



To all national football associations,
and confederations

Circular no. 28

138th Annual General Meeting of The International Football Association Board

Decisions

Zurich, 21 March 2024
SEC/2024-C428/bru

Dear Sir or Madam,

The 138th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The International Football Association Board (The IFAB) took place in Loch Lomond, Scotland, on 2 March 2024 and was chaired by Mike Mulraney, President of the Scottish Football Association. The main decisions taken at the AGM are outlined below.

In order to ensure that the preparations to implement the approved changes to the Laws of the Game can begin without delay and to assist with the translation of the Laws, all of the changes are set out in the enclosed document (Law changes 2024/25), which is also available at <https://www.theifab.com/documents/>.

The Laws of the Game 2024/25 will be effective from **1 July 2024**. Competitions starting before that date may implement the changes earlier or delay their implementation until no later than the start of the next competition. The same principles also apply to the 'Additional permanent concussion substitutions protocol' and the amended 'Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)'.

1. Laws of the Game 2024/25

The members approved several changes and clarifications for the Laws of the Game 2024/25, which can be found in the above-mentioned enclosure.

Main Law changes:

- **Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct**

The AGM agreed that for non-deliberate handball offences in the penalty area, the same philosophy should apply as for offences (fouls) which are an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball. Consequently, for penalties awarded for a non-deliberate handball offence, DOGSO offences will now result in a yellow card and SPA offences will result in no card. There is no change to the punishment for deliberate handball offences, which will continue to be sanctioned with a red card when a penalty is awarded, as they are similar to holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.

- **Law 14 – The Penalty Kick**

It was decided that encroachment by players will be penalised only if it has an impact, which is the same philosophy applied to goalkeeper encroachment. It was also decided that part of the ball must touch or overhang the centre of the penalty mark.

Other changes and clarifications:

- **Law 3 – The Players; Law 4 – The Players' Equipment**

The meeting agreed that teams must have a captain who wears an identifying armband. The captain must wear the armband issued or authorised by the relevant competition organiser or a simple armband.

It was also agreed that the size and protection provided by the shinguards are each player's own responsibility. The meeting agreed that players should be aware of the potential dangers resulting from wearing very small/thin shinguards.

Other changes and clarifications that were approved for inclusion in the Laws of the Game 2024/25, including a revision of the 'Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)', are detailed in the above-mentioned enclosure, which is also available at <https://www.theifab.com/documents>.

2. Additional permanent concussion substitutions

The members received an update on the trials with additional permanent concussion substitutions and agreed that these should now be included under Law 3 – The Players as a fixed option for competitions, with details of the protocol to be included under 'Notes and modifications'. Whereas the trials involved two protocols, the AGM decided that one protocol in which each team may use one additional permanent concussion substitute in a game and the other team gets an additional substitute (and substitution opportunity) will now be used. The protocol is attached to this circular.

It was also agreed that trials with temporary concussion substitutions would not be undertaken at this stage but would remain under consideration.

3. Announcement of VAR-related decisions

Members were informed of the decision taken at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) in November 2023 (<https://www.theifab.com/news/abm-2023>) to extend the ongoing trials in which the referee publicly announces and explains the final decision after a video assistant referee (VAR) 'review' or lengthy VAR 'check' to domestic competitions.

4. Trials related to improving participant behavior and increasing playing time/reducing time wasting

The members approved the trials endorsed by the ABM related to improving participant behaviour and increasing playing time, details of which can be found in circular no. 29 (which will be sent out in due course).

Regarding temporary dismissals (sin bins), the members agreed to study the current guidelines available as an option to some competitions and to consider whether their use could be extended in the future. The guidelines have been rewritten and include some changes agreed at the AGM. The revised guidelines are attached to this circular.

5. Other matters

The members reinforced The IFAB's position that the wearing of cameras and microphones by players remains strictly forbidden and that match officials may wear cameras only as part of a trial approved by The IFAB.

The members received a report from FIFA on the trial, approved at the 134th AGM in 2020, of an alternative approach to the offside law. The trial will continue, and the outcomes will be carefully monitored.

Downloadable versions of the full Laws of the Game 2024/25 book will be available on our website shortly. The latest version of the Laws will also be accessible as from 1 July 2024 on The IFAB's app (<https://www.theifab.com/logapp/>).

