

IFAB LotG Changes

26/27 Season

Wednesday 26th August 2026



Key Changes 26/27

10

LAWS UPDATED

for the 2026/27 season

*8 applicable in
grassroots football*



**Time Limited
Substitutions**



Technology



**Injury Treatment
Protocol**



**DOGSO
Disciplinary**



**Captain Only
Protocol**



**Restart
Clarity**



Equipment



**Cooling Off
Period**

Law 3

The Players



The Players

- ▶ A substituted player now has 10 seconds to leave the pitch.
- ▶ Miss it, the incoming sub waits until the next stoppage (past one minute).
- ▶ If multiple subs, **all players** being **substituted must be off** the field of play **within ten seconds** of the **substitution board** being shown/signal being given for the **final substitution**.



Play is stopped once the sub has been requested and ready to come on.



10s timer starts when sub has been identified by the Board/AR/Referee.



Last 5s is communicated by hand and vocal countdown.



Sub is stopped if the 10s exceeds.



Sub can enter after 1 minute at the next stoppage.

10s

to leave the pitch when substituted.

Exceptions...

- Safety (spectators)
- Safeguarding (U18s)
- Injury

Captain Only

- ▶ ***Mandatory*** across all competitions.
- ▶ Protocol aimed at ***reducing confrontation*** and improving respect.
- ▶ Referees can activate the protocol by communicating with players.
- ▶ Important to ***usher unwanted players away*** and point to the arm.
- ▶ Any player not following the instruction is to be cautioned (C2 – sin bin).



Law 4

The Players' Equipment



Jewellery

NOTE

FA GUIDANCE
REMAINS
UNCHANGED

*All jewellery to
be removed
unless for
medical/religious
reasons*

25/26 wording

"All items of jewellery (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewellery is not permitted."

26/27 wording

"A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous. Accessories are permitted as long as they are not dangerous and are safely and securely covered. Dangerous items must be removed and not taped or covered. The players must be inspected before the start of the match and substitutes before they enter the field of play. If a player is wearing or using unauthorised/dangerous accessories, the referee must order the player to remove or fix it before continuing, as before

Law 5

The Referee



The Referee



ADVANTAGE

- ▶ Advantage can be played even when a restart was itself taken incorrectly, as long as the ball is in play.



BODY
CAMERAS

- ▶ Referees may be permitted to wear body cameras ***IF THE COMPETITION*** (League/CFA) ***SUPPLIES*** them and has control of the footage.

Player Injuries

▶ An outfield player is **REQUIRED TO LEAVE THE PITCH FOR ONE MINUTE**, when:

- ▶ Play is stopped (because of injury or suspected injury).
- ▶ The referee has signalled for the trainer, irrelevant of treatment.
- ▶ The player has requested treatment.

▶ An outfield player is **NOT REQUIRED TO LEAVE FOR ONE MINUTE**, when:

- ▶ The player indicates they do not require treatment when the game is naturally stopped.
- ▶ They voluntarily leave.



Player Injuries - EXCEPTIONS

- ▶ A GK is injured.
- ▶ A GK and outfield player have collided and require attention.
- ▶ Players from the same team have collided and require attention.
- ▶ A severe injury has occurred that involves the stretcher/medical.
- ▶ A player is injured because of a challenge worth of a YC or RC.
- ▶ A penalty kick is awarded, and the injured player is the taker.



Process



Referee
stops
the
game



Medical
personnel
enter the
FOP



Player
leaves
the FOP



Game
restarts.
1 minute
starts.



1 minute
ends



Referee
signals
the
return

Cooling Off Period

- ▶ Provides an ***additional tool*** to match officials managing a game.
- ▶ Applied when the referee feels the ***game needs to settle***.
- ▶ On/Off field influences.
- ▶ On signal, all players must move to their own penalty area.
- ▶ Any player not respecting this will be cautioned (C2 – sin bin).
- ▶ The two captains, two coaches then meet the referee in the centre circle.



Cooling Off Period

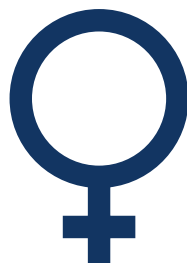
- ▶ Captains/coaches have responsibility to speak to players/spectators.
- ▶ All other participants remain outside FOP.
- ▶ One official may take drinks to their players/treat injuries.
- ▶ Duration of cooling off period is ***determined by the referee.***
- ▶ Max ***TWO PERIODS*** can be applied in one game.
- ▶ All cooling-off periods are ***reported to the COMPETITION.***



What Level?



