

TO THE MEMBERS OF FIFA

Circular no. 1302

Zurich, 31 May 2012

SG/est

Amendments to the Laws of the Game – 2012/2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

The 126th Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) took place in Surrey (England) on 3 March 2012. The amendments to the Laws of the Game approved at this meeting and the various instructions and directives issued are listed below.

LAWS OF THE GAME AND DECISIONS OF THE BOARD

1. Law 1 – The Field of Play

Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees – Commercial advertising

(submitted by FIFA)

Present text	New text
<p>Commercial advertising shall be at least 1 m (1 yd) from the boundary lines of the field of play.</p>	<p>Advertising on the ground shall be at least 1 m (1 yd) from the boundary lines of the field of play.</p> <p>Upright advertising shall be at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 m (1 yd) from the touch lines of the field of play • the same distance from the goal line as the depth of the goal net, and • 1 m (1 yd) from the goal net

Reason

There should be no upright advertising within a one-metre area surrounding the goal net to allow an unrestricted view of the goal for match officials.

The proposal was approved with some discretion accorded for certain stadiums where a full metre distance behind the goal may not be possible without major stadium work.

2. Law 3 – The Number of Players

(submitted by FIFA with amendments from the Scottish Football Association)

Present text	New text
	<p>If a named substitute enters the field of play instead of a named player at the start of the match and the referee is not informed of this change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the referee allows the named substitute to continue the match • no disciplinary sanction is taken against the named substitute • the number of substitutions allowed by the offending team is not reduced • the referee reports the incident to the appropriate authorities

Reason

It is not rare that a substitution is made prior to the start of the match and after the referee has been informed of the names of the players and substitutes. This is normally due to an injury of a player during the warm-up. If the referee is informed of the substitution, this is permitted but it is necessary to clarify how to proceed if the referee is not informed of the change.

3. Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

(submitted by The Football Association)

Present text	New text
stockings	stockings – if tape or similar material is applied externally it must be the same colour as that part of the stocking it is applied to

Reason

An increasing number of players are using excessive amounts of tape externally on their socks. This can be a multitude of colours and completely changes the look of the sock. This can cause confusion, particularly for assistant referees who may need to look at the sock to determine who last played the ball before it went out of play.

4. Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

(submitted by The Football Association)

Present text	New text
Infringements and sanctions The ball is dropped again: (...)	Infringements and sanctions The ball is dropped again: (...) <p>If the ball enters the goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if a dropped ball is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded • if a dropped ball is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team

Reason

There have been a number of occasions where goals have been scored from "uncontested" dropped balls. This has put a great deal of pressure on the referee as he has to allow the goal to stand. We then have the unseemly situation where the opposition allows the team to score from the kick-off without any players trying to stop them in order to rebalance the game.

5. Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees – Disciplinary sanctions

(submitted by FIFA)

Present text	New text
Disciplinary sanctions There are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, e.g. when a player: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession 	Disciplinary sanctions There are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, e.g. when a player: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession

Reason

It is more important to punish the consequence that the hand ball created rather than the fact that it was blatant. In fact, a hand ball could be inconspicuous but certainly very important. Furthermore, it is difficult to define what is meant by “blatantly” (p. 113), and therefore to have a uniform interpretation, especially by referees from different countries or continents with very different experiences. Deleting the word “blatantly”, and providing that if the hand ball prevented the opponent from gaining possession the player must be cautioned, makes the interpretation easier (p. 117).

Other decisions of the IFAB

1. Additional Assistant Referees (AARs)

(submitted by FIFA)

Note was taken that the final feedback on the AAR experiment was due by 31 May 2012, followed by the UEFA EURO 2012 final tournament analysis and concluding with a presentation to the IFAB special meeting on 5 July 2012.

2. Goal-line technology (GLT)

(submitted by FIFA)

The members approved the recommendation to allow two companies, Hawk-Eye and GoalRef/Fraunhofer, to progress to testing phase 2.

3. FIFA Task Force Football 2014

(submitted by FIFA and discussed at the second meeting of the Task Force on 25 October 2011: the usage of radio communication and other equipment)

Present text	New text
Other equipment (...) The use of radio communication systems between players and/or technical staff is not permitted.	Other equipment (...) The use of electronic communication systems between players and/or technical staff is not permitted.

Reason

The current wording of “radio communication systems” does not reflect technological advances.

4. Vanishing spray

(submitted by FIFA)

FIFA updated the members on the vanishing spray experiment during CONMEBOL’s 2011 *Copa América*. It was explained that following the approval given to CONMEBOL by the IFAB on 5 March

2011 for the experimental use of the 9.15m vanishing spray at the 2011 *Copa América* and other competitions, a detailed CONMEBOL report had been received by FIFA and the IFAB in October 2011 which highlighted the results achieved.

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

1. Effective accomplishment of existing regulations, making the 9.15m distance between the wall and the ball be unmistakably respected.
2. Less time-wasting due to increased clarity on position and distance-setting. Additionally, with the use of a vanishing spray, there is more game time as the formation of the defending players is quicker.
3. Vanishing spray is a new tool which will be a vital factor for fair play, thus avoiding confrontations between players and officials at set pieces.
4. Due to its low market price, vanishing spray may be acquired by all professional and amateur leagues.

The members agreed that the use of such spray should be allowed and it should be up to each member association to decide whether to implement the use of the spray.

5. Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment

(submitted by FIFA)

The members approved the principle of wearing a headscarf, subject to referral to the FIFA Medical Committee for an analysis of its safety ahead of final approval at the 5 July meeting.

6. 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil™ regulations – preliminary competition

(submitted by FIFA)

It was explained that the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil™ regulations state:

“23 players may be entered on the match sheet (11 players and 12 substitutes). The 11 first-named players must start the match, the other 12 are designated as substitutes.”

(regulations, p. 23)

The Laws of the Game (Law 3), however, only allow a maximum of seven nominated substitutes.

(Laws of the Game, p. 17).

FIFA therefore retroactively sought permission to keep these regulations in their current form and allow a maximum of 12 nominated substitutes.

➔ The Laws of the Game would therefore have to be amended as follows:

Present text	New text
<p>Official competitions Up to a maximum of three substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition organised under the auspices of</p>	<p>Official competitions Up to a maximum of three substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition organised under the auspices of</p>

FIFA, the confederations or the member associations. The rules of the competition must state how many substitutes may be nominated, from three up to a maximum of seven.

FIFA, the confederations or the member associations. The rules of the competition must state how many substitutes may be nominated, from three up to a maximum of **twelve**.

Reason

FIFA explained that the regulations do not make twelve substitutes compulsory. Coaches also have the advantage of working with the full group of players for matches that are played close together, for example over a weekend and the following midweek, and thus cover any issues related to injuries or technical decisions after the first match. The teams also have the advantage of having a third goalkeeper available to cover any last-minute injuries prior to the game. Finally, younger players have a serious advantage and benefit from sharing the dressing room and bench with experienced players and their professional environment, which is also a development factor.

The proposal was approved and it was noted that the new regulation was already in force for the preliminary competition for the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil™.

Implementation

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 2012, 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.

Yours faithfully,

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



Jérôme Valcke
Secretary General

cc: FIFA Executive Committee
FIFA Referees Committee
Confederations