

To all national football associations,
confederations and FIFA

Circular no. 5

Zurich, 1 April 2016
SEC/2016-C121/bru

Amendments to the Laws of the Game – 2016/2017 and other important decisions taken by The International Football Association Board

The 130th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The International Football Association Board (The IFAB) took place in Cardiff on 5 March 2016. The amendments to the Laws of the Game approved at this meeting, as well as all other important decisions taken, are listed below (item order based on meeting agenda). Detailed minutes will be available on www.theifab.com shortly.

1. Revision of the Laws of the Game – 2016/2017

The AGM approved the comprehensive revision of the Laws of the Game undertaken by the IFAB Technical Subcommittee. This is the most extensive revision of the Laws in The IFAB's 130-year history. We appreciate that translating the new Law book and preparing educational material will involve a lot of work for national football associations, so to assist with this process, please note the following:

- From 11 April, the English version of the full Laws of the Game 2016-17 book will be available on www.theifab.com. This version can be downloaded. Towards the end of May, the French, Spanish and German versions will also be available online.
- The English text of just the 17 Laws will be available in a format that allows “copying and pasting” solely for translation purposes and to prepare education material.
- An updated version of the Law changes presentation given at the FIFA Referee Instructors meeting in Seville in February is available online for education purposes.

The main reason for revising the Laws was so they “*are more accessible and more easily understood by everyone in football and increase consistency of understanding, interpretation and application*”. The IFAB is convinced that the revised Laws will enhance refereeing and football at all levels of the game throughout the world. If you have any questions about the Laws please e-mail them to: lawenquiries@theifab.com.

Enclosed with this circular is the form to be used to order copies of the Laws of the Game 2016-17 book (English, Spanish, French and German). As usual, you will be sent the following printed copies of the 2016/2017 Laws of the Game at the end of May:

- Five copies for your association;
- One copy for each of your 2016 FIFA referees and assistant referees.

If you wish to order additional copies, please use the enclosed, self-explanatory order form. To make the modernised Laws of the Game book widely available, we can supply additional copies at a cost of CHF 3.00 per copy (excl. shipping). In order for IFAB to produce the appropriate number of copies, we kindly ask you to complete and return this form by email to order@theifab.com, or by fax to +41 44 245 1887 **by 29 April 2016 at the latest**.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity

One of the most important Law changes is the revision of the wording for an offence in the penalty area which denies an attacker an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. As the penalty kick effectively restores the lost goal-scoring opportunity, a penalty area offence which was an attempt to play the ball or challenge an opponent for the ball will now be a caution (yellow card), not a sending off (red card). However, to preserve ‘fair play’, handball, holding, pushing, pulling, or where the defender makes no attempt to play the ball or has no possibility of playing the ball, the defender will still be sent off (red card).

The AGM approved the following wording and the impact of this change will be reviewed at the 2018 AGM:

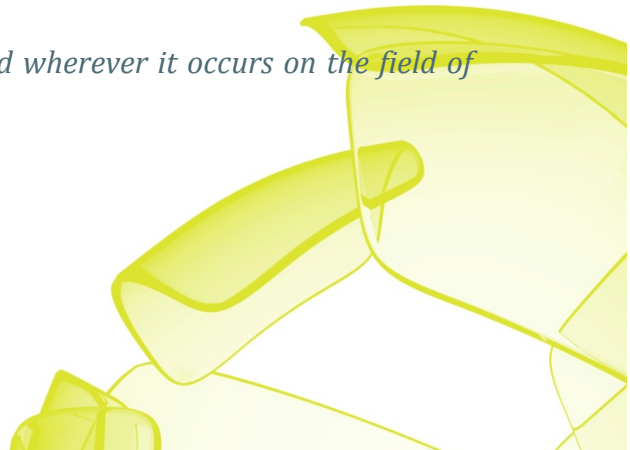
“Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity

Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.

Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:

- *The offence is holding, pulling or pushing or*
- *The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball or*
- *The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc.)*

In all the above circumstances the player is sent off.”



A presentation on this topic, including clear examples showing the application of the new wording, will soon be available for download on www.theifab.com.

