



## Laws of the Game

# LAWS OF THE GAME

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## PREFACE

It is FIFA's custom to publish the annual edition of the Laws of the Game in its four official languages (English, French, Spanish and German) soon after the meeting of the International Football Association Board.

This new edition of the Laws of the Game contains amendments and explanations to the decisions reached by the International F. A. Board at a meeting held in Rio de Janeiro on 9 March 1996.

The special committee appointed to reword the Laws has, in the meantime, completed its work. The newly redacted Laws will be officially submitted to the Board for approval in March 1997, and the new text will come into effect in July next year.

In view of the foregoing, very few changes have been made to the present Laws this year.

FIFA wishes to remind the national associations that it is their duty to ensure that their referees implement the Laws of the Game strictly, as defined by the Board.

The International F. A. Board will continue to work together in an effort to promote and improve our sport constantly.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Dr. João Havelange  
President of FIFA  
May 1996

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## NOTES

Subject to the agreement of the national association concerned and provided the principles of these Laws are maintained, the Laws may be modified in their application for matches for players of under 16 years of age, for women's football and for veterans' football (over 35 years).

Any or all of the following modifications are permissible:

- (a) size of the field of play;
- (b) size, weight and material of the ball;
- (c) width between the goalposts and height of the cross-bar from the ground;
- (d) the duration of the periods of play;
- (e) number of substitutions.

Further modifications are only possible with the consent of the International Football Association Board. References to the male gender in the Laws of the Game in respect of referees, linesmen, players or officials are for simplification and refer to both males and females.

**JULY 1996**

*Next meeting of the F.A. Board:  
March 1997, in Belfast, Northern Ireland*

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**INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION BOARD (IFAB)**

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The Scottish Football Association  
The Football Association of Wales  
Irish Football Association  
(1 vote each)  
  
Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)  
(4 votes)

# I. THE FIELD OF PLAY

The field of play and appurtenances shall be as shown in the following plan:

## 1. DIMENSIONS

The field of play shall be rectangular, its length being not more than 130 yards nor less than 100 yards and its breadth not more than 100 yards nor less than 50 yards. (In international matches the length shall be not more than 120 yards nor less than 110 yards and the breadth not more than 80 yards nor less than 70 yards.) The length shall in all cases exceed the breadth.

## 2. MARKING

The field of play shall be marked with distinctive lines, not more than 5 inches in width (not by a V-shaped rut) in accordance with the plan, the longer boundary lines being called the touch-lines and the shorter the goal-lines. A flag on a post not less than 5 ft. high and having a non-pointed top, shall be placed at each corner; a similar flag-post may be placed opposite the half-way line on each side of the field of play, not less than 1 yard outside the touch-line. A halfway-line shall be marked out across the field of play. The centre of the field of play shall be indicated by a suitable mark and a circle with a 10 yards radius shall be marked round it.

## 3. THE GOAL AREA

At each end of the field of play two lines shall be drawn at right-angles to the goal-line, 6 yards from each goal-post. These shall extend into the field of play for a distance of 6 yards and shall be joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal-line. Each of the spaces enclosed by these lines and the goal-line shall be called a goal-area.

## 4. THE PENALTY AREA

At each end of the field of play two lines shall be drawn at right-angles to the goal-line, 18 yards from each goal-post. These shall extend into the field of play for a distance of 18 yards and shall be joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal-line. Each of the spaces enclosed by these lines and the goal-line shall be called a penalty-area. A suitable mark shall be made within each penalty-area, 12 yards from the mid-point of the goal-line, measured along an undrawn line at right-angles thereto. These shall be the penalty-kick marks. From each penalty-kick mark an arc of a circle, having a radius of 10 yards, shall be drawn outside the penalty-area.

## 5. THE CORNER AREA

From each corner-flag post a quarter circle, having a radius of 1 yard, shall be drawn inside the field of play.

## 6. THE GOALS

The goals shall be placed on the centre of each goal-line and shall consist of two upright posts, equidistant from the corner-flags and 8 yards apart (inside measurement), joined by a horizontal cross-bar the lower edge of which shall be 8 ft. from the ground.

For safety reasons, the goals, including those which are portable, must be anchored securely to the

ground.

The width and depth of the cross-bars shall not exceed 5 inches (12 cm). The goal-posts and the cross-bars shall have the same width.

Nets may be attached to the posts, cross-bars and ground behind the goals. They should be appropriately supported and be so placed as to allow the goal-keeper ample room.

*Footnote: Goal nets. The use of nets made of hemp, jute or nylon is permitted. The nylon strings may, however, not be thinner than those made of hemp or jute.*

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#### DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD

1. In international matches the dimensions of the field of play shall be: maximum 110 x 75 metres; minimum 100 x 64 metres.
2. National associations must adhere strictly to these dimensions. Each national association organising an international match must advise the visiting association, before the match, of the place and the dimensions of the field of play.
3. The Board has approved this table of measurements for the Laws of the Game:

<b>130 yards</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>120 meters</b>
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4. The goal-line shall be marked the same width as the depth of the goal-posts and the cross-bar, so that the goal-line and goal-posts will conform to the same interior and exterior edges.
5. The 6 yards (for the outline of the goal-area) and the 18 yards (for the outline of the penalty-area) which have to be measured along the goal-line, must start from the inner sides of the goal-posts.
6. The space within the inside areas of the field of play includes the width of the lines marking these areas.
7. All associations shall provide standard equipment, particularly in international matches, when the Laws of the Game must be complied with in every respect and especially with regard to the size of the ball and other equipment which must conform to the regulations. All cases of failure to provide standard equipment must be reported to FIFA.
8. In a match played under the rules of a competition if the cross-bar becomes displaced or broken, play shall be stopped and the match abandoned unless the cross-bar has been repaired and replaced in

position or a new one provided without such being a danger to the players. A rope is not considered to be a satisfactory substitute for a cross-bar.

