strikes an opponent in the area enclosed by the goal line and the goal nets. What action does the referee take?

*The referee stops play, sends off the goalkeeper and restarts play with a dropped ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped.**

A penalty kick is not awarded as the area in which the incident occurred is not part of the field of play.

- 14.** A player deliberately plays the ball with his arm in his own penalty area. What action does the referee take?

The referee awards a penalty kick. The offence of deliberate handball includes the illegal use of both hand or arm.

- 15.** A goalkeeper holding the ball bounces it before he kicks it upfield. Is it an offence to bounce the ball?

No. In the spirit of the Law he would not be regarded as having released the ball from his possession.

- 16.** A player, other than the goalkeeper, standing in his own penalty area holding a shinguard, hits the ball with his shinguard to prevent it entering the goal. What action does the referee take?

The referee awards a penalty kick and the player is sent off for preventing a goal. The shinguard is regarded as an extension of the player's hand.

- 17.** What happens if, in a similar situation, the player in question is the goalkeeper?

The referee stops play, cautions the goalkeeper for unsporting behaviour and play is restarted with an indirect free kick to the opposing team.

- 18.** While the ball is in play a player standing inside his own penalty area throws an object at an opponent standing outside the penalty area. What action does the referee take?

He stops play and sends off the player who threw the object for violent conduct. Play is restarted by a direct free kick to the opponents' team taken from the place where the offence occurred, i.e. where the object struck or would have struck the opponent.

- 19.** A player throws an object e.g. footwear at a person seated in the technical area. What action does the referee take?

Play is stopped, the player is sent off for violent conduct and play is restarted with an indirect free kick taken from where the object was thrown.

- 20.** While the ball is in play, a substitute throws an object e.g. footwear at a player of the opposing team. What action does the referee take?

*Play is stopped and the substitute is sent off for violent conduct. Play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place where the ball was located when play was stopped.**

- 21.** A player running with the ball sees a defender immediately in front of him and runs off the field of play to continue playing the ball. The opponent holds him beyond the touch line to prevent him continuing his run. What action does the referee take?

*Play is stopped and the opponent is cautioned for unsporting behaviour. Play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place where the ball was located when play was stopped.**

- 22.** A player standing in his own penalty area strikes the referee. What action does the referee take?

*Play is stopped and the player is sent off for violent conduct. Play is restarted with an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the offence occurred**

- 23.** Is it permitted for a referee to show a red card to a substitute to indicate he must leave the technical area and go to the changing room, whether or not he has taken part in the match, for his use of offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures?

Yes. All players and substitutes come under the jurisdiction of the referee whether they are on the field of play or not. The use of the red card is to give a clear indication that a sanction is being taken.

- 24.** A player is charged in a fair manner but the ball is not within playing distance. What action should the referee take?

If the referee considers the charge to have unfairly impeded the progress of an opponent an indirect free kick is awarded. However, if the referee considers the charge on the opponent to be careless, a direct free kick will be awarded.

LAW 13 – Free Kicks

1. A player takes a free kick from outside his own penalty area and then touches the ball again by deliberately handling the ball before it has been played by another player. What action does the referee take?

He punishes the more serious offence, by awarding a direct free kick, or penalty kick if the offence took place inside the penalty area.

2. A team is awarded a direct free kick in its own penalty area. The player taking the kick passes it directly to his goalkeeper who misses it and the ball enters the goal. What action does the referee take?

The kick is retaken since the ball is not in play until it has passed outside the penalty area.

3. A team is awarded an indirect free kick inside its own penalty area. The player taking the kick hits it against a team mate who is inside the penalty area and the ball enters the goal. What action does the referee take?

The kick is retaken since the ball is not in play until it has passed outside the penalty area.

4. When a goal kick or a free kick is taken from within a player's own penalty area, when may opposing players enter the penalty area?

The players may not enter until the ball has passed outside the penalty area.

5. May a free kick be taken by lifting the ball with a foot or both feet simultaneously?

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

6. When taking a free kick awarded to their team, may players use feinting tactics to confuse opponents?

Yes. It is permitted and is part of football. However, if any opponents move nearer than 9.15m (10 yards) from the ball before it is in play they are cautioned for failing to respect the required distance.

- 7.** Although an opponent is only 4.5m from the ball a player takes a quick free kick. Is it permitted?

Yes. Play is allowed to continue even if the opponent intercepts the ball.

- 8.** An indirect free kick is awarded to the attacking team outside its opponent's penalty area. The referee fails to raise his arm to indicate that the kick is indirect and the ball is kicked directly into goal. What action does the referee take?