2. “Sin Bins”

Approval was given for the UEFA experiments involving the use of “sin bins” in youth development matches to continue for a 3rd year. UEFA will be asked to provide further information so that a decision may be made at the 2017 AGM.

3. Fourth Substitution in Extra Time

Based on a number of requests from national football associations and confederations, The IFAB decided to allow experiments with fourth substitutions in extra time in competitions with knock-out stages where extra time is part of establishing the winner of a match. Competition organisers should contact The IFAB for further information if they wish to apply for permission to use this system in their tournament(s).

The outcome of the trials will be considered at the 2018 AGM.

4. Electronic Performance & Tracking Systems (EPTS)

An update on EPTS was presented and it was agreed that further work should be undertaken to investigate introducing certain standards and a quality programme.

5. “Triple Punishment”

Approval was given for the ‘new’ wording in Law 12 for offences in the penalty area which deny the opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (*see “1. Revision of the Laws of the Game – 2016/2017” above*).

6. Video Assistance for Match Officials

Following a two-year debate within The IFAB, including the Football and Technical Advisory Panels, and after consultation with other football stakeholders and sports using video assistance for match officials, The IFAB decided to start an experimental phase using Video Assistant Referees (VARs) to assist with clear errors in match-changing situations.

The aim of this experiment is to answer one important question: **“Does the implementation of VARs improve the game?”** and this will be analysed by an independent research institute under the leadership of The IFAB. The information will be presented to the 2017 and 2018 AGMs.

Currently, The IFAB, with the support of FIFA’s Football Technology & Innovation Department and interested competition organisers (national football associations and

leagues) from across the world, is preparing the project protocols and practicalities which are expected to be ready for implementation later this year or in early 2017.

More information will be available on www.theifab.com by early June 2016.

These are exciting times for football and The IFAB is very pleased to be at the forefront of discussing and leading these changes and experiments. We look forward to working with you to continue improving the game and its Laws.

Thank you for your attention and please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or enquiries; please note The IFAB's new address and contact details:

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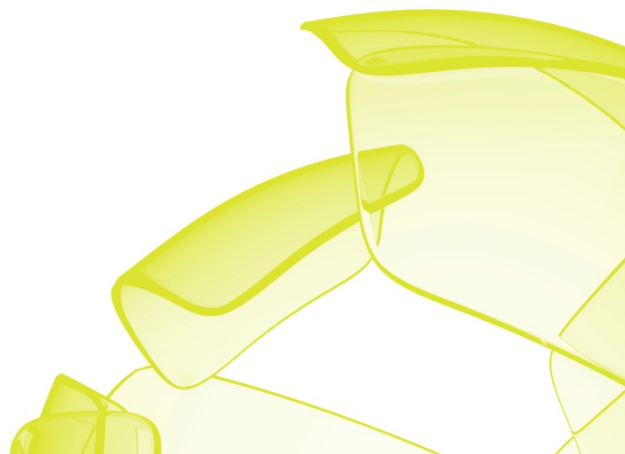
www.theifab.com

Yours sincerely,
The IFAB



Lukas Brud
Secretary

Encl: Order form



Mitglieder / Member association
Association membre / Asociación miembro

Order form Laws of the Game 2016/2017 / Bestellformular Spielregeln 2016/2017
Bon de commande Lois du Jeu 2016/2017 / Hoja de pedido Reglas de Juego 2016/2017

➔ Email order@theifab.com or fax [+41 44 245 1887](tel:+41442451887) by **29 April 2016** at the latest.

Provisional delivery date as from June 2016
Voraussichtlicher Liefertermin ab Juni 2016
Délai de livraison probable à partir de juin 2016
Previsible fecha de entrega a partir de junio de 2016

		Anzahl Number Quantité Cantidad	Bemerkungen Comments Remarques Observaciones
English	Laws of the Game 2016/2017		
Deutsch	Spielregeln 2016/2017		
Français	Lois du Jeu 2016/2017		
Español	Reglas de Juego 2016/2017		

Datum/Date/Date/Fecha

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