

Observations on the Additional Instructions and Guidelines for Referees contained in the 2007-2008 version of the FIFA Laws of the Game (Comments in red are by Roy Levin)

By Alan Lee, 8/24/07

1. Page 71, last bullet: It is possible that more than one foul is committed at the same time. If committed by players on the same team, punish the more serious foul. If committed by players on different teams, restart with a dropped ball. The USSF ATR included this as long ago as 2005 (see ATR 8.5), but was careful to call it "rare".
2. Page 78: As depicted in the illustration, the angle of the arm for signaling a direct free kick is roughly 45 degrees (as opposed to horizontal). Jim Allen, USSF National Instructor Staff and editor of Advice to Referees, told me last year: "There is no "official" angle for indicating the free kick. We recommend 45 degrees, but it's not required--it just looks better than anything else." [That said, I recently observed Brian Hall. His free kick signals were nearly horizontal.]
3. Page 82: If the ball is not placed correctly for a goal kick, the assistant referee is to raise his flag. This is new. There is no signal for this situation in USSF's Guide to Procedures. In the past, FIFA has limited the number of prescribed signals and procedures that it included in the Law book. This year's revision has added a number, including this one. In most cases, they accord with USSF's recommendations, but there are a few minor differences. This is an interesting topic, since historically national associations have had the latitude to specify mechanics (and did – some things are done noticeably differently in other countries). Perhaps FIFA is trying to standardize more to improve officiating at international tournaments.
4. Page 84: On a penalty kick, the keeper is to stay on the goal line until the ball is in play (i.e., kicked and moves forward). If the keeper moves off the line prior to this and a goal is not scored, the kicking team gets to kick it again. The Additional Instructions now tell us that the assistant referee is to raise his flag if the keeper blatantly moves forward and a goal is not scored. To date, USSF's Advice to Referees has not provide guidance as to the distinction between trivial and significant when deciding if the keeper moved forward too soon. Also, USSF's Guide to Procedures has not explained how the assistant referee is to signal, but now we know to raise the flag. [It is not addressed here, but the same procedures should apply to kicks from the penalty mark.] This is another example of what I noted in the previous item. As with all matters of mechanics, the referee has the ultimate power to instruct his ARs how they are to signal, regardless of what USSF or FIFA prescribes. As long as an effective mechanism for communication exists, it doesn't matter what is done. An assessor who demands that an officiating team use prescribed signals simply because they are prescribed is not doing his job properly. An assessor who notes that an officiating team has not used prescribed signals AND poor communication has resulted IS doing his job.
5. Page 84: On a kick from the penalty mark when a goal has been scored but it is not obvious, the assistant referee is to raise his flag, then confirm the goal (how to confirm the goal is not stated). It makes sense to raise the flag because this is the same signal used elsewhere on the field when the assistant referee indicates to the referee to stop play because the ball has totally crossed the goal line or touchline. [This procedure would also apply on penalty kicks.]
6. Page 87: The assistant referee can use a discreet hand signal to indicate that the ball is still in play.

7. Page 90: The assistant referee can use discreet hand signals as needed and as agreed upon in the pre-match conference. **And this supports the point I made earlier that the referee can specify how/what the ARs are to signal.**
8. Page 93: In the past, when an assistant referee signals that the ball is out of play but the referee does not see the signal, it was not clear how long the assistant referee should hold up the flag. It is now stated that the assistant referee is to hold up the flag until the referee acknowledges it. **There used to be a Q&A entry that took the more practical view that if the referee did not acknowledge the signal for a long time (which included restarts), the AR should drop his flag. I think that was removed some years ago, but the point is still valid – if the referee has already stopped and restarted the game without acknowledging the signal, there isn't any real purpose in continuing to signal, since under the Law he can't change his decision. So, the unconditional statement in the new Law book can't really be as unconditional as it appears.**
9. Page 93: Assistant referees should give a direct signal to indicate the direction of a throw-in, even when the ball is far from the assistant referee's position. This is different from USSF's Guide to Procedures in which it is stated that the assistant referee signals direction only for balls in his/her own half of the touchline. **That's not quite what it says. It says when the ball crosses the touchline far from the assistant referee's position and the decision is an obvious one [emphasis added], the assistant referee shall make a direct signal to indicate direction. For the non-obvious case, it specifies the customary mechanic. Our colleague Peter Fletcher has provided guidance on what "obvious" means in this context, and I quote: "if the decision is an obvious one' means that the referee is already pointing... ;-)"**
10. Page 93, last paragraph: **This paragraph is illogical. If the assistant referee is unsure that the ball has crossed the touchline, why should he raise his flag?** See a similar but clearer paragraph on page 94. **Yes, this is terrible wording. I suspect that "ball appears to still be in play" means "the players are still acting as if the ball is in play".**
11. Page 94: The assistant referee is to signal for goal kicks and for offside with the right hand. The logic escapes me. My left hand has served me well for eight years. (Last year I had an email conversation on this topic with Jim Allen, USSF National Instructor Staff and editor of Advice to Referees. He told me: "There is some sort of fad going around that you should use the hand that is away from the referee's side to signal for kicks, etc. In theory that means you do not block your vision. That is a load of the well-known brown substance. The AR may use whichever hand he or she sees fit to use for signalling." So much for this fad!) **Agreed. This is what happens when you let the Swiss bureaucrats make things up.**
12. Page 94: The wording of the third paragraph is not the same as the wording of the last paragraph on page 93. Why? **Might as well ask why the Q&A contained errors and inconsistencies every time they were issued. The answer will be the same. On the whole, however, I think this revision is *relatively* error-free.**
13. Page 94: In games in which there is free substitution, if there is no fourth official, it is inferred that the assistant referee is to move to the halfway line to monitor substitutions. **This implication is more explicit in the USSF procedures, although they specify that the AR is to act in accordance with the pre-game instructions.**
14. Page 95: When an assistant referee waves the flag for a foul or misconduct, the signal should be done with the same hand that will be used to indicate the remainder of the signal (i.e., direction), and the wave should be slight, not excessive or aggressive. This is nothing new, but now it is documented. **I believe it is new for FIFA to say this; it has been in the USSF procedures for a while.**
15. Page 95: The assistant referee can apply the advantage clause, but **there is no explanation how the referee and the players will know this. Should the assistant referee say something like "Advantage, play on"?** I assume that if the advantage