Should your association/competition organiser wish to order hard copies of the Laws of the Game, these can be pre-ordered through The IFAB's webshop at <https://shop.theifab.com> **as from 23 March 2024**, at the price of CHF 3.50 per copy. To ensure the correct number of copies is produced, please place your order by **23 April 2024** at the latest. Please note that late orders may incur greater production costs and thus the price per copy may be higher.

The IFAB will continue to engage in global consultations with stakeholders so that the Laws of the Game continue to evolve to reflect changes in the game and promote and protect fairness and integrity on the field of play.

Thank you for your attention. Please contact us if you have any questions or enquiries.

Yours faithfully,
The IFAB



Lukas Brud
Secretary

Cc: FIFA
Encl.: as mentioned



Law
changes
2024/25

Outline summary of Law changes

Law 1 – The Field of Play

- Clarification that the goal line technology (GLT) indication that a goal has been scored can be communicated via the referee’s earpiece/headset

Law 3 – The Players

- The use of additional permanent concussion substitutions is now available to competitions
- Each team must have a captain who wears an identifying armband

Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment

- Clarification that players are responsible for the size and suitability of their shinguards
- Clarification of the requirements for the captain’s compulsory armband
- Reference to gloves to be included under ‘Other equipment’
- Reference to tracksuit bottoms for goalkeepers to be removed from ‘Compulsory equipment’ and included under ‘Other equipment’

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- Clarification that non-deliberate handball offences for which penalties are awarded are to be sanctioned in the same way as fouls which are an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

- Clarification that part of the ball must touch or overhang the centre of the penalty mark
- Encroachment by players will be penalised only if it has an impact (same philosophy as goalkeeper encroachment)

Other:

Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)

- The guidelines have been revised, including, most notably, to specify that a temporarily dismissed player can return to the field of play only during a stoppage and to simplify System B

Details of all Law changes

The following are the changes to the Laws of the Game for the 2024/25 edition. For each change, the amended or additional wording is provided together with the previous wording, where appropriate, followed by an explanation of the change.

Key

The main Law changes are underlined in yellow and highlighted in the margin. Editorial changes are underlined.

YC = yellow card (caution); RC = red card (sending-off).

Law 1 – The Field of Play

11. Goal line technology (GLT)

Additional text

Principles of GLT

(...)

The indication of whether a goal has been scored must be immediate and automatically confirmed within one second by the GLT system only to the match officials (via the referee's watch, by vibration and visual signal, and/or via the referee's earpiece/headset); it may also be sent to the video operation room (VOR).

Explanation

Clarification that the GLT indication that a goal has been scored can be communicated via the referee's earpiece/headset.

Law 3 – The Players

2. Number of substitutions

Additional text (after the 'Return substitutions' section)

Additional permanent concussion substitutions

Competitions may use additional permanent concussion substitutions in accordance with the protocol listed under 'Notes and modifications'.

Explanation

Competitions now have the option to use additional permanent concussion substitutions. The protocol details are contained in the 'Notes and modifications' section of the Laws of the Game.

Law 3 – The Players

10. Team captain

Additional text

Each team must have a captain on the field of play who wears an identifying armband. The team captain has no special status or privileges but (...)

Explanation

Teams must have a captain who can be easily identified by the referee. Armband details are outlined in Law 4.

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

2. Compulsory equipment

Amended text

The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- (...)
- shinguards – these must be made of a suitable material and be of an appropriate size to provide reasonable protection and be covered by the socks. Players are responsible for the size and suitability of their shinguards
- (...)

Explanation

Clarification that players are responsible for the size and suitability of their shinguards. Having provided this information in the definition of 'shinguard' in the Glossary, it is now also included in the Laws text.

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

2. Compulsory equipment

Additional text

The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- (...)
- footwear

The team captain must wear the armband issued or authorised by the relevant competition organiser, or a single-coloured armband that may also have the word 'captain' or the letter 'C' or a translation thereof, which should also be a single colour (see also 'General modifications').

Explanation

The captain must wear an armband which is simple and conforms to the requirements of Law 4 relating to slogans, statements, images and advertising. It may be issued or authorised by the competition organiser.

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

2. Compulsory equipment & 4. Other equipment

Amended text

2. Compulsory equipment

The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- (...)

~~Goalkeepers may wear tracksuit bottoms.~~

(...)

4. Other equipment

Non-dangerous protective equipment, for example gloves, headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material is permitted, as are goalkeepers' caps and sports spectacles. Goalkeepers may wear tracksuit bottoms.

