

2008 vs. 2007 FIFA IFAB LOTG Comparison

This document summarizes the changes in the 2008/2009 edition of the FIFA / IFAB “Laws of the Game” as compared to the previous 2007/2008 edition. Any text samples extracted and included are done solely for fair-use educational purposes and are still bound to the original copyright holder (FIFA / IFAB).

While every attempt is made to make this document accurate, this comparison has no official approval nor review by FIFA, IFAB, the rules committee(s), nor any other official interpreters. Purely “in the opinion of the referee” that authored this comparison, **true changes** to the LOTG are in **bold** while *minor changes with no meaning change intended* are *italicized*.

This is the first time since generating comparison documents of USSF material that the LOTG has been analyzed. Historically, IFAB limited the extent of their changes and clearly marked any changes with precise change bars. Furthermore, clear guidance on the changes was available from places like the USSF Memorandum. But 2007 saw a major expansion of the IFAB LOTG publication by collecting a lot of material into an expanded “**Additional Instructions**” section. This included incorporating much of the FIFA Q&A document. 2008 went a step further.

Per the notice following the IFAB meeting in March 2008 and by their own admittance in the new LOTG Preface, there has been a rewrite in the 2008 FIFA LOTG edition without much intended meaning change. In language parlance, there has been syntactic but not semantic changes. Analysis shows that there are many unmarked changes including the shuffling of material between the main body of the document and the former “**Additional Instructions**” section. This makes it really difficult to understand what actually changed – even if just meant to be in wording or location and not meaning. Hence, why this comparison document of the FIFA LOTG has been developed this year.

Normally, the attempt is made to simply point out the actual textual changes and leave interpretation to the user. But in a number of cases, wording was changed in a way that appears to introduce a semantic (meaning) change. Based on the pronouncement by IFAB, that no change in meaning is really intended, some interpretation is also given here to help uphold the “no change” intention. Otherwise, we state that some changes appear to be actually intended. Read carefully and look for additional confirmation from senior referee staff in your country or federation of any interpretation implied here.

There are two sections (a summary of major changes and then the detailed comparison), followed by two appendices (details on global changes and suggested changes still to be made to clean up the text, interpretation or procedures).

Randy Harr, USSF Referee, June 2008 (rev D). Original posted at <http://socref.net/>

Section 1: Summary of major changes

- In 150 places, especially in the “**Interpretation and Guidelines**” chapter, the word “**shall**” or similar was changed to “**must**”.
- Special Circumstances reference removed: on Dropped Ball, inserted full text to replace reference; on IFK changed reference to Law 13 for placement .
- “**Second touch**” changed to “**touch again**” (most) everywhere
- Law 1, Field Markings add explicit optional mark along the touch line
- Law 1, Dimensions changed to state “**all lines must be the same width**”.
- Law 1,3, Players Technical Area material moved to Technical Area section outside the laws.
- Law 4, Players Equipment has added phrase that “**the teams must distinguish in colour from each other**” (not just the referees); “**jersey or shirt with sleeves**”
- Law 5 Referee changes the word **Terminate** to **Abandon** for when outside interference affects a game
- Law 6 (and in the “**Interpretation and Guidelines**” chapter) “**are closer to the action**” is changed to “**have a better view**” in describing when the assistant referee should make a foul call
- Law 6 “**move forward**” is changed to “**moves off the goal line**” when describing the keeper during a penalty kick (in I&G Law 6 as well)
- Law 12, the Direct Free Kick foul changed as show: “~~tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball~~” and moved to “**careless, reckless, or using excessive force**” fouls section.
- Law 12, added two new sentences to lead the “**Disciplinary Sanctions**” section on when and how the yellow and red card are to be used to communicate; removed “shown a xxx card” from most other places
- I&G Law 3, added Fourth bullet in “**Substitution Procedure**” section: “The referee gives the substitute permission to enter the field of play”
- I&G Law 5, Added new sentence to start out the “**Advantage**” section: “The referee may play advantage whenever an infringement or offence occurs.”
- I&G Law 12, in the section “**Playing in a dangerous manner**” on page 112, the first paragraph had the last sentence dropped. It had read: “**The action becomes an offence only when an opponent is adversely affected**”

*Note: in this document, modified text is sometimes shown in markup format. This means that deletions of text from 2007 to the 2008 edition are shown with ~~strikeout~~ text while additions are shown underlined. Text from the document appears as “*quoted and in a red font*”.*

Section 2: Detailed Comparison

General Cleanups

In 150 places, especially in the “Interpretation and Guidelines” chapter, the word “**shall**” or similar was changed to “**must**”. A complete list of these changes is in the Appendix.

Anytime there was an asterisk and reference: * (see page 3), this has been replaced.

- If an indirect free kick was being annotated, this was replaced with the text:
“(see Law 13 – Position of Free Kick)”.
- If a dropped ball was being annotated, this was replaced with the text:
“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”.

A complete list of these changes to remove “special circumstances” is in the Appendix.

In all but 2 pages, the words “**second time**” or “**second touch**” were changed to “**again**”. This is in the context of the player putting the ball back into play and then touching the ball again before it has touched any other player. A complete list of these changes is available in the appendix.

All but one reference to “**show a yellow card**” or “**show a red card**” have been simplified to just state the player is cautioned or sent off. Law 12 on misconduct now has a simple statement on yellow and red card showing. A complete list of these changes is in the appendix.

