To the members of FIFA

Circular no. 1149

Zurich, 25 June 2008
SG/jya-ebr

Amendments to the Futsal Laws of the Game – 2008

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are pleased to inform you of the amendments to the Futsal Laws of the Game and the instructions and guidelines that were revised at the meeting of the Sub-Committee of the International Football Association Board and approved by the FIFA Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee.

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Reason: Law 6 has been merged with Law 5, so the numbering has changed from Law 6 onward.
ADDENDUAL INSTRUCTIONS AND
GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES

Reason: All the officials mentioned are referees and they must all be equally familiar with the Laws. The word “guidelines” has been added to underline that it is obligatory to comply with them.

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAWS OF THE GAME AND DECISIONS BY THE BOARD

LAW 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Current text
3. A team official may give tactical instructions to players during a match. However, team officials shall not obstruct players and referees and shall always behave in an appropriate manner.

New text
3. A team official may give tactical instructions to players during a match. However, team officials shall not obstruct players and referees, placing themselves within the technical area, where one exists, and shall always behave in an appropriate manner.

4. The technical area relates particularly to matches played in facilities with a designated seated area for technical staff and substitutes. While the technical areas may differ between facilities, e.g. in terms of size, the following notes are issued for general guidance:

• The technical area extends 1 m on either side of the designated seated area and extends forward up to a distance of 75 cm from the touch line
• It is recommended that markings are used to define this area
• The number of persons permitted to occupy the technical area is defined by the competition rules
• The occupants of the technical area are identified before the beginning of the match in accordance with the competition rules
• Only one person at a time is authorised to convey tactical instructions and he must return to his position after giving these instructions
• The coach and other officials must remain
LAW 4 - THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

Basic equipment

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

- a jersey or shirt
- shorts – if thermal undershorts are worn, they must be the same main colour as the shorts

Reason: To bring the Laws into line with the IFAB's decisions in the Football Laws of the Game.

Decisions

Current text
1. Players must not reveal undershirts that contain slogans or advertising. Any player who lifts his shirt to reveal slogans or advertising shall be sanctioned by the competition organisers.
2. The shirts must have sleeves.

New text
1. Players must not reveal undershirts showing slogans or advertising. The basic compulsory equipment must not have any political, religious or personal statements.
2. A player removing his shirt to reveal slogans or advertising will be sanctioned by the competition organiser. The team of a player whose basic compulsory equipment has political, religious or personal slogans or statements will be sanctioned by the competition organiser or by FIFA.
3. The shirts must have sleeves.

Reason: The technical area is established as the place from which officials may give instructions to their players, thus preventing them from hindering the development of play.

within the confines of the technical area except in special circumstances, for example, a physiotherapist or doctor entering the field of play, with the referees' permission, to assess an injured player.

- The coach and other occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner.
Reason: To bring the Laws into line with the IFAB’s decisions in the Football Laws of the Game, which were already obligatory, even though they did not appear in the Laws, which were not amended last year.

LAW 5 – THE REFEREE AND THE SECOND REFEREE
Duties and powers

Current text

5 – THE REFEREE
The authority of the referee
Each match shall be controlled by a referee, who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed, from the moment he enters the premises where the pitch is located until he leaves them.

Duties and powers
The referee shall:
- enforce the Laws of the Game
- allow play to continue if the team against which an offence has been committed stands to benefit from such an advantage, and penalise the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue
- take note of and report to the appropriate authorities any incidents occurring before, during and after the match and any disciplinary measures taken against players and team officials
- act as a timekeeper in the event that this official is not present
- stop, suspend or terminate the match for any infringement of the Laws of the Game when he considers it appropriate
- stop, suspend or terminate the match as a result of any kind of outside interference;
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences
- take action against team officials who are guilty of misconduct and, if necessary, dismiss them from the pitch area
- ensure that no unauthorised persons enter the pitch
- stop the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensure that this player is removed from the pitch
- allow play to continue until the ball is out of

New text

LAW 5 – THE REFEREE AND THE SECOND REFEREE
The authority of the referees
Each match shall be controlled by two referees, who have full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.

Duties and powers
The referees shall:
- enforce the Laws of the Game
- allow play to continue if the team against which an offence has been committed stands to benefit from such an advantage, and penalise the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue
- take note of and report to the appropriate authorities any incidents occurring before, during and after the match and any disciplinary measures taken against players or team officials
- take disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences
- take action against team officials who are guilty of misconduct and, if necessary, dismiss them from the pitch area without showing them a red card
- ensure that no unauthorised persons enter the pitch
- stop the match if, in their opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensure that this player is removed from the pitch
- allow play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in their opinion, only slightly injured
- ensure that the balls used meet the requirements of Law 2
- punish the more serious offence if a player commits more than one offence at the same time

The referee shall:
play if a player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured
• ensure that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2
• punish the more serious offence if a player commits more than one offence at the same time

Decisions of the referee
The decisions of the referees regarding facts connected with play are final. The referee and second referee may only change a decision if they realise that it is incorrect or if they deem it necessary to do so, provided that play has not restarted or the match has not ended.

