

# Summary of the 2011 Changes to The Laws of the Game



The 125<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) took place in Wales on March 5, 2011. The amendments to the Laws of the Game approved at that meeting and the various instructions and directives issued, together with the reasons for some of the changes, are listed below. A few comments regarding the application of these changes in AYSO are also shown.

## Law 1 (Interpretations) – The Field of Play

Only the lines indicated in Law 1 are to be marked on the field of play. Where artificial surfaces are used, other lines are permitted provided that they are of a different colour and clearly distinguishable from the lines used for football.

**IFAB's Reason:** There is clearly a demand for football turf pitches to have markings for more sports than just football. Considering that these lines cannot be removed from a football turf pitch, it is problematic under the current Laws of the Game to find a basis for allowing a competitive football match to take place on a football turf pitch that is used for multiple sports.

**Ken Aston Camp Comment:** *Consistent with the guidelines of the National Referee Program, referees should allow the match to commence and continue even the field of play may not be perfectly marked.*

## Law 1 (Interpretations) – Goals

The position of the goalposts in relation to the goal line must be according to the graphics below.



If the shape of the goalposts is square (viewed from above), the sides must be parallel or perpendicular to the goal line. The sides of the crossbar must be parallel or perpendicular to the field plane.



If the shape of the goalposts is elliptical (viewed from above), the longest axis must be perpendicular to the goal line. The longest axis of the crossbar must be parallel to the field plane.



If the shape of the goalposts is rectangular (viewed from above), the longest side must be perpendicular to the goal line. The longest side of the crossbar must be parallel to the field plane.



**IFAB's Reason:** It is necessary to define the position of the goalposts in relation to the goal line in order to avoid inconsistencies between one field of play and another.

## Law 2 – The Ball

### Replacement of a defective ball

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during the course of a match:

- the match is stopped
- the match is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the replacement ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the original ball was located when play was stopped

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during a penalty kick or during kicks from the penalty mark as it moves forward and before it touches any player or the crossbar or goalposts:

- the penalty kick is retaken

**IFAB’s Reason:** It is considered unfair that if the ball bursts or becomes defective during a penalty kick or during kicks from the penalty mark, play is restarted with a dropped ball in accordance with the present text of Law 2.

## Law 3 – The Number of Players (Structural Amendment)

Present structure	New structure
<b>Law 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Players</li><li>• Official competitions</li><li>• Other matches</li><li>• All matches</li><li>• Substitution procedure</li><li>• Changing the goalkeeper</li><li>• Infringements and sanctions</li><li>• Players and substitutes sent off</li></ul>	<b>Law 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of players</li><li>• Number of substitutions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Official competitions</li><li>- Other matches</li></ul></li><li>• Substitution procedure</li><li>• Changing the goalkeeper</li><li>• Infringements and sanctions</li><li>• Players and substitutes sent off</li></ul>

**IFAB’s Reason:** The text of Law 3 has been reorganized by the IFAB Technical Sub-Committee in order to have a clearer structure of the Laws and to avoid current misinterpretations.

**Ken Aston Camp Comment:** *There are no substantive changes. Merely a re-ordering of topics and renaming of topic headings.*

## Law 3 – The Number of Players (Interpretations)

### Extra persons on the field of play

#### Outside agents

Anyone not indicated on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is deemed to be an outside agent, as is a player who has been sent off.

### Extra persons on the field of play

#### Team officials

The coach and other officials indicated on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are deemed to be team officials if a team official enters the field of play:

**IFAB’s Reason:** There are some references to team officials in the Laws of the Game but no definition of the term. The reorganization of the text of Law 3 is a good opportunity to include a definition of team officials for ease of understanding.

**Ken Aston Camp Comment:** *In AYSO, for purposes of enforcing responsible behavior consistent with the AYSO Philosophies and the National Rules and Regulations, a “team official” may include the coach, assistant coach, trainer, board member, field monitor, etc. permitted in the technical area.*

**Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment**  
**Basic equipment**

shorts – if undershorts or tights are worn, they must be of the same main colour as the shorts

**IFAB’s Reason:** The current Law permits tights to be worn that are not of the same basic colour as the shorts, which could possibly result in confusion for opponents and match officials. This change would ensure consistency with the present wording that requires undershorts, if worn, to be of the same basic colour as the shorts and prevent the aforementioned confusion.

**Ken Aston Camp Comment:** *AYSO does not train referees to be fashion police, but we do expect the teams to be appropriately attired and equipped. The purpose of uniforms is to allow the teams to be easily distinguished from one another and for the goalkeepers to be further distinguished and recognizable. In colder times of the year, additional clothing may be desired by the players. With the younger divisions, some deviations are allowed as long as the wearer’s team affiliation and player number remain recognizable. Sliding pants, compression shorts, boxer shorts or other types of garments worn under the soccer shorts that are exposed are not illegal but should be the same color as the shorts or as the predominant color of the shorts. Although opinions vary greatly as to the appropriateness, function and esthetic value of these items, they should not be disallowed in games unless the referee believes they present a safety hazard or that they are simply unnecessary adornment.*

**Law 5 (Interpretations) – The Referee**

If an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match, the referee must stop the match only if it interferes with play. Play must be restarted by a dropped ball from the position of the match ball when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

If an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match without interfering with play, the referee must have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

NOTE: As this amendment was approved, the paragraph below has been deleted.

**Law 2 (Interpretations) The Ball**  
**Extra balls on the field of play**

If an extra ball enters the field of play during the match, the referee must stop the match only if it interferes with play. Play must be restarted by a dropped ball from the position of the ball when the match was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

If an extra ball enters the field of play during the match without interfering with play, the referee must have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

**IFAB’s Reason:** It is unclear in the current text of the Laws of the Game which decision the referee should take when an object enters the pitch and interferes with play, and which decision the referee should take when an object enters the pitch without interfering with play.

**Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play (Structural Amendment)**

Present structure	New structure
<p><b>Law 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminaries</li> <li>• Kick-off</li> <li>• Procedure</li> <li>• Infringements and sanctions</li> <li>• Dropped ball</li> <li>• Procedure</li> <li>• Infringements and sanctions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of kick-off</li> <li>• Procedure               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before a kick-off at the start of the match or extra time</li> <li>- Kick-off</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Infringements and sanctions</li> <li>• Definition of dropped ball</li> <li>• Procedure</li> <li>• Infringements and sanctions</li> </ul>

**IFAB's Reason:** A new organisation of the text of Law 8 has been prepared by the IFAB Technical Sub-Committee in order to have a more clear structure of the Laws and avoid current misinterpretations.

**Ken Aston Camp Comment:** *There are no substantive changes. Merely a re-ordering of topics and renaming of topic headings.*

## **Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play**

### **Definition of dropped ball**

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game.

**IFAB's Reason:** Following the general structure of the Laws of the Game of definition, procedure and infringements, it is considered necessary to include a definition of a dropped ball.

The decisions of this year's Annual General Meeting of the Board regarding changes to the Laws of the Game are binding for confederations and member associations as from 1 July 2011 but confederations or member associations whose current season has not ended by 1 July may delay the introduction of the adopted alterations to the Laws of the Game in their competitions until the beginning of their next season.

The 2011/2012 *Laws of the Game*, AYSO Edition, are available from the AYSO Supply Center.

Prepared by the Ken Aston Camp  
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