

Rule Changes

1. Free kicks: No attacking players in wall

The IFAB has approved a rule change which prohibits attacking players - ie those from the team on attacking from the free kick - from being in the wall.

Specifically, **when there is a wall of three or more players attackers are not allowed within one meter of it.**

Any attacking player found to be less than one meter from the wall when a free kick is taken will be penalized and the other team will be rewarded with an indirect free kick.

The idea behind the change is to avoid time-wasting and disturbances between players that may result in physical altercations.

2. Goal Kicks

Previously, the ball was deemed 'dead' until it left the penalty area, but a new change means that the ball is in play as soon as it is touched and it can be played inside the 18-yard box.

Early confusion around this rule led the IFAB to clarify that opposition players are still not allowed in the box until the ball is played.

Clarification: <https://www.theifab.com/news/clarification-law-16-the-goal-kick>

3. Substitutions: Players must leave nearest point (Probably not going to enforce)

Players who are being taken off and replaced **must now leave the pitch by the nearest point** on the touchline, which means we will no longer be forced to endure preposterously slow walks to the half-way line.

So players will have to think twice about how they exit the pitch and, not only that, they must make their way straight to the technical area or dressing room otherwise they risk being sanctioned for unsporting behavior.

4. Kick-off

From 2019-20 on, the team that wins the coin toss has a choice of picking which half to attack or to take first kick-off.

The thinking behind this rule is that many players will opt to take kick-off, since a goal can be scored directly from one.

5. Yellow & red cards for coaches (Already in place)

In order to clamp down on difficult behavior from coaches who don't see eye to eye with the referee or their opposite number, officials will be able to show them yellow or red cards, in the same way they do with players.

If, in the event of a touchline melee for example, the offending individual cannot be identified for punishment, the senior coach who is in the technical area will be the default recipient.

6. Handball: Accidental offences deemed free kicks (Very tough for refs to enforce without VAR)

The IFAB has attempted to provide more clarity on the handball offence for occasions when the offence is deemed to be 'non-deliberate'.

Essentially, the changes will mean that there will be **no goal in cases where the ball accidentally strikes a player's hand before crossing over the line.**

Similarly, if a player has accidentally handled the ball and created an advantage or subsequently scores, they will be penalized with a free kick.

7. Penalty kicks: Goalkeepers must have at least one foot on the goal line

The issue of penalty kicks has cropped up a few times in recent years and the trend has been towards reducing the freedom of the goalkeeper.

That hasn't changed with the latest update to the rules, which dictate that the shot-stopper **must not be moving or touching the goalposts.**

The new rule changes also say that the goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on or in line with the goal-line.

"Allowing the goalkeeper to have only one foot touching the goal line (or, if jumping, in line with the goal line) when the penalty kick is taken is a more practical approach as it is easier to identify if both feet are not on the line," goes the IFAB's explanation.

"As the kicker can 'stutter' in the run, it is reasonable that the goalkeeper can take one step in anticipation of the kick."

As well as those points, the penalty taker will now be permitted to receive a quick treatment if necessary, before taking the kick.

8. Drop ball no longer competitive

If play is stopped inside the penalty area the ball will simply be dropped for the goalkeeper.

If it is stopped outside the penalty area the ball will be dropped for a player from the team that last touched the ball. In all cases, players will have to be at least four meters (four and a half yards) away.

Here's the IFAB's explanation: "The current dropped ball procedure often leads to a 'manufactured' restart which is 'exploited' unfairly (e.g. kicking the ball out for a throw-in deep in the opponents' half) or an aggressive confrontation.

"Returning the ball to the team that last played it restores what was 'lost' when play was stopped, except in the penalty area where it is simpler to return the ball to the goalkeeper.

"To prevent that team gaining an unfair advantage, all players of both teams, except the player receiving the ball, must be at least 4m (4.5 yds) away."