

FOOTBALL

BASIC RULES OF THE GAME



Laws of the Game

There are 17 laws that govern how the game is to be played so that it is fair to all players taking part in a game. The most basic rule is that a player needs to move the ball towards the opponents' goal line and away from his/her own using any body part except the hands and arms.

Rule 1: The field of play



The pitch must be a rectangle, marked with touchlines, goal lines and areas, a halfway line, a center circle, penalty areas, spots, arcs corner arcs and flag post. The short edges are the touch lines whereas the shorter lines are referred to as goal lines. A half line runs across the center of the field dividing it into two equal parts. All these must be marked as well as the goal areas, center circle, penalty area and corner arcs with a flag on each corner. The acceptable dimensions of a football field are 90-120meters length by 45-90meters width.

Rule 2: The ball



The ball must be made of approved materials. The ball that will be used in a game must have a diameter of 68-70 cm (27-28in), weight between 410-450g (14-16oz) and must have an internal pressure of between 0.6 and 1.1 atmospheres at sea level. It can only be changed by the referee. If ever it bursts during a game, the play is stopped and restarted with a new drop ball

Rule 3: The number of players



A football match consists of two teams of not more than **11 players each** including a goalkeeper. An outfield player may swap with the goalkeeper during a stoppage of play. Teams must have at least seven players to begin or continue a match. A maximum of three substitutions are allowed per team in official matches but the number can be more in friendly games.

Rule 4: The players' equipment



All players must wear a shirt, socks, shorts, shin pads or shin guards and football boots. Goalkeepers from both teams should wear gloves and jerseys that distinguishes them from their own team, opponents and from the officials. Headgear is permitted if it does not present a threat to other players. Wearing any forms of jewelries during a match is prohibited.

Rule 5: The referees / officials



Every game must be controlled by a referee whose role is to ensure that all rules are followed and punish those who do not adhere as well as stopping and starting the game as is necessary. He or she is the final decision-making authority on all facts connected with play. Referees' remuneration for their services varies between leagues.

Rule 6: The assistant referees

Assistant referees (at least two) also known as linesmen have a role to assist the main referee in manning the game. The assistant referee's duties generally consist of judging when the ball has left the field of play. They support the referee primarily by signaling for corner kicks, throw-ins, and offside infringements. At higher levels of play the referee is also assisted by a fourth official. The fourth official's duties are usually administrative in nature and vary depending on the match rules and the discretion of the referee.

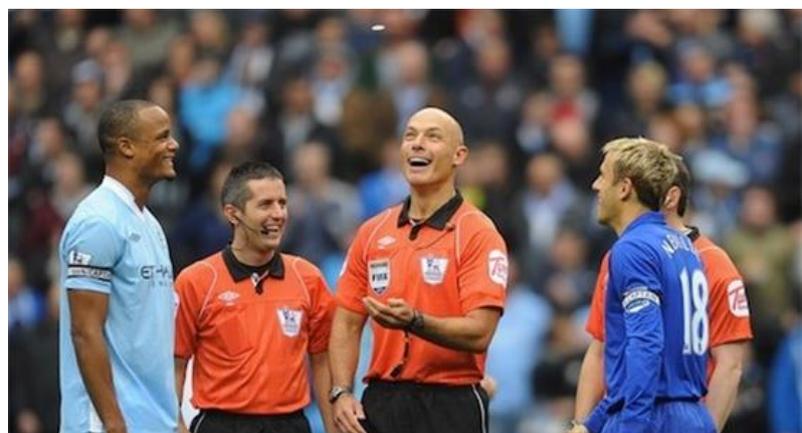
Rule 7: The duration of the match

A football match is played for two sessions, 45 minutes each with a break of 15 minutes maximum in between. Additional minutes or injury time may be added at the end of the game to cater for time lost caring for injured players. Overtime is the time added to a match when no winner has been determined by the end of regular time.



Rule 8: The starting and restart of play

A coin is tossed by the captains of the competing teams and the team to start the game predetermined. A kick-off from one player of a team then starts the game at the center circle. After halftime, the opposing team begins the match.



Rule 9: Ball in or out of play

The ball is in play when it is inside the field of play and the referee has not stopped play.

The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed the touchlines or the goals lines, whether in the air or on the ground.

If the ball rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar, corner flagpost, or the referee or one of the assistant referees and remains in the field of play, it is still in play.

Rule 10: The method of scoring



A goal is scored when the ball has completely crossed the goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no other infringements have taken place. The team with the most goals wins. If both teams score the same number of goals, or if no goals are scored at all, the match is a draw.

Rule 11: Offside

A player is offside, at the moment a ball is passed forward, when he is: in the opponents' half of the field; is closer to the opponents' goal line than the ball; and there are fewer than two defenders including the goalkeeper closer to the goal line than the attacking player. When a player is called offside, the opposition is awarded a free-kick.

Rule 12: Fouls and Misconduct

The referee decides on the deserving punishment depending on how extreme a foul is. A foul has been committed if a player trips, kicks, pushes, charges another player recklessly, striking of any kind (punching, head-butting, elbowing, kneeing, choking including biting), attempts to strike or spits at an opponent, makes a tackle but connects with the player before the ball, deliberately handles the ball (except for the goalkeepers), obstructs an opponent or prevents them from releasing the ball. These include issuing red and yellow cards to those at fault and giving free kicks, throw-ins or penalties to the opposing team. Two yellow cards in a game will result in a red and the player must leave the pitch.



Rule 13: Free kicks (direct and indirect)

Free kicks restart play after a foul or infringement and are usually taken from the place from which the offense was committed. Free-kicks can be “direct” in which the taker may score directly, or “indirect”, in which the taker and a second player from the same team must touch the ball before a goal can be scored.

Rule 14: The penalty kick

A penalty-kick is awarded for a foul committed by a defending player in his or her own penalty area. The kick is taken from the penalty spot and all other players except for the goalkeeper and taker must be at least 9.15m (10yrd) from the spot. The taker may touch the ball if it rebounds from the goalkeeper, but not if it rebounds from the post or crossbar.



Rule 15: The throw-in

A throw-in is awarded when the ball has crossed the touchline and an opposition player was the last to touch it. The throw is taken from the point from which the ball crossed the line. The taker must have both feet on the ground, use two hands to throw the ball from behind and over the head, and be facing the field of play.

Rule 16: The goal-kick

A goal-kick is awarded to the defending team when the ball crosses its goal line, a goal has not been scored, and the last player to touch it was from the opposition. Any player may take the goal kick, placing the ball anywhere in the goal area. The kick must send the ball out of the penalty area or be retaken. The taker may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by a second player.

Rule 17: The corner-kick



A corner-kick is awarded to the attacking team when the opposition is last to touch the ball and the ball crosses the goal line without a goal being scored. It is also awarded if the ball enters the goal from a throw-in or indirect free kick. The attacking team restarts play by placing the ball in the corner arc nearest to where it crossed the goal line.