In a friendly match, by mutual consent, play may be resumed without the cross-bar provided it has been removed and no longer constitutes a danger to the players. In these circumstances, a rope may be used as a substitute for a cross-bar. If a rope is not used and the ball crosses the goal-line at a point which, in the opinion of the referee is below where the cross-bar should have been, he shall award a goal.

The game shall be restarted by the referee dropping the ball at the place where it was when play was stopped, unless it was within the goal-area at that time, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.

9. National associations may specify such maximum and minimum dimensions for the cross-bars and goal-posts, within the limits laid down in Law I, as they consider appropriate.
10. Goal-posts and cross-bars must be made of wood, metal or other approved material as decided from time to time by the International F.A. Board. They may be square, rectangular, round, half-round or elliptical in shape. Goal-posts and cross-bars made of other materials and in other shapes are not permitted. The goal-posts must be of white colour.
11. Any kind of publicity is forbidden in connection with, or on, the field of play. In particular, no advertising material may be displayed at any level on nets, corner flags or goalposts, nor shall such appurtenances of the game have any extraneous equipment attached to them (cameras, microphones, etc.). The reproduction of a FIFA, Confederation, National Association, League, Club or any other logo on the field of play (turf) is also forbidden.
12. 'Curtain-raisers' to international matches should only be played following agreement on the day of the match, and taking into account the condition of the field of play, between representatives of the two associations and the referee (of the international match).
13. National associations, particularly in international matches, should:
  - a. restrict the number of photographers around the field of play,
  - b. have a line (photographers' line) marked behind the goal-lines at least two metres from the corner flag going through a point situated at least 3.5 metres behind the intersection of the goal-line with the line marking the goal-area to a point situated at least six metres behind the goal-posts,
  - c. prohibit photographers from passing over these lines,

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- d. forbid the use of artificial lighting in the form of "flashlights".
14. A mark may be made off the field of play, 11 yards from the corner flag and at right angles to the goal-line, to help the referee ensure that this distance is observed when a corner kick is being taken.

## II. THE BALL

The ball shall be spherical; the outer casing shall be of leather or other suitable materials. No material shall be used in its construction which might prove dangerous to the players. The circumference of the ball shall not be more than 70.0 cm and not less than 68.0 cm. The weight of the ball at the start of the game shall not be more than 450 g. nor less than 410 g. The pressure shall be equal to 0.6–1.1 atmosphere (=600–1,100g./cm<sup>2</sup>) at sea level. The ball shall not be changed during the game unless authorised by the referee.

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### *DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD*

1. The ball used in any match shall be considered the property of the association or club on whose ground the match is played, and at the close of play it must be returned to the referee.
2. The International Board, from time to time, shall decide what constitutes approved materials. Any approved material shall be certified as such by the International Board.
3. The Board has approved these equivalents of the weights specified in the Law: 14 to 16 ounces = 396 to 453 grams.
4. In FIFA competition matches and in competition matches under the auspices of the Confederations, acceptance of a football for use will be 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 designation on a football indicates that it was duly tested and found to be in compliance with the specific technical requirements for each category (FIFA APPROVED, FIFA INSPECTED and INTERNATIONAL MATCHBALL STANDARD, the latter being of equal technical standard to FIFA INSPECTED), additional to the minimum specifications set forth in Law II. The ball shall carry appropriate indication that it has been successfully tested. Such additional requirements, specific to each of the respective categories, have to be approved by the International F.A. Board. The institutes conducting the tests shall be selected by FIFA.

In all other matches the ball used must satisfy the requirements of Law II. National Associations or Competitions may require the use only of balls bearing any one of the aforementioned designations.

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5. If the ball bursts or becomes deflated during the course of a match, the game shall be stopped and restarted by dropping the new ball at the place where the first ball became defective, unless it was within the goal-area at that time, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.
  
6. If this happens during a stoppage of the game (place-kick, goal-kick, corner-kick, free-kick, penalty-kick or throw-in), the game shall be restarted accordingly.

### III. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

1. A match shall be played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper.
2. Up to a maximum of three substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition under the auspices of FIFA, the Confederations or the National Associations.

The rules of the competition shall state how many substitutes may be nominated, from three up to a maximum of seven.

The names of the substitutes must be given to the referee prior to the commencement of the match.

Substitutes not so named may not take part in the match.

3. In other matches, up to five substitutes may also be used provided that the teams concerned reach an agreement on a maximum number, and that the referee is informed before the match. If the referee is not informed, or no agreement is reached before the commencement of the match, no more than three substitutes shall be permitted. The names of the substitutes must be given to the referee prior to the commencement of the match.
4. Any of the other players may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that the referee is informed before the change is made, and provided also that the change is made during a stoppage of the game.
5. When a goalkeeper or any other player is to be replaced by a substitute, the following conditions shall be observed:
  - a. The referee shall be informed of the proposed substitution, before it is made.
  - b. The substitute shall not enter the field of play until the player he is replacing has left, and then only after having received a signal from the referee.
  - c. He shall enter the field during a stoppage in the game, and at the half-way line.
  - d. A player who has been replaced shall not take any further part in the game.
  - e. A substitute shall be subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee whether called upon to play or not.

- f. The substitution is completed when the substitute enters the field of play, from which moment he becomes a player and the player whom he is replacing ceases to be a player.