“**touchline**” was changed to “**touch line**” where occurred to be consistent through out the document and similar to “**goal line**” in reference. A list is in the appendix.

Capitalization and punctuation changes are not mentioned in this document unless deemed significant in some way.

Title, Notes and Contents

A new page entitled “**Preface**” (page 3) has been added to explain the major updates. A suggested read for everyone.

On “**Notes**” page, removed description for asterisk (*) in “**Key**” section that previously referred to Law 8 and special circumstances. (See *General Cleanups above*.)

“**Contents**” shows the (1) main Law chapters reduced in overall page count by four pages, (2) “**Fourth Official**” chapter title is expanded to include “**Reserve Assistant Referee**”, and (3) former “**Additional Instructions**” chapter is renamed to be the “**Interpretations of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees**” and expanded by two pages. (see Preface). This new super-chapter is referred to as “**Interpretations and Guidelines**” (or even “**I&G**” for short) in this document.

Law 1

“Field Surface” section expanded to include two paragraphs on artificial surfaces . The first paragraph was in the former “Additional Instructions”. The second was former “IFAB Decision 7”. Both simply moved here.

“Field Markings” section (previously fourth section, now second) has the first sentence of the former “Dimensions” section merged into its first sentence. The third sentence is expanded to include “which joins the midpoints of the two touch lines” when talking of the halfway line. Paragraph 5 is created by moving “IFAB Decision 6” here and changed to include text of an optional mark along the touch line.

“Dimensions” has new last sentence that was moved from the former “Field Markings” section. The sentence was changed to state all lines must be the same width.

Removed first intro sentence to “Goal Area” (“a goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows:”) and “Penalty Area” (“a penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows:”)

In “Penalty Area”, split the former second paragraph of two sentences into two paragraphs of one sentence each.

Minor wording change: “Goals” to “A goal” on first sentence of “Goals” section.

Former IFAB Decision 2 and its two sentences were tacked onto the end of the second paragraph in the “Goals” section.

The Field of Play diagram and two corresponding Measurement diagrams now indicate optional marks along the touch line. (pages 10-11)

The IFAB Decisions went from 8 to 1. Decision 1 was moved to the “Goals” section in “Interpretations and Guidelines” Law 1 chapter, Decision 2 moved to the “Goals” section here. Decisions 3, 4 and 5 moved to the “Interpretation and Guidelines” Law 1 chapter. Decision 6 moved to the “Field Markings” section here. Decision 7 moved to the “Field Surface” section here. And Decision 8 stayed and became the new Decision 1 here.

Law 2

Decision 1 had the first and last sentence removed (somewhat redundant text). *Minor text cleanup (mostly to change words to “logo”). Logo diagrams moved from bottom of page to middle of Decision 1.*

Law 3

Last sentence of “All Matches” section reworded to improve intent.

In “Substitution Procedure” section, the second to last and third to last bullets are changed to indicate the player becomes a substituted player; not just ceases to be a player.

In “**Infringements and Sanctions**”, there has been almost a complete rewording with additional text added. Key changes are “**or substituted player**” has been added to the first sentence intro, any mention of caution no longer mentions “**showing the yellow card**”, and it is clarified that the “**referee**” is doing the action. No apparent change in meaning; just clarification.

*A former section title “**Restart of Play**” was removed as was its intro sentence. The remaining bullet now concludes the “**Infringements and Sanctions**” section.*

*IFAB Decision 1 has been moved to the “**Interpretations and Guidelines**” Law 3 chapter.*

IFAB Decision 2 has been deleted but the same material is covered by text in “**The Technical Area**” section of the publication.

Law 4

The last bullet of IFAB Decision 1 was removed and instead “**with sleeves**” was added to the first bullet in the “**Basic Equipment**” section after the phrase “**jersey or shirt**”.

*Minor rewording of the second bullet under the “**Shinguards**” section.*

*The section formerly entitled “**Goalkeepers**” has been renamed to “**Colours**”. A first bullet has been inserted that was from the former “**Additional Instructions**” section. The bullet is reworded to add that “**the teams must distinguish in colour from each other**”; not just the referees.*

*Slight rewording of the first sentence start of the “**Infringements and Sanctions**” section. Removed “**enters (or “** and “**and shown the yellow card**” from the last sentence.*

IFAB Decision 1 has the bullets removed, each sentence now on its own, and the last bullet moved to the main law text (last bullet was about jerseys must have sleeves).

Law 5

7th bullet in “**Powers and Duties**” section **changes the word Terminate to Abandon** for when **outside interference affects a game**.

*Adds “**indicates the**” before second to last bullet starting with “**restart the match**”.*

*Former IFAB Decision 3 is moved into the middle of the first sentence in the “**Decisions of the Referee**” section. “**or the Fourth Official**” is added to the last sentence of this same section.*

*In IFAB Decision 1, the third bullet is reworded and simplified to simply say “**suitability of field equipment**”. The word “**require**” replaces “**request or insist**” in the 6th bullet. The 8th bullet parenthesized clause is reworded to indicate where the referee has authority instead of when his responsibility.*

Law 6

Minor wording changes under the “*Duties*” section as follows:

- (a) “*are*” changed to “*may be*” in opening sentence,
- (b) “*passed out*” changed to “*leaves*” in first bullet,
- (c) “*side*” changed to “*team*” in second bullet,
- (d) “*has occurred*” changed to “*occurs*” in fifth bullet,
- (e) here and in the “**Interpretation and Guidelines**” chapter, “**are closer to the action**” is changed to “**have a better view**” in describing when the assistant referee should make a foul judgment and signal (and the word “*assistants*” is changed to “*assistant referee*” in the sixth bullet where this is mentioned),
- (f) “**move forward**” is changed to “**moves off the goal line**” in the last bullet describing the keeper during a penalty kick, and
- (g) “*has crossed*” is changed to “*crosses*” in the last bullet

In the “*Assistance*” section, inserted “(10 yds)” after 9.15m.

