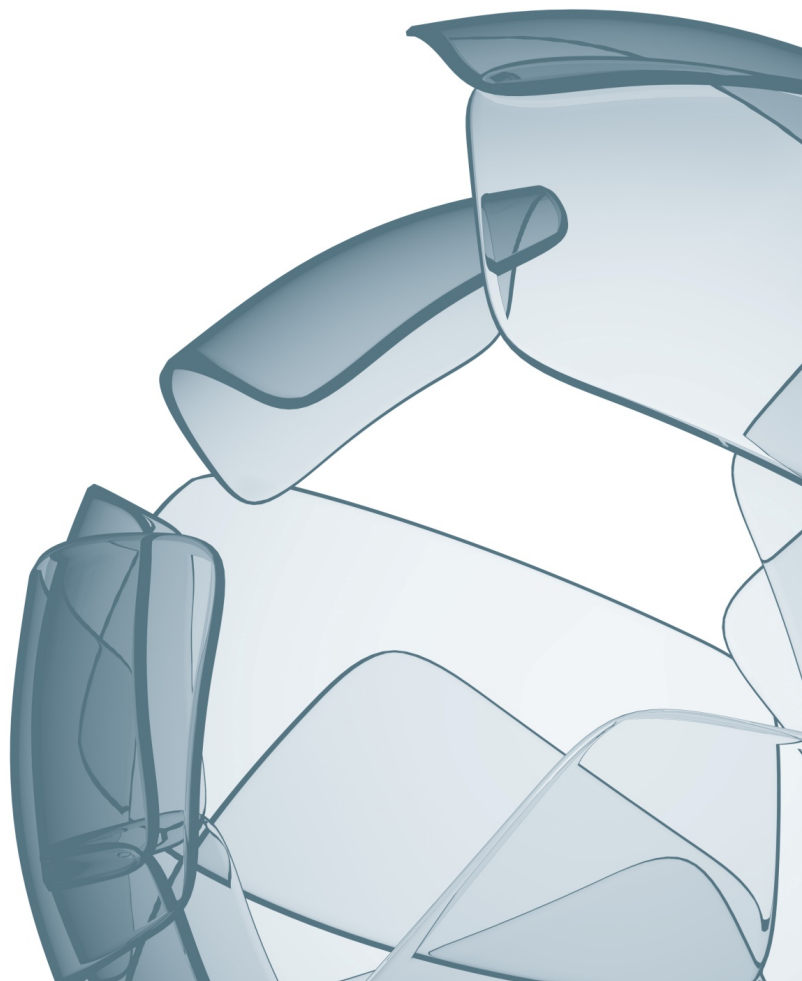


Minutes

129th Annual General Meeting of The International Football Association Board

Belfast, Northern Ireland
27 February – 1 March 2015



Participants

Irish FA (chair)

Jim Shaw
David Martin
Jack Grundie
Leslie Caul
Patrick Nelson
William Campbell

FIFA

Joseph S. Blatter
Jim Boyce
Worawi Makudi
Jérôme Valcke
Jean-Paul Brigger
Massimo Busacca

FA of Wales

Trefor Lloyd Hughes
David Griffiths
Jonathan Ford
Ray Ellingham

Scottish FA

Campbell Ogilvie
Alan McRae
Rod Petrie
Stewart Regan
John Fleming

The Football Association

Greg Dyke
David Gill
David Elleray
Jonathan Hall
Neale Barry

The IFAB

Lukas Brud
Boudien Broekhuis

FIFA Administration

Priscilla Duncan
Edward Brown
Brian Alexander

I. Welcome

IFA President, Jim Shaw, Chairman of this 129th Annual General Meeting (AGM), opened the meeting by welcoming the members of The International Football Association Board (IFAB), namely the delegations from FIFA, the Scottish FA (SFA), The Football Association (The FA), and the FA of Wales (FAW).

II. Chairman's remarks

The Chairman referred to the longstanding history of The IFAB and the reform the organisation underwent, leading to its current status as a completely independent body. It was emphasised that all member associations and confederations have been informed about the new structure of The IFAB, including the two Advisory Panels.

