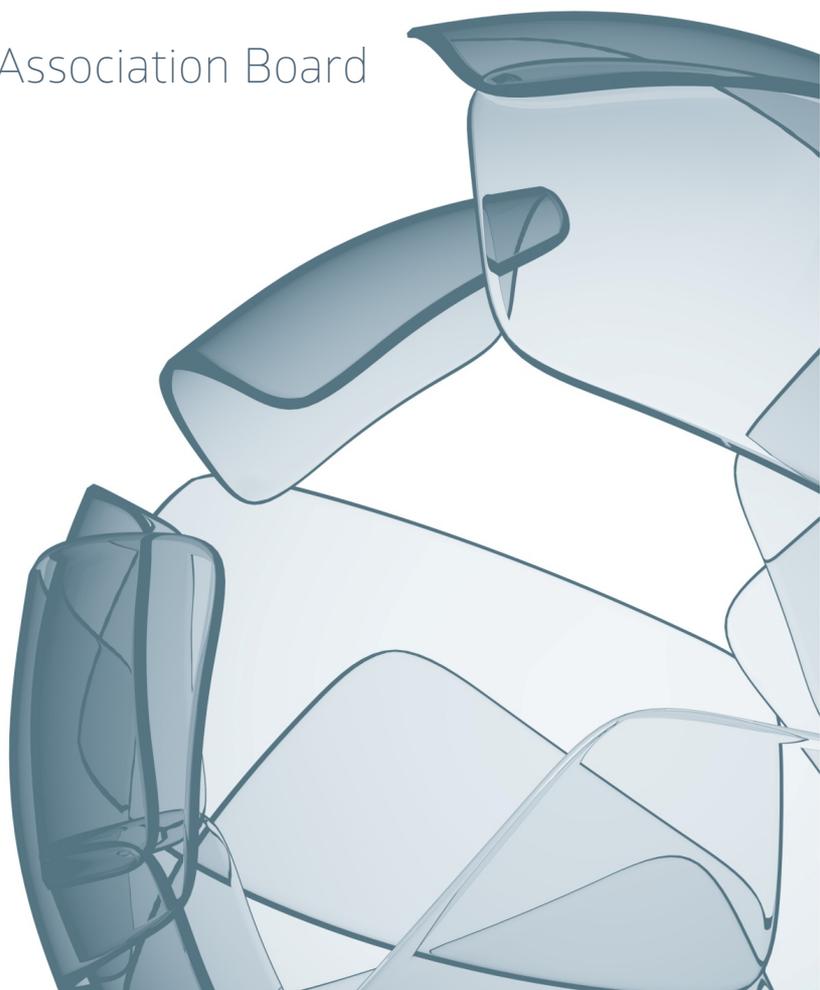


Laws of the Game 2017/18

Summary of Law Changes for Competition Organisers and Administrators

The International Football Association Board

April 2017



Introduction

The 131st AGM of The International FA Board (The IFAB) held in London on 3 March 2017 approved 'a second stage' of changes and clarifications to the Laws of the Game for 2017/18 to complete last year's major Law revision.

An important change is an increase in the flexibility of national FAs to modify parts of the 'organisational' Laws to benefit their domestic football - they now have more options for the football for which they are responsible (see p 3).

The IFAB and FIFA also expressed a strong commitment to a major focus on improving player behaviour, including increasing the role of the captain.

This document contains a summary of the main Law changes which affect competition organisers and administrators, and details of the Modifications of the Laws of the Game.