Decisions
[...] 6 – THE SECOND REFEREE
Duties and powers
This Law has been deleted.

Reason: To merge Laws 5 and 6 in order to clarify that the decisions taken by the second referee are of equal validity to those taken by the first referee.

LAW 6 – THE TIMEKEEPER AND THE THIRD REFEREE
The timekeeper

Current text

The timekeeper
• [...]  
• indicate the end of the first half, the end of the match, the end of the periods of extra time and the end of time-outs with a whistle or acoustic signal distinct from the one used by the referee  
• keep a record of all time-outs remaining to

New text

The timekeeper
• [...]  
• indicate the end of the first half, the end of the match, the end of the periods of extra time and the end of time-outs with a whistle or acoustic signal distinct from the one used by the referees  
• indicate a team’s request for a time-out
each team, keep the referees and teams informed in this regard and indicate permission for a time-out when requested by an official from either team (Law 8)

- keep a record of the first 5 accumulated fouls committed by each team signalled by the referees in each half of the match and use a whistle or acoustic signal distinct from the one used by the referee to indicate when a team has committed its fifth accumulated foul

The third referee

In addition to assisting the timekeeper, the third referee shall:

- keep a record of the first five accumulated fouls committed by each team signalled by the referees in each half of the match and place a visible sign on the timekeeper’s table to advertise this fact
- keep a record of stoppages in play and the reasons for them
- take note of the goalscorers’ numbers
- record the names and numbers of any players cautioned or sent off
- monitor the replacement of balls at the request of the referees
- if necessary, check the substitutes’ equipment before they enter the pitch
- signal to the referees when an obvious mistake has been made in cautioning or sending off a player or if an act of violence has been committed out of their range of vision. In any case, the referee shall decide on any facts connected with play
- monitor the conduct of those persons seated on the team benches and inform the referees of any inappropriate behaviour
- provide any other information relevant to the game

In the event of undue interference by the timekeeper or the third referee, the referee shall relieve the person in question of his duties, arrange for his replacement and submit a report to the appropriate authorities.

In case of injury, the third referee may replace either the referee or second referee.

with a whistle or acoustic signal distinct from the one used by the referees, after informing the third referee

- indicate the fifth accumulated foul by a team with a whistle or acoustic signal distinct from the one used by the referees, after informing the third referee

The third referee

In addition to assisting the timekeeper, the third referee shall:

- keep a record of the first five accumulated fouls committed by each team signalled by the referees in each half of the match and place a visible sign on the timekeeper’s table to advertise this fact
- keep a record of all the time-outs that each team has remaining, keep the referees and teams informed in this regard and indicate permission for a time-out when requested by an official from either team (Law 7)
- keep a record of stoppages in play and the reasons for them
- keep a record of the playerstaking part in the match
- take note of the goalscorers’ numbers
- record the names and numbers of any players cautioned or sent off
- monitor the replacement of balls at the request of the referees
- if necessary, check the substitutes’ equipment before they enter the pitch
- signal to the referees when an obvious error has been made in cautioning or sending off a player or if an act of violence has been committed out of their range of vision. In any case, the referees shall decide on any facts connected with play
- monitor the conduct of those persons seated on the team benches and inform the referees of any inappropriate behaviour
- provide any other information relevant to the game

In the event of undue interference by the timekeeper or the third referee, the referee shall relieve the person in question of his duties, arrange for his replacement and submit a report to the appropriate authorities.
Reason: To define the duties of the timekeeper and the third referee, which were not clear in the old version. Also, to explain that the third referee may only replace the second referee.

**LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH**

**Periods of play**

*Current text*
The match shall last two equal periods of 20 minutes.
The timekeeping shall be carried out by a timekeeper, whose duties are defined in Law 6. The duration of either half may be prolonged to enable a penalty kick to be taken, or for a direct free kick to be taken against a team that has committed more than five accumulated fouls.

*New text*
The match shall last two equal periods of 20 minutes.
The timekeeping shall be carried out by a timekeeper, whose duties are defined in Law 6. The duration of either half shall be prolonged to enable a penalty kick to be taken, or for a direct free kick to be taken against a team that has committed more than five accumulated fouls.

Reason: To specify that the prolongation of the duration of a match is obligatory if it is necessary for a penalty or direct free pick to be taken after the fifth accumulated foul.

**LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH**

**Time-out**

*Current text*
The teams are entitled to a one-minute time-out in each half.
The following conditions apply to a time-out:
• the team officials are authorised to request the timekeeper for a one-minute time-out
• [...].

