



Application of the Laws of the Game at Harrogate Strays' Sessions

The referee controls the game with the welfare of the players in mind, taking appropriate disciplinary action against players guilty of offences. Play shall be stopped if in the referee's opinion a player is injured to allow the player to be checked and if necessary treated and safely removed from the playing area. Play shall resume with a drop ball to the team in possession when play was halted.

The referee will make decisions to the best of their ability according to the Laws of the Game and the 'spirit of the game'. **The decisions of the referee are final and must always be respected.**

To aid the flow of a game, the referee is encouraged to play advantage when the team against which an offence has been committed may benefit and penalise the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not accrue.

BALL

The ball is out of play when:

- it has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline, whether on the ground or in the air;
- play has been stopped by the referee;
- it exceeds the height of ball restriction;
- it touches the referee, and a team starts a promising attack, the ball goes directly into goal or possession of the ball is lost.

The ball is in play **at all other times**, including if it touches the referee and stays in the possession of the same team without a significant advantage and if it rebounds off a goal post, crossbar or barrier and remains in the playing area.

The ball is the property of the goalkeeper if any part of the ball is touching or vertically above the goal line, as the goal line is considered part of the penalty area.

BALL HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

A height restriction cannot be less than the height of the crossbar nor greater than 2 metres. If **in the referee's opinion** the ball rises above the height restriction, an indirect free kick is awarded from where the offence took place (i.e. at the point where the ball was kicked or a deflection occurred).

If a goalkeeper commits a height offence which is not the result of making a save, an indirect free kick should be awarded 3 metres from the penalty area line nearest to where the offence took place.

Any save or block from a goalkeeper that rises above the height restriction will result in a side-line restart (kick-in or roll-in) for the opposing team, in line with where the offence took place.

If a ball goes above the height restriction from a shot after rebounding off the frame of the goal without the goalkeeper touching it, it is retained by the goalkeeper;

If the ball goes above the height restriction after rebounding off a barrier, an indirect free kick is awarded against the player who last touched the ball, to be taken one metre in from where the ball hit the barrier;

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Walking football is a non-contact sport. **Particular caution should be taken to avoid accidental contact from behind or alongside opponents, where their awareness is reduced.** Tackling or attempting to tackle from behind is not permitted; in the interests of player safety, tackling from the side is also not permitted if the tackler is deemed to be poaching from behind (i.e. can see any part of the opponent's back when making the challenge – cf. Figure 1 below). Tackling when face to face is acceptable unless excessive force is involved.

In assessing an offence, the referee shall judge whether an offender has acted in a manner that is **careless, reckless or using excessive force (i.e. in a dangerous manner).**

Indirect free kicks will be awarded if a player commits minor infringements, as a result of which the referee may warn a player that repeated offences may result in a blue card. Examples include if a player:

- is deemed to be not walking (**note the accumulated team offences below**);
- heads the ball **deliberately**;
- holds or grabs an opponent;
- impedes the progress of an opponent **without any contact being made**;
- attempts to play the ball when it is being played or attempted to be played by an opponent (sliding tackle);
- plays the ball whilst on the floor;
- **deliberately** touches the ball with their hand or arm (e.g. moving the hand or arm towards the ball or by making the body unnaturally bigger);
- scores in the opponent's goal directly from their hand/arm or immediately after the ball has touched their hand/arm;
- where barriers are in place, holds onto the barrier to shield the ball (players are only permitted to hold the barriers to correct their balance);
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball.

A goalkeeper commits an offence by:

- touching or controlling the ball with hands or feet in the goal area for more than 6 seconds;
- receiving the ball back directly from a team mate to whom they have just passed the ball without it having made contact with another player;
- allowing the ball to stop in a stationary position in the goal area without touching it for more than 6 seconds;
- infringing against the height restriction.

NOTE: The referee may issue a blue card if a player commits multiple “minor” offences (see C3 below).

Blue card offences

C1 – Unsporting behaviour.

C2 – Dissent by word or action, including argumentative behaviour, sarcasm, failure to heed the referee's instruction and any other action deemed by the referee to be dissent.

C3 – **Persistent offences against the Laws of the Game** (usually three personal offences), with exception to circumstances covered under DOGSO below.

C4 – Delaying the restart of play by:

- appearing to take a kick in for walking football, but suddenly leaving it to a team mate to take;
- delaying leaving the field of play when being substituted;
- excessively delaying the restart of play;

- kicking or carrying the ball away or deliberately touching the ball when the referee has stopped play;
- taking a kick-in or roll-in from the wrong position to force a retake.

C5 – Failing to heed the required distance when play is restarted (corner kick, kick-in, free kick or goal clearance).

C6 – Entering or re-entering the playing area without the referee's permission or committing a substitution procedure offence.

C7 – Deliberately leaving the playing area without the referee's permission outside of a substitution.

C8 – Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence.

C9 – Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick and that particular offence is not deemed to be reckless or using excessive force.

C8 and C9 are also sanctioned with the award of a penalty kick to the opposition (see DOGSO below)

Red card offences

S1 – Serious foul play (i.e. fouls and misconduct considered by the referee to be dangerous) especially tackling or challenging with excessive speed or force, kicking or attempting to kick and tripping or attempting to trip.

S2 – Violent conduct (e.g. striking or attempting to strike, head butting, charging, pushing or tackling someone into a barrier).

S3 – Spitting at or biting.

S4 – Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures towards the referee.

S5 – Receiving a second blue card in the same match.

FREE KICKS

All free kicks in walking football, other than a penalty kick, are indirect and can be awarded to the opposing team of any player, substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official guilty of an offence.