An electronic version of the Laws of the Game 2017/18 can be downloaded from The IFAB's website (www.theifab.com) which also contains the following summary documents:

- *'Summary of Law Changes for Players, Coaches and the Media'* - a summary which focuses on the Law changes relating to the players and match situations
- *Guidelines for Temporary dismissals (sin bins)*
- *Guidelines for Return substitutes*

Reminders

The IFAB and FIFA would like to remind everyone of two very important aspects of the game:

Captains

- The Laws of the Game state that the captain has '*a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of their team*' - captains are expected to use this responsibility to help calm/positively influence the behaviour of their players, especially in controversial/confrontation situations involving opponents or match officials

Referees

- Players must respect all decisions made by the referee and other match officials, even when they may appear to be wrong.
- Respect for the Laws of the Game and the match officials who apply the Laws is paramount to the integrity, fairness and image of football

Key

YC = yellow card

RC = red card

Modifications of the Laws of the Game

Historically, The IFAB allowed national football associations (FAs) some flexibility with the 'organisational' Laws for specific categories of football. However, The IFAB strongly believes that national FAs should now have more freedom to modify aspects of the way football is organised if it will benefit football in their own country.

How the game is played and refereed should be the same on every football field in the world from the FIFA World Cup™ final to the smallest village. However, how long the game lasts, how many people can take part and how some unfair behaviour is punished can now be varied according to the needs of a country's domestic football.

Consequently, the 131st AGM of the IFAB in London on 3rd March 2017 unanimously agreed that national FAs (and confederations and FIFA) should have the discretion to modify the following organisational areas of the Laws for competitions for which they are responsible:

For youth, veterans, disability and grassroots (lowest levels) football:

- the ball and the size of the goals and the field of play,
- the length of the two (equal) halves of the game (and 2 equal halves of extra time)
- the use of return substitutes*
- the use of temporary dismissals (sin bins) for some/all cautions (YCs)*

**see guidelines document*

For any level of football except competitions involving the 1st team of clubs in the top division or 'A' international teams:

- the number of substitutions each team is permitted to use up to a maximum of 5

National FAs have the option to approve different modifications for different competitions - there is no requirement to apply them universally. Each National FA will decide whether to make a universal ruling or to decide on a competition by competition basis. **No other modifications to the Laws of the game are allowed.**

In addition to allow national FAs further flexibility to organise their domestic football to benefit football in their country, The IFAB AGM approved the following changes relating to 'categories of football':

- women's football is no longer listed as a separate category as the growth of Women's football is such that it should have the same status as Men's football
- the age limits for youth and veterans have been removed – national FAs, confederations and FIFA have the flexibility to decide the ages for these categories of football
- each national FA will determine which of their lowest levels/tiers of competitions are defined as 'grassroots'

Summary of 'administrative' Law changes for 2017/18

The following summarises the changes related to the organisation of a match/competition

LAW 1 – THE FIELD OF PLAY

- Artificial turf may be used for the lines on a grass field if it is not dangerous; this can be useful for the boundary lines and the area which the assistant referee runs on

LAW 3 – THE PLAYERS

- National FAs can now allow teams to use a maximum of five substitutes (but not in competitions involving teams from 1st (top) division clubs or in 'A' international competitions)
- The option to use return substitutions, which is currently available for grassroots football, has been extended to youth, veterans and disability football, subject to the approval of the national FA (*see Guidelines for Return Substitutes*)
- If a player who has gone off the field and needs the referee's permission to return (e.g. injured, changing footwear etc.) comes back onto the field without the referee's permission and interferes with play it is a YC and a direct free kick*

LAW 4 – THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

- Players are forbidden to wear/use any electronic or communication equipment, except electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS)
- All EPTS equipment must have a minimum safety standard mark; systems already in use have a transition period to obtain this mark which ends on 31 May 2018
- Technical area staff may only use communication equipment for player safety/welfare
- There will be a consultation about other electronic communication in the technical area

LAW 5 – THE REFEREE

- Law 5 now contains an important statement that decisions made by referees and the other match officials must always be respected – The IFAB and FIFA hope this will be publicised and supported by all competitions and national FAs.
- National FAs may allow competitions to use temporary dismissals (sin bins) for some/all cautions (YCs) in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football (*see Guidelines for Temporary dismissals*)
- A medical official guilty of a dismissible offence may stay in the technical area and treat players if no other medical person is available; the offence is reported

LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

- A short drinks break is permitted at half-time of extra time; it is not for coaching

LAW 8 – THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY

- The kicker is permitted to stand in the opponents' half to take the kick-off

LAW 10 – DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH

Kicks from the penalty mark (KFPM)

- A goalkeeper who is unable to continue may be replaced by a player excluded to equalise the numbers (e.g. opponents had a player sent off), even if all substitutes have been used

LAW 12 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- A player who commits a foul which ‘stops a promising attack’ in the penalty area does not receive a YC if the foul was an attempt to play the ball
- A player will get a YC if a goal celebration causes a safety/security problem
- If a player commits an offence off the field against an opponent, substitute or team official, or a match official, it is a free kick on the boundary line*
- If a substitute or team official commits an offence off the field against an opponent or match official, it is a free kick on the boundary line*
- Throwing or kicking the ball or any object onto the field to interfere with play/someone will be a direct free kick*
- Throwing or kicking the ball or any object off the field at an opposing player, substitute, team official or a match official will be a direct free kick on the boundary line*

**penalty kick if direct FK offence in the offender’s penalty area (for a free kick or penalty kick to be awarded the ball must be in play at the time of the offence)*

The exact wording for these changes can be found in the Laws of the Game 2017/18

For further information or for a specific question, please e mail lawenquiries@theifab.com

Guidelines for return substitutes

Following approval at the 131st AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3rd March 2017 The Laws of the Game now permit the use of return substitutes in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the approval of the competition's national FA, confederation or FIFA, whichever is appropriate.

Reference to return substitutions is found in the **Laws of the Game 2017/18**:

Law 3 – The Players (Number of substitutions):

Return substitutions

The use of return substitutions is only permitted in [youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football](#), subject to the agreement of the national football association, [confederation or FIFA](#).

A 'return substitute' is a player who has already played in the match and has been substituted (a substituted player) and later in the match returns to play by replacing another player.

Apart from the dispensation for a substituted player to return to play in the match, the provisions of Law 3 and the Laws of the Game apply to return substitutes. **In particular, the substitution procedure outlined in Law 3 must be followed.**

Frequently asked questions about return substitutes

How many times can a player be a return substitute in a match?

- There is no limit to the number of times a player can be a return substitute

Does the game need to be stopped for a return substitution to take place?

- All the requirements of the substitution procedure must be followed:
 - play must be stopped
 - the referee must give permission for the substitution to take place
 - the procedure is completed when the player being substituted has left the field and the (return) substitute has entered the field

Can a return substitution be made during kicks from the penalty mark?

- The Laws state that only players on the field of play at the end of the match (unless off injured etc.) can take part in kicks from the penalty mark (penalties) so no substitutions are permitted, except for a goalkeeper who is unable to take part

Can a player who has been sent off still be a return substitute?

- Once a player has been sent off he/she cannot play in the rest of the match

Guidelines for Temporary dismissals (sin bins)

The 131st AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3rd March 2017 approved the use of temporary dismissals (sin bins) for all or some cautions/yellow cards (YCs) in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the approval of the competition's national FA, confederation or FIFA, whichever is appropriate.

Reference to temporary dismissals is found in the **Laws of the Game 2017/18**:

Law 5 – The Referee (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 at the start of the match until after the match has ended, including during the half-time interval, extra time and kicks from the penalty mark*

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 that 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 for cautionable offences (YCs) committed by a substitute or substituted player

Referee's signal

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

The temporary dismissal period

- The length of the temporary dismissal is the same for all offences
- The length of the temporary dismissal should be between 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 etc.)