*New text*
The teams are entitled to a one-minute time-out in each half.
The following conditions apply to a time-out:
• the team officials are authorised to request the third referee for a one-minute time-out
• [...].

Reason: To prevent the timekeeper from being distracted.

**LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH**

**Decisions**

*Current text*
1. If the timekeeper is not available, the team official may request the referee for a time-out.

*New text*
1. If the third referee or timekeeper is not available, the team official may request the referee for a time-out.

Reason: If the third referee or timekeeper is not available, the team official may request the referee for a time-out.
LAW 11 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Direct free kick

Current text
A direct free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six infringements in a manner considered by the referees to be careless, reckless or excessively forceful:
- kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
- tripping or attempting to trip an opponent, either by sliding or by bending down in front of or behind an opponent
- jumping on an opponent
- charging an opponent
- striking or attempting to strike an opponent
- pushing an opponent

A direct free kick shall also be awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following five infringements:
- holding an opponent
- spitting at an opponent
- sliding in an attempt to play the ball while an opponent is playing it or is about to play it (sliding tackle), except for the goalkeeper in his own penalty area, provided that he does not endanger the safety of an opponent
- touching the opponent before the ball when attempting to win possession
- carrying, striking or throwing the ball with one’s hands or arms, except for the goalkeeper in his own penalty area

New text
A direct free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following seven infringements in a manner considered by the referees to be careless, reckless or excessively forceful:
- kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
- tripping or attempting to trip an opponent, either by sliding or by bending down in front of or behind him
- jumping on an opponent
- charging an opponent
- striking or attempting to strike an opponent
- tackling an opponent
- pushing an opponent

A direct free kick shall also be awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four infringements:
- holding an opponent
- spitting at an opponent
- sliding in an attempt to play the ball while an opponent is playing it or is about to play it (sliding tackle), except for the goalkeeper in his own penalty area, provided that he does not endanger the safety of an opponent
- carrying, striking or throwing the ball with one’s hands or arms, except for the goalkeeper in his own penalty area

Reason: To bring the text into line with the Football Laws of the Game.

LAW 11 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Indirect free kick

Current text
An indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper commits any of the following offences:
- after clearing the ball, he touches it again with his hands before it has been played or touched by an opponent
- he touches or controls the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked

New text
An indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper commits any of the following offences:
- after clearing the ball, he touches it again with his hands following a deliberate pass by a team-mate, before it has crossed the halfway line or been played or touched by an opponent
Reason: To ensure that the previous wording is complied with.

LAW 11 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT
Cautionable offences

Current text
A player or a substitute shall be cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following infringements:

Reason: To create a specific provision for substitutes.

LAW 11 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT
Cautionable offences

New text
A substitute shall be cautioned if he commits any of the following infringements:
- unsporting behaviour
- dissent by word or action
- delaying the restart of play

Reason: To differentiate between cautions for players and cautions for substitutes.

LAW 11 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT
Sending-off offences

Current text

Reason: To appropriately punish a serious offence.

LAW 11 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT
Decisions

Current text
2. Under Law 12, following a clearance by the goalkeeper a player may pass the ball back to him using his head, chest, knee, etc provided that he receives it after it has crossed the halfway line or has been touched or played by an opponent. [...] The offence shall be deemed to have been

New text
2. Under Law 11, following a clearance by the goalkeeper a player may pass the ball back to him using his head, chest, knee, etc provided that he receives it after it has crossed the halfway line or has been touched or played by an opponent. [...] The offence shall be deemed to have been
committed by any player who attempts to circumvent both the letter and the spirit of Law 12.

Reason: Change in the numbering of the Laws.

**LAW 13 – ACCUMULATED FOULS**

Position of free kick

**Current text**
- are those punished by a direct free kick mentioned in Law 12

Reason: Change in the numbering of the Laws.

**LAW 14 – THE PENALTY KICK**

Procedure

**Current text**
- The player taking the penalty shall kick the ball forward
- He may not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player
- The ball shall be deemed in play from the moment it is kicked and set in motion
When a penalty kick is taken during normal time or when time has been extended at half-time or full time, a goal shall be awarded if, before passing between the goalposts and under the crossbar:
- [...]

Reason: To specify that this provision also applies during extra time.

**LAW 16 – THE GOAL CLEARANCE**

Procedure

**Current text**
- the ball shall be thrown from any point within the penalty area by the goalkeeper of the defending team
- opponents shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play
- the goalkeeper may not play the ball a second time until it has been touched by an opponent or has crossed the halfway line
- [...]

committed by any player who attempts to circumvent both the letter and the spirit of Law 11.

**New text**
- the ball shall be thrown from any point within the penalty area by the goalkeeper of the defending team
- opponents shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play
- the goalkeeper may not play the ball a second time until it has been touched by an opponent or is returned to him by a team-mate once it has crossed the halfway line
Reason: To bring the text into line with Law 11.

