

## **Rules and laws of football**

Without rules and laws no sport would be able to exist as a particular order must be kept while playing every sport whether it is football, netball, wrestling or swimming.

In this section of the coursework I will explain the rules of football and the responsibility of the officials.

I will start by looking at, arguably the most important part of the game, where football is played.

## **The Field of Play**

### **Field Surface**

Matches may be played on natural or artificial surfaces, according to the rules of the competition. The Field of Play and appurtenances shall be as shown in the plan above:-

### **Dimensions**

The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touch line must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length Minimum 90 m (100 yds) Maximum 120 m (130 yds)

Width Minimum 45 m (50 yds) Maximum 90 m (100 yds)

### **Field Markings**

The field of play is marked with lines. These lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries.

The two longer boundary lines are called touch lines. The two shorter lines are called goal lines.

All lines are not more than 12 cm (5 ins) wide.

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line.

The centre mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of 9.15 m (10 yds) is marked around it.

### **The Goal Area**

A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows:

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 5.5 m (6 yds) from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 5.5 m (6 yds) and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

### **The Penalty Area**

A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows:

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 16.5 m (18 yds) from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 16.5 m (18 yds) and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area.

Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made 11 m (12 yds) from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

An arc of a circle with a radius of 9.15 m (10 yds) from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area

## **Flagposts**

A flagpost, not less than 1.5 m (5 ft) high, with a non-pointed top and a flag is placed at each corner.

Flagposts may also be placed at each end of the halfway line, not less than 1m (1 yd) outside the touch line.

## **The Corner Arc**

A quarter circle with a radius of 1 m (1 yd) from each corner flagpost is drawn inside the field of play.



## **Goals**

Goals must be placed on the centre of each goal line.

They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar.

The distance between the posts is 7.32 m (8 yds) and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 2.44 m (8ft).

Both goalposts and the crossbar have the same width and depth which do not exceed 12 cm (5 ins). The goal lines are the same width as that of the goalposts and the crossbar. Nets may be attached to the goals and the ground behind the goal, provided that they are properly supported and do not interfere with the goalkeeper.

The goalposts and crossbars must be white.

## **Safety**

Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

## **Decisions of the International FA Board**

### **Decision 1**

If the crossbar becomes displaced or broken, play is stopped until it has been repaired or replaced in position. If a repair is not possible, the match is abandoned. The use of a rope to replace the crossbar is not permitted. If the crossbar can be repaired, the match is restarted with a dropped ball at the place where the ball was located when play was stopped.\*

### **Decision 2**

Goalposts and crossbars must be made of wood, metal or other approved material. Their shape may be square, rectangular, round

or elliptical and they must not be dangerous to players.

### **Decision 3**

No kind of commercial advertising, whether real or virtual, is permitted on the field of play and the field equipment (including the goal nets and the areas they enclose) from the time the teams enter the field of play until they have left it at half-time and from the time the teams re-enter the field of play until the end of the match. In particular, no advertising materials of any kind may be displayed on goals, nets, flagposts or their flags. No extraneous equipment (cameras, microphones, etc.) may be attached to these items.

### **Decision 4**

There shall be no advertising of any kind within the technical area or within one metre from the touch line and outside the field of play on the ground. Further, no advertising shall be allowed in the area between the goal line and the goal nets.

### **Decision 5**

The reproduction whether real or virtual, of representative logos or emblems of FIFA, Confederations, National Associations, Leagues, Clubs or other bodies, is forbidden on the field of play and field equipment (including the goal nets and the areas they enclose) during playing time, as described in Decision 3.

### **Decision 6**

A mark may be made off the field of play, 9.15 metres (10yds) from the corner arc and at right angles to the goal line, to ensure that this distance is observed when a corner kick is being taken.

### **Decision 7**

Where artificial surfaces are used in either competition matches between representative teams of 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.

### **Decision 8**

Where a technical area exists, it must meet the requirements approved by the International FA Board, which are contained in this publication.

**Periods of play**

The match lasts two equal periods of 45 minutes, unless otherwise mutually agreed between the referee and the two participating teams. Any agreement to alter the periods of play (for example to reduce each half to 40 minutes because of insufficient light) must be made before the start of play and must comply with competition rules.

**Half-time interval**

Players are entitled to an interval at half-time. The half-time interval must not exceed 15 minutes. Competition rules must state the duration of the half-time interval. The duration of the half-time interval may be altered only with the consent of the referee.

**Allowance for time lost**

Allowance is made in either period for all time lost through:

- substitution(s)
- assessment of injury to players
- removal of injured players from the field of play for treatment
- wasting time
- any other cause

The allowance for time lost is at the discretion of the referee.