Explanation

Reference to gloves has been included under 'Other equipment' to reflect the fact that they are widely used, especially by goalkeepers. Reference to tracksuit bottoms for goalkeepers has been removed from 'Compulsory equipment' and included under 'Other equipment' to accurately reflect the fact that they are not compulsory.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

3. Disciplinary action

Amended text

(...)

Cautions for unsporting behaviour

There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, including if a player:

- (...)
- handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack, except where the referee awards a penalty kick for a non-deliberate handball offence
- denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick for a non-deliberate handball offence
- (...)

Sending-off offences

A player, substitute or substituted player who commits any of the following offences is sent off:

- denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a deliberate handball offence (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- (...)

Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO)

(...)

Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a deliberate handball offence, the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs (except a goalkeeper within their own penalty area). Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a non-deliberate handball offence and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is cautioned.

Explanation

Non-deliberate handball offences are usually the result of a player attempting to play fairly, so when a penalty kick is awarded for such offences, the same philosophy should apply as for offences (fouls) which are an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball, i.e. DOGSO offences result in a yellow card and SPA offences result in no card. Deliberate handball remains a red-card offence when a penalty kick is awarded, as it is similar to holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball etc.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

1. Procedure

Amended text

The ball must be stationary, ~~or~~ with part of the ball touching or overhanging the centre of the penalty mark, and the goalposts, crossbar and goal net must not be moving.

Explanation

Clarification regarding the ball position for a penalty kick, as there can be disputes and/or delays, especially when the penalty mark is not a 'spot'. Part of the ball must touch or overhang the centre of the penalty mark (just as the ball must be inside the corner area, including overhanging the corner arc, at a corner kick). As with other positional matters, if ground conditions dictate a slight change, this is a decision for the referee.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

2. Offences and sanctions

Additional text

(...)

If, before the ball is in play, one of the following occurs:

- a team-mate of the player taking the penalty kick is penalised for encroachment only if:
 - the encroachment clearly impacted on the goalkeeper; or
 - the encroaching player plays the ball or challenges an opponent for the ball and then scores, attempts to score or creates a goal-scoring opportunity
- a team-mate of the goalkeeper is penalised for encroachment only if:
 - the encroachment clearly impacted on the kicker; or
 - the encroaching player plays the ball or challenges an opponent for the ball and this prevents the opponents from scoring, attempting to score or creating a goal-scoring opportunity
- (...)

Explanation

Player encroachment can be difficult to detect and manage, especially at the lower levels of the game, where there may be no neutral assistant referees. However, it can easily be identified by the video assistant referee, and if Law 14 were to be applied strictly, most penalty kicks would be retaken. Since encroachment rarely affects the outcome of the kick (only if the ball rebounds into play), the same principle should apply to player encroachment as to goalkeeper encroachment, i.e. it is penalised only if it has an impact.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

3. Summary table

Amended text

	Outcome of the penalty kick	
	Goal	No goal
Encroachment by attacking player	<u>Impact: penalty is retaken</u> <u>No impact: goal</u>	<u>Impact: indirect free kick</u> <u>No impact: no retake</u>
Encroachment by defending player	<u>Impact: goal</u> <u>No impact: goal</u>	<u>Impact: penalty is retaken</u> <u>No impact: no retake</u>
Encroachment by defending and attacking player	<u>Impact: penalty is retaken</u> <u>No impact: goal</u>	<u>Impact: penalty is retaken</u> <u>No impact: no retake</u>
Offence by goalkeeper	Goal	Not saved: penalty is not retaken (unless kicker is clearly impacted) Saved: penalty is retaken and warning for goalkeeper; caution for any further offence(s)
Goalkeeper and kicker offend at the same time	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker
Ball kicked backwards	Indirect free kick	Indirect free kick
'Illegal' feinting	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker
Wrong kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for wrong kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for wrong kicker

Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)

The guidelines have been revised and the main changes are as follows:

- To help manage temporary dismissals, a temporarily dismissed player can return to the field of play only during a stoppage after the end of the temporary dismissal period, i.e. not while the ball is in play
 - If a temporary dismissal period is not completed at the end of the first half of extra time, it continues at the start of the second half of extra time (a temporary dismissal period cannot continue after the end of the second half of extra time, since temporary dismissals are not used in penalties (penalty shoot-out))
 - System B, which uses temporary dismissals as an additional sanction for specific offences only, has been simplified so that any two cautionable offences in the same match will result in the player being (permanently) sent off (RC)
 - 'Handball' has been changed to 'deliberate handball' in the list of offences that might be suitable for a temporary dismissal if they stop or interfere with a promising attack (System B)
-



Laws of the Game 2024/25

Additional permanent concussion substitutions protocol

Effective as from 1st July 2024

The International Football Association Board

Münstergasse 9, 8001 Zürich, Switzerland

T: +41 (0)44 245 1886

theifab.com

Introduction

Following approval at the 138th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The IFAB held in Scotland on 2nd March 2024, the Laws of the Game now allow competitions to permit the use of additional permanent concussion substitutions.