He awards only a goal kick because the initial offence, punished by an indirect free kick, is not nullified by the referee's mistake.

LAW 14 – The Penalty Kick

1. The referee orders a penalty kick to be retaken because the goalkeeper moves forward from his goal line. May a different player take the retaken penalty kick?

Yes.
2. A player taking a penalty kick back heels the ball to a team mate who kicks the ball into goal. What action does the referee take?

The penalty kick is retaken because the ball must be kicked forward.
3. A player taking a penalty kick plays the ball forward for a team mate to run to it and score. Is this permitted?

Yes, provided the correct penalty kick procedures have been followed.
4. A defender standing in his own penalty area strikes an opponent while the ball is in play in his opponent's penalty area. What action does the referee take?

Play is stopped. A penalty kick is awarded against the defender and he is sent off for violent conduct.
5. On a water-logged pitch a player places the ball for a penalty kick to the side of the penalty mark. Is this permitted?

No.
6. When the penalty kick is taken the ball strikes the goalpost and/or crossbar and bursts. What action does the referee take?

He stops play, obtains a replacement ball and restarts play with a dropped ball. If this situation occurs during extended play, the match ends.
7. A match is extended to allow a penalty kick to be taken. May the goalkeeper be replaced before the kick is taken?

Yes. He may be replaced by another eligible player on the field or by a substitute, provided the permitted number of substitutions is not exceeded.

- 8.** When a penalty kick is being taken the goalkeeper advances before the ball is kicked and intercepts it in front of the goal line. What action does the referee take?

The penalty kick is retaken.

- 9.** A team mate of a player taking a penalty kick enters the penalty area before the ball is in play. When the penalty kick is taken the ball is deflected by the goalkeeper and crosses the goal line over the top of the crossbar. What action does the referee take?

He awards a corner kick.

- 10.** A player taking a penalty kick feints before kicking the ball. Is this permitted?

Yes.

- 11.** A player takes a penalty kick before the referee has signalled. What action does the referee take?

He orders the kick to be retaken.

- 12.** When a penalty kick is being taken and after the referee has given the necessary signal, a team mate of the player identified to take the kick suddenly rushes forward and takes it instead. What action does the referee take?

a) If the ball leaves the field of play?

b) If the ball is pushed out by the goalkeeper?

c) If the ball is deflected by the goalkeeper, rebounds into play and the player who took the kick scores a goal?

In all three cases the referee orders the penalty kick to be retaken, since the correct procedures for taking a penalty kick have not been followed. The referee may caution the team mate of the identified kicker for unsporting behaviour.

- 13.** The referee signals for a penalty kick to be taken. An attacking player then punches an opponent outside the penalty area. The referee notices the incident. What action does the referee take?

The referee sends off the offending player for violent conduct before allowing the penalty kick to proceed.

Kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match

- a) Does taking kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match form part of the match?

No.

- b) The captains of both teams mutually agree to refuse to take kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match, despite the fact this is stipulated in the regulations of the competition. What action does the referee take?

The referee reports the situation to the appropriate competition authorities.

- c) Who is responsible for selecting which players will take the kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match?

Each team is responsible for selecting the players and the order that they will take the kicks from those players on the field of play at the end of the match.

- d) When kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match are being taken the ball bursts on hitting one of the goal posts or the crossbar. Should this kick be retaken?

No.

- e) May an injured player be excused from taking part in kicks from the penalty mark to determine the result of a match?

Yes.

- f) At the end of a match, some players leave the field of play and fail to return for kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match. What action does the referee take?

All players who are not injured must participate in the taking of kicks from the penalty mark. If they do not return to the field of play, the kicks will not be taken and the referee reports the incident to the appropriate authorities.

- g)** A player who has already been cautioned commits a second cautionable offence during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark. What action does the referee take?

The player is sent off.

- h)** Kicks from the penalty mark are about to be taken to decide the winner of a match. May one of the teams, which has not used a substitute, replace one or more of its players with the substitute(s) prior to the kicks being taken?

No. Only those players who are on the field of play at the end of the match may take part.

- i)** The floodlights fail in the stadium after extra time but before or during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark. What action does the referee take?

The referee allows a reasonable amount of time for the lights to be repaired but if matters do not improve, the result is decided according to competitions rules.

- j)** During the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, a goalkeeper is sent off. May he be replaced by a nominated substitute?

No.

- k)** During the taking of kicks from the penalty mark a goalkeeper is injured and is unable to continue. May he be replaced by any named substitute?

Yes. Provided that the number of eligible substitutes has not already been used.