**PUNISHMENT:**

- a. Play shall not be stopped for an infringement of paragraph 4. The players concerned shall be cautioned immediately the ball goes out of play.
- b. If a substitute enters the field of play without the authority of the referee, play shall be stopped. The substitute shall be cautioned and removed from the field or sent off according to the circumstances. The game shall be restarted by the referee dropping the ball at the place where it was when play was stopped, unless it was within the goal-area at that time, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.
- c. For any other infringement of this Law, the player concerned shall be cautioned, and if the game is stopped by the referee to administer the caution, it shall be restarted by an indirect free-kick, to be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was when play was stopped, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

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**DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD**

1. The minimum number of players in a team is left to the discretion of national associations.
2. The Board is of the opinion that a match should not be considered valid if there are fewer than seven players in either of the teams.
3. A player who has been ordered off before play begins may only be replaced by one of the named substitutes. The kick-off must not be delayed to allow the substitute to join his team. A player who has been ordered off after play has started may not be replaced.

A named substitute who has been ordered off, either before or after play has started, may not be replaced. (This decision only relates to players who are ordered off under Law XII. It does not apply to players who have infringed Law IV.)

## IV. PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

1. (a) The basic compulsory equipment of a player shall consist of a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings, shinguards and footwear.  
  
(b) A player shall not wear anything which is dangerous to another player.
2. Shinguards, which must be covered entirely by the stockings, shall be made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, polyurethane or similar substance) and shall afford a reasonable degree of protection.
3. The goalkeeper shall wear colours which distinguish him from the other players and from the referee.

### **PUNISHMENT:**

For any infringement of this Law, the player at fault shall be instructed to leave the field of play by the referee, to adjust his equipment or obtain any missing equipment, when the ball next ceases to be in play, unless by then the player has already corrected his equipment. Play shall not be stopped immediately for an infringement of this Law. A player who is instructed to leave the field to adjust his equipment or obtain missing equipment shall not return without first reporting to the referee, who shall satisfy himself that the player's equipment is in order. The player shall only re-enter the game at a moment when the ball has ceased to be in play.

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### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. In international matches, international competitions, international club competitions and friendly matches between clubs of different national associations, the referee, prior to the start of the game, shall inspect the players' equipment and prevent any player whose equipment does not conform to the requirements of this Law from playing until such time as it does comply. The rules of any competition may include a similar provision.
2. If the referee finds that a player is wearing articles not permitted by the Laws and which may constitute a danger to other players, he shall order him to take them off. If he fails to carry out the referee's instruction, the player shall not take part in the match.
3. A player who has been prevented from taking part in the game or a player who has been sent off the field for infringing Law IV must report to the referee during a stoppage of the game and may not enter or re-enter the field of play unless and until the referee has satisfied himself that the player is no longer infringing Law IV.
4. A player who has been prevented from taking part in a game or who has been sent off because of an infringement of Law IV, and who enters or re-enters the field of play to join or re-join his team, in breach of the conditions of Law XII (j), shall be cautioned.

If the referee stops the game to administer the caution, the game shall be restarted by an indirect

free-kick, taken by a player of the opposing side, from the place where the ball was when the referee stopped the game, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

## V. REFEREES

A referee shall be appointed to officiate in each game. His authority and the exercise of the powers granted to him by the Laws of the Game commence as soon as he enters the field of play.

His power of penalising shall extend to offences committed when play has been temporarily suspended, or when the ball is out of play. His decision on points of fact connected with the play shall be final, so far as the result of the game is concerned. He shall:

- a. enforce the Laws.
- b. refrain from penalising in cases where he is satisfied that, by doing so, he would be giving an advantage to the offending team.
- c. keep a record of the game; act as timekeeper and allow the full or agreed time, adding thereto all time lost through accident or other cause.
- d. have discretionary power to stop the game for any infringement of the Laws and to suspend or terminate the game whenever, by reason of the elements, interference by spectators, or other cause, he deems such stoppage necessary. In such a case he shall submit a detailed report to the competent authority, within the stipulated time, and in accordance with the provisions set up by the National Association under whose jurisdiction the match was played. Reports will be deemed to be made when received in the ordinary course of post.
- e. from the time he enters the field of play, caution and show a yellow card to any player guilty of misconduct or ungentlemanly behaviour. In such cases the referee shall send the name of the offender to the competent authority, within the stipulated time, and in accordance with the provisions set up by the national association under whose jurisdiction the match was played.
- f. allow no person other than the players and assistant referees to enter the field of play without his permission.
- g. stop the game if, in his opinion, a player has been seriously injured; have the player removed as soon as possible from the field of play, and immediately resume the game. If a player is slightly injured, the game shall not be stopped until the ball has ceased to be in play. A player who is able to go to the touch– or goal– line for attention of any kind, shall not be treated on the field of play.
- h. send off the field of play and show a red card to any player who, in his opinion, is guilty of violent conduct, serious foul play, the use of foul or abusive language, or is guilty of a second cautionable offence.

- i. signal for recommencement of the game after all stoppages.
- j. decide that the ball provided for a match meets with the requirements of Law II.

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***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. Referees in international matches shall wear a blazer or blouse the colour of which is distinct from the colours worn by the contesting teams.
2. Referees for international matches will be selected from a neutral country unless the countries concerned agree to appoint their own officials.
3. The referee must be chosen from the official List of International Referees. This need not apply to amateur and youth international matches.
4. The referee shall report to the appropriate authority misconduct or any misdemeanour on the part of spectators, officials, players, named substitutes or other persons which take place either on the field of play or in its vicinity at any time prior to, during, or after the match in question so that appropriate action can be taken by the authority concerned.
5. assistant referees are assistants of the referee. In no case shall the referee consider the intervention of a assistant referee if he himself has seen the incident and from his position on the field, is better able to judge. With this reserve, and the assistant referee neutral, the referee can consider the intervention, and if the information of the assistant referee applies to that phase of the game immediately before the scoring of a goal, the referee may act thereon and cancel the goal.
6. The referee, however, can only reverse his first decision so long as the game has not been restarted.
7. If the referee applies the advantage clause and the advantage which was anticipated does not develop at that time, the referee shall penalise the original offence.
8. The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with as little interference as possible, and in this view it is the duty of referees to penalise only deliberate breaches of the Law. Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of spectators.
9. By par. (d) of Law V the referee is empowered to terminate a match in the event of grave disorder, but he has no power or right to decide, in such event, that either team is disqualified and thereby the loser of the match. He must send a detailed report to the proper authority who alone has power to deal further with this matter.