An additional permanent concussion substitution occurs when a player who has an actual or suspected concussion is substituted and takes no further part in the match. This substitution does not count as one of the 'normal' permitted substitutions (or substitution opportunities, where applicable).

Reference to additional permanent concussion substitutions is found in:

Law 3. The Players > 3.2 Number of substitutions

Additional permanent concussion substitutions

Competitions may use additional permanent concussion substitutions in accordance with the protocol listed under 'Notes and modifications'.

NB: Although two different protocols were used during the trials, a single protocol (see below) was approved at The IFAB AGM and must be used in its entirety.

Principles

- Each team is permitted to use a maximum of one 'concussion substitute' in a match.
- A 'concussion substitution' may be made regardless of the number of substitutes already used.
- In competitions in which the number of named substitutes is the same as the maximum number of 'normal substitutes' that can be used, the 'concussion substitute' can be a player who has previously been substituted and may be used at any time, regardless of the number of substitutes already used.
- When a 'concussion substitute' is used, the opposing team then has the option to use an 'additional substitute' for any reason.

Procedure

- The substitution procedure operates in accordance with Law 3 – The Players (except as outlined otherwise below).
- A 'concussion substitution' may be made:
 - immediately after a concussion occurs or is suspected;
 - after an on-field assessment and/or an off-field assessment; or
 - at any other time when a concussion occurs or is suspected, including when a player has previously been assessed and has returned to the field of play.

- If a team decides to make a 'concussion substitution', the referee/fourth official is informed, ideally by using a substitution card/form of a different colour.
- The player with concussion or suspected concussion is not permitted to take any further part in the match, including penalties (penalty shoot-out), and should, where possible, be accompanied to the dressing room and/or a medical facility.
- The opposing team is informed by the referee/fourth official that it has the option of using an 'additional substitute' and an 'additional substitution' opportunity, which may be used concurrently with the 'concussion substitution' made by the other team or at any time thereafter (except as outlined otherwise in the Laws of the Game).

Substitution opportunities

- Making a 'concussion substitution' is separate from any limit on the number of 'normal substitution' opportunities.
- However, if a team makes a 'normal substitution' at the same time as a 'concussion substitution', this will count as one of its 'normal substitution' opportunities.
- Once a team has used all its 'normal substitution' opportunities, it cannot use a 'concussion substitution' to make a 'normal substitution'.
- Where a team makes a 'concussion substitution', the opposing team can use an 'additional substitute' and receives an 'additional substitution' opportunity. This additional opportunity can be used only for the 'additional substitute' and not for a 'normal substitute'.

Match officials

The referee and other match officials, especially the fourth official:

- are not part of a team's decision-making process as to whether a player should be substituted or not, nor whether a player should be replaced by a 'normal substitute' or a 'concussion substitute';
- must not decide whether an actual or suspected injury qualifies for a 'concussion substitute' to be used;
- should give appropriate support where a player has an actual or suspected injury, including by informing the team captain, coach and/or medical staff if they suspect that a player needs to be assessed and/or treated;
- should support a decision by the team captain, coach and/or medical staff that an injured player cannot continue playing, which may require the referee to delay the restart until after the player has left the field of play; and
- must inform the appropriate authorities if there are concerns that a 'concussion substitution' has been made inappropriately.

Laws of the Game 2024/25

Revised 'Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)'

Updated as from 1st July 2024

Introduction

Temporary dismissals (sin bins) for all or some cautionable (YC) offences are an option in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football competitions, subject to the approval of the competition's national FA, confederation or FIFA (whichever is appropriate).

The 138th Annual General Meeting of The IFAB approved a revised version of the 'Guidelines for temporary dismissals (sin bins)', which, as with all Law changes, are effective as from 1st July 2024 but may be introduced earlier.

