

LAW 3

Players being substituted must leave the field at the closest point of the boundary line (goal line or touch line). Failure to do so could, under appropriate circumstances and in the opinion of the referee, be construed as delaying the restart of play (a cautionable offense). Substitutes must still enter at the midfield line. The referee may designate another exit point for safety or security reasons.

LAW 5

Red and yellow cards may be shown to team officials (e.g., coach, assistant coach, etc.). Law 12 will include examples of behavior that would warrant a verbal warning, a yellow card, or a red card dismissal. These examples should be studied carefully and understood in the context of increasingly serious behavior warranting one of these three levels of response. If misconduct is clearly committed but cannot be attributed to a specific team official, the card is shown to the most senior team official present (i.e., the coach). Note: the Board has indicated that the full 2019-2020 edition of the Lawbook should be ready for distribution soon and may be downloaded at theifab.com.

A new exception to the list of situations which would not require that the injured player leave the field for treatment (i.e., be able to be treated on the field) is if the restart of the stoppage would be a penalty kick and the injured player is to take the kick.

A restart can be called back and changed if an assistant referee (AR) had properly signaled for an offense, had maintained the signal, but the referee had not become aware of it until after the restart. This change significantly increases the importance of (a) maintaining a signal which the AR is convinced might, if accepted by the referee, result in a different restart and (b) the referee making quick eye contact with both ARs as frequently as possible in order to make such a situation as rare as possible.

LAW 8

The coin toss prior to the match will now result in the winner of the toss deciding whether to kick first or to select the goal it will attack. Whichever decision remains is made by the team which did not win the toss.

The dropped ball restart has been almost completely reconfigured though the referee mechanics remain the same. Any such restart, regardless of the reason, will involve one and only one player. That player will be from the team which last made contact with the ball if the drop is taken anywhere on the field outside the penalty area. If the drop is inside the penalty area, only the goalkeeper defending that penalty area will participate. All other players from either team must be and remain at a distance of 4.5 yards from the drop until the ball is in play.

LAW 9

Play is stopped if the ball makes contact with the referee or an AR AND (a) the ball remains on the field AND (b1) a team takes control of the ball and starts a “promising attack” OR (b2) the ball goes directly into the net OR (b3) possession of the ball goes to the opposing team. The

restart is a dropped ball where the ball was last touched before making contact with the official (see Law 8 above for the modified dropped ball procedure).

LAW 10

A goal scored directly by a ball thrown by the opposing goalkeeper is not counted. The restart is a goal kick.

LAW 12

A not otherwise deliberate contact between the ball and the hand/arm is nevertheless an offense if it results in a goal or a goal-scoring opportunity against the opposing team. Hand/arm contact is included even if the initial contact is with some other part of the player's body.

A new section of Law 12 outlines hand/arm contact which is “usually” an offense, including positions that make the player's body “unnaturally bigger” or where the hand/arm location is above shoulder height except where the contact is preceded by deliberate legal contact that happens to result in the hand/arm contact (i.e., deliberate chest trap which happens to rebound upwards and contacts a hand/arm raised above shoulder level).

The above is followed by a section which outlines hand/arm contact which is “not usually” a violation — directly from a deliberate play (see above), from a teammate who is considered close enough that contact could not be avoided, or contact while falling where the hand/arm is between the player's body and the ground. The final statement in this series regarding handball offenses is that holding one's hand/arm above the shoulder is “taking a risk” that could lead to an adverse decision despite the player's best efforts to the contrary.

Prior to the 2020 changes, the Law clearly required that any player misconduct must result in a card no later than the next stoppage (including particularly a stoppage following the application of advantage). This will not be true as of June 1. The referee may delay giving a card if, at that next stoppage, the offended team is clearly ready to start quickly and wants to start as doing so would give them a goal-scoring opportunity. However, in order to allow the quick restart despite having decided to give a card, the referee must not have said or done anything (e.g., holding a card in sight of the players) to distract the team ultimately receiving the card which might cause them to assume that the restart would be delayed. Where a card is not given, under these circumstances, at the next stoppage, it must be given at the following stoppage.