10. If a player commits two infringements of a different nature at the same time, the referee shall punish the more serious offence.
11. It is the duty of the referee to act upon the information of neutral assistant referees with regard to incidents that do not come under the personal notice of the referee.
12. The referee shall not allow any person to enter the field until play has stopped, and only then if he has given him a signal to do so.
13. A referee (or where applicable a assistant referee or fourth official) shall not be held liable for (1) any kind of injury suffered by a player, official or spectator, (2) any damage to property of any kind, or (3) any other loss suffered by any individual, club, company, association or similar body, due or which may be due to any decision which he may take in terms of the Laws of the Game or in respect of the normal procedures required to hold, play and control a match.

Such a decision may be:

- a. a decision that the condition of the field of play or its surrounds or that the weather conditions are such as to allow or not to allow a match to take place,
- b. a decision to abandon a match for whatever reason,
- c. a decision as to the condition of the fixtures or equipment used during a match including the goal-posts, cross-bar, corner-posts and the ball,
- d. a decision to stop or not to stop a match due to spectator interference or any problem in the spectator area,
- e. a decision to stop or not to stop play to allow an injured player to be treated,
- f. a decision to request or insist that an injured player be removed from the field of play for treatment,
- g. a decision to allow or not to allow a player to wear certain apparel or equipment,
- h. a decision (in so far as this may be his responsibility) to allow or not to allow any persons (including team or stadium officials, security officers, photographers or other media representatives) to be present in the vicinity of the field of play,

- i. any other decision which he may take in accordance with the Laws of the Game or in conformity with his duties in terms of the Federation, Association or League Rules or Regulations under which the match is played.

14. The coach may convey tactical instructions to players during the match.

The coach and other officials, however, must remain within the confines of the technical area, where such an area is provided and they must conduct themselves, at all times, in a responsible manner.

15. In tournaments or competitions where a fourth official is appointed, his role and duties shall be in accordance with the guide-lines approved by the International Football Association Board.

## VI. ASSISTANT REFEREES

Two assistant referees shall be appointed, whose duty (subject to the decision of the referee) shall be to indicate:

- a. when the ball is out of play;
- b. which side is entitled to a corner-kick, goal-kick or throw-in;
- c. when a player may be penalised for being in an offside position;
- d. when misconduct or other incident has occurred out of the view of the referee;
- e. when a substitution is desired.

They shall also assist the referee to control the game in accordance with the Laws. In the event of undue interference or improper conduct by an assistant referee, the referee shall dispense with his services and arrange for a substitute to be appointed. (The matter shall be reported by the referee to the competent authority.)

The assistant referees should be equipped with flags by the club on whose ground the match is played.

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### *DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD*

1. Assistant referees, where neutral, shall draw the referee's attention to any breach of the Laws of the Game of which they become aware if they consider that the referee may not have seen it, but the referee shall always be the judge of the decision to be taken.
2. In international "A" matches, national associations should appoint neutral assistant referees from the International List.
3. In international matches assistant referees's flags shall be of a vivid colour, bright reds and yellows. Such flags are recommended for use in all other matches.
4. An assistant referee may be subject to disciplinary action only upon a report of the referee for unjustified interference or insufficient assistance.

## VII. DURATION OF THE GAME

The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of 45 minutes, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, subject to the following:

- a. Allowance shall be made in either period for all time lost through substitution, the transport from the field of injured players, time-wasting or other cause, the amount of which shall be a matter for the discretion of the referee.
- b. Time shall be extended to permit a penalty-kick being taken at or after the expiration of the normal period in either half.

The half-time interval shall not exceed fifteen minutes. Competition rules shall clearly stipulate the duration of the half-time interval.

The duration of the half-time interval may be altered only with the consent of the referee.

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### *DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD*

1. If a match has been stopped by the referee, before the completion of the time specified in the rules, for any reason stated in Law V, it must be replayed in full unless the rules of the competition concerned provide for the result of the match at the time of such stoppage to stand.
2. Players have a right to an interval at half-time.

## VIII. THE START OF PLAY

- a. **At the beginning of the game**, choice of ends and the kick-off shall be decided by the toss of a coin. The team winning the toss shall have the option of choice of ends or the kick-off. The referee having given a signal, the game shall be started by a player taking a place-kick (i.e. a kick at the ball while it is stationary on the ground in the centre of the field of play) into his opponents' half of the field of play. Every player shall be in his own half of the field and every player of the team opposing that of the kicker shall remain not less than 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked-off; it shall not be deemed in play until it has travelled the distance of its own circumference. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.
- b. **After a goal has been scored**, the game shall be restarted in like manner by a player of the team losing the goal.
- c. **After half-time**; when restarting after half-time, ends shall be changed and the kick-off shall be taken by a player of the opposite team to that of the player who started the game.

### PUNISHMENT

For any infringement of this Law, the kick-off shall be retaken, except in the case of the kicker playing the ball again before it has been touched or played by another player; for this offence an indirect free-kick shall be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

A goal shall not be scored direct from a kick-off.