**Penalty kick**

If a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the duration of either half is extended until the penalty kick is completed.

**Abandoned match**

An abandoned match is replayed unless the competition rules provide otherwise

Now I have looked at the playing surface I will now say what is legal and illegal with in the field of play.

### **Players**

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players.

### **Substitution Procedure**

To replace a player by a substitute, the following conditions must be observed:

- the referee is informed before any proposed substitution is made
- a substitute only enters the field of play after the player being replaced has left and after receiving a signal from the referee
- a substitute only enters the field of play at the halfway line and during a stoppage in the match
- a substitution is completed when a substitute enters the field of play  
from that moment, the substitute becomes a player and the player he has replaced ceases to be a player
- a player who has been replaced takes no further part in the match
- all substitutes are subject to the authority of the referee, whether called upon to play or not

### **Preliminaries**

A coin is tossed and the team which wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match. The other team takes the kick-off to start the match. The team which wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half of the match. In the second half of the match the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.

### **Kick-off**

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- at the start of the match
- after a goal has been scored

- at the start of the second half of the match
- at the start of each period of extra time, where applicable

A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off.

### **Procedure**

- all players are in their own half of the field
- the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play
- the ball is stationary on the centre mark
- the referee gives a signal
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward
- the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.

### **Ball out of play**

The ball is out of play when:

- it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the referee

### **Ball in play**

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- it rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play
- it rebounds from either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

### **Offside position**

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

A player is in an offside position if:

- he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent

A player is not in an offside position if:

- he is in his own half of the field of play  
or
- he is level with the second last opponent  
or
- he is level with the last two opponents

### **Offence**

A player in an offside position is only penalised if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- interfering with play  
or
- interfering with an opponent  
or
- gaining an advantage by being in that position

### **No offence**

There is no offside situation if a player receives the ball directly from:

- a goal kick  
or
- a throw-in  
or
- a corner kick

### **Infringements/sanctions**

For any offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free-kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

### **Direct free kick**

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent



- trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- jumps at an opponent
- charges an opponent
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- pushes an opponent

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four offences:

- tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
- holds an opponent
- spits at an opponent
- handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)

A direct free kick is taken from where the offence occurred.

### **Penalty kick**

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

### **Indirect free kick**

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following five offences:

- takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it from his possession
- touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player
- touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
- touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

- plays in a dangerous manner
- impedes the progress of an opponent
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands
- commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player

The indirect free kick is taken from where the offence occurred.

### **Disciplinary sanctions**

Only a player or substitute or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card.

The Referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions, as from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

### **Cautionable offences**

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following seven offences:

1. is guilty of unsporting behaviour
2. shows dissent by word or action
3. persistently infringes the Laws of the Game
4. delays the restart of play
5. fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick
6. enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission
7. deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission

## **Sending-off offences**

A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following seven offences:

1. is guilty of serious foul play
2. is guilty of violent conduct
3. spits at an opponent or any other person
4. denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area)
5. denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick
6. uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
7. receives a second caution in the same match

A player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area.

## Referee's and officials

### **Powers and duties**

#### **The referee:**

- enforces the Laws of the Game
- controls the match in co-operation with the assistant referees and, where applicable, with the fourth official

- ensures that any ball used meets the requirements
- ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements
- acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match
- stops, suspends or terminates the match, at his discretion, for any infringements of the Laws
- stops, suspends or terminates the match because of outside interference of any kind
- stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that he is removed from the field of play
- allows play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured
- ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped
- allows play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalises the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time
- punishes the more serious offence when a player commits more than one offence at the same time
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences. He is not obliged to take this action immediately but must do so when the ball next goes out of play
- takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds
- acts on the advice of assistant referees regarding incidents which he has not seen
- ensures that no unauthorised persons enter the field of play
- restarts the match after it has been stopped

- provides the appropriate authorities with a match report which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players, and/or team officials and any other incidents which occurred before, during or after the match

### **Decisions of the referee**

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final. The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he has not restarted play or terminated the match.

Two assistant referees are appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- when the whole of the ball has passed out of the field of play
- which side is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in
- when a player may be penalised for being in an offside position
- when a substitution is requested
- when misconduct or any other incident has occurred out of the view of the referee
- when offences have been committed whenever the assistants are closer to the action than the referee (this includes, in particular circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area)
- whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper has moved forward before the ball has been kicked and if the ball has crossed the line