LAW 17 – THE CORNER KICK
The corner kick

Current text

[...]

A corner kick shall be awarded when:

- the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, crosses the goal line either along the ground or through the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 11

Reason: Change in the numbering of the Laws.

PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE THE WINNER OF A MATCH OR PLAY-OFF
Kicks from the penalty mark

Current text

- the referee shall choose the goal at which the kicks shall be taken
- the referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick
- the referee and the timekeeper shall keep a record of the kicks taken
- [...].

Reason: To add that the third referee will also keep a record of the kicks taken from the penalty, as he is positioned next to the eligible players.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES

Current text

The aim of these additional instructions for referees, second referees, third referees and timekeepers is to ensure the correct application of the Futsal Laws of the Game. Futsal is a competitive sport, and physical contact between the players is normal and an acceptable part of the game. [...]. Serious foul play and violent conduct are two sending-off offences under Law 12 and constitute unacceptable levels of physical aggression.

Reason: To bring the text in line with the title and the change in the numbering of the Laws.

New text

A corner kick shall be awarded when:

- the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, crosses the goal line either along the ground or through the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10

New text

- the referee shall choose the goal at which the kicks shall be taken
- the referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick
- the referee, the third referee and the timekeeper shall keep a record of the kicks taken
- [...].

New text

The aim of these additional instructions and guidelines for referees is to ensure the correct application of the Futsal Laws of the Game. Futsal is a competitive sport, and physical contact between the players is normal and an acceptable part of the game. [...]. Serious foul play and violent conduct are two sending-off offences under Law 11 and constitute unacceptable levels of physical aggression.
There are circumstances when, in addition to a direct free kick being awarded, a player must also be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, e.g. when a player:

- deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession
- attempts to score a goal by deliberately handling the ball

**Reason:** To list all the cases in which a player must be cautioned for deliberate handball, thus avoiding misinterpretation.

**ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES**

**Holding an opponent**

**Current text**

This inability to properly assess the action of holding a shirt or an arm can lead to controversy; referees are therefore urged to intervene immediately and firmly in these situations in accordance with Law 11.

**Reason:** Change in the numbering of the Laws.

**ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES**

**Goal celebrations**

**Current text**

Players will be cautioned, if, in the opinion of the referee, they do any of the following:

- [...] remove their shirt or cover their head with it

**New text**

Players will be cautioned, if, in the opinion of the referee, they do any of the following:

- [...] remove their shirt or cover their head with it
- cover their head or face with a mask or other similar item
Reason: To bring the text into line with the IFAB’s decisions.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES

Procedure for injured players

Current text
The referee must take into account the following instructions if a player is injured:

- allow the match to continue until the ball goes out of play if the injury is, in the referee's opinion, a minor one
- stop the match if the referee considers the injury to be serious
- after consulting the injured player, the referee shall authorise one or more (maximum two) medical staff to enter the pitch to allow them to assess the injury and ensure that the player leaves the pitch safely and swiftly
- [...] the referee must ensure that the injured player is carried off the pitch safely and swiftly
- the player may not be treated on the pitch
- any player with a bleeding wound must leave the pitch and may not return until the referee has ascertained that the wound has stopped bleeding. A player may not wear blood-stained clothing
- [...] If the match has not been interrupted for any other reason, or if the player's injury is not a consequence of an infringement of the Futsal Laws of the Game, the referee shall restart the match with a dropped ball at the place where the ball was when the match was interrupted*.

New text
The referees must take into account the following instructions if a player is injured:

- allow the match to continue until the ball goes out of play if the injury is, in their opinion, a minor one
- stop the match if they consider the injury to be serious
- after consulting the injured player, the referees shall authorise one or more (maximum two) medical staff to enter the pitch to allow them to assess the injury and ensure that the player leaves the pitch safely and swiftly
- [...] the referees must ensure that the injured player is carried off the pitch safely and swiftly
- the player may not be treated on the pitch
- any player with a bleeding wound must leave the pitch and may not return until the referees have ascertained that the wound has stopped bleeding (the third referee may carry out the check, but only the referees may authorise his entry, if he has not been substituted); a player may not wear blood-stained clothing
- [...] If the match has not been interrupted for any other reason, or if the player's injury is not a consequence of an infringement of the Futsal Laws of the Game, the referees shall restart the match with a dropped ball at the place where the ball was when the match was interrupted*.

Reason: To specify that the second referee may also intervene on certain occasions due to the importance of the incident and because he is closer to it.
The FIFA Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee has agreed that the amendments to the Laws of the Game and the instructions and guidelines for referees should come into force on 1 July 2008.

Yours faithfully,

FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Jérôme Valcke
Secretary General

cc: - FIFA Executive Committee
- FIFA Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee
- FIFA Referees Committee
- Confederations
- Member associations