

TO THE MEMBERS OF FIFA

Circular no. 968

Zurich, 17 May 2005

GS/ ftr-sma

Amendments to the Laws of the Game - 2005

Dear Sir or Madam,

The 2005 Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) took place in Vale of Glamorgan, Wales on 26 February 2005. The amendments to the Laws of the Game made at the meeting and the various instructions and directives are listed below.

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAWS OF THE GAME AND DECISIONS OF THE BOARD

LAW 3 - THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Other Matches

Present Text

In other matches, up to six substitutes may be used.

New text

In national A team matches, up to a maximum of six substitutes may be used.

In all other matches, a greater number of substitutes may be used provided that:

- the teams concerned reach agreement on a maximum number;
- the referee is informed before the match.

If the referee is not informed, or if no agreement is reached before the match, no more than six substitutes are allowed.

Reason:

This change will clarify the present position.

LAW 3 - THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Infringements/Sanctions

Bullet point 3

Present Text

Play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place it was located when play was stopped.*

New Text

Play is restarted with an **indirect free kick** at the place the ball was located when play was stopped.*

Reason:

It should be considered to be an infringement by the team of the substitute player who enters the field of play without permission, and his team should be penalised with an indirect free kick.

LAW 5 - THE REFEREE

Decisions of the Referee

Present Text

The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he has not restarted play.

New Text

The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he has not restarted play **or terminated the match.**

Reason:

The text needs to be clarified because of a practical situation that arose in France, when a referee saw the assistant referee signal after he had ended the match.

LAW 11 - OFFSIDE

New International FA Board Decision 1

In the definition of offside position, “nearer to his opponents’ goal line” means that any part of his head, body or feet is nearer to his opponents’ goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent. The arms are not included in this definition.

Reason:

Football is played with the head, body and feet. If these are nearer the opponents’ goal line, there is a potential advantage. There is no advantage to be gained if only the arms are in advance of the opponent.

New International FA Board Decision 2

The definitions of elements of involvement in active play are as follows:

- **Interfering with play means playing or touching the ball passed or touched by a teammate.**
- **Interfering with an opponent means preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent’s line of vision or movements or making a gesture or movement which, in the opinion of the referee, deceives or distracts an opponent.**
- **Gaining an advantage by being in that position means playing a ball that rebounds to him off a goal post or the crossbar having been in an offside position or playing a ball that rebounds to him off an opponent having been in an offside position**

Reason:

These definitions have been tried out over two seasons and modified following the approval of the original interpretation by the IFAB business meeting in September. This IFAB decision gives the appropriate recognition to the Laws of the Game booklet.

LAW 12 - FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Disciplinary sanctions

Present Text

Only a player or substitute or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card.

New Text

Only a player or substitute or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card.

The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions, as from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

Reason:

It is important to define when the referee is authorised to show red and yellow cards. When incidents happen on the pitch right after the final whistle, a card may now be shown and, it would be more effective than the current practice of just reporting the incident.

LAW 12 - FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

International FA Board Decision 4

Present Text

A tackle from behind, which endangers the safety of an opponent, must be sanctioned as serious foul play.

New Text

A tackle, which endangers the safety of an opponent, must be sanctioned as serious foul play.

Reason:

A tackle from behind but also from the side or the front, which injures or could have injured the opponent, must be sanctioned as serious foul play.

LAW 14 - THE PENALTY KICK

Infringements/Sanctions

The player taking the penalty kick infringes the Laws of the Game:

Bullet point three

Present Text

If the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is not retaken.

New Text

If the ball does not enter the goal, the referee stops play and restarts the match with an indirect free kick to the defending team.

A team-mate of the player taking the kick enters the penalty area or moves in front of or within 9.15m (10 yds) of the penalty mark:

Bullet point three

Present Text

If the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is not retaken.

New Text

If the ball does not enter the goal, the referee stops play and restarts the match with an indirect free kick to the defending team.

Reason:

The current text is confusing and leads to different interpretations.

LAW 15 - THE THROW-IN

Procedure

Present Text

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- faces the field of play;
- has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line;
- uses both hands;
- delivers the ball from behind and over his head.

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

New Text

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- faces the field of play;
- has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line;
- uses both hands;
- delivers the ball from behind and over his head.

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

All opponents must stand no less than 2 metres from the point at which the throw-in is taken.

The ball is in play immediately it enters the field of play.

Reason:

There is an increasing trend for an opponent to stand immediately in front of the thrower at a throw-in, with his feet virtually on the touch line. There is no breach of Law 15 but without doubt the thrower is being impeded from completing the throw-in. In addition, there is the possibility of a confrontational situation developing between both players.

The only occasions where players currently need not retreat a prescribed distance at the start or restart of play is at a dropped ball or a throw-in and the proposal brings the throw-in in line with other laws.

A number of member associations are actually unofficially imposing a prescribed distance in such situations and this proposed amendment would ensure standardisation of the application of the Laws of the Game.

2. INFORMATION

Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct

The following proposal was submitted by FIFA as a new International FA Board decision:

Once the referee has stopped the match to award a free kick, any player from the team that committed the foul who deliberately touches the ball is considered as delaying the restart of play and should be punished with a yellow card. This sanction also applies to a player who touches the ball when a throw-in or corner kick is awarded in favour of the opponent and if a player takes the ball from the goal net after his team has scored a goal (kick-off for the opponent).

Reason:

Clear guidelines should stop unsporting tactics to delay the restart of play, such as holding the ball for a few seconds or throwing it away, thereby allowing the defence to regain its position. It should also stop players fighting for the ball.

The board decided to allow FIFA to experiment with this proposal at the FIFA World Youth Championship in the Netherlands and at the FIFA U-17 World Championship in Peru. FIFA will report on the experiment at the next AGM.

The Ball

The board gave FIFA permission to experiment with new goal line ball technology at the FIFA U-17 World Championship Peru 2005 and at the FIFA Club World Championship TOYOTA Cup in Japan. FIFA will report on this experiment at a future meeting.

The amendments to the Laws of the Game take effect as from 1 July 2005 and instructions and directives are introduced with immediate effect.

Yours faithfully,

FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Urs Linsi
General Secretary

cc: - FIFA Executive Committee
- FIFA Referees Committee
- Confederations