Changes to the substance of the guidelines are underlined; editorial changes are not marked.

Reference to temporary dismissals is found in:

Law 5. The Referee > 5.3 Powers and duties – Disciplinary action

The referee has the power to show yellow or red cards and, where competition rules permit, temporarily dismiss a player, from entering the field of play at the start of the match until after the match has ended, including during the half-time interval, extra time and penalties (penalty shoot-out).

A temporary dismissal is when a player commits a cautionable (YC) offence and is punished by an immediate 'suspension' from participating in the next part of the match. The philosophy is that an 'instant punishment' can have a significant and immediate positive influence on the behaviour of the offending player and, potentially, the player's team.

The national FA, confederation or FIFA should approve (for publication in the competition rules) a temporary dismissal protocol within the following guidelines:

Players only

- Temporary dismissals apply to all players (including goalkeepers) but not to cautionable (YC) offences committed by a substitute or substituted player

Referee's signal

- The referee will indicate a temporary dismissal by showing a yellow card and then clearly pointing with both arms to the temporary dismissal area (usually the player's technical area)

Temporary dismissal period

- The length of the temporary dismissal period is the same for all offences
 - The length of the temporary dismissal period should be 10–15% of the total playing time (e.g. 10 minutes in a 90-minute match; 8 minutes in an 80-minute match)
 - The temporary dismissal period begins when play restarts after the player has left the field of play
-

- The referee should include in the temporary dismissal period any time 'lost' for a stoppage for which 'additional time' will be allowed at the end of the half (e.g. substitution, injury, goal celebration, etc.)
- Competitions must decide who will help the referee time the dismissal period – it could be the responsibility of a delegate, fourth official or neutral assistant referee; conversely, it could be a team official
- Once the temporary dismissal period has been completed, the player can return from the touchline with the referee's permission, when the ball is next out of play
- The referee has the final decision as to when the player can return
- A temporarily dismissed player can only be substituted after the temporary dismissal period has ended (and only if the team has not used all its permitted substitutes and/or substitution opportunities, if applicable)
- If a temporary dismissal period has not been completed at the end of the first half, the remaining period is served from the start of the second half; this also applies in extra time
- If a temporary dismissal period has not been completed at the end of the second half when extra time is to be played, the remaining period is served from the start of extra time
- A player who is still serving a temporary dismissal at the end of the match is permitted to take part in penalties (penalty shoot-out) as temporary dismissals are not used during penalties (penalty shoot-out)

Temporary dismissal area

- A temporarily dismissed player should remain within the technical area (where one exists) or with the team's coach/technical staff, unless 'warming up' (under the same conditions as a substitute)

Offences during a temporary dismissal period

- A temporarily dismissed player who commits a cautionable (YC) or sending-off (RC) offence during their temporary dismissal period will take no further part in the match and may not be replaced or substituted

Further disciplinary action

- Competitions/national FAs will decide if temporary dismissals must be reported to the appropriate authorities and whether any further disciplinary action may be taken, e.g. suspension for accumulating a number of temporary dismissals, as with 'standard' cautions (YCs)

Temporary dismissal systems

A competition may use either of the following temporary dismissal systems:

- System A – for all cautionable (YC) offences
- System B – for some cautionable (YC) offences

System A – temporary dismissal for all cautionable (YC) offences

- All cautionable (YC) offences are punished with a temporary dismissal
- A player who receives a second caution (YC) in the same match:
 - will serve a second temporary dismissal period and then take no further part in the match
 - may be replaced by a substitute at the end of the second temporary dismissal period if the player's team has not used its maximum number of substitutes and/or substitution opportunities, if applicable (this is because the team has already been 'punished' by playing without that player for two temporary dismissal periods)

System B – temporary dismissal for some cautionable (YC) offences*

- A predefined list of cautionable (YC) offences will be punished with a temporary dismissal
- All other cautionable (YC) offences are punished with a yellow card but no temporary dismissal
- A player who receives two cautions (YCs) in the same match is sent off (RC), even if one caution is/both cautions are for a temporary dismissal offence

**Some competitions may find it valuable to use temporary dismissals only for offences relating to 'inappropriate' behaviour, e.g.:*

- *Simulation*
- *Deliberately delaying the opposing team's restart of the match*
- *Dissent or verbal comments or gestures*
- *Stopping or interfering with a promising attack by holding, pulling, pushing or deliberate handball*
- *Kicker illegally feinting at a penalty kick*