Law 7

“*two participating teams*” change in the first sentence.

Added text to “*alter the duration of the periods of play*”.

Removed parenthesis in “*substitution(s)*” of first bullet in “*Allowance for Time Lost*” section.

Law 8

Minor changes in wording in the “*Procedure*” section:

- (a) added “*of play*” to last word “*field*” of the first bullet

The “*Infringements and Sanctions*” section had some rewording as follows:

- (a) “*kicker*” changed to “*player taking the kick-off*” in the first sentence,
- (b) “*place where*” changed to “*position of the ball when*” in first bullet

The “*Dropped Ball*” section single sentence was reworded with inclusion of language indicating that a dropped ball is when the referee stopped play.

Under the “*Procedure*” section, the asterisk special circumstances reference has been changed to the full text, as described in the general notes.

The “**Special Circumstances**” section is deleted. The third paragraph on dropped ball position has been textually included everywhere a dropped ball situation had the referencing asterisk to this section. The free kick paragraphs (first two) are part of the Law 13 section “**Position on Free Kicks**”.

Law 9

Minor change of “*from*” to “*off*” when describing the ball rebounding after hitting a referee or assistant referee

Law 10

The sentence in the “**Competition Rules**” section was enhanced and rewritten using the language of IFAB Decision 1. IFAB Decision 1 has been deleted.

Law 11

*Dropped “or” from first two bullets in “**No Offenses**” section*

*Minor reword of intro to “**Infringements and Sanctions**” section (“**For any**” changed to “**In the event of**”).*

*IFAB Decisions 1 and 2 defining terms has been moved a new section entitled “**Definitions**” to start the “**Interpretation and Guidelines**” Law 11 chapter.*

Law 12

The Direct Free Kick foul changed to “**tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball**” and moved to the section on “**careless, reckless, or using excessive force**” fouls. *The language counting the number of fouls listed in each group in the “**Direct Free Kick**” section is correspondingly updated.*

*In the “**Indirect Free Kick**” section, moved some phrases around in sentences with minor tense change. Specifically, the intro sentences to the two bulleted list groups. The first one has the “**while controlling the ball with his hands**” starting the sentence where the phrase used to be after “**six seconds**”. “**in the opinion of the referee**” used to end the intro sentence for the second paragraph (instead of now being before “a player”). Slight rewording of second bullet on second touch for the keeper.*

*In the last bullet of the second group of the “**Indirect Free Kick**” section, changed “**dismissed**” to “**send off**”. Added the phrase “**the place**” before “**where the offence**” in the last sentence in this same section.*

Added two new sentences to lead the “Disciplinary Sanctions**” section on when and how the yellow and red card are to be used to communicate:**

“The yellow card is used to communicate that a player, substitute or substituted player has been cautioned.

The red card is used to communicate that a player, substitute or substituted player has been sent off.”

*Moved IFAB Decision 1 to become the new last paragraph in the “**Disciplinary Sanctions**” section.*

Removed “and shown the XXXX card” from the titles of groups of “Cautionable Offences” and “Sending-off Offences” sections. (All but the first instance was removed.

Other consistent, minor textual changes in the groups of offences sections were made as follows to bring the items into more of a title than a description format:

- (a) *“is guilty of” removed before “unsporting behavior”, “serious foul play”, and “violent conduct”*
- (b) *“shows” is removed before “dissent by ...”*
- (c) *“persistently infringes” changed to “persistent infringement”*
- (d) *“enters or re-enters” changed to “entering or re-entering”*
- (e) *“leaves” changed to “leaving”*
- (f) *“denies” to “denying”*
- (g) *“receives” to “receiving”*

IFAB Decisions 2, 5 and 6 were removed but considered covered in text already existing in the “Interpretation and Guidelines” chapter. Decision 6 is covered by text on page 115 (third bullet) of the “Celebration of a goal” section. Decision 5 covered in text of page 114 (sixth bullet) of the “Cautions for unsporting behavior” section. Decision 2 covered in page 111 on “Offences committed by goalkeepers” section.

IFAB Decisions 1, 3 and 4 were moved. Decision 1 to earlier in this section as described above, Decision 3 to page 114 of the new “Instructions and Guidelines” Law 12 chapter to become the last two bullets of the “Cautions for unsporting behavior” section, and Decision 4 to page 117 of that same new chapter to become paragraph two of the “Serious foul play” section.

Law 13

The former second paragraph was moved down to the bottom of the page (page 37) and given a section title of “Procedure”.

The two bullets under section “The Direct Free Kick” had the bold face title added “Ball Enters the Goal”. The subtitles under section “The Indirect Free Kick” were made bold face now.

Under the section “Position of a Free Kick”, some improvements on titling (bold face first title “Free Kick Inside the Penalty Area” and “Free Kick Outside the Penalty Area”, then made title italic “Direct or indirect free kick to the defending team”.

