

## **FIFA Rules Updates for Fall 2019**

As you know, FIFA constantly updates its rules, and those most current FIFA rules govern all MSI games (except as noted in the “Modifications to FIFA Rules” section of the Program Manuals). For the Fall 2019 season, there are a number of rules changes (or interpretations to rules) that you should be aware of. Here is a link to a very helpful summary of those changes:

<https://www.the-ra.org/news/ifab-law-changes-2019-2020>

Here is a brief overview of the rules changes:

**Free Kicks and “Walls”:** whenever the defense establishes a “wall” of at least 3 players, no member of the attacking team may stand closer than 1 yard to the “wall”. If they do stand closer than 1 yard when the kick is taken, the referee shall blow their whistle and award an Indirect Free Kick to the defending team.

**Free Kicks taken by the defending team from within their Penalty Area, including Goal Kicks:** players from the opposing team must be positioned outside the Penalty Area and at least 10 yards away when the kick is taken (unless the kick is taken so quickly as to not have allowed sufficient time to retreat). The ball will be “in play” as soon as it is kicked, and does NOT need to leave the Penalty Area before being played by another player. In other words, you may take a Goal Kick by tapping it to a teammate standing next to you. Opposing players may rush into the penalty area to intercept a free kick after it has been kicked into play.

**NOTE:** *MSI Recreational League games in Grades 3-6 will have a Rules Modification in effect, stating that Free Kicks/Goal Kicks taken from within the Penalty Area must leave the Penalty Area before they are “in play” (the exception would be if they pass the ball to a teammate who is located inside the penalty area, the ball would be “in play” at that time). The intent of this Rules Modification is to address those instances where Recreational Grades 3-6 teams may have some difficulty in effectively clearing the ball out of their own penalty area.*

**Handballs:** there are a number of new interpretations for the handball rule. Most significantly, many handball situations that are “accidental” will now be considered an offense, and penalized by a free kick. Please review the link provided above for more detailed information.

**Kickoffs:** following the captains’ coin toss, the winner of the coin toss now may choose whether to kick off first or which goal to attack (previously, they only had the choice of which goal to attack).

**Penalty Kicks and Goalkeepers:** Goalkeepers must have at least one foot on or directly above (if they are jumping) the goal line at the moment the penalty kick is taken. In other words, they may take one step in front of the goal line with one foot before the shot is taken, so long as the other foot remains on or directly above the goal line.

**Dropped Ball:** there are minor changes to the dropped ball rules.

**Substitutions:** Referees now may require players to leave the field at the closest point to a sideline or endline, in order to speed up substitutions.