



Manly Warringah Football Referees Association

Laws of the Game Changes 2020

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Summary of Law Changes



- The introduction of yellow and red cards for misconduct by team officials
- A player being substituted leaving the field at the nearest point on the boundary line
- At a goal kick and a free kick for the defending team in their own penalty area, the ball is in play as soon the kick is taken (it can be played before it leaves the penalty area)

Other changes include: clearer wording for 'handball', attacking team players must be at least 1m away from a defensive 'wall', the goalkeeper only has to have one foot on the goal line at a penalty kick, and a new dropped ball procedure (including a dropped ball being awarded if the ball hits a match official and goes into the goal, team possession changes or a promising attack starts).

Dropped ball

Laws 8 & 9



Changes

- If play is stopped inside the penalty area, the ball will be dropped for the goalkeeper
- If play is stopped outside the penalty area, the ball will be dropped for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the point of the last touch
- In all cases, all the other players (of both teams) must be at least 4m away
- If the ball touches the referee (or another match official) and goes into the goal, team possession changes or a promising attack starts, a dropped ball is awarded

Explanation

- No more contested drop ball, instead the ball will be given to the team last in possession, unless the ball is inside the penalty area where it will be given to the goalkeeper
- If the ball hits the referee and an advantage is gained it will now be a drop ball

Free kicks

Law 13



Changes

- When there is a 'wall' of three or more defenders, the attackers are not allowed within 1m of the wall; an attacker less than 1m from the 'wall' when the kick is taken will be penalised with an indirect free kick
- When the defending team takes a free kick in their own penalty area, the ball is in play once the kick is taken; it does not have to leave the penalty area before it can be

Explanation

- Attackers will no longer be allowed to stand within 1m of a wall of three or more defenders

Goal kick

Law 16



Changes

- The ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played before leaving the penalty area

Explanation

- The ball no longer has to leave the penalty area to be in play. Opponents must still remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play

Handball

Law 12



Changes

- Deliberate handball remains an offence
- The following 'handball' situations, even if accidental, will be a free kick:
 - the ball goes into the goal after touching an attacking player's hand/arm
 - a player gains control/possession of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then scores, or creates a goal-scoring opportunity
 - the ball touches a player's hand/arm which has made their body unnaturally bigger
 - the ball touches a player's hand/arm when it is above their shoulder (unless the player has deliberately played the ball which then touches their hand/arm)

Explanation

- Provides greater clarity for when non-deliberate handball is an offence:
 - Scoring a goal
 - Creates a goal-scoring opportunity
 - If their hand/arm has made their body unnaturally bigger
 - If their hand/arm is above their shoulder

Goal-Scoring Opportunity



Definition

For there to be a goal-scoring opportunity, the following criteria must be considered:

1. Distance between the player and the goal
2. General direction of play
3. Likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
4. Location and number of defenders (typically referred to as 'last man')

A goal-scoring opportunity is more likely to eventuate when a player has control of the ball, is very close to (and heading directly towards) goal with few defenders in-between the player and the goal. However, these considerations are broad and should be applied to each event on a case-by-case basis.

Kick-off Law 8



Changes

- The team that wins the toss can now choose to take the kick-off or which goal to attack (previously they only had the choice of which goal to attack)

Explanation

- Recent Law changes have made the kick-off more dynamic (e.g. a goal can be scored directly from the kick-off) so captains winning the toss often ask to take the kick-off

Penalty kick

Law 14



Changes

- The team's penalty taker can have (quick) treatment/assessment and then take the kick
- The goalkeeper must not be touching the goalposts/crossbar/nets; they must not be moving
- The goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on/in line with the goal line when the kick is taken; cannot stand behind the line

Explanation

- The penalty kick is not to be taken if the goalkeeper is touching the goalposts, crossbar or net, or if they are moving e.g. the goalkeeper has kicked/shaken them
- Goalkeepers now only need to have one foot on the goal line when the kick is taken

Substitutes

Law 3



Changes

- A player who is being substituted must leave the field by the nearest point on the touchline/goal line (unless the referee indicates the player can leave quickly/ immediately at the halfway line or a different point because of safety, injury etc.)

Explanation

- Substitutes must now leave the field at the nearest point to avoid time wasting. They must go immediately to the technical area after leaving the field

Team officials

Laws 5 & 12



Changes

- A team official guilty of misconduct will be shown a YC (caution) or RC (sending off); if the offender cannot be identified, the senior coach who is in the technical area at the time will receive the YC/RC

Explanation

- Team officials can now be shown a Yellow Card or Red Card



For Laws of the Game enquiries or interpretations please contact:
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