- d. **After any other temporary suspension**; when restarting the game after a temporary suspension of play from any cause not mentioned elsewhere in these Laws, provided that immediately prior to the suspension the ball has not passed over the touch- or goal-lines, the referee shall drop the ball at the place where it was when play was suspended, unless it was within the goal-area at that time, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped. It shall be deemed in play when it has touched the ground; if, however, it goes over the touch- or goal-lines after it has been dropped by the referee, but before it is touched by a player, the referee shall again drop it. A player shall not play the ball until it has touched the ground.

If this section of the Laws is not complied with, the referee shall again drop the ball.

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### DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD

1. If, when the referee drops the ball, a player infringes any of the Laws before the ball has touched the ground, the player concerned shall be cautioned or sent off the field according to the seriousness of the offence, but a free-kick cannot be awarded to the opposing team because the ball was not in play

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at the time of the offence. The ball shall therefore be again dropped by the referee.

2. Kicking-off by persons other than the players competing in a match is prohibited.

## IX. BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play:

- a. when it has wholly crossed the goal–line or touch–line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- b. when the game has been stopped by the referee. The ball is in play at all other times from the start of the match to the finish including:
  1. if it rebounds from a goal–post, cross–bar or corner–flag post into the field of play.
  2. if it rebounds off either the referee or assistant referees when they are in the field of play.
  3. in the event of a supposed infringement of the Laws, until a decision is given.

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### *DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD*

1. The lines belong to the areas of which they are the boundaries. In consequence, the touch– lines and the goal–lines belong to the field of play.

## X. METHOD OF SCORING

Except as otherwise provided by these Laws, a goal is scored when the whole of the ball has passed over the goal-line, between the goal-posts and under the cross-bar, provided it has not been thrown, carried or intentionally propelled by hand or arm, by a player of the attacking side, except in the case of a goalkeeper, who is within his own penalty-area.

The team scoring the greater number of goals during a game shall be the winner; if no goals or an equal number of goals are scored, the game shall be termed a "draw".

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### *DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD*

1. Law X defines the only method according to which a match is won or drawn; no variation whatsoever can be authorised.
2. A goal cannot in any case be allowed if the ball has been prevented by some outside agent from passing over the goal-line. If this happens in the normal course of play, other than at the taking of a penalty-kick: the game must be stopped and restarted by the referee dropping the ball at the place where the ball came into contact with the interference, unless it was within the goal-area at that time, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.
3. If, when the ball is going into goal, a spectator enters the field before it passes wholly over the goal-line and tries to prevent a score, a goal shall be allowed if the ball goes into goal unless the spectator has made contact with the ball or has interfered with play, in which case the referee shall stop the game and restart it by dropping the ball at the place where the contact or interference occurred, unless it was within the goal-area at that time, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.

## **XI. OFF-SIDE**

1. A player is in an off-side position if he is nearer to his opponents' goal-line than the ball, unless:
  - a. he is in his own half of the field of play, or
  - b. he is not nearer to his opponents' goal-line than at least two of his opponents.
  
2. It is not an offence in itself to be in an off-side position. A player shall only be penalised for being in an off-side position 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:
  - a. interfering with play, or
  - b. interfering with an opponent, or
  - c. gaining an advantage by being in that position.
  
3. A player shall not be declared off-side by the referee
  - a. merely because of his being in an off-side position, or
  - b. if he receives the ball direct from a goal-kick, a corner-kick or a throw-in.
  
4. If a player is declared off-side, the referee shall award an indirect free-kick, which shall be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred, unless the offence is committed by a player in his opponents' goal area, in which case the free-kick shall be taken from any point within the goal area.

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### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. Off-side shall not be judged at the moment the player in question receives the ball, but at the moment when the ball is passed to him by one of his own side. A player who is not in an off-side position when one of his colleagues passes the ball to him or takes a free-kick, does not therefore become off-side if he goes forward during the flight of the ball.
  
2. A player who is level with the second last opponent or with the last two opponents is not in an

off-side position.

## XII. FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

A player who commits any of the following six offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or involving disproportionate force:

- a. kicks or attempts to kick an opponent; or
- b. trips an opponent; or
- c. jumps at an opponent; or
- d. charges an opponent; or
- e. strikes or attempts to strike an opponent; or
- f. pushes an opponent;

or who commits any of the following four offences:

- g. when tackling an opponent makes contact with the opponent before contact is made with the ball; or
- h. (I) holds an opponent or  
(II) spits at an opponent; or
- i. handles the ball deliberately, i.e., carries, strikes or propels the ball with his hand or arm (this does not apply to the goalkeeper within his own penalty-area);

shall be penalised by the award of a **direct free-kick** to be taken by the opposing team from the place where the offence occurred, unless the offence is committed by a player in his opponents' goal-area, in which case the free-kick shall be taken from any point within the goal-area.

Should a player of the defending team commit one of the above ten offences within the penalty-area, he shall be penalised by a **penalty-kick**.

A penalty-kick can be awarded irrespective of the position of the ball, if in play, at the time an offence within the penalty-area is committed.