Reworded the last bullet of “Indirect Free Kick to the attacking team” with no real change in meaning.

Added phrase to last bullet in “Free Kick Outside the Penalty Area”: “or from the position of the ball when the infringement occurred (according to the infringement).”

Under the section “Infringements and Sanctions” (pages 39-40), some minor formatting to titles as above:

- (a) bold faced “Free kick taken by a player other than the goalkeeper” and “Free kick taking by the goalkeeper”,
 (b) In second sentence, changed “into play” to “out of the penalty area”

Law 14

Moved section previously entitled “Referee” contents to the section entitled “Procedure”. First bullet of “Procedure” section was previously first sentence of “Referee” section and was rephrased with no real meaning change. Last sentence of “Procedure” section was former second sentence of old “Referee” section.

The “Infringements and Sanctions” section had a number of changes. New subsections were defined by adding bold face to the first sentence and the 7th paragraph; both starting “If ...”. Everywhere in this section you see “be taken”, it used to say “proceed”. Where you see “the match is restarted”, it used to say “restarts the match”.

Law 15

Old third sentence with three bullets became the current second paragraph.

Changed “immediately after” to “when” in “Procedure” section.

Law 16

The former third sentence / paragraph with a bullet was moved to become the second paragraph. The bullet was removed and text simply flowed. Some reordering of phrases in the former bulleted sentence was made.

“beyond” changed to “out of” in fourth bullet of “Procedure” section.

“into play beyond” changed to “out of” in first sentence of “Infringements and Sanctions” section. Text “from a goal kick” added to end.

The subsection titles starting with text “Goal kick taken by ...” were bold faced.

Law 17

The former third sentence / paragraph with a bullet was moved to become the second paragraph. The bullet was removed and text simply flowed. Some reordering of phrases in the former bulleted sentence was made.

The opening bullet for the “Procedure” section was changed:

- the ball is must be placed inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flagpost nearest to the point where the ball crossed the goal line

Changed “not be moved” in 2nd bullet of “Procedures” section.

The subsection titles starting with text “Corner kick taken by ...” were bold faced.

Procedures to Determine the Winner of a Match ...

“are methods of determining” changed to “are the three methods approved for determining” in first sentence of first paragraph of chapter. “*aggregated*” added to “*if the scores*” in “*Away Goals*” subsection at start.

Under “*Procedures*” subsection of “*Kicks from the Penalty Mark*” section:

(a) Correctly removed paragraph space in middle of text “*F.A. Board Decisions*” in third to last bullet .

(b) Second to last bullet describing the reduce to equate principle was reworded but not changed in meaning.

(c) Changed phrase “*that only an equal*” in last bullet.

Technical Area

The first sentence of chapter was changed as shown:

“~~The technical area described in Law 3, International F.A. Board Decision no. 2, relates particularly to matches played in stadiumsstadia with ...~~”

The second sentence was reworded with no real change in meaning.

Second to last bullet of Technical Area chapter had phrase changed as shown:

“*within theits confines of the technical area*” .

Fourth Official

The chapter title “*The Fourth Official*” expanded to include “*and the Reserve Assistant Referee*” on page 53.

Phrase “*the match-referee*” changed in second bullet in. 6th bullet reordered to become 5th bullet . “*Footballs*” changed in 6th bullet. Changed “*that has-occurred*” in 8th bullet.

Interpretations and Guidelines (I&G)

Renamed the “*Additional Instructions and Guidelines for Referees*” in the 2007 edition to “*Interpretations of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees*” here.

Note: Remember that the section was greatly expanded in 2007 by including other sections and material from the Q&A rewritten in plain English statements of fact. It was further changed this year by moving material from the main laws (especially IFAB decisions) back to this section. Note also that “none” below means no changes of note in addition to any global changes that are grouped together elsewhere.

I&G Law 1

“*Artificial turf*” section moved to main “*Law 1*” chapter earlier.

New section entitled “*Goals*” added with text taken from former Law 1, IFAB Decision 1.

“Commercial advertising” section expanded with a new paragraph created by the merger of text from the former Law 1, IFAB Decisions 3 and 4.

New section entitled **“Logos and emblems”** added with text of former Law 1, IFAB Decision 5.

I&G Law 2

none

I&G Law 3

Removed “if appointed” from the second bullet in “Substitution Procedure” section

Fourth bullet is brand new in “Substitution Procedure” section:

- *The referee gives the substitute permission to enter the field of play*

“process” became “procedure” in 8th and 10th bullets of “Substitution Procedure” section

“e.g.” added to third bullet of “Player outside the field of play” subsection on page 61.

IFAB Decision 1 from former Law 3 was merged into the second paragraph of **“Minimum number of players”** section to solidify that you may continue playing with less than 7 players but are not advised to.

Third paragraph of “Minimum number of players” section modified. “However” dropped as first word. “7” changed to “seven” in second to last word.

I&G Law 4

First bullet of former “Basic Equipment” section moved into main Law 4 chapter.

Correctly added a paragraph space after first sentence of second paragraph in “Other equipment” section.

I&G Law 5

Added new sentence to start out the **“Advantage”** section:

The referee may play advantage whenever an infringement or offence occurs.

Changed **“The decision to penalise the original offence must be taken within the next a few seconds”**. This is the second to last paragraph of the **“Advantage”** section on page 66.