In addition, he remembered the loss of prominent football personalities in the past year and asked attendees to stand for a moment of silence.

The Chairman introduced two new members to The IFAB: Ray Ellingham from the FAW and Dr. Leslie Caul from the IFA. He also congratulated Jim Boyce on receiving an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his service to football.

III. Roll call

The Chairman asked the Secretary of The IFAB, Lukas Brud (LB) to read the roll call, with the latter then listing all the delegations present at the meeting.

IV. Approval of the agenda

The members unanimously approved the agenda of this meeting.

V. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

All members agreed to approve the minutes of the 128th Annual General Meeting, held in Zürich, Switzerland at the Home of FIFA on 1 March 2014.

VI. Agenda containing the items to be discussed and enclosures

Items for Decision

1. Law 3 - The Number of Players

- a. **4th Substitution in Extra Time** – Proposal by FIFA on behalf of member associations and confederations

History / summary

FIFA received requests from CONMEBOL, Sri Lanka and US Soccer, suggesting an amendment to Law 3, Number of Players, namely to allow a fourth substitution in extra time.

Feedback from members

FIFA President, Joseph S. Blatter (JB), stated that the item has been discussed within FIFA and its committees in the past. He added that FIFA was concerned that the introduction of a fourth substitute in extra time (which only applies to tournaments) could open “Pandora’s Box”, i.e. that once this was approved, requests would be made in the future to increase the number again. FIFA Secretary General, Jérôme Valcke (JV), suggested referring the proposal to the Advisory Panels in order to explore the benefits of such amendment and to ensure that the fourth substitution will not be part of the first 90 minutes and will not push for future changes regarding the number of substitutions. All other members were in agreement with the FIFA proposal.

Decisions / next steps

- The proposal was **not approved** at this time
- **Further exploration** by the Advisory Panels

b. Return Substitutions – Reports by The FA and The Scottish FA on experiments

History / summary

Since 2012, the FA and the SFA had conducted a two-year experiment with so-called “rolling subs” or “return substitutions”. Both associations mentioned that the experiments had demonstrated a great degree of success in amateur and recreational football. The participation level of players increased significantly. Furthermore, it stopped teams from dropping out mid-way through the season and also helped players coming back from injuries by managing their game time better.

Feedback from the Advisory Panels

The Chairman asked Patrick Nelson (PN) as chair of the recent meetings of the two Advisory Panels for a summary of the feedback provided. PN stated that the panels agreed that the return substitutions concept would be beneficial to the development of players, but that a maximum number of players should be defined. They also highlighted that the selection of the level within the league (where such protocol would be implemented) was important and must be considered by the associations.

Feedback from members

The FAW stated it was ambivalent at present but that it would support this protocol once the term “recreational football” was clearly defined and on the understanding that it would be for each individual member association to decide whether or not to implement and, if so, at which level. The IFA and FIFA would also support the recommendation.

Decisions / next steps

- The proposal **was approved** under the provision that it is the decision of each individual member association to implement and at which competition level
- Subsequent **amendment to the Laws of the Game** was approved:

Other Matches (p.17)

(...)

Return Substitutions

The use of return substitutions is only permitted in the lowest levels (grassroots/recreational) of football, subject to the agreement of the member association concerned.

and

Substitution Procedure (p.18)

(...)

- the substituted player takes no further part in the match, **except where return substitutions are permitted.**

2. Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

a. Electronic performance & tracking systems (EPTS)

History / summary

LB summarised the background and progress made regarding EPTS and stated that EPTS are already being used by many teams worldwide, focusing on data produced by the human body and assessing the match with video footage and animations. He added that nowadays the data can be easily transferred in real time to any tablet PC, mobile phone, and soon potentially also to an interactive watch or similar device and would thus be available in the technical area, which would be very difficult to control by match officials.

Currently, Law 4 (Interpretations) clearly forbids the use of electronic communication systems between players and/or technical staff.