A player committing any of the five following offences:

1. playing in a manner considered by the referee to be dangerous;
2. charging fairly, i.e. with the shoulder, when the ball is not within playing distance of the players concerned and they are definitely not trying to play it;
3. when not playing the ball, impeding the progress of an opponent, i.e. running between the opponent and the ball, or interposing the body so as to form an obstacle to an opponent;
4. charging the goalkeeper except when he
  - a. is holding the ball;
  - b. is obstructing an opponent;
  - c. has passed outside his goal–area.
5. when playing as a goalkeeper and within his own penalty–area:
  - a. from the moment he takes control of the ball with his hands, he takes more than 4 steps in any direction whilst holding, bouncing or throwing the ball in the air and catching it again, without releasing it into play, or
  - b. having released the ball into play before, during or after the 4 steps, he touches it again with his hands, before it has been touched or played by a player of the opposing team either inside or outside of the penalty area, or by a player of the same team outside the penalty area, subject to the over–riding conditions of 5(c), or
  - c. touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team–mate, or
  - d. indulges in tactics, which in the opinion of the referee, are designed to hold up the game and thus waste time and so give an unfair advantage to his own team, shall be penalised by the award of an **indirect free–kick** to be taken by the opposing side from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

A player shall be **cautioned and shown the yellow card** if:

- j. he enters or re–enters the field of play to join or rejoin his team after the game has commenced, or leaves the field of play during the progress of the game (except through accident) without, in either case, first having received a signal from the referee showing him that he may do so. If the referee stops the game to administer the caution, the game shall be restarted by an indirect free–kick taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was when the referee stopped the game, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

If, however, the offending player has committed a more serious offence he shall be penalised according to that section of the law he infringed.

- k. he persistently infringes the Laws of the Game;
- l. he shows, by word or action, dissent from any decision given by the referee;
- m. he is guilty of ungentlemanly conduct.

For any of these last three offences, in addition to the caution, an indirect free-kick shall also be awarded to the opposing side from the place where the offence occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII, unless a more serious infringement of the Laws of the Game was committed.

A player shall be **sent off the field of play and shown the red card**, if, in the opinion of the referee, he:

- n. is guilty of violent conduct;
- o. is guilty of serious foul play;
- p. uses foul or abusive language;
- q. is guilty of a second cautionable offence after having received a caution.

If play is stopped by reason of a player being ordered from the field for an offence without a separate breach of the Law having been committed, the game shall be resumed by an **indirect free-kick** awarded to the opposing side from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

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#### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. If the goalkeeper either strikes an opponent by throwing the ball at him or pushes him with the ball while still holding it, the referee shall award a penalty-kick, if the offence took place within the penalty-area.
2. If a player leans on the shoulders of another player of his own team in order to head the ball, the referee shall stop the game, caution the player for ungentlemanly conduct and award an indirect free-kick to the opposing side.
3. A player's obligation when joining or rejoining his team after the start of the match to 'report to the referee' must be interpreted as meaning 'to draw the attention of the referee from the touch-line'. The signal from the referee shall be made by a definite gesture which makes the player understand that he may come into the field of play; it is not necessary for the referee to wait until the game is stopped

(this does not apply in respect of an infringement of Law IV), but the referee is the sole judge of the moment in which he gives his signal of acknowledgement.

4. The letter and spirit of Law XII do not oblige the referee to stop a game to administer a caution. He may, if he chooses, apply the advantage. If he does apply the advantage, he shall caution the player when play stops.
5. If a player covers up the ball without touching it in an endeavour not to have it played by an opponent, he obstructs but does not infringe Law XII par. 3 because he is already in possession of the ball and covers it for tactical reasons whilst the ball remains within playing distance. In fact, he is actually playing the ball and does not commit an infringement; in this case, the player may be charged because he is in fact playing the ball.
6. If a player positions his arms to impede an opponent and steps from one side to the other, moving his arms up and down to delay his opponent, forcing him to change course, but does not make "bodily contact" the referee shall caution the player for ungentlemanly conduct and award an indirect free-kick.
7. If a player impedes the progress of the opposing goalkeeper, in an attempt to prevent him from putting the ball into play in accordance with Law XII, 5 (a), the referee shall award an indirect free-kick.
8. If, after a referee has awarded a free-kick, a player protests violently by using abusive or foul language and is sent off the field, the free-kick should not be taken until the player has left the field.
9. Any player, whether he is within or outside the field of play, whose conduct is ungentlemanly or violent, whether or not it is directed towards an opponent, a colleague, the referee, a assistant referee or other person, or who uses foul or abusive language, is guilty of an offence, and shall be dealt with according to the nature of the offence committed.
10. If, in the opinion of the referee, a goalkeeper lies on the ball longer than is necessary, he shall be penalised for ungentlemanly conduct and
  - (a) be cautioned and an indirect free-kick awarded to the opposing team;
  - (b) in case of repetition of the offence, be sent off the field.
11. The offence of spitting at officials and other persons, or similar unseemly behaviour shall be considered as violent conduct within the meaning of section (n) of Law XII.
12. If, when a referee is about to caution a player, and before he has done so, the player commits another offence which merits a caution, the player shall be sent off the field of play.

13. If, in the opinion of the referee, a player who is moving toward his opponent's goal with an obvious opportunity to score a goal is impeded by an opponent, through unlawful means, i.e. an offence punishable by a free-kick (or a penalty-kick), thus denying the attacking player's team the aforesaid goalscoring opportunity, the offending player shall be sent off the field of play for serious foul play in accordance with Law XII (o).
14. If, in the opinion of the referee, a player, other than the goalkeeper within his own penalty area, denies his opponents a goal, or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, by intentionally handling the ball, he shall be sent off the field of play for serious foul play in accordance with Law XII (o).
15. The International F.A. Board is of the opinion that a goalkeeper, in the circumstances described in Law XII 5 (a), will be considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his hands or arms. Possession of the ball would include the goalkeeper intentionally parrying the ball, but would not include the circumstances where, in the opinion of the referee, the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after he has made a save.
16. Subject to the terms of Law XII, a player may pass the ball to his own goalkeeper using his head or chest or knee, etc. If, however, in the opinion of the referee, a player uses a deliberate trick in order to circumvent article 5(c) of Law XII, the player will be guilty of ungentlemanly conduct and will be punished accordingly under the terms of Law XII; that is to say, the player will be cautioned and shown the yellow card and an indirect free-kick will be awarded to the opposing team from the place where the player committed the offence.