On diagrams of “Guidelines for Referees” section (pages 70-74), added touch line side optional mark and changed titles: “~~Positioning for dead ball situations—the~~”. On diagrams of pages 71-74, an offside line was added extending from the trailing assistant referee.

Under **“Use of whistle”** subsection of **“Referee Signals”** section (page 76), changed bullet under **“stop play”**: **“suspended or ~~terminated~~abandoned”**. Also added **“.”** to all the main bullets of this subsection where missing to make consistent.

I&G Law 6

“process” to “procedure” on third bullet under “Duties and Responsibilities” section.

On diagrams of “Positioning and team work” section (pages 77-86), added touch line side optional mark. On diagrams of pages 85-86, added offside line extending from trailing assistant referee.

On page 81, “5. Penalty Kick”, changed “blatantly moves forward” to “blatantly moves off the goal line”.

Page 87 “Running Technique” section. Second sentence broken up into two sentences.

Bullet in middle of page clarified from:

- if play has restarted, only disciplinary action may be taken.

to:

- if play has already restarted, the referee may still take disciplinary action but not penalise the offence with a free kick or penalty kick

Removed first bullet under second paragraph of section “Fouls” on page 92; likely because changed text in main law to be “view” from “closer”. The bullet had read:

- the offence occurred closer to the assistant referee than to the referee (this applies, in certain circumstances, to offences committed in the penalty area)

Removed sentence from middle of paragraph of section “Wall distance” on page 94. The sentence had read:

He will assert the distance from the position of the ball.

I&G Law 7

Shortened title of only section by dropping “Additional Time “ from beginning of title.

I&G Law 8, 9, 10

none

I&G Law 11

Added new “Definitions” section to start this chapter (on page 99). Content is made from former Law 11 IFAB Decisions 1 and 2; slightly rewritten for form.

Last paragraph of “Infringements” section on page 100 has minor changes: “goal posts” changed to “goalposts”, and “play shall be restarted” changed.

On text associated with diagrams 9, 10 and 11; dropped “player” before letter designators.

Corrected text associated with diagram 12 as shown: “rebounds ~~from the goalkeeper~~ off an opponent to playerattacker (B)”.

I&G Law 12

On page 109, in the section "*Holding an opponent*", the 4th paragraph in the middle of the page had a single word changed from "*but*" to "*and*" when describing conditions for a hold continuing into the penalty area.

On page 110, under section "*Handling the ball*", the third bullet had "*The*" added to the start. At the bottom of the page, "*handling*" was inserted into "*guilty of several handling offences*"

Title of section changed by inserting word: "*Offences committed by goalkeepers*". In this section's first sentence, "*Goalkeepers are*" was changed to "*A goalkeeper is*", "*their*" to "*his*" and the word "*possession*" was changed to "*control*" in two places. Further down in the middle of the page, "*the goalkeeper*" was changed to "*him*". The title of the next section changed similarly: "*Offences committed against goalkeepers*".

In the section "*Playing in a dangerous manner*" on page 112, the first paragraph had the last sentence dropped. It had read: "*The action becomes an offence only when an opponent is adversely affected.*" In this same section, under the subsection "*Disciplinary sanctions*", the last bullet was modified as shown: "*opportunity by playing*".

Section "*Cautions for unsporting behavior*" had its bullet list expanded by moving into the text of former Law 12, IFAB Decisions 3 and 5. Decision 5 became bullet 6. Decision 3 became bullets 12 and 13. Decision 3 was reworded to fit in this form and appears to have dropped a special circumstances reference in error.

Section "*Celebration of a goal*" on page 115 was expanded by moving former Law 12, IFAB Decision 6 to become the third bullet in the third paragraph.

Section "*Serious foul play*" on page 117 was expanded by moving former Law 12, IFAB Decision 4 to become the second paragraph.

On page 119 under "*Restart of play:*" for the "*Violent Conduct*" section, the first sub-bullet under the third bullet was expanded as shown: "*...or a penalty kick (if inside the offending player's own penalty area)*" Similar expansion made on page 120, end of 4th bullet in section "*Offences where an object or ball is thrown*".

I&G Law 13, 14, 15

none

I&G Law 16

On page 126, first paragraph, the phrase ending the first sentence "*he shall be penalised with an indirect free kick from ...*" was changed to "*an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team in ...*"

I&G Law 17

none

I&G Procedures to determine ...

Second bullet under “Procedure” of “Kicks from the penalty mark” was changed from:

- The goal may be changed only if it becomes unusable

to:

- The penalty area where the kicks from the penalty marks are taking place may be changed only if the goal or the playing surface becomes unusable

Second to last bullet under “Procedure” of “Kicks from the penalty mark” had a phrase changed as shown: “if a team ~~remains with lessis~~ reduced to fewer than 7 players”.

Rules of the IFAB

(although not really a law change, it is a change in the document and so covered here. Odd because the moniker still lists that these are as approved by IFAB in 1993?)

On page 131, under “Annual Business Meeting” of “Procedures”, inserted text as shown:

“Any confederation or other member association of FIFA may forward”.

On page 132, under “Quorums and Voting Powers”, the middle two sentences were changed as shown:

“FIFA shall have four votes on behalf of all its affiliated member associations ~~in~~ membership. The other ~~member associations~~ of the IFAB shall each have one vote.”

Appendix A: Detail of Global Changes Made

To simplify the document above, material that was generally changed is listed in more detail by occurrence here.