does not materialize, the assistant referee is to signal for the foul or misconduct. This is another example of the Swiss bureaucracy at work. USSF does a better job of explaining what the AR is to do, but it does not include any action visible or audible to the players. In general, the whole matter of the application of advantage by the AR is tricky, but not really any trickier than the judgment of trifling/doubtful offenses, which the AR must be able to do as well. The overall principles of "linesmanship" should be applied: "Does the referee need my signal? Will I embarrass the referee if I signal? Will the game fall into disrepute if I do not signal?"

16. Page 99: A lousy illustration of where to hold the ball for a dropped ball. We teach "waist level": the players' waists, not the referee's. A story: the picture in associated with Law 8 in the main portion of the Law book used to be similarly broken. Years ago Bill Mason convinced George Cumming to replace it with one showing the ball at waist height. George did, but the picture appears to show the referee throwing the ball downward rather than dropping it. The picture added this year on p. 99 is much like the old picture that Bill railed against. When I pointed it out to him earlier this month, he rolled his eyes.
17. Page 102: Based on the last paragraph, it is implied that "remaining stationary" is not interfering with an opponent.
18. Page 110: The conditions for a foul do not list "against an opponent or the opposing team" as stated in USSF's Advice to Referees. Page 114 helps in this regard by making it clear that playing in a dangerous manner must involve an opponent. For clarity, I think it is important to include "opponents/opposing team" in the list. Yes, that would be more consistent, although Law 12 explicitly involves the opponents nearly everywhere they need to be mentioned. Of course, deliberately handling the ball isn't really an offense against the opposing team. On the other hand, as you point out, dangerous play must be committed against an opponent to be a foul, even though Law 12 doesn't say this. So getting things absolutely consistent would take a little more tweaking.
19. Page 112: Related to handling the ball deliberately, what does it mean that the "position of the hand does not necessarily mean that there is an infringement"? Advice to Referees says there is handling if the arm is in an abnormal playing position. I don't believe anything subtle is intended. This is trying to address the case of a hand in a normal position, e.g. at the side, that is struck by the ball. As written, the qualification is accurate, since it is equivalent to "there are some positions of the hand that do not imply an infringement."
20. Page 114: Good explanation of what is "playing in a dangerous manner." An opponent must be involved. I think "threatens injury" is a little misleading. Ken Aston's description was better, since he described dangerous play as playing the ball improperly and thereby denying the opponent the opportunity to play the ball properly.
21. Page 118: Not new, but it is good to know that a captain has no special status or privileges. For example, being a captain is not an excuse for dissent. This used to be in the Laws prior to the 1997 rewrite (in an IBD), but it got lost. It's good to see it back again.
22. Page 121: A long explanation of how to restart play after violent conduct. Yes, and notice the restart specified if a player leaves the field to commit violent conduct. Previously, this was a dropped ball; it is now an IFK.
23. Page 130: During kicks from the penalty mark, a goalkeeper who is sent off "shall be replaced by a player who finished the match." Note that it does not say "by a player who is on the field" (a player participating in the kicks). Most of the time these two would be the same, but not always (in the full procedures on these kicks, see the second to last bullet, known as the "reduce to equate" clause; it is possible that a player finished the match but is not participating in the kicks). An interesting

observation. If one reads the language explaining Kicks from the Penalty Mark on pp. 54-56, one might infer this statement, but it certainly is not a case I had considered. Note that "on the field of play at the end of the match" must not be taken too literally – I believe that a player who has left the field with permission of the referee before time expires is still considered "a player on the field" for the purposes of eligibility for participation in the kicks.