



2011-12 Laws of the Game

MEMORANDUM

U.S. Soccer Referee Education Resource Center

UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION, INC.

The 125th Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) took place in Wales on 5 March 2011. The amendments to the Laws of the Game approved at this meeting and the various instructions and directives issued are listed below.

Amendments to the Laws of the Game and Decisions of the Board

1. Law 1 -- The Field of Play

a) Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees – Field markings

Present text

Only the lines indicated in Law 1 are to be marked on the field of play.

New text

Only the lines indicated in Law 1 are to be marked on the field of play. Where artificial surfaces are used, other lines are permitted provided that they are of a different color and clearly distinguishable from the lines used for football.

Reason

There is clearly a demand for football turf pitches to have markings for more sports than just football. Considering that these lines cannot be removed from a football turf pitch, it is problematic under the current Laws of the Game to find a basis for allowing a competitive football match to take place on a football turf pitch that is used for multiple sports.

USSF Advice to Referees: The above guideline is simply a practical adjustment to the growing number of fields throughout the world which use the turf surface and which are marked for various sports other than soccer. The referee remains the final judge of whether the non-soccer markings interfere with the safe and enjoyable conduct of the game.

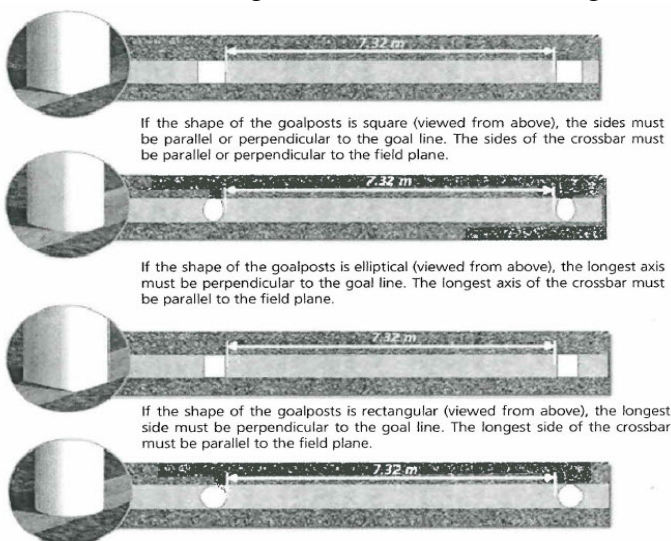
b) Goals

Present text

None

New text

The position of the goalposts in relation to the goal line must be according to the graphics below.



Reason

It is necessary to define the position of the goalposts in relation to the goal line to avoid inconsistencies between one field of play and another.

USSF Advice to Referees: The preceding graphics clarify and implement the requirement that the size of the goal (measured from the inside of the goal framework) must be consistent across all permissible goalpost shapes as well as in conformity with the dimensions mandated in Law 1.

2. Law 2 – The Ball

Replacement of a defective ball

Present text

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during the course of the match:

- the match is stopped
- the match is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the replacement ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the original ball was located when play was stopped

New text

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during the course of the match:

- the match is stopped
- the match is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the replacement ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the original ball was located when play was stopped

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during a penalty kick or during kicks from the penalty mark as it moves forward and before it touches any player or the crossbar or goalposts:

- the penalty kick is retaken

Reason

It is considered unfair that, if the ball bursts or becomes defective during a penalty kick or during kicks from the penalty mark, play is restarted with a dropped ball in accordance with the present text of Law 2.

USSF Advice to Referees: The new proviso that the penalty kick or kick from the mark is retaken in place of dropping the ball if the ball becomes defective is not only a reasonable accommodation to the special circumstances of penalty kicks and kicks from the mark but also is consistent with the general guideline that the penalty kick (or kick from the mark) must be retaken if anything interferes with the movement of the ball on its path to the goal.

3. Law 3 – The Number of Players

a) Structural amendment

Present structure

- Players
- Official competitions
- Other matches
- All matches
- Substitution procedure
- Changing the goalkeeper
- Infringements and sanctions
- Players and substitutes sent off

New structure

- Number of players

- Number of substitutions
 - Official competitions
 - Other matches
- Substitution procedure
- Changing the goalkeeper
- Infringements and sanctions
- Players and substitutes sent off

Reason

The text of Law 3 has been reorganized by the IFAB Technical Sub-Committee in order to have a clearer structure of the Laws and to avoid current misinterpretations

USSF Advice to Referees: As noted above, the International Board reorganized the language of Law 3 but did not make any substantive changes in its contents.

b) Addition to the current text of the Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees – Extra persons on the field of play

Present text

Extra persons on the field of play

Outside Agents

Anyone not indicated on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is deemed to be an outside agent, as is a player who has been sent off.

Team Officials

If a team official enters the field of play:

New text

Extra persons on the field of play

Outside Agents

Anyone not indicated on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is deemed to be an outside agent, as is a player who has been sent off.

Team Officials

The coach and other officials indicated on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are deemed to be team officials.