Feedback from the Advisory Panels

PN informed all members that the panels were less concerned about the players wearing devices but suggested that there should be control of what is being used and to ensure the security of data. There was no support for access to the data during the match by the team officials, unless limited to medical information to prevent injuries.

Feedback from members

The FAW expressed their support for chips and data used for post-match analysis, although not in real time. If at some point preventive medical benefits are proven then they would support it.

The SFA stated that it is important to maintain control at present by regulating the type of systems used and the data provided. They suggested keeping the item on the agenda and referring it to the panels for further discussion. The FA agreed with the SFA's arguments and would like to see this move forward in a controlled and proportionate manner.

The IFA was in general agreement with the others and added that standards should be developed with regard to the type of data and quality, as well as the security.

FIFA agreed with the points made by the other members; there should be a clear understanding of the existing systems and they should be officially approved. In addition, when EPTS can be of medical advantage, the devices should be allowed during the game in the technical area, but for medical reasons only.

Decisions / next steps

- The use of EPTS in **principle approved**
- Until EPTS have proven preventive medical benefits, their data cannot be used **in real time within the technical area**
- Further research is needed for a **quality assessment of the different systems**, the use of data, as well as the licensing process

b. Display of messages of any kind

History / summary

At the last AGM, The IFAB passed an amendment to Law 4 forbidding the display of messages on undergarments. During the meeting, a request was made to investigate this further with regard to other possible displays of messages, such as tattoos, and it was agreed that the Advisory Panels should discuss this matter.

Feedback from members and Advisory Panels

PN reported that all members from both Advisory Panels agreed that the competition organisers should deal with this matter. The Chairman stated that the feedback from the panels was aligned to that of the AGM.

Decisions / next steps

- **no further action** to be taken by The IFAB
- competition organisers to **deal with** such **individual matters**

3. Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct – Sending-off offences; “triple punishment”

History / summary

Following proposals submitted by the German Football Association (DFB) in 2011 and UEFA in 2014, The IFAB discussed the potential improvement

of Law 12, and the related so-called “triple punishment” at their 126th and 128th AGMs for situations of denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) within the penalty area. Both the DFB and UEFA suggested replacing the red card with a yellow following the aforementioned denial. At both meetings, The IFAB believed that such a drastic and one-sided change to the Law would not bring a solution to the problem and that the Law and particularly the related interpretation give clear guidance to referees on when to show “yellow” and when it is a clear red-card offence. Consequently, the Board rejected the proposals.

The Chairman informed the members that following the decision of The IFAB in 2014, UEFA recently submitted a revised proposal, suggesting that the purpose of the proposal was to remain with the original aim of the Law at the time of its introduction, which was to stop so called “cynical fouls”, purely aimed at denying a goal scoring opportunity.

Feedback from the Advisory Panels

PN stated the members of the panels agreed that there are situations where three punishments is one too many. However, there was no final agreement on what the solution should be, despite the different mitigation options presented to them. However, they highlighted that a clear differentiation should be made between DOGSO and denying a goal (which should remain three punishments), and between offences outside and inside the penalty area.

Feedback from members

Another solution to “triple punishment” was presented by FIFA: i.e. to remove the third sanction, the automatic suspension for DOGSO fouls within the penalty area. The sanctions are listed in the FIFA Disciplinary Code, which would need amendment if this was agreed.

In addition, the IFA raised a concern regarding the administrative handling of the removal of automatic suspension in amateur football and questioned whether a card of a different colour card (or another appropriate measure) could be issued for that category of dismissal from the game in order to simplify its administration in lower leagues that lack a major organisational infrastructure.

An extensive debate took place where different views were shared and several options discussed. Subsequently all members agreed that:

Decisions / next steps

- The **new wording** proposed by UEFA was **not approved**, as it would be difficult to implement an entirely new approach in practice
- **Agreement with the FIFA proposal:** the **removal of** one element, i.e. the **automatic suspension** following a foul denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity in the penalty area
- FIFA's legal division to **investigate and discuss** the exact wording further, as well as the administrative implementation options at lower / grassroots level, **with the FIFA Disciplinary Committee**

Items for Discussion

4. **Law 7 – Duration of the match** – “Stopping the clock” – Proposal by US Soccer

History / summary

This matter was brought to The IFAB by US Soccer, who suggested the introduction of “public” time keeping, whereby the duration of the match is still controlled by the referee, but displayed to everyone in the stadium/TV spectators.