In such circumstances, it is irrelevant whether the goalkeeper subsequently touches the ball with his hands or not. The offence is committed by the player in attempting to circumvent both the text and the spirit of Law XII.

## **XIII. FREE-KICK**

Free-kicks shall be classified under two headings: "direct" (from which a goal can be scored direct against the offending side), and "indirect" (from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched by a player other than the kicker before passing through the goal).

When a player is taking a direct or an indirect free-kick inside his own penalty-area, all of the opposing players shall be at least ten yards (9.15 m) from the ball and shall remain outside the penalty-area until the ball has been kicked out of the area. The ball shall be in play immediately it has travelled the distance of its own circumference and is beyond the penalty-area. The goalkeeper shall not receive the ball into his hands, in order that he may thereafter kick it into play. If the ball is not kicked direct into play, beyond the penalty-area, the kick shall be retaken.

When a player is taking a direct or an indirect free-kick outside his own penalty-area, all of the opposing players shall be at least ten yards from the ball, until it is in play, unless they are standing on their own goal-line, between the goal-posts. The ball shall be in play when it has travelled the distance of its own circumference.

If a player of the opposing side encroaches into the penalty-area, or within ten yards of the ball, as the case may be, before a free-kick is taken, the referee shall delay the taking of the kick, until the Law is complied with.

The ball must be stationary when a free-kick is taken, and the kicker shall not play the ball a second time, until it has been touched or played by another player.

Notwithstanding any other reference in these Laws to the point from which a free-kick is to be taken:

1. Any free-kick awarded to the defending team, within its own goal-area, may be taken from any point within the goal-area.
2. Any indirect free-kick awarded to the attacking team within its opponent's goal-area shall be taken from the part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the offence was committed.

### **PUNISHMENT:**

If the kicker, after taking the free-kick, plays the ball a second time before it has been touched or played by another player, an indirect free-kick shall be taken by a player of the opposing team from the spot where the infringement occurred, unless the offence is committed by a player in his opponent's goal-area, in which case the free-kick shall be taken from any point within the goal-area.

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### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. In order to distinguish between a direct and an indirect free-kick, the referee, when he awards an indirect free-kick, shall indicate accordingly by raising an arm above his head. He shall keep his arm in that position until the kick has been taken and retain the signal until the ball has been played or

touched by another player or goes out of play.

2. Players who do not retire to the proper distance when a free-kick is taken must be cautioned and on any repetition be ordered off. It is particularly requested of referees that attempts to delay the taking of a free-kick by encroaching should be treated as serious misconduct.
3. If, when a free-kick is being taken, any of the players dance about or gesticulate in a way calculated to distract their opponents, it shall be deemed ungentlemanly conduct for which the offender(s) shall be cautioned.

## **XIV. PENALTY-KICK**

A penalty-kick shall be taken from the penalty-mark and, when it is being taken, all players with the exception of the player taking the kick, properly identified, and the opposing goalkeeper, shall be within the field of play but outside the penalty-area, at least 10 yards from the penalty mark and must stand behind the penalty mark.

The opposing goalkeeper must stand (without moving his feet) on his own goal-line, between the goal-posts, until the ball is kicked. The player taking the kick must kick the ball forward; he shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player. The ball shall be deemed in play directly it is kicked, i.e. when it has travelled the distance of its circumference. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty-kick. When a penalty-kick is being taken during the normal course of play, or when time has been extended at half-time or full-time to allow a penalty-kick to be taken or retaken, a goal shall not be nullified if, before passing between the posts and under the cross-bar, the ball touches either or both of the goal-posts, or the cross-bar, or the goal-keeper, or any combination of these agencies, providing that no other infringement has occurred.

### **PUNISHMENT:**

For any infringement of this Law:

- a. by the defending team, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has not resulted.
- b. by the attacking team other than by the player taking the kick, if a goal is scored it shall be disallowed and the kick retaken.
- c. by the player taking the penalty-kick, committed after the ball is in play, a player of the opposing team shall take an indirect free-kick from the spot where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

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### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. When the referee has awarded a penalty-kick, he shall not signal for it to be taken, until the players have taken up position in accordance with the Law.
2. (a) If, after the kick has been taken, the ball is stopped in its course towards goal, by an outside agent, the kick shall be retaken.  
  
(b) If, after the kick has been taken, the ball rebounds into play, from the goalkeeper, the cross-bar or a goal-post, and is then stopped in its course by an outside agent, the referee shall stop play and restart it by dropping the ball at the place where it came into contact with the outside agent, unless it was within the goal-area at that time, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal-line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.

3. (a) If, after having given the signal for a penalty-kick to be taken, the referee sees that the goalkeeper is not in his right place on the goal-line, he shall, nevertheless, allow the kick to proceed. It shall be retaken, if a goal is not scored.

(b) If, after the referee has given the signal for a penalty-kick to be taken, and before the ball has been kicked, the goal-keeper moves his feet, the referee shall, nevertheless, allow the kick to proceed. It shall be retaken, if a goal is not scored.

(c) If, after the referee has given the signal for a penalty-kick to be taken, and before the ball is in play, a player of the defending team encroaches into the penalty-area, or within ten yards of the penalty-mark, the referee shall, nevertheless, allow the kick to proceed. It shall be retaken, if a goal is not scored.

The player concerned shall be cautioned.

4. (a) If, when a penalty-kick is being taken, the player taking the kick is guilty of ungentlemanly conduct, the kick, if already taken, shall be retaken, if a goal is scored. The player concerned shall be cautioned.

(b) If, after the referee has given the signal for a penalty-kick to be taken, and before the ball is in play, a colleague of the player taking the kick encroaches into the penalty-area or within ten yards of the penalty-mark, the referee shall, nevertheless, allow the kick to proceed. If a goal is scored, it shall be disallowed, and the kick retaken.

