

To all national football associations and confederations

Circular no. 10

Zurich, 13 June 2017
SEC/2017-C182/bru

The IFAB strategy and *'play fair!'* initiative

Dear Sir or Madam,

As announced in IFAB Circular 8 on 28 March 2017, the 131st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The IFAB in London on 3 March 2017 approved a strategy for the period 2017 to 2022 which, working closely with the FIFA fair play programme, will focus on improving some important elements of the game as it is played today, through developing the Laws of the Game.

The strategy has three central pillars:

- **Fairness and integrity:** promoting greater fairness and integrity through a *'play fair!'* initiative, especially on the field of play.
- **Universality and inclusion:** safeguarding the Laws of the Game, which apply to every match from grassroots all the way through to the FIFA World Cup™ Final, and ensuring the game is accessible to everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability or, perhaps most fundamental of all, playing ability.
- **Technology:** the development of technology cannot be ignored and football must be prepared to embrace technical advances, e.g. goal-line technology (GLT), video assistant referees (VAR) etc., while guarding against technology-related threats to the game e.g. match manipulation.

A copy of the strategy accompanies this circular and, in addition to the on-going trials with a 4th substitute in extra time and video assistant referees (VARs), we would like to highlight the first stage of discussions and trials which will focus on three main areas:

1. Improving player behaviour and increasing respect
2. Increasing playing time
3. Increasing fairness and attractiveness

The discussions will involve the IFAB's Technical and Football Advisory Panels and there will be wide-ranging consultation with national football associations (FAs) and other stakeholders.

Trials by national FAs, confederations and FIFA

Different organisations/competitions will be involved in different trials and The IFAB would like to invite confederations and national FAs to join FIFA in taking part in one of the main trials – a different and potentially fairer order of kickers for Kicks from the Penalty Mark (KFPM) as outlined below (except for the FIFA Confederations Cup Russia 2017).

A different order of kickers for Kicks from the Penalty Mark (penalties)

There is some evidence that the current arrangements for Kicks from the Penalty Mark (KFPM) gives an unfair advantage to the team taking the first kick (in each pair of kicks) – the hypothesis is that the player taking the 2nd kick is under greater mental pressure as if the 1st kick has been successful, a miss by the 2nd kicker means the loss of the match, especially from the 4th pair of kicks onwards.

As part of The IFAB's 'play fair!' initiative, a different order of kickers will be trialled in an experiment to reduce any advantage the team taking the 1st kick may have. In simple terms, the team taking the 1st kick in each 'pair' of kick will alternate as follows:

1 st kick	Team A	2 nd kick	Team B
3 rd kick	Team B	4 th kick	Team A
5 th kick	Team A	6 th kick	Team B
7 th kick	Team B	8 th kick	Team A
9 th kick	Team A	10 th kick	Team B
11 th kick	Team B	12 th kick	Team A and so on....

(other systems/orders may be permitted during the experiments)

Any national football association (FA) wishing to take part in trialling this new order of KFPM in any competition(s) for which they are responsible should apply directly to The IFAB for permission and for details of the feedback that will be required (including information from matches which used KFPM in the previous competition). Applications from competitions must be accompanied by approval from the relevant national FA.

For permission to participate or further information, please contact secretary@theifab.com.

Trials by confederations and FIFA

Confederations may apply to conduct trials in their tournaments for:

- A different order of kickers for Kicks from the Penalty Mark (see above)
- Showing the red card (RC) and yellow card (YC) to team officials for irresponsible behaviour

For permission to participate or further information, please contact secretary@theifab.com.

Trials by FIFA

During 2017, FIFA will conduct trials, in association with The IFAB, in some of their tournaments:

- Showing the red card (RC) and yellow card (YC) to team officials for irresponsible behaviour
- A substituted player being required to leave the field at the nearest point on the touchline or goal line (to reduce the time lost/'wasted' by the player walking slowly to the halfway line)
- At a goal kick and defending team free kick in their penalty area, the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves, i.e. no requirement for the ball to leave the penalty area before the defenders can play it – this is to encourage a faster and potentially more constructive restart of play

In addition, FIFA will give referees in their 2017 tournaments clear instructions relating to:

- Mobbing match officials (including captains taking a more proactive and positive role)
- Increasing playing time by a more accurate calculation of 'additional time'
- The goalkeeper holding the ball for more than 6 seconds

It is hoped that this approach can be extended to confederations and national associations once it has been applied and refined in the FIFA tournaments, especially the FIFA Confederations Cup Russia 2017.

Discussion topics

During 2017 and 2018, The IFAB will continue discussing and consulting on other '*play fair!*' topics:

Improving player behaviour and increasing respect:

- Enhancing the role and responsibilities of the team captain
- Pre-kick off handshake between the referee and both coaches
- If a substitute is sent off during a match the team loses one substitution

Increasing playing time:

- Increasing the amount of time the ball is in play (effective playing time)
- Linking the stadium clock to the referee's watch
- 'self-passing' at free kicks/corner kicks i.e. the player can play the ball a second time (or more)
- Allowing the ball to be moving at goal kicks
- Requiring a goal kick to be taken on the side of the goal area where the ball left the field of play

Increasing fairness and attractiveness:

- Handball
 - Red card for a player who deliberately scores a goal with the hands/arms
 - Penalty kick if the goalkeeper handles a pass or throw-in from a team-mate
 - Goal awarded if a deliberate handball on the goal line stops a goal
- End of each half not occurring until the ball has gone out of play
- All penalty kicks to be treated as a Kick from the Penalty Mark i.e. only outcomes are a goal or no goal is scored (restart with a goal kick)

Awards for acts of fairness

In the past few years, The IFAB received several requests relating to the potential awarding of players, teams etc. for special “positive” acts of fairness on the field of play. And we warmly encourage initiatives which recognise high levels of fairness and sporting conduct during a match. Players and team officials are role models and acting in a fair manner has a major impact on the game itself as well as its development.

Whatever form the award/recognition takes its presentation must take once the match has concluded. Any forms of awards by match officials during the match (for example “green card”, as it was suggested) are not permitted.

These are very exciting times for football as we all work together to explore ways to make the game better through improving player behaviour and increasing respect, playing time, fairness, the attractiveness and image of the game.

Thank you for your attention and please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to be part of this initiative or if have any questions, comments or enquiries.

Yours sincerely,
The IFAB



Lukas Brud
Secretary

Cc → FIFA, IFAB Advisory Panels
Encl. → as mentioned

More information can be found here: www.play-fair.com