Feedback from members

All members agreed that the referee should be in control of the duration of the game and that the time should not be displayed. The members highlighted that nowadays an average match would be of around 55 minutes playing time and were worried that the match might be greatly prolonged due to having the official time stopped; this would have a great influence on logistics, broadcast time, stewarding, security, transportation etc.

Decisions / next steps

- The proposal was **not approved**

5. Law 12 – Fouls and misconduct – Handling the ball – Proposal by the FA of Wales

History / summary

At the 2014 AGM, this topic was presented by the FAW with a view to a potential improvement of Law 12 in the future. The FAW emphasised that the proposal is about the difference between accidental and deliberate handball.

Feedback from the Advisory Panels

PN summarised the feedback received and stated that according to the panels the main problem is uniformity in the application of the Law, rather than the Law itself. While the introduction of a clear definition of “natural position” could potentially bring some improvement, it was felt that more comprehensive training of match officials would be a much better step in order to achieve a higher degree of consistency regarding the decisions made by the referees.

Feedback from members

The members agreed with the view of the panels and suggested that this matter could be mitigated by increasing the quality and quantity of education of referees instead of through changing the Laws of the Game. However, it was suggested that the panels should continue the debate and see whether there is any merit in trying to improve the wording of the Law.

Decisions / next steps

- **Further exploration** by Advisory Panels

6. Video replay for match officials

History / summary

PN informed the members of different discussions, ideas and proposals surrounding the use of video replay technology as a support for the referee. He mentioned that the KNVB had conducted an (offline) experiment, using referee video assistance based on video footage provided by broadcasters' cameras. He added that, during the experiment, the referee could have received additional information from a so-called video assistant (in a separate room / van) with access to camera footage and the ability to inform the referee instantly via a headset in crucial situations which appear difficult to be seen by the referee.

PN also mentioned briefly mentioned another approach presented at the 64th FIFA Congress in Sao Paulo in 2014, whereby a challenge system for team managers and coaches could be implemented, which would enable them to request a review of a referee's decision. Subsequently, the referee would have access to video replays in order to review the situation in question, for which the match would have to be stopped.

Feedback from the Advisory Panels

PN informed all members that both panels partially supported live experiments in order to understand the possible advantages and disadvantages of video replay better. While the FAP agreed that such technology would probably be inevitable in future, the TAP raised concerns relating to the length of time for the decision-making.

Feedback from members

The SFA and IFA stated that they were rather sceptical about video replays. However, after having seen the project conducted in the Netherlands, the SFA support further investigations by the panels to gather more recommendations. The SFA further highlighted that communication technology between referees in the form of audio transmission already exists and is in use to improve the decision-making by providing the main referee with additional information from his assistants. Video assistance follows the same principle and could also be considered as an additional support, but it should not slow down the game and only be used for specific decisions.

The FA stressed that video replays should only be allowed to help or support the referee. The debate should be around how the technology can be used to improve the game. The experiment from the KNVB should be encouraged and also continued by other parties in order to find strong arguments to form the basis for further recommendations.

The FAW has been opposed to the introduction of technology in the past. However, in recent years technology has proven to be of great assistance to match officials (i.e. goal-line technology). But a major role of The IFAB is to protect the game and its universality. The FAW's concerns related to the changing of the game, with a possible diminution of the referee's authority as the video assistant takes on more influence. They felt this could result in ever-increasing pressure on the referee from the

spectators, players, and coaches. Very careful consideration was needed, they said, because once you start down this direction, there is no way back.

On behalf of FIFA, JB stated that The IFAB functions as guardian of the game and has in the past decided not to go any further with technology than goal-line technology. He added that one must be very careful in this matter and must consider all relevant facts before taking any important decisions. JB also stated that FIFA – representing the remaining 205 member associations – is currently reluctant to approve any experiments.