If a team official enters the field of play:

Reason

There are some references to team officials in the Laws of the Game but no definition of the term. The reorganization of the text of Law 3 is a good opportunity to include a definition of team officials for ease of understanding.

USSF Advice to Referees: The above common-sense definition of “team officials” is routinely understood. In addition, however, USSF has previously advised referees that, in circumstances often seen in lower level matches, it is acceptable to consider anyone who is permitted in the technical area (other than players, substitutes, or substituted players) to be a team official for purposes of enforcing responsible behavior.

4. Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment

Basic equipment

Present text

Shorts – if undershorts are worn, they must be of the same main color as the shorts

New text

Shorts – if undershorts or tights are worn, they must be of the same main color as the shorts

Reason

The current Law permits tights to be worn that are not of the same basic color as the shorts, which could possibly result in confusion for opponents and match officials. This change would ensure consistency with the present wording that requires undershorts, if worn, to be of the same basic color as the shorts and prevent the aforementioned confusion.

USSF Advice to Referees: The modification merely extends to tights the same requirement that previously had been specified for undershorts. The general principle is therefore confirmed that anything worn by a player under the shorts which extends visibly below the shorts must be of the same main color as the shorts.

5. Law 5 – The Referee

Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees – Powers and Duties

Present text

None

New text

If an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match, the referee must stop the match only if it interferes with play. Play must be restarted by a dropped ball from the position of the match ball when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

If an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match without interfering with play, the referee must have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Reason

It is unclear in the current text of the Laws of the Game which decision the referee should take when an object enters the pitch and interferes with play, and which decision the referee should take when an object enters the pitch without interfering with play.

USSF Advice to Referees: The text above is not actually new – previously, this topic had been covered in the Interpretations section regarding matters involving Law 2 (The Ball) where it had been identified as guidance on “Extra balls on the field of play”. As a result, this section under Law 2 Interpretations is removed. Additionally, however, the new text clarifies that the guidance pertains to anything (other than people) entering the field during play – extra balls, objects (e.g., balloons) or animals. The critical element in the referee’s decision as to stopping play immediately is whether there is actual interference with play.

6. Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

a) Structural amendment

Present structure

Law 8

- Preliminaries
- Kick-off
- Procedure
- Infringements and sanctions
- Dropped ball
- Procedure
- Infringements and sanctions

New structure

Law 8

- Definition of kick-off
- Procedure
 - Before a kick-off at the start of the match or extra time
 - Kick-off
- Infringements and sanctions
- Definition of dropped ball
- Procedure
- Infringements and sanctions

Reason

A new organization of the text of Law 8 has been prepared by the IFAB Technical Sub-Committee in order to have a more clear structure of the Laws and avoid current misinterpretations.

USSF Advice to Referees: As noted above, the International Board reorganized the language of Law 8 but did not made any substantive changes in its contents.

b) Addition to the current text

Present text

Dropped ball

If, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game, the match is restarted with a dropped ball.

New text

Definition of dropped ball

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game.

Reason

Following the general structure of the Laws of the Game of definition, procedure and infringements, it is considered necessary to include a definition of a dropped ball.

Other decisions of the IFAB

1. Additional Assistant Referees (AARs)

a) Experiment status

The proposal to move the AAR's position from left to right and to allow the referee to return to his "traditional" diagonal system should be approved, provided that any such change does not commence until the start of a new season (e.g., 2011/2012 in Europe).

The AAR experiment will be permitted to continue until its planned conclusion, following which the IFAB will make a final decision

b) Use of Additional Assistant Referees at UEFA EURO 2012

The IFAN unanimously agreed to grant UEFA permission to use AARs at the EURO 2012 final tournament.

2. Goal-line technology (GLT)

The IFAB unanimously agreed to the continuation of the GLT project. A final decision on GLT should be made during the IFAB Special Meeting, which will be convened following the conclusion of UEFA EURO 2012.

3. Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment

a) Other equipment: usage of radio communication

The IFAB agreed that this item should be referred to the FIFA Task Force Football 2014 for consideration.

b) Other equipment: wearing of “snoods”

The IFAB determined that items such as “snoods” and other similar clothing did not meet the definition of “other equipment” under Law 4 and was therefore not permitted.

USSF Advice to Referees: A “snood” (which is not a familiar item of clothing in the United States) is a type of scarf worn around the neck. An example is shown below of the most common variety of “snood” considered by the IFAB and determined to be not permissible.



4. Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Sending-off offenses

The IFAB agreed that the matter should be referred to the FIFA Task Force Football 2014 for consideration.

5. Vanishing spray

The IFAB approved the use of vanishing spray by CONMEBOL in a trial basis.

USSF Advice to Referees: Except where specifically approved by USSF, the use of vanishing spray is not permitted.

Implementation

The decisions of this year’s Annual General Meeting of the Board regarding changes to the Laws of the Game are binding for confederations and member associations as from 1 July 2011 but confederations or member associations whose current season has not ended by 1 July may delay the introduction of the adopted alterations to the Laws of the Game in their competitions until the beginning of their next season.