If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, a goal kick is awarded. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the kicker's team's goal, a corner kick is awarded

A goal cannot be scored by deliberately attempting to play the ball against an opponent in order to score a goal. This is regarded as 'unsporting behaviour' and will be sanctioned with a blue card.

Procedure

All free kicks are taken from the place where the offence occurred, except that free kicks around the penalty area must not be taken closer than 3 metres from the goal area line. Free kicks to the defending team in their goal area may be taken anywhere by the goalkeeper.

The ball must be stationary, and the kicker must not touch it again until it has touched another player. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves except for a free kick to the defending team in their goal area where the ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the goal area.

Until the ball is in play all opponents must remain at least 3 metres from the ball. Defending players who have been instructed to observe the required distance and do not do so can be shown a blue card for dissent.

If, when a free kick is taken, an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance the kick is retaken unless advantage can be applied to the attacking team. If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded.

Quick free kicks are allowed to be taken at the referee's discretion. However, players must wait for the referee's signal in cases where:

- a player may be injured;
- the referee needs to speak to a player;
- the referee is not ready.

If a player takes a quick free kick and the ball hits an opponent who clearly had no chance of getting out of the way, then it's the kicker's own fault for not waiting until the opponent is the required distance. If a player takes a quick free kick and the ball is deliberately stopped by a defender who is not the required distance, then the free kick should be retaken.

PENALTY KICKS

A penalty kick is awarded if:

- a defending player **deliberately** enters their own penalty area;
- a goalkeeper commits any of the five sending off offences within their penalty area;
- a goalkeeper **deliberately** exits their own penalty area (not as a result of momentum when making a save);
- a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence
- a player denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick
- the opposition accumulates a fourth team 'not walking' count.

DOGSO

The following must be considered when determining whether the offence is denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity:

- distance between the offence and the goal;
- the general direction of the play;
- the likelihood of the attacker keeping or gaining control of the ball;
- the location and number of defending outfield players, as well as the goalkeeper.

Penalty procedure

The defending goalkeeper must remain facing the kicker on the goal line between the goalposts

until the ball has been kicked. The goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on or in line with the goal line. If the goals have low crossbars, the goalkeeper cannot be on the goal line but must stand as close to the crossbar as possible.

Until the ball is in play, players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must be at least 3 metres from the ball, behind or to the side of the penalty mark, on the pitch and outside the goal area.

The penalty kick is taken upon the referee's signal. The player taking the penalty kick must start their approach with both feet on the ground no more than two metres from the ball, walk directly to the ball from a standing position and kick the ball forward.

If, in the opinion of the referee, the player has not walked to the ball, has made a feinting movement before kicking the ball or has played the ball again before it has touched another player, the kick shall be declared invalid. It shall not be re-taken and any goal scored shall be disallowed. Unless the kick has been taken during a penalty shoot-out, an indirect free kick is awarded to the defending team to be taken from the penalty mark.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves, and the penalty kick is completed if:

- a goal is scored;
- the ball stops moving;
- the ball goes out of play;
- the referee stops play for any offence.

Offences and sanctions

A penalty kick is retaken, if:

- a goal is not scored but a player of the defending team commits an offence before the ball is in play; or
- a goal is scored but a team-mate of the player taking the kick commits an offence.

If the player taking the kick commits an offence once the ball is in play an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team and any goal disallowed.

<i>Summary</i>	<i>Outcome of Penalty Kick</i>	
	Goal	No goal
Encroachment by attacking player	Penalty retaken	Indirect free kick
Encroachment by defending player	Goal	Penalty retaken
Offence by goalkeeper	Goal	Penalty retaken, keeper cautioned
Ball kicked backwards	Indirect free kick	Indirect free kick
Illegal feinting	Indirect free kick, and kicker cautioned	Indirect free kick, and kicker cautioned
Wrong kicker	Indirect free kick, and kicker cautioned	Indirect free kick and kicker cautioned
Illegal approach to the ball	Indirect free kick	Indirect free kick

KICK-INS/ROLL-INS

A kick-in/roll-in is awarded to an opponent of the player who last touched the ball when the ball passes over a touch line or the ball rises above the designated height restriction after a save or block by the goalkeeper

The ball must be stationary on the touch line The player taking a roll-in must have part of each foot on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line at the moment of rolling the ball and must use an underarm action.

WALKING

Walking is defined as 'always having at least one foot in contact with the ground' and relates to the motion of all players moving around the field of play. A straightening of the legs during the walking motion is also a good indicator that the player is not breaking into a running technique. A goalkeeper is exempt from this rule whilst in the action of making a save (e.g. diving or jumping with both feet off the ground). Otherwise, all players, including goalkeepers, are not allowed to run or jog at any time during the game. **Fast walking is allowed if performed in accordance with the above definition.**

An indirect free kick need not necessarily be awarded against a defender who is not walking if there is a clear attacking opportunity for the team in possession. Advantage can be played and the offender sanctioned once play has stopped or the advantage has not accrued. If, in the opinion of the referee, there has not been sufficient advantage gained, play may be brought back and an indirect free kick then awarded.

A penalty kick is awarded to the opposition on the fourth accumulated not walking offence committed by a team. This team count is then reset to zero and the not walking offences will accumulate again.

Any DOGSO offence committed in which a defender is guilty of not walking results in the awarding of a penalty and a blue card for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity. However, the running offence will not be included within the team count.

Figure 1

Acceptable Challenge Zone



Foul Challenge Zone