

## **Fall 2019 FIFA Rule Update**

IFAB generally updates the LOTG (Laws Of The Game) in June of each year. This year several major law changes go into effect. The purpose of this memorandum is to briefly summarize the new laws and outline the expectation of each official should enforce them.

**Coin Toss before the match:** The team that wins the coin toss can now decide if they want the ball (i.e., to kickoff) or which goal they will defend.

**Dropped ball:** The reasons for restarting play with a dropped ball have not changed. The change is to make sure that the team that had possession keeps possession. That is why the way we conduct this restart has major changes here we need to be familiar with:

- If play is stopped inside the Penalty Area, the ball will be dropped for the goalkeeper
- If play is stopped outside the Penalty Area, the ball will be dropped for ONE player of the team that last touched the ball and at the place where the ball was last touched
- All other players need to be 4.5 yards from the spot of the dropped ball
- If an opportunity develops because the ball hit you, the Referee (or a goal is scored because the ball was last touched by you, the Referee) the restart will be a dropped ball.

**Free Kick - Walls:** The new Law says that when there is a wall of 3 or more defenders, the attacking team (the one taking the free kick) cannot have players in the wall. In fact, the attackers need to be at least 1 yard from the wall.

- If an attacker is closer than 1 yard, the other team gets an indirect free kick. So, failure to comply means you lose the free kick.

**Goal Kicks/Free Kicks by Defense in their own Penalty Area:** The ball is now in play for all restarts including the ones mentioned above when the “ball is kicked and clearly moves”. This means that the ball no longer needs to leave the Penalty Area to be in play. This will be a major change. Keep in mind the following additional requirements when the ball is being played out from the Penalty Area.

- Attacking players still need to be outside the Penalty Area
- Attacking players still need to be a minimum of 10 yards from the ball

The difference is they can charge the ball as soon as it is kicked and clearly moves.

**Penalty Kick – Goalkeeper:** In the past the goalkeeper was required to have both feet on the line. The new Law is that they must **HAVE ONLY ONE FOOT ON THE GOAL LINE AT THE TAKING OF THE PENALTY KICK.**

- The explanation says that if the player taking the kick can stutter on the run, it is reasonable that the goalkeeper can take one step in anticipation of the kick.

**Deliberate handball will remain an offense under the rewritten Laws of the Game.** The following additional descriptions (situations) are now a part of the Law:

**The following ‘handball’ situations, even if accidental, will be a free kick:**

- the ball goes into the goal after touching an attacking player’s hand/arm
- player gains control/possession of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then scores, or creates a goal-scoring opportunity
- the ball touches a player’s hand/arm which has made their body unnaturally bigger
- the ball touches a player’s hand/arm when it is above their shoulder (unless the player has deliberately played the ball which then touches their hand/arm)

**The following will not usually be a free kick, unless they are one of the above situations:**

- the ball touches a player’s hand/arm directly from their own head/body/foot or the head/body/foot of another player who is close/near
- the ball touches a player’s hand/arm which is close to their body and has not made their body unnaturally bigger
- if a player is falling and the ball touches their hand/arm when it is between their body and the ground to support the body (but not extended to make the body bigger)
- If the goalkeeper attempts to ‘clear’ (release into play) a throw-in or deliberate kick from a team-mate but the ‘clearance’ fails, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball

## **Explanation**

Greater clarity is needed for handball, especially on those occasions when ‘nondeliberate’ handball is an offence. The re-wording follows a number of principles:

- soccer does not accept a goal being scored by a hand/arm (even if accidental)
- soccer expects a player to be penalized for handball if they gain possession/control of the ball from their hand/arm and gain a major advantage e.g. score or create a goal-scoring opportunity
- it is natural for a player to put their arm between their body and the ground for support when falling.
- having the hand/arm above shoulder height is rarely a ‘natural’ position and a player is ‘taking a risk’ by having the hand/arm in that position, including when sliding
- if the ball comes off the player’s body, or off another player (of either team) who is close by, onto the hands/arms it is often impossible to avoid contact with the ball
- When the GK clearly kicks or tries to kick the ball into play, this shows no intention to handle the ball so, if the ‘clearance’ attempt is unsuccessful, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball without committing an offence

**Substitutions:** In the past the players being substituted left the field where the subs came on (at the sideline). Now, they can leave the field from the closest place to where they are. We will not be strict on this implementation because we have unlimited subs. It is recommended that you continue to force the players to leave the field at the same place where the subs come onto the field.