

Summary of Law changes

These are the main Law changes for 2016/17

LAW 1 – THE FIELD OF PLAY

- Artificial and natural surfaces can not be combined on the field of play; hybrid systems are permitted
- Competitions may determine field size for their competitions (within Law)
- Commercial advertising on the ground must be at least 1m (1yd) from boundary lines
- Logos/emblems of FAs, competitions etc. are allowed on corner flags (not the posts) but no advertising (same restrictions as for the ball)

LAW 2 – THE BALL

None

LAW 3 – THE PLAYERS (*NEW TITLE*)

- A match may not start/continue if a team has fewer than 7 players
- A substitute can take any restart (including a throw-in or corner kick) but must first step onto the field of play (to complete the substitution procedure)
- A player can now be sent off (but not cautioned) before the kick-off (see Law 5 below). If this happens:
 - before team lists have been submitted:
 - the player can not appear on the list
 - after the team lists have been submitted but before kick-off:
 - a player can be replaced by a substitute (who can not be replaced)
 - a substitute can not be replaced

In both cases, the team starts the match with 11 players and can still make the maximum number of substitutions permitted

- If a substitute, substituted player, team official or a player who has been sent off enters the field and interferes with play or an opponent it will be a direct free kick (penalty kick if in their own penalty area)
- If something or someone (other than a player) touches a ball which is going into the goal and it still goes in the goal, the goal can be awarded if the defenders were not affected and the ball does not go into the opponents' goal
- If a goal is scored with an extra person on the field and referee has restarted play, the goal stands and match continues; the matter is reported after the match

LAW 4 – THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

- Any material on/covering the socks must be the same colour as the part of the sock it covers (this applies to all material and not just tape)
- If a player accidentally loses their footwear(boot) or shinguard they can continue playing until play next stops
- Undershorts/tights must be the same colour as either the main colour of the shorts or the lowest edge/bottom (hem); the team must wear the same colour
- Electronic communication with substitutes (and players, team officials etc.) is forbidden
- A player can return during play after changing/correcting equipment, once the equipment has been checked (by referee, fourth official or AR) and referee signals

LAW 5 – THE REFEREE

- A decision can not be changed if play has restarted or the referee has left the field of play at the end of the half
- If several offences occur at the same time, the most serious is punished in terms of sanction, restart, physical severity and tactical impact
- A player may be sent off from the time the referee enters the field of play for the pre-match inspection (see Law 3 above). Any other offences or inappropriate behaviour will be reported after the match (no yellow cards, cautions etc.)
- The referee can only use the red card (send off) and yellow card (caution) after entering the field at start of the match
- If a player is injured by a foul which results in a red or yellow card, the player can have quick assessment/treatment on the field and not have to go off; any non-quick treatment will require the player to leave the field of play
- The equipment a referee can or may be allowed to use is now listed
- Diagrams of referee signals have been included from the Guidelines section

LAW 6 – THE OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS (NEW TITLE)

- More details are given of the duties of the assistants, AARs, fourth official
- Diagrams of assistant referee signals have been included from Guidelines section

LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

- Competitions are now permitted to have breaks for medical reasons (e.g. drinks in very hot/humid conditions)

LAW 8 – THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY

- All restarts included (previously only kick-off and dropped ball)
- The ball must clearly move to be in play for all kicked restarts
- The ball can be kicked in any direction at kick-off (previously had to go forward) – team-mates are not allowed to stand in the opponents' half at the kick off
- Referee has no authority to 'manufacture' the outcome of a dropped ball

LAW 9 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

- If the ball hits a match official (including an assistant referee or AAR who is off the field) play continues unless the ball went out of play

LAW 10 – DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH (NEW TITLE)

Kicks from the penalty mark:

- The referee will toss a coin to choose the goal (unless weather, safety etc...)
- The referee will toss a coin a second time to determine who takes the first kick
- A player temporarily off the field at the final whistle (e.g. injured, changing equipment) can take part
- There is no need to tell the referee which players will take kicks or the order
- If one team loses a player during the kicks (injured, sent off) the other team removes one player (the same as at the end of the match)
- A kick is completed/over when the ball stops moving (including being held by the goalkeeper), goes out of play or there is an infringement; the kicker can not play the ball a second time
- If a player leaves the field of play during the kicks, the kicks are not delayed and if the player is not back in time to take a kick then their kick is forfeited/missed

LAW 11 – OFFSIDE

- The halfway line is 'neutral' for offside; player must be in opponents' half
- Players' arms and hands (including the goalkeepers) are not considered when judging offside
- Offside free-kicks will be taken from the place where the player commits the offside offence – this can be in their own half. A player can not be in an offside position in their own half but can move back into their own half from an offside position in the opponents' half and commit an offside offence (play the ball, challenge an opponent etc.) – this is where the free kick is taken from
- A defender who goes off the field over the goal line and stays off is considered to be on the goal line until play stops or the defender's team plays the ball towards the halfway line and it is out of their penalty area.
- As above for attacker returning; before that re-entry point is the offside position

LAW 12 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- If a foul involves contact with the opponent it is a direct free kick
- If a player commits a red card (send off) offence or a second caution (YC) offence and the referee plays advantage, that player can not become involved in the play; the red card will be shown when play next stops. If the player does become involved in play the referee will stop play, show the red card (send off) and award an indirect free kick.
- Not all handball offences receive a yellow card (caution) – it usually depends on the effect/outcome of the handball e.g. stopping a promising attack
- If a player commits a DOGSO offence inside the penalty area it will now be a yellow card (caution) if the foul was an attempt to play the ball or challenge an opponent for the ball. However, the following offences will still be a red card (send-off):
 - Handball
 - Holding, pulling or pushing
 - Not attempting to play the ball
 - Not having the chance to play the ball
 - Serious foul challenges, violent conduct etc.
- Attempted violent conduct is a red card (send off), even if no contact
- A player who deliberately strikes an opponent on the head or face (when not challenging for the ball) will be sent off unless the force used was minimal/negligible
- Offence against substitutes, team officials, match officials etc. is now a direct free kick
- A foul off the field of play is penalised with a free kick on the boundary line nearest to where the foul occurred (penalty kick if this is in offender's own penalty area)

LAW 13 – FREE KICKS

- Difference between 'stopping' a free kick and 'intercepting' the ball after free kick taken

LAW 14 – THE PENALTY KICK

- If the goalkeeper moves early and causes the penalty kick to be re-taken, the goalkeeper will receive a yellow card (caution)
- If the ball is kicked backwards it is an indirect free kick
- If the kicker stops and 'feints' at the end of their run it will always be an indirect free kick and yellow card (caution) even if they score (i.e. no retake)
- If the goalkeeper moves early and causes the penalty kick to be re-taken, the goalkeeper will receive a yellow card (caution)

LAW 15 – THE THROW-IN

- The ball must be thrown with BOTH hands and not thrown with one hand and ‘guided’ with the other

LAW 16– THE GOAL KICK

- If a goal kick is kicked into the kicker’s own goal it is a corner kick to the opponents
- An opponent who is in the penalty area when a goal kick is taken can not touch the ball until another player has touched it (indirect free kick if this occurs)

LAW 17 – THE CORNER KICK

- If a corner kick is kicked into the kicker’s own goal it is a corner kick to the opponents