The players concerned shall be cautioned.

(c) If, in the circumstances described in the foregoing paragraph, the ball rebounds into play from the goalkeeper, the cross-bar or a goal-post, and a goal has not been scored, the referee shall stop the game, caution the player and award an indirect free-kick to the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

5. (a) If, after the referee has given the signal for a penalty-kick to be taken, and before the ball is in play, the goalkeeper moves from his position on the goal-line, or moves his feet, and a colleague of the kicker encroaches into the penalty-area or within 10 yards of the penalty-mark, the kick, if taken, shall be retaken.

The colleague of the kicker shall be cautioned.

(b) If, after the referee has given the signal for a penalty-kick to be taken, and before the ball is in play, a player of each team encroaches into the penalty-area, or within 10 yards of the penalty-mark, the kick, if taken, shall be retaken. The players concerned shall be cautioned.

6. When a match is extended, at half-time or full-time, to allow a penalty-kick to be taken or retaken, the extension shall last until the moment that the penalty-kick has been completed, i.e. until the referee has decided whether or not a goal is scored, and the game shall terminate immediately the referee has made his decision. After the player taking the penalty-kick has put the ball into play, no player other than the defending goalkeeper may play or touch the ball before the kick is completed.

7. When a penalty-kick is being taken in extended time:

- a. the provisions of all of the foregoing paragraphs, except paragraphs (2) (b) and (4) (c) shall apply in the usual way, and
- b. in the circumstances described in paragraphs (2) (b) and (4) (c) the game shall terminate immediately the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper, the cross-bar or the goal-post.

## **XV. THROW-IN**

When the whole of the ball passes over a touch-line, either on the ground or in the air, it shall be thrown in from the point where it crossed the line, in any direction, by a player of the team opposite to that of the player who last touched it. The thrower at the moment of delivering the ball must face the field of play and part of each foot shall be either on the touch-line or on the ground outside the touch-line. The thrower shall use both hands and shall deliver the ball from behind and over his head. The ball shall be in play immediately it enters the field of play, but the thrower shall not again play the ball until it has been touched or played by another player. A goal shall not be scored direct from a throw-in.

### **PUNISHMENT:**

- a. If the ball is improperly thrown in the throw-in shall be taken by a player of the opposing team.
- b. If the thrower plays the ball a second time before it has been touched or played by another player, an indirect free-kick shall be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

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### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. If a player taking a throw-in plays the ball a second time by handling it within the field of play before it has been touched or played by another player, the referee shall award a direct free-kick.
2. A player taking a throw-in must face the field of play with some part of his body.
3. If, when a throw-in is being taken, any of the opposing players dance about or gesticulate in a way calculated to distract or impede the thrower, it shall be deemed ungentlemanly conduct, for which the offender(s) shall be cautioned.
4. A throw-in taken from any position other than the point where the ball passed over the touch-line shall be considered to have been improperly thrown in.

## **XVI. GOAL–KICK**

When the whole of the ball passes over the goal–line excluding that portion between the goal–posts, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by one of the attacking team, it shall be kicked direct into play beyond the penalty–area from any point within the goal–area by a player of the defending team. A goalkeeper shall not receive the ball into his hands from a goal–kick in order that he may thereafter kick it into play. If the ball is not kicked beyond the penalty–area, i.e. direct into play, the kick shall be retaken. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has touched or been played by another player. A goal shall not be scored direct from such a kick. Players of the team opposing that of the player taking the goal–kick shall remain outside the penalty–area until the ball has been kicked out of the penalty–area.

### **PUNISHMENT:**

If a player taking a goal–kick plays the ball a second time after it has passed beyond the penalty–area, but before it has touched or been played by another player, an indirect free–kick shall be awarded to the opposing team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

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### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. When a goal–kick has been taken and the player who has kicked the ball touches it again before it has left the penalty–area, the kick has not been taken in accordance with the Law and must be retaken

## **XVI. GOAL–KICK**

When the whole of the ball passes over the goal–line excluding that portion between the goal–posts, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by one of the attacking team, it shall be kicked direct into play beyond the penalty–area from any point within the goal–area by a player of the defending team. A goalkeeper shall not receive the ball into his hands from a goal–kick in order that he may thereafter kick it into play. If the ball is not kicked beyond the penalty–area, i.e. direct into play, the kick shall be retaken. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has touched or been played by another player. A goal shall not be scored direct from such a kick. Players of the team opposing that of the player taking the goal–kick shall remain outside the penalty–area until the ball has been kicked out of the penalty–area.

### **PUNISHMENT:**

If a player taking a goal–kick plays the ball a second time after it has passed beyond the penalty–area, but before it has touched or been played by another player, an indirect free–kick shall be awarded to the opposing team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.

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### ***DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL F.A. BOARD***

1. When a goal–kick has been taken and the player who has kicked the ball touches it again before it has left the penalty–area, the kick has not been taken in accordance with the Law and must be retaken

## **XVII. CORNER-KICK**

When the whole of the ball passes over the goal-line, excluding that portion between the goal-posts, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by one of the defending team, a member of the attacking team shall take a corner-kick, i.e. the whole of the ball shall be placed within the quarter circle at the nearest corner-flagpost, which must not be moved, and it shall be kicked from that position. A goal may be scored direct from such a kick. Players of the team opposing that of the player taking the corner-kick shall not approach within 10 yards of the ball until it is in play, i.e. it has travelled the distance of its own circumference, nor shall the kicker play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.

### **PUNISHMENT:**

- a. If the player who takes the kick plays the ball a second time before it has been touched or played by another player, the referee shall award an indirect free-kick to the opposing team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law XIII.
- b. For any other infringement the kick shall be retaken.