- Competitions must decide who will help the referee time the dismissal period – it could be the responsibility of a delegate, 4th 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, which can be given while the ball is in play
- The referee has the final decision as to when the player can return
- A temporarily dismissed player cannot be substituted until the end of the temporary dismissal period (but not if the team has used all its permitted substitutes)
- If a temporary dismissal period has not been completed at the end of the first half (or the end of the second half when extra time is to be played) the remaining part of the temporary dismissal period is served from the start of the second half (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 Kicks from the Penalty Mark (penalties)

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 before/during/after a temporary dismissal

- 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 cautions (YCs)

Temporary dismissal systems

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

- System A - for all cautions (YCs)
- System B - for some but not all cautions (YC)

System A – temporary dismissal for all cautions (YCs)

- All cautions (YCs) are punished with a temporary dismissal
- A player who commits a 2nd caution (YC) in the same match:
 - will receive a second temporary dismissal and then takes 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 (*this is because the team has already been 'punished' by playing without that player for 2 x temporary dismissal periods*)

System B – temporary dismissal for some but not all cautions (YCs)*

- A pre-defined list of cautionable (YC) offences will be punished by a temporary dismissal
- All other cautionable offences are punished with a caution (YC)
- A player who has been temporarily dismissed and then receives a caution (YC) continues playing
- A player who has received a caution (YC) and then receives a temporary dismissal can continue playing after the end of the temporary dismissal period
- A player who receives a second temporary dismissal in the same match will serve the temporary dismissal and then takes no further part in the match. The player 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
- A player who receives a second caution (YC) in the same match will be sent off and takes no further part in the match and may not be replaced/substituted

**Some competitions may find it valuable to use temporary dismissals only for cautions (YCs) for offence relating to 'inappropriate' behaviour, e.g.*

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

Frequently asked questions about temporary dismissals

What offences do temporary dismissals apply to?

- Temporary dismissals are only for cautions (YCs)
- Competitions may use temporary dismissals for all YCs or just some (usually those relating to unfair behaviour) – see *System B (above)*

Who do temporary dismissals apply to?

- Temporary dismissals only apply to players (including goalkeepers) – they are not used for substitutes, substituted players or team officials

Are temporarily dismissals reported to the appropriate authority?

- The national FA will decide if temporary dismissals must be reported after the match and if any further action results e.g. suspension for a number of temporary dismissals (as with YCs)

How does the referee signal a temporary dismissal?

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

How long does the temporary dismissal last?

- The temporary dismissal period:
 - is the same for all offences
 - should be between 10-15% of the total playing time (e.g. 10 minutes in a 90-minute match; 8 minutes in an 80-minute match)
 - begins when play restarts after the player has left the field of play
 - will include any time 'lost' for a stoppage for which 'additional time' will be allowed at the end of the half
- Competitions must decide who will help the referee time the dismissal period e.g. delegate, 4th official or neutral assistant referee; conversely it could be a team official.

What happens if the half ends and the temporary dismissal period has not been completed?

- If a player's temporary dismissal period is not over at the end of the first half, the remaining time is served from the start of the second half (this is the same at the end of the match if extra time is to be played)
- If a player's temporary dismissal period is not over at the end of the match, the player is permitted to take part in Kicks from the Penalty Mark (penalties)

Where does the temporarily dismissed player go?

- A temporarily dismissed player should stay in the team's technical area; if there is no technical area the player should stay with the team's coach/technical staff (unless warming up)

Can a temporarily dismissed player warm up?

- For reasons of injury prevention, a temporarily dismissed player is allowed to warm up as if he/she were a substitute

When can the temporarily dismissed player return?

- Once the temporary dismissal period has been completed, the player can return from the touchline with the referee's permission, which can be while the ball is in play

Can a temporarily dismissed player be substituted?

- A temporarily dismissed player can only be substituted at the end of their temporary dismissal period. However, he/she cannot be substituted if the team has already used all its permitted substitutes

What happens if a temporarily dismissed player commits another offence during a temporary dismissal?

- A temporarily dismissed player who commits a caution (YC) or sending-off/red card (RC) offence during their temporary dismissal period is not allowed to play again in the match and may not be replaced or substituted