The words “*second time*” or “*second touch*” were changed to “*again*” on the following pages:

- Pages 27, 28, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45 (2 times), 46 (2 times), 47, 48, 49 (2 times), 122, 125, and 127

“*touchline*” was changed to “*touch line*” where occurred to be consistent through out the document and similar to “*goal line*” in reference at the following places:

- Page 57 (former Law 1 IFAB Decision 4), second paragraph
- Pages 83, 84, 86, 90 (3 times), 93, and 94

“*showing a yellow card*” removed at the following places:

- Pages 17 (2 times), 19, 35, 45, and 114 (2 times)

“*showing a red card*” removed at the following places:

- Pages 36 (2 times)

* (see page 3) annotating a free kick restart is replaced by “(see Law 13 – Position of Free Kick)” on the following pages:

- Pages 17 (2x), 19, 28, 32-34, 39 (2x), 40 (3x), 43 (2x) 46 (2x), 47 (3x), 49 (5x), 61 (2x), 64, 109-112, 117, 119 (5x), 120 (3x), 126, and 127

* (see page 3) annotating a dropped ball restart is replaced by “*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*” on the following pages:

- Pages 13, 29, 56, 58, 60, 65, 68 (2x), 98, 100, 108, and 119 (2x)

The word “*shall*”, “*is*”, “*does*”, “*are*” or “*may*” was changed to “*must*” on the following pages:

- Pages 6, 8 (2x), 16, 18, 19 (2x), 27 (3x), 37, 38 (5x), 41 (4x), 42 (2x), 44, 46, 48 (5x), 51 (3x), 60 (2x), 61 (6x), 62 (3x), 64 (2x), 65 (2x), 66 (2x), 67 (3x), 68 (6x), 77, 78 (2x), 79 (5x), 80 (2x), 81 (2x), 82 (4x), 83 (2x), 84 (2x), 85 (2x), 86 (2x), 87, 90 (6x), 91 (9x), 92 (6x), 93 (5x), 94, 95, 100 (4x), 101, 103 (2x), 108 (3x), 109 (5x), 110, 113, 114 (2x), 118 (2x), 122 (6x), 123 (2x), 125 (4x), 126, 127 (3x), 128 (2x)

Appendix B: Further Changes Still Needed

In the humble opinion of this referee only, it is suggested that the additional changes detailed here could make the document or referee mechanics clearer, and thus the game covered by the Laws of the Game better. These are derived either through visual inspection of the current document or through deduction. As many of these are not specific to a chapter, they are simply given below in no particular order. They are provided to further aid in the likely understanding of the intended meaning in the LOTG. Check with other senior referees before considering these suggestions to be correct interpretation.

[1] Minor formatting, language, or similar changes (i.e. likely errata):

(General)

Further “shall” to “must” changes likely desired: page 57 (first sentence), 63 (first sentence), 66 (second sentence), 76 (middle page), 87 (2x first paragraph), 90 (3rd and 4th paragraph), 93 (first, third and last sentence), 98 (first sentence), 112 (4x bottom 1/2 page), 116 (bottom), 117 (3x, last two paragraphs), 118 (middle page), 120 (first 2 paragraphs), 121 (middle page), and 128 (last paragraph)

(Law 1, Field of Play)

Change “which must be not” to “which must not be” on page 7 in the “Dimensions” section.

Paragraph space needed between 2nd and 3rd paragraphs of the “Goals” section on page 9.

Define the dimensions and shape of the Penalty and Centre Mark (Peter's suggestion)

(Law 4 Player Equipment)

Add paragraph space(s) between paragraphs of IFAB Decision 1.

(Law 5 Referee)

Change the first bullet on page 76 under “Use of whistle” sub-section from:

- start play (1st, 2nd half), after a goal

to:

- start play (1st half, 2nd half, after a goal)

(Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct)

For consistency, remove final remaining occurrence of “and shown the yellow card” from first sentence under “Cautionable Offences” subsection.

(Law 13 Free Kicks)

Update the third bullet on page 38, “Position of Free Kick” subsection to read: “the ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area within the field of play”.

Similarly, change “out of the penalty area” back to “into play” (Second “if, “ under “Infringements and Sanctions” subsection). Or need to add the additional wording to define what “out of the penalty area” really means as suggested above.

Remove paragraph break between bullets of the same sentence (last two bullets of page 39 under “**Infringements and Sanctions**” subsection).

(Law 15, Throw in)

Add the text “**and leaves the hands of the player putting the ball into play**” to end the second to last sentence on page 44 that currently reads “**The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.**”

(Law 15, Throw-in)

Change “**when**” to “**before**” in second sentence.

(Law 16, Goal Kick)

Add paragraph space between first and second sentences.

Update 4th bullet in “**Procedures**” section so it reads “**The ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area within the field of play.**”

Update the first sentence of the “**Infringements and Sanctions**” section to read: “**If the ball is not kicked directly out of the penalty area within the field of play from a goal kick:**”

(Procedures to determine ...)

Removed “**or home-and-away**” from the end of the first paragraph text. Should it be removed from the title?

(I&G Law 6 Assistant Referee)

Add “**(10 yd)**” after “**9.15 m**” in the first sentence under the subsection “**Wall Distance**” on page 94 of Law 6 sub-chapter of the “**Interpretations and Guidelines**” chapter.

(I&G Law 11 Offside)

Add optional marks to field diagrams on pages 101-107.

