



2019/20 Laws of the Game – Changes and clarifications

Changes

- Yellow and red cards for misconduct by team officials
- A player being substituted leaving the field of play at the nearest point on the boundary line
- At a goal kick and a free kick for the defending team in their own penalty area

Team Officials

If any coach, assistant coach, athletic trainer or representative of the team on the sidelines is found to be guilty of misconduct but the referee cannot distinguish who committed the infraction, the highest-ranking team official will receive the Yellow/Red Card.

Substitutes

Anyone who is being substituted needs to leave at the closest point of the touchline/goal line. If the halfway point is the closest point, please go off there. If you are injured or the safest point to exit the field is not the nearest, then the referee will indicate so and you can leave at the halfway point. This change is trying to eliminate the practice of wasting time by substituting a player who is on the opposite side of the field.

Goal kick

In the past, the attacking team could not touch a goal kick until it had left the penalty area. Now, an attacking team may enter the penalty area as soon as the ball is in play. For the ball to be in play it must have been kicked and clearly moved. This change is meant to speed up the play of the game.

Does this change affect the buildout line?

No, the ball is considered in play when it has been kicked and has clearly moved. Players must still remain behind the build out line until the ball is considered in play. If a team chooses to take a goal kick or free kick quickly, they are doing so at their own risk as the normal build out line rules still apply.

Clarifications

Dropped ball

If the ball touches the referee or another match official and goes into the goal, team possession changes or an attack for the opponents begins, a dropped ball is awarded.

If play is stopped inside the penalty area, the ball will be dropped for the goalkeeper (no other player participates).

If play is stopped outside the penalty area, the ball will be dropped for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the point of the last touch of the ball



In all cases, all the other players of both teams must be 4.5 yards away from the dropped ball.

Free Kicks

When there is a 'wall' of three or more defenders, attackers are not allowed within 1 yard of the wall. If an attacker is inside that 1-yard area when the kick is taken, the defending team is given an Indirect Free Kick from the spot of the infraction.

Indirect Free Kicks

Once the kick has been taken and it is clear that a goal will not be scored from the kick, there is no more need for a signal.

Quick Free Kicks and Red/Yellow Cards

If a free kick is taken quickly, before an official has the chance to issue a Yellow or Red Card, and a goal-scoring opportunity is created, the referee can award the Yellow Card/Red Card at the next convenient point.

Kicking Objects

If you kick an object at the ball, an opponent or a match official the other team will receive a Direct Free Kick from the spot of the infraction.

Goal Celebrations

If a goal is disallowed, any Yellow Card given for an 'illegal' goal celebration still stands.

Handball

The following 'handball' situations, **even accidental**, will be a free kick

- The ball goes hits a player's hand or arm and goes into the goal off an attacker.
- A player gains control/possession after the ball has touched their hand/arm and scores, or creates a goal-scoring opportunity
- The ball touches a player's hand/arm where the player has tried to block the ball by extending their arms away from their body.
- The ball touches a player's hand/arm when it is above their shoulder (unless the player has deliberately played the ball which then touches their hand/arm)



The following 'handball' situations **will not** usually be a free kick:

- The ball touches a player's hand/arm directly from:
 - Their own head/body/foot, if the player has not made themselves unnaturally bigger
 - The head/body/foot of another player who is close/near, if the player has not made themselves unnaturally bigger
- The ball touches a player's hand/arm which is close to their body and has not made their body unnaturally bigger
- If a player is falling and the ball touches their hand/arm which is between their body and the ground to support the body (not extended to make the body bigger)

The goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball into the opponent's goal.

If a goalkeeper attempts to play the ball by legal means on a throw-in or a deliberate pass from a teammate (heading, kicking) but the attempt is misplayed, the goalkeeper can play the ball with his/her hands.

Penalty Kick

If an attacking team's player is injured on the play they may have a quick treatment/assessment and then take the kick

The goalkeeper cannot be touching the goalposts, crossbar or nets and cannot move until the ball is in play.

The goalkeeper only needs to have one part of one foot on the goal line when the kick is taken.

If an offense occurs between when the penalty is declared and before the kick is taken, the offender may receive a Yellow Card/Red Card but the penalty kick will still be taken.

Player's Equipment

Players may wear multi-colored or patterned undershirts, if the undershirts are the same pattern or color as the main shirt.

Verbal Offenses

All verbal offenses will be penalized with at least an Indirect Free Kick.