



MEMORANDUM

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The 123rd Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) took place in Northern Ireland on 28 February 2009. 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

Field Surface

Current Text

Matches may be played on natural or artificial surfaces, according to the rules of the competition.

The color of artificial surfaces must be green.

Where artificial surfaces are used in either competition matches between representative teams of member associations affiliated to FIFA or international club competition matches, the surface must meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Concept for Artificial Turf or the International Artificial Turf Standard, unless special dispensation is given by FIFA.

New Text

Matches may be played on natural or artificial surfaces, according to the rules of the competition.

The color of artificial surfaces must be green.

Where artificial surfaces are used in either competition matches between representative teams of member associations affiliated to FIFA or international club competition matches, the surface must meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Concept for **Football Turf** or the International Artificial Turf Standard, unless special dispensation is given by FIFA.

USSF Advice to Referees: The above change, which only replaces the phrase “Artificial Turf” with “Football Turf,” is solely for the purpose of consistency.

2. Law 11 – Offside

Interpretations of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees

Current Text

When an offside offense occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played to him by one of his team mates.

If a defending player steps behind his own goal line in order to place an opponent in an offside position, the referee must allow play to continue and caution the defender for deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee’s permission when the ball is next out of play.

New Text

When an offside offense occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played to him by one of his team mates.

Any defending player leaving the field of play for any reason without the referee’s permission shall be construed to be on his own goal line or touch line for the purposes of offside until the next stoppage of

play. If the player leaves the field of play deliberately, he must be cautioned when the ball is next out of play.

USSF Advice to Referees: The new text more explicitly describes how referees are to consider the location of a defender off the field when deciding if an attacker is or is not in an offside position. A defender who is off the field with the referee's permission (and thus cannot freely return to the field) is not included in determining where the last and second to last defenders are located. A defender whose position off the field was not with the permission of or at the direction of the referee is deemed to be on the goal line or touch line closest to where the defender left the field and must therefore be considered as though still on the field. Furthermore, if the departure from the field is "deliberate," (i.e., other than during the normal course of play), the defender is to be cautioned for the misconduct.

3. Procedures to Determine the Winner of a Match or Home-And-Away

Kicks from the Penalty Mark

Current Text

If at the end of the match and before the kicks start to be taken from the penalty mark, one team has a greater number of players than their opponents, they must reduce their numbers to equate with that of their opponents and the team captain must inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded.

New Text

If at the end of the match and before the kicks start to be taken from the penalty mark, one team has a greater number of players than their opponents, they must reduce their numbers to equate with that of their opponents and the team captain must inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded. **Any player thus excluded may not participate in kicks from the penalty mark.**

USSF Advice to Referees: The new final sentence is intended only to emphasize that any player(s) excluded as a result of the need for a team to "reduce to equate" have ceased to be eligible to participate in any way in kicks from the mark. In practical terms, this means that they are no longer permitted to be on the field with those players who are eligible to kick. They are, of course, still under the authority of the referee.

4. The Technical Area

Current Text

- only one person at a time is authorized to convey tactical instructions and he must return to his position after giving these instructions
- the coach and other officials must remain within its confines except in special circumstances, for example, a physiotherapist or doctor entering the field of play, with the referee's permission, to assess an injured player
- the coach and other occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner

New Text

- **only one person at a time is authorized to convey tactical instructions from the technical area**
- the coach and other officials must remain within its confines except in special circumstances, for example, a physiotherapist or doctor entering the field of play, with the referee's permission, to assess an injured player
- the coach and other occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner

USSF Advice to Referees: The above change removes the requirement that anyone giving tactical instructions from within the technical area (usually by moving off the bench toward the front of the technical area) must afterward return to the bench.

Reminder to referees

Referees are reminded that Law 5 states that the referee must stop the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured.

USSF Advice to Referees: This statement is intended to reinforce a guideline issued earlier by both the International Board and USSF that the practice of a team kicking the ball off the field to stop play when there is an apparent injury on the field detracts from the responsibility of the referee under Law 5 to assess the injury and to stop play only if, in the opinion of the referee, the injury is serious. Referees are therefore advised to be seen quickly and publicly considering the status of any player seeming to be injured and clearly deciding whether or not the situation merits a stoppage of play. The referee must control this decision as much as possible.

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 2009, 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.