

To all football associations,
confederations and FIFA

Circular no. 1

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Amendments to the Laws of the Game – 2015/2016 and information on the completed reform of The International Football Association Board

AMENDMENTS TO THE LAWS OF THE GAME – 2015/2016

The 129th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The International Football Association Board (IFAB) took place in Belfast on 28 February 2015. The amendments to the Laws of the Game approved at this meeting are listed below. The detailed minutes of the meeting are available on www.theifab.com.

Law 3 – The Number of Players Return Substitutions

The IFAB approved the use of return substitutions under the provision that it is the decision of each individual member association to implement and at which competition level (*alterations highlighted in red*).

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.

Reason

The two-year experiment with “return substitutions”, conducted by The Football Association (The FA) and the Scottish Football Association (SFA), proved very successful 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.

Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment

Electronic performance & tracking systems (EPTS)

The use of EPTS is 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 (*alterations highlighted in red*).

The Players’ Equipment (p.70)
(...)

Where electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS) are used (subject to the agreement of the member association/competition organiser concerned):

- they must not pose any danger to the players and/or match officials
- information and data transmitted from the devices/systems is not permitted to be received or used in the technical area during the match.

Reason

Many teams and players wear EPTS devices already for training purposes in order to control and improve their performance. Subsequently, requests were made to The IFAB to permit players to wear such devices also during matches, subject to the two criteria mentioned above.

The IFAB would like to highlight that, while the permission to wear EPTS was given in principle, the final decision as to whether or not EPTS may be used lies with the respective association, league or competition.

Furthermore, in cooperation with FIFA, a quality programme is currently being established in order to categorise the available systems and to set the quality criteria to ensure the data generated by the different systems is reliable and accurate.

Submission deadlines and implementation of amendments to Laws of the Game

At its last AGM, The IFAB unanimously agreed that the date for amendments to the Laws of the Game to come into effect would change in future from 1 July to 1 June in order to accommodate any tournaments starting in the month of June. In addition, it was agreed that the deadline to submit proposals to The IFAB Advisory Panels would move from 1 December to 1 November to allow sufficient time for review by The IFAB's bodies before the subsequent AGM.

Consequently, the decisions of this year's AGM regarding changes to the Laws of the Game are binding for confederations and member associations as of 1 June 2015. However, confederations or member associations whose current season has not ended by 1 June may delay the introduction of the adopted alterations to the Laws of the Game in their competitions until the beginning of their next season.

Lastly, please be informed that, as in the past, you will receive a few hard copies of the new Laws of the Game in a separate communication together with the order form for copies of the book for your association.

INFORMATION ON THE COMPLETED REFORM OF THE IFAB

As presented to you during the 64th FIFA Congress in São Paulo on 10 and 11 June 2014, The International Football Association Board (IFAB) has for almost two years been working on a comprehensive revision of its own organisation, structure and decision-making process associated with changing the Laws of the Game in order to become more modern, democratic and transparent. This reform process was successfully concluded by the Foundation Meeting, which took place in Zurich on 13 January 2014. Since then, work has been underway to implement the reforms step by step.

Despite the 128-year-old tradition of preserving the Laws of the Game and the associated conservative perception of the Board, The IFAB has constantly been monitoring the developments of the game and passing amendments to the Laws when it has been necessary, always bearing in mind the importance of maintaining the universality of the game. Its goal is to continue to do so in the future, with the strong support and involvement of the entire football community.

As its first step, The IFAB has created an organisational foundation and registered itself as an independent legal entity under Swiss law, with its own statutes and headquarters in Zurich. Furthermore, The IFAB has introduced an Executive Support Office, which manages the administration of The IFAB and which will be your main point of contact for any questions or proposals you may have. From now on, any correspondence related to The IFAB or the Laws of the Game should be addressed to:

The International Football Association Board (IFAB)
Executive Support Office
Aurorastrasse 100
8032 Zurich
Switzerland
Email: secretary@theifab.com

The main change to the former structure of The IFAB has certainly been the introduction of two new Advisory Panels, the so-called Football Advisory Panel (FAP) and the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP). The Panels' composition represents the entire global football community and through their bi-annual meetings they will provide additional perspectives and valuable expertise for the decision-making process. This addition to the structure of The IFAB was of high importance to the Board and, following the two meetings in November 2014 and April 2015, has already proven to be of great support to the consultation process.

With the development of a new corporate identity and website, we plan to increase the visibility and approachability of The IFAB within the football community. The website www.TheIFAB.com (currently linked to the IFAB-section on FIFA.com) is going to be established very soon and will not only include more information on the Laws of the Game and their application, but also offer educational material for referees, coaches, players, fans, the media and any other interested parties. Obviously, this platform will also contain all official documentation and information for your associations and leagues.

Lastly, please be informed that from now on, all matters related to The IFAB and the Laws of the Game will be communicated directly by The IFAB.

We look forward to a closer future cooperation and to the constant improvement of the game and its Laws. Thank you for your attention and please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or enquiries.

Yours sincerely,
Board of Directors of The IFAB



Lukas Brud
Secretary

