

To all national football associations,  
and confederations

### **Circular no. 13**

Zurich, 21 April 2018  
SEC/2018-C225/bru

## **132<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The International Football Association Board (The IFAB) – decisions**

Dear Sir or Madam,

The 132<sup>nd</sup> AGM of The IFAB took place at the Home of FIFA in Zurich on 3 March 2018 and was chaired by FIFA President Gianni Infantino. Details of the AGM's main decisions and discussions are outlined below; the minutes of the meeting will be available in due course on [www.theifab.com](http://www.theifab.com).

In order to ensure that referees can prepare without delay, as well as to assist with the translation of the Laws of the Game, all changes for this year's edition are now available on <http://www.theifab.com/document/for-football-bodies>. The full Laws of the Game 2018/19 will be available on our website for download in English, French, German and Spanish shortly before the printed copies are distributed.

As usual, in May you will be sent five printed copies of the Laws of the Game 2018/19 for your association/confederation as well as one copy for each of your FIFA referees and assistant referees.

Orders for additional copies of the Laws of the Game can be made via the web shop at <http://theifab.com/shop> as of 21 April 2018. To ensure the correct number of copies is produced, and at the reasonable price of CHF 3.00 per copy, we kindly ask you to place your order by **4 May 2018 at the latest**. Once your order is confirmed, you will receive an invoice with payment instructions.

N.B.: late orders will potentially incur greater production costs and thus the price per copy may be higher.

### **1. Laws of the Game 2017/18**

The AGM was pleased that the recent significant revisions of the Laws of the Game have been well received and noted the positive response from national football associations (FAs) to the greater flexibility in the *Modifications to the Laws*, especially the ability to use more substitutes and the option to use temporary dismissals (sin bins) in grassroots, youth, veterans and disability football.

## 2. Laws of the Game 2018/19

A number of changes to the Laws of the Game were approved; the exact wording may be found in the 'Law changes – 2018/19' document accompanying this circular and, as mentioned before, on our website. The document also includes all necessary amendments related to the use of Video Assistant Referees (VARs).

These changes take effect as from 1 June 2018; competitions starting before that date may apply them immediately or delay introducing them until no later than the start of the next competition.

### a. **Law 3 – The Players: additional substitute in extra time**

After a successful two-year experiment in many competitions around the world, the AGM gave approval for competitions, if they so wish, to include in their rules the option for teams to use an additional substitute if a match goes into extra time, regardless of whether or not the team has already used its maximum number of permitted substitutes.

The benefits of this option include increasing the chance of matches being decided during extra time (and thus avoiding kicks from the penalty mark) and reducing the potential injuries due to fatigue.

### b. **Law 4 – The Players' Equipment**

#### i. **Electronic and communication equipment in the technical area:**

As it is almost impossible to prevent electronic communication to/from the technical area, the focus will now be on the behaviour resulting from such communication. Team officials will now be permitted to use small hand-held, mobile devices (the list of permitted devices is included in Law 4) in the technical area but only for coaching/tactics and player welfare. A team official who uses unauthorised equipment or behaves inappropriately must be dismissed from the technical area.

Disciplinary committees are urged to apply the philosophy of this change and not ban a team official from communicating with the technical area when dismissed or banned from the technical area.

#### ii. **Electronic Performance and Tracking Systems (EPTS):**

FIFA is introducing a Quality Programme for Electronic Performance and Tracking Systems (EPTS) to help ensure that the systems are reliable and safe; data from EPTS may now be received in the technical area during the match.

### c. **Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: DOGSO and SPA**

The 2016 IFAB AGM approved a global two-year experiment where if a referee penalises a player for a 'denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity' (DOGSO) offence in their own penalty area, the player is cautioned (yellow card) and not sent off (red card) if the offence was an attempt to play the ball. The 2017 AGM extended this principle so that a 'stopping a promising attack' (SPA) offence in the penalty area which was an attempt to play the ball does not result in a caution.

In light of the excellent feedback, the wording for both situations, which is already in the Laws of the Game, was confirmed as permanent.

**d. Summary and confirmation of clarifications announced since the 131<sup>st</sup> AGM**

The AGM formally approved the clarifications to the Laws of the Game which were announced in Circular no. 11 (25 September 2017).

**e. Additional amendments and clarifications**

Other amendments and clarifications to the Laws of the Game were approved. The main ones are summarised below:

***Modifications to the Laws: temporary dismissals (System B)***

A player who receives 2 x temporary dismissals and a non-temporary dismissal yellow card may not be replaced or substituted.

***Law 3 – The Players***

For national ‘A’ team friendly matches, the maximum number of substitutes that can be named is now limited to twelve to be consistent with competitive matches and to prevent there being insufficient seating in the technical area.

***Law 5 – The Referee***

Match officials are not permitted to wear or use cameras during a match.

***Law 7 – The Duration of the Match***

To avoid drinks breaks becoming lengthy coaching or commercial breaks, they should not exceed one minute. This restriction does not apply to medical ‘cooling breaks’.

***Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: DOGSO and SPA***

- Biting (a rare offence) is now included as a direct free kick and sending-off offence
- Throwing an object at the ball or hitting the ball with a held object has become a separate category of offence and is no longer part of handball
- A goalkeeper who unsuccessfully attempts to catch/hold/stop or ‘parry’ the ball can still pick the ball up and not be penalised
- If the referee plays advantage for a DOGSO offence, the sanction is a caution whether or not a goal is scored i.e. no sending off if a goal does not result

***Law 15 – The Throw-in***

A player must stand to take a throw-in, i.e. a throw-in cannot be taken from a sitting or kneeling position.

**3. Video assistant referees (VARs)**

The AGM received detailed reports on the two-year experiment with video assistant referees (VARs) and, as announced in Circular no. 12 (7 March 2018), the AGM approved the inclusion of VARs in the Laws of the Game 2018/19 as an option for competitions, subject to full adherence to the VAR protocol and the implementation requirements, as well as the completion of a rigorous approval process; any use of VARs requires written permission from The IFAB and FIFA.

#### 4. Play fair! initiative

The AGM received a report on the consultations and early testing in relation to potential Law changes outlined in the *play fair!* strategy which was approved at the 2017 IFAB AGM. The various ideas have now been placed in different categories of testing or discussion. In particular, it was agreed that some should now undergo more extensive testing – national FAs and competitions are invited to contact us if they would like information about potentially participating in any of the following experiments:

- **The AB-BA system of kicks from the penalty mark** – a system designed to bring greater fairness by ensuring that the same team does not always take the ‘second’ kick
- **Red and yellow cards for misconduct by team officials in the technical area** – a method of making it clear what disciplinary action the referee is taking against a team official who has behaved inappropriately in the technical area
- **The defending team being able to play the ball before it has left the penalty area at a goal kick or defensive free kick** – a method of reducing time-wasting and creating a more constructive restart to the game
- **A substituted player being required to leave the field of play from the nearest boundary line** (subject to security considerations) – a method of reducing time-wasting by applying the same principle as for an injured player who has to leave the field of play

The IFAB greatly appreciates the input and support from all parts of the football world in developing the Laws of the Game to make football at all levels – from grassroots to international football – fair, accessible and enjoyable. The IFAB will continue to consult globally to ensure that the Laws of the Game protect the game’s fairness and integrity on the field of play.

We thank you for your attention and please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or enquiries.

Yours sincerely,  
The IFAB



Lukas Brud  
Secretary

Encl.: as mentioned

cc: FIFA