



Summary of the 2002 Changes To the Laws of the Game

At the 116th annual meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB), held in Zermatt, Switzerland, a number of proposals for changes to the Laws of the Game were discussed. The changes approved by the Board, and their reasons for some of the changes, are given below. New text is indicated with bold type.

A few comments regarding the application of these changes in AYSO are also shown, along with some background information.

In World Cup years the IFAB typically makes no significant changes to the Laws; this year was no exception.

These amendments to the Laws become effective on 1 July 2002. The Board also issued additional 'Information, Instructions and Directives', which are effective immediately.

Changes to the Laws of the Game

The first change is the addition of a new 3-part decision to Law 4 regarding players' uniform shirts:

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment; Decision 1

- *Advertising is permitted only on the players' jerseys. It may not be worn on shorts, stockings or footwear.*
- *Players must not reveal undershirts, which contain slogans or advertising. A player removing his jersey to reveal slogans or advertising will be sanctioned by the competition organiser.*
- *Jerseys must have sleeves.*

AYSO Comment: 1) The prohibition of advertising does not apply to the normal logos and markings of uniform suppliers. 2) This decision is intended to prevent players from deliberately taking off their shirts to reveal messages on their undershirts of a political, religious, commercial or social nature. 3) The third part of this decision is intended to preclude the wearing of basketball style jerseys, as had been occurring with some national teams. No minimum sleeve length has been specified.

The following change was made to Law 5:

Law 5 – The Referee; Powers and Duties

- *Stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that he is removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted.*

IFAB's Reason: "This clarifies the procedure to be followed when a player returns to the field of play following injury."

AYSO Comment: An injured player must first receive permission from the referee before re-entering the field of play. If permission is given while the ball is in play, the injured player must re-enter from a touch line; when the ball is out of play the injured player may re-enter, after receiving the referee's permission, from any of the boundary lines.

The following change was made to Law 12:

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct; Indirect Free Kicks

- *An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following **four** offences:*

IFAB's Reason: "This is a minor alteration to the text to recognise that there are now four offences instead of five as before."

AYSO Comment: In 2000 the 'six-second rule' was introduced, replacing the old 'four-step rule'. Last year the 'wastes time' offence was belatedly removed (resulting in four offences rather than five), as was the "more than 5-6 seconds" goalkeeper time wasting provision of Decision 3.

Information, Instructions and Directives

“Simulation: There was unanimous support for a high profile publicity campaign to be organised by FIFA against players guilty of this offence. Referees are instructed to take strong action against simulation and players guilty of simulation must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour.”

AYSO Comment: At the March 2002 Referees’ Seminar in Seoul, the World Cup referees and ARs were instructed to deal firmly with players seeking an unfair advantage by pretending to be fouled. The game officials were also told not to tolerate players demanding yellow or red cards for opponents.

“Players Delaying the Restart of Play: Serious concern was expressed at the number of players who delay the restart of play. The Laws of the Game are very clear on this matter and the Board insists that referees must apply them.”

“Temporary Expulsions: The Board strongly supports FIFA’s concern that some national associations continue to use temporary expulsions in lower leagues. The Board confirmed in the strongest terms that this procedure must cease immediately, otherwise disciplinary sanctions will be applied against the offending federation.”

“Celebration of a Goal: The Board expressed its concern at the common practice of players removing their shirts while celebrating a goal to reveal slogans and advertising. It was agreed that when time wasting occurred referees would continue to take actions in accordance with the Laws of the Game. It was also agreed that when slogans and advertising were displayed on an undershirt, the matter could be dealt with by the disciplinary procedures of the competition.”

AYSO Comment: In 2001 the IFAB relaxed their 1996 decision that a player must be cautioned for removing his or her jersey when celebrating a goal. The referee must report to the appropriate authority any display of slogans or advertising displayed on a player’s undershirt. Players are to be cautioned, however, for unsporting behaviour if their celebrations are provocative and intended to incite or ridicule opponents or opposing spectators. Players guilty of excessive time wasting while celebrating a goal must also be cautioned.

“Artificial Surfaces: The Board endorsed its support at last year’s meeting for the FIFA Quality Concept for Artificial Surfaces.”

“Additional Instructions to Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials: The Board approved that the ‘Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials’ would now be printed in the Laws of the Game book.”

AYSO Comment: From 1994 through 1996 the Law Book contained a section titled “Additional Instructions Regarding the Laws of the Game”. These were absent in the 1997–1999 Law books. In 2000 a section titled “Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials” was added to FIFA’s “Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game” book (available on FIFA’s web site); these additional instructions will now be included in the Law book.

Discussed but Not Adopted

Fourth Official: A draft document will be prepared to better integrate the role of the fourth official into the text of the Laws of the Game (probably Law 6) for consideration in 2003.

9.15 Metres (10 Yards) Advancement of Free Kicks: The FA reported on the success so far of the experiment conducted in England wherein a free kick is advanced 10 yards if the defending team fails to respect the distance. In addition to improved co-operation between referee and players, a goal was scored in one of every 24 cases of the free kick being advanced.

The IFAB plans to continue the experiment for another year in two countries in two different continents.

AYSO Comment: There have been questions regarding the possibility of AYSO leagues adopting this 10-yard advancement of free kicks. AYSO regions, areas and sections must conform to the current Laws of the Game. The experiment can only be conducted with the permission of FIFA.