**STEP 7 &
BELOW**



**TIER 5
AND
BELOW**



**COUNTY
CUPS**



Law 8

The Start & Restart of Play



What Level?

- ▶ Dropped ball text amended to clarify that the team that “would have gained possession” includes the team that would have taken the restart, in situations where the ball would have gone out of play.
- ▶ When there is interference by a match official, or outside agent, the ball is dropped at the position of the interference.



Law 12

Fouls & Misconduct



Fouls & Misconduct

TWO related refinements to how DOGSO offences are punished:

- ▶ Play ADV through a clear goal-scoring opportunity and the goal is scored? NO CAUTION FOLLOWS.
- ▶ The goal is the consequence so a YC would be an additional punishment.

**NO
CAUTION**

When ADV played
in a DOGSO & a
goal is scored.

**DOGSO
JUDGEMENT**

Now
attackers
DDDC.

includes
PLUS

Goalkeeper Control (8s)

1

▶ **FIRST offence** – corner kick awarded.

2

▶ **SECOND offence** – corner kick awarded AND warning.

3

▶ **THIRD offence** – corner kick awarded AND yellow card.

4

▶ **FOURTH offence** – corner kick awarded AND second yellow card/red.

Covering Mouth

- ▶ This Law WILL NOT be adopted for football in England during the 2026/27 season.
- ▶ Competition specific (World Cup, for example).



Law 14

The Penalty Kick



Penalty Kick

If the kicker accidentally kicks the ball with both feet, or touches the ball with their non-kicking foot, then:

- ▶ If the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken.
- ▶ If the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is recorded as missed.

This change has led to the removal of the automatic caution for the kicker, if both the goalkeeper and kicker commit an offence at the same time.



Law 15 & 16

The Throw-in & The Goal-kick



Countdown Restarts

The use of a ***FIVE-second countdown*** has been introduced when a player/team is delaying the taking of a throw-in and/or goal-kick.

- ▶ THROW-IN delayed = reversed restart to opposition.
- ▶ GOAL KICK delayed = corner kick awarded to opposition.

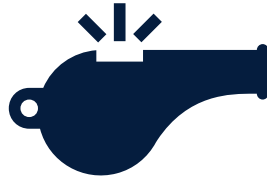
Where a restart is awarded to the opposition, a caution is only issued if the player/team-mate ***EXCESSIVELY*** delays the opposition restart.



The Process



Verbal
instruction
to speed
restart



Referee
blows the
whistle to
start count



Visual AND
verbal count
down from
5 seconds



Reverse
throw or
award CK

Restart in Practice

A player DOES NOT have to be in holding the ball for the countdown to start. If they cause delay by:

- ▶ Slowing retrieval of the ball.
- ▶ Taking up an incorrect position at a throw in.
- ▶ Putting the ball in an incorrect position at a goal-kick.

If a player was in the process of throwing or kicking the ball, as the referee reaches the end of the countdown, the game is allowed to continue.



Commencing the Count

Considerations:

- ▶ In possession of the ball.
- ▶ In playing distance of the pitch.
- ▶ Facing the pitch.
- ▶ Ball at their hands or at their feet.
- ▶ The opponents are the required distance away.
- ▶ Once you have blown your whistle to indicate the count.



In Summary

1

▶ **Countdowns** – Be consistent and don't set your threshold too low.

2

▶ **Own the Welfare/Substitutions** – Count it, communicate it, don't be rushed.

3

▶ **DOGSO & Advantage** – talk in motion, “ADV played, goal scored, no YC”.

USE COMMON SENSE

Support



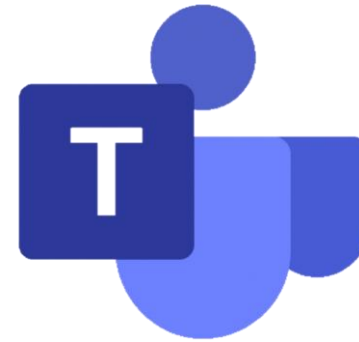
IFAB Laws of the Game

Make sure you are on the
26/27 version



Referee Team

Monthly LoTG quiz
released, test yourself.
Ask Questions!!



U18 Support Calls

[Book Here](#) with AG

Kent FA



THANK YOU