New language clarifies that, if a player temporarily off the field commits an offense against anyone on his/her own team who is also off the field, the restart is an indirect free kick closest on the touchline to where the off-field offense occurred. Other new language states that kicking an object at someone is punished the same way as the Law prescribes for throwing an object at someone.

The “pass-back” and “throw-to” offenses limited to goalkeepers set out in the indirect free kick offense part of Law 12 are still offenses if the goalkeeper's handling of the ball follows directly from the deliberate kick or throw-in by a teammate, but does not apply if the goalkeeper kicks or attempts to kick the ball initially and, having failed to clear the ball, thereafter handles the ball.

LAW 13

The referee's indirect free signal is normally required to be held from the moment of the kick to the moment when the ball contacts some player from either team other than the original kicker. The Law now allows the referee to drop the signal after the ball is in play if, in the opinion of the referee, it is clear that a goal will not be scored. We believe this language would allow the signal to be resumed if, for some reason, the referee's opinion changes as to the possibility of a goal being scored directly.

Any free kick given to a team from within its own penalty area is in play the moment it is kicked and moves. The requirement that, additionally, the ball must leave the penalty area has been removed. Once in play, either team (except the original kicker — that restriction remains) is allowed to play the ball. Players from the opposing team, however, are still required to remove themselves from the penalty area and may not enter or re-enter until the ball is in play. As with free kicks outside a team's penalty area, the kicking team may require this rule to be enforced (thus turning the restart into a ceremony). The kicking team may decide to forego this requirement and kick the ball despite one or more opponents being inside the penalty area but, if they do, they are "taking a risk" and must live with the consequences.

A completely new requirement in the Law applies to the concept of "the wall" as regards positioning at the taking of any free kick outside a team's own penalty area. First, a "wall" is defined as two or more opponents forming a "connected" array (i.e., usually shoulder-to-shoulder). Second, if a "wall" includes three or more opponents, players on the kicking team are not allowed to be in it (within or at either end) and, additionally, must be at least one yard away from any part of the "wall." If a player on the kicking team does not respect this one-yard minimum distance, the offense is punished by an indirect free kick for the opposing team.

LAW 14

The goalkeeper defending against a penalty kick will be allowed to have one foot into the field prior to the ball being in play provided that some part of the other foot is on and remains on the goal line nor is the goalkeeper permitted to stand behind the goal line. The referee must not signal for the penalty kick if the goalkeeper is making contact with any part of the goal frame or with the net and must wait for these items to stop moving before whistling. The goalkeeper is not allowed to contact the goal frame or net between the whistle and the ball being in play. Once the ball is in play, all these restrictions are removed.

It is expected that the kicker initiates the kick upon hearing the referee's whistle. If the kicker fails to do so by an extended or unfair delay, disciplinary action may be taken prior to rewhistling. In the absence of specific guidance, we are inclined to suggest (if warranted) a caution for delaying the restart of play.

LAW 16

In a major shift, the Law will no longer require that, for a goal kick, the ball leave the penalty area before it can be played by anyone on either team. The ball is considered to be "in play" the moment it is kicked and moved. If the ball is played a second time by the original kicker, even if the ball has moved only slightly, this would be a second touch violation (instead of the usual retake because, under 2019 Law, a ball which has not left the penalty area was not considered to be in play). As with the change described in Law 13, all opponents are still

required to be outside the penalty area and must remain there until the ball is in play. If the team which has been given a goal kick decides to take the kick with one or more opponents still inside the penalty area, the same concept of “taking a risk” applies here as was described in Law 13 for a free kick taken within a team’s own penalty area. We note that this likely means the kicking team may request the referee to enforce the “outside the penalty area” requirement (which thus turns the goal kick into a ceremonial restart), but must otherwise accept the results if an opponent makes contact with the ball while inside the penalty area. Members of the goal kick team, of course, can play the ball themselves while in the penalty area once the ball has been kicked and moved. The Law provides that no opponent can contact the ball inside the penalty area before it has been put into play (the goal kick is retaken if this happens).