



Summary of the 2001 Changes To the Laws of the Game

At the 115th annual meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB), held in Edinburgh, Scotland, a number of proposals for changes to the Laws of the Game were discussed. The changes approved by the Board, along with their reasons for the changes (published in FIFA Circular No. 750 dated 10 April 2001), are given below. New text is indicated with bold type. A few comments regarding the application of these changes in AYSO are shown.

These amendments to the Laws become effective on 1 July 2001. The Board also issued several instructions and directives, which are effective immediately.

The first change is to the Notes on the Laws of the Game. These notes specify the only modifications to the Laws that are permitted.

Notes on the Laws of the Game:

*Subject to the agreement of the national associations 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 footballers, for veteran footballers (over 35 years) **and for players with disabilities.***

Reason: This change recognises the large number of players with disabilities who play football and permits appropriate modifications to the Laws to enable them to take part in officially organised competitions.

AYSO Comment: A reminder of the permissible modifications: 1) size of the field of play, 2) size, weight and material of the ball, 3) width between the goalposts and height of the crossbar from the ground, 4) duration of the periods of play, and 5) substitutions.

The following change was made to Law 3:

Law 3 – The Number of Players; Decision 2

*~~The coach~~ **A team official** may convey tactical instructions to the players during the match and ~~he~~ must return to his position ~~immediately~~ after giving these instructions **doing so. He and the other** ~~All team~~ officials must remain within the confines of the technical area, where such an area is provided, and they must behave in a responsible manner.*

Reason: The new text recognises that tactical instructions may be given by different team officials during the match provided the person returns to his or her position after giving these instructions and behaves in a responsible manner. The statement that the team official must return immediately to his or her position has been removed.

AYSO Comment: AYSO's 'technical area' consists of the coaches' area, which extends ten yards on each side of the halfway line, the front and back edges, respectively, one and three yards from the touch line. Participation by coaches during AYSO games is limited to *positive instruction* and *encouragement*, and coaches must remain within the coaches' area.

The following changes were made to Law 12:

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct; Indirect Free Kick

Delete Bullet Point 5:

~~•wastes time~~

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct; Decision 3

Delete the Final Paragraph:

~~*The goalkeeper is considered to be guilty of time wasting if he holds the ball in his hands or arms for more than 5-6 seconds.*~~

Reason: Both texts are no longer necessary because of the alteration to Law 12 in 2000 which stated that a goalkeeper is permitted to control the ball with his hands or arms for up to six seconds.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct; Disciplinary Sanctions

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

Reason: This clarifies the use of the red and yellow cards.

AYSO Comment: Reminder – Cards may be shown only during the match. Any misconduct occurring before the opening kick-off or after the game must be reported, and it is recommended that the referee also indicate whether it was a red card or yellow card offense.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct; Sending-Off Offences

New Text (to be added after Sending-Off Offence No. 7):

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

Reason: This clarifies the situation for players who have been sent off.

AYSO Comment: Although the Laws of the Game require a player who is sent off to leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area, the AYSO National Referee Program recommends that youth players who are sent off be allowed to remain on the sideline, under the control of their coach, unless when leaving, they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct; Decision 1

Delete: *A penalty kick is awarded if, while the ball is in play, the goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, strikes or attempts to strike an opponent by throwing the ball at him.*

The decisions 2 through 6 became decisions 1 through 5 respectively.

Reason: This confirms the sanction to be taken, as stated in the Questions and Answers Book on the Laws of the Game, when an object is thrown at an opponent from a distance.

AYSO Comment: This is the new interpretation of where “an offence occurred” (as published in last year’s revised Q&A Book). Previously a foul was committed “where the guilty party started the action.” It is now “where the object struck or would have struck the opponent.” Sorry about that.

The “KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK” section (following Law 17) was given a new title, with new text (section) added as follows:

PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE THE WINNER OF A MATCH

The Golden Goal and taking kicks from the penalty mark are methods of determining the winning team where competition rules require there to be a winning team after a match has been drawn.