- l)** While kicks from the penalty mark are being taken to decide the result of a match, a player is sent off. After each team has taken 10 kicks from the penalty mark, can the team which lost the player use another who has already taken a kick?

Yes.

LAW 15 – The Throw-In

1. The ball is out of play over the touch line, but before it is thrown in, a player deliberately kicks an opponent. What action does the referee take?

He sends him off the field for violent conduct and restarts play with a throw-in.

2. A player takes a throw-in. The ball does not enter the field of play but remains outside the touch line. What action does the referee take?

The throw-in is retaken.

3. A player, while correctly taking a throw-in, intentionally throws the ball at an opponent's head. What action does the referee take?

Play is stopped if in the opinion of the referee, the player is guilty of unsporting behaviour. He is cautioned (or sent off for violent conduct). Play is restarted by a direct free kick to the opposing team from the place where the offence occurred i.e. the place where the ball struck the opponent.

4. Is there a maximum distance away from the touch line from which a throw-in may be taken?

No. A throw-in should be taken from the place where the ball left the field of play. However, a throw-in from a distance of up to 1m from the exact position is a generally accepted practice.

5. An opponent stands in front of a player at a throw-in to impede him. What action does the referee take?

He allows the throw-in to be taken if the opponent remains stationary. If he moves or gesticulates to distract the thrower, he is cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

6. A player takes a throw-in with part of each foot on or behind the touch line or with part of his feet inside the line and his heels on the touch line. Is this permitted?

Yes, provided that part of each foot is on or behind the touch line and on the ground.

- 7.** A throw-in, taken incorrectly, sends the ball directly to an opponent. Is play allowed to continue by applying the advantage clause?
No. The throw-in is retaken by a player of the opposing team.
- 8.** Is a player allowed to take a throw-in kneeling or sitting down?
No, a throw-in is only permitted if the correct procedures in the Laws of the Game are followed.
- 9.** Is a player allowed to take a throw-in acrobatically, by rolling with the ball?
Yes, provided that the correct procedures in the Laws of the Game are followed.
- 10.** A throw-in is taken by a player. He throws the ball directly to his goalkeeper who attempts to stop the ball entering the goal by using his hands. However, the ball enters the goal. What action does the referee take?
A goal is awarded.

LAW 16 – The Goal Kick

1. A player who has taken a goal kick correctly, deliberately plays the ball with his hand when the ball has left the penalty area but before it has been touched by another player. What decision does the referee give?

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team and the player may be sanctioned according to the Laws of the Game.

2. A player, other than the goalkeeper takes a goal kick and the ball passes out of the penalty area into play but is blown back by a strong wind without any other player having touched it. A player of the defending side other than the goalkeeper, plays the ball with his hands within the penalty area. What decision does the referee take?

A penalty kick is awarded and the player may be sanctioned according to the Laws of the Game.

3. A goalkeeper takes a goal kick and the ball passes out of the penalty area into play but is blown back by a strong wind without any other player having touched it. The goalkeeper tries to stop the ball entering the goal by touching it with his hands, but is unsuccessful. What decision does the referee give?

He awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team.

4. After a goal kick has been taken, but before the ball has left the penalty area, an opponent enters the penalty area and is fouled by a defending player. What action does the referee take?

The offending player is cautioned or sent off according to the nature of the offence and the goal kick is retaken.

5. When a player takes a goal kick, the ball strikes the referee inside the penalty area and continues in play. What action does the referee take?

No action is necessary. The ball remains in play after it rebounds from the referee in the field of play.

LAW 17 – The Corner Kick

1. When a corner kick is taken, what is the correct way to place the ball in the quarter circle?

(The diagram illustrates some correct and incorrect positions.)

Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials

The following additional instructions to referees, assistant referees and fourth officials are intended to clarify the correct application of the Laws of the Game.

Football is a competitive sport and physical contact between players is a normal and acceptable part of the game, however players must play within the Laws and respect the principles of fair play.

Serious foul play and violent conduct are two sending-off offences in Law 12 involving unacceptable levels of physical aggression.

Serious Foul Play

A player is guilty of serious foul play if he uses 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.

Violent Conduct

Violent conduct may occur either on the field of play or outside its boundaries, whether the ball is in play or not. A player is guilty of violent conduct if he uses excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball.

He is also guilty of violent conduct if he uses excessive force or brutality against a team-mate or any other person.

Offences against goalkeepers

Referees are reminded that:

- it is an offence for a player to prevent a goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands
- a player must be penalised for playing in a dangerous manner if he kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- it is an offence to restrict the movement of the goalkeeper by unfairly impeding him at the taking of a corner kick

Screening the ball

It is not an offence if a player, with the ball under control within playing distance, screens the ball from an opponent without using his arms.

