



MEMORANDUM

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Paul Tamberino
Director of Referee Development

Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION, INC.

The 122nd Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) took place in Scotland on 8 March 2008. 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

General revision

While the modification of Law 2 indicated below is the only amendment in the substance of the Laws of the Game this year, the overall wording and structure has been reviewed and revised in order to consolidate and reorganize the content for the sake of consistency, simplification and clarification. As part of this process, some of the Decisions of the International Football Association Board from the 2007/2008 edition of the Laws of the Game have now been either incorporated in the Law to which they were previously appended or otherwise added to the section previously known as Additional Instructions and Guidelines for Referees. For the 2008/2009 edition of the Laws of the Game, this section has been renamed "Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees". The reason for this change is to underline that, while the content of this section is intended to complement the Laws of the Game themselves, its application is indeed a compulsory requirement.

In addition, certain principles that were implicitly understood throughout the game but did not explicitly feature in the Laws of the Game have been added to the new edition for completeness, for example, Law 4 now expressly states that "The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and also the referee and assistant referee."

USSF Advice to Referees: The general rewrite of the Laws of the Game and the apparent expansion and renaming of the new section "Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees" referred to above were not available at the time this memorandum was published. When this material becomes available, USSF will review it closely and may, if further clarifications are needed, distribute a second memorandum for this purpose in addition to its usual publication of The Laws of the Game. Meanwhile, until advised otherwise, referees in USSF-sanctioned matches will continue to apply the "Additional Instructions and Guidelines" republished in 2008 and recently distributed to the state associations.

Law 1 -- The Field of Play

At a special meeting of the IFAB on 8 May 2008, it was ruled that the decision passed at the Annual General Meeting on 8 March to standardize the dimensions of the field of play for "A" international matches would not be implemented until the IFAB had reviewed the matter at next year's 123rd Annual General Meeting in Northern Ireland.

USSF Advice to Referees: This matter would have no direct bearing on any matches played below the "A" international level.

Law 2 -- The Ball

Decisions of the International F.A. Board

Decision 1

Current Text

In competition matches, only footballs which meet the minimum technical requirements stipulated in Law 2 are permitted for use.

In FIFA competition matches, and in competition matches organized under the auspices of the confederations, acceptance of a football for use is conditional upon the football bearing one of the following three designations:

- the official "FIFA APPROVED" logo, or
- the official "FIFA INSPECTED" logo, or
- the reference "International Matchball Standard"



Such a designation on a football indicates that it has been tested officially and found to be in compliance with specific technical requirements, different for each category and additional to the minimum specifications stipulated in Law 2. The list of the additional requirements specific to each of the respective categories must be approved by the International F.A. Board. The institutes conducting the tests are subject to the approval of FIFA.

Member association competitions may also require the use of balls bearing any one of these three designations. In all other matches, the ball used must satisfy the requirements of Law 2.

New Text

In addition to the requirements of Law 2, acceptance of a ball for use in matches played in an official competition organized under the auspices of FIFA or the confederations is conditional upon the ball bearing one of the following:

- the official "FIFA APPROVED" logo
- the official "FIFA INSPECTED" logo
- the "International Matchball Standard" logo



Such a logo on a ball indicates that it has been tested officially and found to be in compliance with specific technical requirements, different for each logo and additional to the minimum specifications stipulated in Law 2. The list of the additional requirements specific to each of the respective logos must be approved by the International F.A. Board. The institutes conducting the tests are subject to the approval of FIFA.

Member association competitions may also require the use of balls bearing any one these three logos.

Directives and instructions issued by the IFAB

Dealing with injured players

In view of the differing practices applied in various competitions around the world by the team in possession when the ball remains in play after a player has been injured and the confusion that this can cause, the IFAB wishes to reiterate that Law 5 states that the referee has the power to stop the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured, but he may allow play to continue if the player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured.

Furthermore, the IFAB calls for the football family to unite in denouncing simulation and working to eradicate this scourge from the game in order to assist the referee's identification of serious injuries and, more generally, to uphold the fundamental principles of fair play and preserve the integrity of the game.

USSF Advice to Referees: The above guidelines clearly support the view of the International F.A. Board that the referee's responsibility to distinguish between serious and slight injuries (taking into account the age, skill, and competitive level of the players) is hampered both by players simulating injuries and by the practice of some teams at some times to stop play on their own initiative by kicking the ball off the field. The Board has strongly emphasized the need for all elements of the soccer community to deal firmly with simulation, but the Board is also suggesting (without, it must be noted, changing any requirement of the Law) that the teams should leave the decision to stop play to the referee instead of exercising it themselves. Although referees should not discourage acts of sportsmanship in situations where a team has taken it upon themselves to stop play and the injury was truly serious, the above instructions also suggest that everyone should now see referees moving more quickly to evaluate injuries and to establish clearly whether play should or should not be stopped so that teams will be less likely to feel a need to take this decision upon themselves.

Pitchside monitors

As a result of the increasing presence of monitors around the boundaries of the field of play for broadcasting purposes, the IFAB underlines that it is forbidden for occupants of the technical area to have access to or be in a position to view pitchside monitors.

USSF Advice to Referees: Although this is an issue only at the highest competitive levels, the above instruction should be of particular concern to fourth officials who must now include among their duties an awareness of where monitors are placed, whether or not those locations can be seen by persons in either of the technical areas, and subsequently whether anyone then leaves their technical area in an attempt to view what is being shown on a monitor.

Goal line technology

The IFAB has decided that all experiments involving goal line technology are to be put on ice until further notice.

Additional assistant referees

The IFAB has granted FIFA permission to conduct an experiment with two additional assistant referees at a forthcoming tournament.

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 2008, 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.