The Golden Goal

Procedure

- *During the period of extra time played at the end of normal playing time, the team which scores the first goal is declared the winner.*
- *If no goals are scored the match is decided by kicks from the penalty mark*

Kicks From the Penalty Mark

Procedure (remaining text unchanged)

Reason: To formally recognise the approval by the International F.A. Board of the Golden Goal as one of the possible procedures to determine the winner of a match.

The International Board also provided the following ‘Information, Instructions and Directives’

Holding and Pulling

The International FA Board expressed its concern at the amount of holding and pulling which was prevalent in football today. It recognised that not every instance of holding and pulling of jerseys and shorts was unsporting behaviour, as is also the case with deliberate handball. It expressed regret, however, that referees were not applying the Laws fully in dealing with blatant cases of holding and pulling and issued the following Mandatory Instruction:

Referees are instructed that, in the case of blatant holding and pulling, the offence must be sanctioned by a direct free kick, or a penalty kick if the offence is committed inside the penalty area, and the player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour.

Treatment of Injured Players

The Board considered the problems caused by injuries to players. It was of the opinion that referees should allow players to return to the field of play as soon as possible after they have recovered from injury. In this respect, and in the case of players returning from treatment for a bleeding injury, referees may be assisted by the fourth official, where one has been appointed to the match.

The Board also expressed its concern at the loss of playing time caused by the assessment of injuries to players and their removal from the field of play. The safety of the players must always be the main priority, however referees are instructed to add the full amount of time lost for these and any other reasons at the end of each period of play.

Experiments to the Laws of the Game – Two referees

The Board, having monitored the experiment of using of two referees in a number of federations, decided to end the experiment.

AYSO Comment: Not a surprise. Another reminder – The diagonal system of control is the approved method of control for all non small-sided AYSO matches.

Experiments to the Laws of the Game – 9.15 metre (10 yards) Advancement

The Board received reports from the Football Association and from the Scottish Football Association about the experiment of advancing play by 9.15 metres towards the centre of the opposing goal where a player failed to respect the required distance, delayed the restart of play by carrying, throwing or kicking the ball away, showed dissent by word or action or indulged in any other form of unsporting behaviour.

It agreed that the experiment should continue for another year with an amendment to the current experiment to cease the advancement of play at the penalty area line.

Celebration of a Goal

The Board recognised that the celebration of a goal was an important and emotional part of football and relaxed the earlier statement in FIFA Circular 579 of 23rd January 1996 that any player removing their jersey when celebrating a goal should be cautioned.

Players will no longer be cautioned if they remove their shirt but they will be cautioned for unsporting behaviour if their celebrations are provocative and intended to incite or ridicule opponents or opposing spectators. Players guilty of excessive time-wasting while celebrating a goal will be cautioned, as has been the case so far.

Players Wearing Spectacles

Sympathy was expressed for players, especially young players, who need to wear spectacles. It was accepted that new technology had made sports spectacles much safer, both for the player himself and for other players. While the referee has the final decision on the safety of players' equipment, the Board expects that they will take full account of modern technology and the improved safety features of spectacle design when making their decision.

AYSO Comment: Players who require *prescription glasses* are to be allowed to wear them during a match. The AYSO NRP recommends, but does not require, that retaining straps be worn. Rubber bands may also be used for this purpose. *Prescription goggles* such as the type used by racquetball players are also permitted, subject to the approval of the referee prior to the start of the match. Spectacle guards made of plastic or other hard material are not permitted.

Artificial Surfaces

The Board was pleased to note the major developments taking place in artificial playing surfaces and the introduction of the FIFA Quality Concept for Artificial Turf.

Advertising

The Board noted with concern that its Decision taken on 4th March 1995 prohibiting advertising and club logos on goal nets and corner flags, was not being respected.

Such advertising or publicity is not permitted in the Laws of the Game and FIFA was asked to take action against clubs which do not respect these instructions.



Summary
Of The Year 2001
Changes To The
Laws of the Game