(I&G Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct)

Remove “**or body**” from third paragraph of “**Impeding the progress of an opponent**” section on page 113. If the body is not allowed to perform shielding, what is allowed?

Add “**(see Law 13 – Position of Free Kick)**” to end of second to last bullet on page 114. In moving former IFAB Decision 3 to form the last two bullets of page 114, “**Cautions for unsporting behavior**”, they dropped the special circumstances reference without adding the text.

(I&G Law 13 Free Kicks)

The first sentence under the “**Procedure**” section changes from:

“**The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.**”

to:

“The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves except for free kicks by the defense in their own penalty area. In these cases, the ball is in play when it leaves the penalty area within the field of play.”

Or better yet, simply remove this redundant statement.

Add “(10 yd)” after “9.15 m” in the first sentence under the subsection “Distance” on page 122 of Law 12 sub-chapter of the “Interpretations and Guidelines” chapter.

(I&G Law 15 Throw-in)

Add “(2 yd)” after “2 metres” in the first sentence of the only section “Procedures – Infringements” on page 125.

(I&G Law 16 Goal Kicks)

Change “second time” and “second touch” on page 126 to “again” as in all other cases.

(I&G Law 17 Corner Kicks)

Change “second time” and “second touch” on page 127 to “again” as in all other cases including already on this same page.

[2] Law 8 and Special Circumstances

Law 8 appears to contain three major sections with some common minor subsections within them. This can be made clearer by:

- The “Preliminaries” major section should be renamed to “Start of a Half”.
- The “Procedures” and “Infringements and Sanctions” subsections following the “Kick-off” major section should not be surrounded by horizontal rules so they appear as subsections.
- The “Procedures” and “Infringements and Sanctions” subsections following the “Dropped-ball” major section should not be surrounded by horizontal rules so they appear as subsections.

Where the asterisk annotated a dropped ball restart, they replaced all “* (see page 3)” text to long, full text describing the special circumstances. Instead, the asterisk indication could be changed, like for free kicks, to simply be a reference. In this case, “(see Law 8 – Dropped Ball)” and thus avoiding the long, duplicate text.

By cleaning up the Law 8 formatting as described, this supports the reference to Law 8 for dropped ball placement as well as makes it clearer to the reader in describing the Dropped Ball as a distinct restart.

[3] Goalkeeper: Possession versus Control

A proposed modified section of page 111 in Law 12 of the “Instructions and Guidance” section:

Offences committed by the goalkeepers

When a goalkeeper has gained control possession of the ball with his hands, he cannot be challenged by an opponent.

A goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball:

- ~~the goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by~~ while touching it the ball with any part of his hands or arms except if the ball rebounds accidentally from him; for example after he has made a save.
- while the ball is between his hands or trapped between his hand and any surface (e.g. ground, own body)
- while holding the ball in his outstretched open hand preparing for a release of the ball
- while in the act of bouncing the ball on the ground or tossing it in the air
- ~~possession of the ball includes the goalkeeper~~ while deliberately parrying the ball with his hands

A goalkeeper is not permitted to keep control of the ball in his hands for more than six seconds.

A goalkeeper is not permitted to touch the ball with his hands inside his own penalty area in the following circumstances:

- if he handles the ball again after it has been released from his ~~possession~~ control and has not touched any other player
- if he touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
- if he touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

Note that the 4th and 5th bullets in the second sentence were moved from the lower section and modified.

Additionally, the two uses of the word “**possession**” on page 34 in law 12 should be changed to the word “**control**” to complete the suggested change.

The changes this year incrementally stepped closer to removing the word “**possession**” and simply using “**control**” or “**control by the hands**”. One word or the other should be used and then the word defined clearly in the context of the hands. Instead, we are left with the muddle of both words being used in different places and with it not being clear if they are really interchangeable in use (as is believed). The exceptions will always have to be spelled out (parrying, bouncing, holding in the palm, etc) as they have been on page 111 of the “Interpretation and Guidelines” chapter.

The two terms were previously defined:

Law 12, IFAB Decision 2: *(former, now removed)*

“The goalkeeper is considered to be in **control** of the ball by touching it with any part of his hand or arms. **Possession** of the ball includes the goalkeeper deliberately parrying the ball, but does not include circumstances where, in the opinion of the referee, the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after he has made a save.” *(bold emphasis added)*

In the I&G section page 111, a reordering of the text on the page, changing of all occurrences of “**possession**” to “**control**”, and a few slight other word changes would finish what they started and is shown above. Additionally, the word “**possession**” needs to be changed to “**control**” in two places on page 34.

[4] Touch Again (or formerly known as the second touch)

It is suggested the following bullet be added to Law 12 under the IFK section:

- **The player putting the ball into play touches the ball again before it has been touched by another player**

With the above change, any nuance such as the simultaneous foul by Deliberate Handling, that the dropped ball is put into play by the referee, and that the keeper releasing the ball is not putting it back into play because the ball never went out of play -- all can be described succinctly in the I&G section.

If desired, add the following fuller explanation in the I&G section on law 12:

“The player putting the ball into play, at the start of a half or on any restart, cannot touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player. If this occurs, an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team from the place where the touch occurred (see Law 13 – Position of Free Kicks). If the touch can also be judged a deliberate handling foul, then this more serious, simultaneous offence prevails and a direct free kick or penalty kick is awarded accordingly.”