If however he prevents an opponent challenging for the ball by illegal use of the hand, arm, legs or body he must be penalised by a direct free kick, or a penalty kick if the offence was committed inside the penalty area.

Scissors or bicycle kick

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

Deliberately handling the ball

Referees are reminded that deliberately handling the ball is normally punished only by a direct free kick or penalty kick if the offence occurred inside the penalty area. A caution or dismissal is not normally required.

Preventing a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity

A player is sent off, however, if he prevents a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball. This punishment in Law arises not from the act of the player deliberately handling the ball but from the unacceptable and unfair intervention which prevented a goal being scored.

Cautions for unsporting behaviour by deliberately handling the ball

There are circumstances when, in addition to a free kick being awarded, a player must also be cautioned for unsporting behaviour 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

Holding an opponent

A common criticism of referees is their failure to correctly identify and punish the offence of holding an opponent. The failure to deal appropriately with shirt-pulling and arm holding can result in confrontation situations developing and referees are instructed to make an early intervention and to deal firmly with the situation in accordance with Law 12.

A direct free kick is normally all that is required as punishment but in certain circumstances an additional sanction is required e.g.

- a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player holds an opponent to prevent him gaining possession of the ball or taking up an advantageous position
- a player must be sent off if he denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by holding an opponent

The taking of free kicks

Referees are reminded that a player must be cautioned if:

- he delays the restart of play
- he fails to respect the required distance when play is being restarted

Offside signals

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

Assistant referees must only indicate for an offside position if the player has to be penalised for being in that position.

Offences by goalkeepers

Referees are reminded that goalkeepers are not permitted to keep possession of the ball in their hands for more than six seconds. A goalkeeper guilty of this offence is punished by an indirect free kick.

Persistent offenders

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 offences he must still be cautioned for persistently infringing the Laws.

Attitude towards referees

The captain of a team, has no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game but he has a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of his team.

A player who is guilty of dissent by protesting at a referee's decision must be cautioned.

A player who assaults a referee or who is guilty of using offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures must be sent off.

Simulation

A player who attempts to deceive the referee by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled is guilty of simulation and must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

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 one of his team-mates to throw-in
- 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 when being substituted

Celebration of a goal

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

FIFA recognised in Circular No. 579 that such reasonable celebrations are allowed. The practice of choreographed celebrations is not to be encouraged when it results in excessive timewasting and referees are instructed to intervene in such cases.

A player must be cautioned when:

- in the opinion of the referee, he makes gestures which are provocative, derisory or inflammatory
- he climbs on to a perimeter fence to celebrate a goal being scored
- removes his jersey in celebrating a goal

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

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

Liquid refreshments

Players are entitled to take liquid refreshments during a stoppage in the match but only on the touch line. It is not permitted to throw plastic water bags or any other water containers onto the field.

Jewellery

Referees are reminded that, in accordance with Law 4, players may not wear any kind of jewellery.

Indication of additional time allowed

Fourth officials are reminded that when, on the instruction of the referee, the minimum additional time to be allowed at the end of each half is being indicated, this indication should only be made at the end of the final minute in each period of play.

Dealing with injured players

Referees must follow the instructions below when dealing with injured players:

- play is allowed to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured
- play is stopped if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured
- after questioning the injured player, the referee authorises one, or at most two doctors, to enter the field to ascertain the type of injury and to arrange the player's safe and swift removal from the field
- the stretcher-bearers should enter the field with a stretcher at the same time as the doctors to allow the player to be removed as soon as possible
- the referee ensures an injured player is safely removed from the field of play
- a player is not allowed to be treated on the field
- any player bleeding from a wound must leave the field of play. He may not return until the referee is satisfied that the bleeding has stopped
- as soon as the referee has authorised the doctors to enter the field, the player must leave the field, either on the stretcher or on foot. If a player does not comply he is cautioned for unsporting behaviour
- an injured player may only re-enter the field from the touchline when the ball is in play. When the ball is out of play, the injured player may re-enter from any of the boundary lines

- the referee alone is authorised to allow an injured player to re-enter the field whether the ball is in play or not
- 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 restarts play with a dropped ball
- the referee allows for the full amount of time lost through injury to be played at the end of each period of play

Exceptions

Exceptions to this ruling are made only for:

- injury to a goalkeeper
- when a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need immediate attention
- when a severe injury has occurred e.g. swallowed tongue, concussion, broken leg etc.

Notes

Notes