It was added that the game of football is changing and expanding all the time and with that the impact of getting a decision wrong is increasing. Therefore, more experiments should be conducted with video assistance in order to understand its potential advantages and disadvantages fully before a decision can be taken.

Decisions / next steps

- The proposal was **not approved**
- **Further exploration** by Advisory Panels

7. “Sin bins”

History / summary

In early 2014, UEFA was given permission by the IFAB Board of Directors to conduct two experiments with so-called “sin-bins” during Men and Women U-16 Development Tournaments held in England and Portugal in February 2014. The main feature of these experiments was the replacement of a yellow card offence with a 10 minute time penalty for the player cautioned (time keeper: 4th official).

LB informed the members that more information regarding “sin bins” is expected from UEFA in order to discuss the matter again next year.

Decisions / next steps

- Discussion **postponed to AGM2016**
- **Further exploration** by Advisory Panels

8. Revision of the Laws of the Game

The Chairman asked David Elleray (DE) from The FA to provide an update on the revision of the Laws of the Game.

DE explained that the aim of the revision is to make the Laws of the Game more accessible and more easily understood by everyone in football and increase consistency of understanding, interpretation and application. The main aspects of the revision include the improvement of the structure, clearer language, corrections, clarifications and a new layout.

The ultimate aim is to increase the universality of the Laws by making them easily understood so football throughout the world benefits from consistent interpretation and application.

Decisions / next steps

- **First draft** to be presented at **AGM2016**
- **Final version** for approval at **AGM2017**

9. Miscellaneous

LB informed the members that The IFAB’s organisational regulations are close to being finalised. In this regard, he proposed to move the date for

Law amendments to come into effect from July 1 to June 1 in order to accommodate any tournaments starting in the month of June. In addition, LB proposed to change the deadline for the submission of proposals to the panels from December 1 to November 1 to allow sufficient time for review before the AGM. All members agreed to the proposals made.

LB also briefed the members on the IFAB budget. As agreed by the Management Board of FIFA, The IFAB will be provided with a fixed annual budget for the next four-year cycle, 2015-2018, in order to fulfil its administrative tasks and to cover any costs related to additional meetings, while maintaining funds in reserve and/or for potential experiments (i.e. goal-line technology). A quarterly finance report will be provided to the Board of Directors and the Finance Department of FIFA. This budget represents a percentage distribution of the revenue generated by the FIFA Quality Programme (FQP), because The IFAB is part of the FQP process, defining minimum criteria for equipment permissible on the field of play.

In addition, LB mentioned that since 1 January 2015 the headquarters of The IFAB have been in the FIFA Sonnenberg building (where it will remain for the duration of 2015) and that in order to support the Board of Directors and the Secretary of The IFAB with any business related matters, the Executive Support Office has employed Miss Boudien Broekhuis.

VII. Any other business

PN remembered William McCrum, who as a member of the IFA, proposed the idea of the penalty kick to stop the prevalent practice at that time of defenders professionally fouling an attacking player to stop

a goal. The idea was submitted to the June 1890 meeting of The IFAB and was approved in 1891.

JB confirmed the importance of the McCrum legacy and offered to support the restoration of William McCrum's grave, which has fallen into disrepair.

10. Proposals for deliberation by the two Advisory Panels

- Law 3 – The Number of Players: 4th Substitution in Extra Time
- Law 4 – Players' Equipment: Electronic Performance and Tracking Systems (EPTS)
- Law 11 – Offside
- Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Handling the ball
- “Sin Bins”
- Video assistance for match officials

VIII. Next meetings

The members were invited by Trefor Lloyd Hughes, President of the FAW, to the next Annual General Meeting of The IFAB in Cardiff, Wales from 4 to 5 March 2016. He mentioned that this would be his last IFAB meeting and thanked everyone for the great experience.

The members thanked the Chairman for the flawless organisation of the meeting and the weekend. The Chairman closed the meeting at 12h07.

Zurich, April 2015
SEC/bbr