If either of the above are implemented, the following text can be removed from the current LOTG:

- Law 17 “Infringements and Sanctions” section (page 49) – whole page except last sentence
- Law 16 “Infringements and Sanctions” section (pages 46-47) – whole page worth of material except first and last sentence
- Law 15 “Infringements and Sanctions” section (page 45) – whole page except the last two bullets
- Law 14 “Infringements and Sanctions” section (page 43) – middle two paragraphs, after “If, after the penalty kick has been taken:”
- Law 13 “Infringements and Sanctions” section (pages 39-40) – all but the first two sentences/bullets (two subsections with titles starting “Free kick taken by”)

Additionally, the following phrases or sentences can be removed (or left for robustness):

- Law 17 “Procedure” section (page 48) – sixth bullet
- Law 16 “Procedure” section (page 46) – third bullet
- Law 15 “Procedure” section (page 44) – last sentence
- Law 14 “Procedure” section (page 43) – third bullet
- Law 13 “Procedure” section (page 37) – last half of sentence

If the above changes are not implemented, then Law 8 needs to be corrected to detail the consequences of a “touch again” during the kick-off and add the page of text discussing in case the touch is by deliberate handling by the keeper or not by the keeper

The notion for this simplification came about independently while trying to clarify the restarts during creation of a more detailed USSF ATR Table 8.6 in 2002. For the same reasons as for the new language replacing Special Circumstances on Dropped Balls, the duplicative language introduces errors over time if not kept identical in all places. Second, it muddles the understanding that there is a single, overriding principle of no touch again by the player putting the ball into play. This is not clearly and simply stated anywhere. The duplicated language is very large (a full page in each law) and full of exceptions that need not be detailed out. The laws already take care of the special cases elsewhere.

[5] Referee Hand Signals

First, be more complete and include the referee hand signals for goal kick, corner kick, and throw-in. Second, add that the referee should face the line where the ball left the field of play when indicating the restart in those instances. This way a corner kick and throw-in (both for the attacking team) is clearly distinguished when the referee is near the touch line making the call. This does not happen often but helps clarify the signal in those few instances where it makes a difference. Thirdly, should state that referee signals to stop play should be made by the referee while stopped (not moving) as is done for the Assistant Referee.

This could pose a problem in implying the referee should have his back to the field when making the indication near the touch line. So word it so face forward or backward to the line is OK. Care should be taken not to imply this for the kick-off and goal kicks one should face the center of the goal or center mark on the field as now expected.

[6] Assistant Referee Flag Signals

IIFAB should consider changing the Offside flag indication by the Assistant Referee so as to be held in the left hand. The goal kick and corner kick are already dictated as being in the right hand. The language should also be modified to indicate the “left” hand implies the side facing the halfway line (i.e. referee) and the “right” hand implies the side facing the goal line. There is an implicit meaning now that only a left diagonal is being described.

Yes, there is a chance of a brief moment of visual obstruction of a majority of the players on the field while bringing the arm up. And yes, while giving the follow on flag signal, there could be further blockage temporarily. But in both cases, the AR is signaling to stop play or play is already stopped. And action is happening quick, down the field with all the focus on the ball that has already passed the AR's position along with several players usually. And it is not due to a foul or other rough play or contact. So the harm in this slightly greater blockage for an instant is minor.

Here are the advantages to use the other hand. First, the flag is naturally already in the left hand as it is the side closest to the referee and in view. Second, it is a restart for the defense and so should be done in the left hand as for fouls for them. Third, and most importantly, it

clearly distinguishes an offside offense near the goal line from a goal kick needed because of a quick in and out of play of the ball over the goal line.

A referee should normally be aware that the ball was so close to the goal line and immediately recognize the raised flag is for quick in and out as opposed to offside. But the suggested change makes the communication more robust. Maybe the referee is still recovering from some play action near the other touch line. Or it was a long ball coming back into the goal mouth area after a recent attack and clear from the goal. Both catching the referee farther from the play and goal line and thus maybe not being aware of the exact circumstances.

Now in reality, the only confusion when using the offside in the right hand is over an offside away from the touch lines and near the goal line as the flag signal sequence is the same as for a goal kick after a quick in and out of play. Inside the goal area, the restart is no different for either case (assuming a goal has not been awarded). Inside the Penalty Area but outside the goal area. In both cases though, in professional matches, it is possible that the restart kick could go directly into the opposing goal. So the offside-induced IFK versus goal kick could be a big difference. So it is felt this refinement can help the communication and game overall.

As it is, the flag use stated as using the right and left hand of the assistant referee should be qualified for only when using the left diagonal. What is really meant is “halfway line side” and “goal line side” as the flag should be in the opposite hand when required to do the reverse or right diagonal.

[7] Clarity on severe misconduct and substitution

The document would benefit with the following change on page 36, last paragraph:

“A player, substitute or substituted player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area and may not participate further in the match. A player sent-off cannot be replaced on the field by a substitute or substituted player from their team.”

Additional benefit may come from adding a new subsection to the end of the I&F Law 12 Misconduct section:

“Send-offs

The team of a player sent off before the match begins may still begin with eleven players on the field to start the match. A substitute or substituted player sent off before or during the match does not affect the number of players allowed on the field for that team. Only if a player is sent off does it affect the number of fielded players. The team must play short the remainder of the match once a player is sent off. If a player is sent off during the halftime break, the team plays short that player during the second half.”