



Laws of the Game 2020/21

Clarifications and associated Law changes



Law 1 – The Field of Play

Shape of the goalposts and crossbar

Law 1 – The Field of Play

Shape of the goalposts and crossbar

Law 1 defines four different shapes for the goalposts and crossbar but an increasing number of goals are a mixture of these shapes, so this is now reflected in the wording of Law 1.

10. Goals (...)

The goalposts and crossbar must be made of approved material. They must be square, rectangular, round, or elliptical or a combination of these shapes and must not be dangerous.



Law 2 – The Ball

Replacement of a defective ball

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Replacement of a defective ball

Change of wording to be consistent with Law 8.

2. Replacement of a defective ball

If the ball becomes defective:

- *play is stopped and*
- *restarted ~~by dropping the replacement~~ with a dropped ball ~~where the original ball became defective~~*



Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

Other equipment: EPTS

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Other equipment: EPTS

In 2019, FIFA implemented the performance standard for EPTS devices, as mandated by The IFAB. The implementation of this new standard required changes to the wording of Law 4.

4. Other equipment

Electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS)

Where wearable technology (WT) as part of electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS) is used in matches played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, confederations or national football associations, the competition organiser must ensure that the technology attached to the ~~player's~~ players' equipment is not dangerous and ~~must bear the following mark~~ meets one of the following standards: IMS (International Match Standard) or FIFA Quality.

This diagram has been deleted:



Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

Other equipment: EPTS

4. Other equipment

Electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS)

~~This mark indicates that it has been officially tested and meets the minimum safety requirements of the International Match Standard developed by FIFA and approved by The IFAB. The institutes conducting these tests are subject to the approval of FIFA.~~

Where ~~electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS) are used (subject to the agreement of the national football association/competition organiser)~~ provided by the match or competition organiser, it is the responsibility of that match or the competition organiser must to ensure that the information and data transmitted from EPTS to the technical area during matches played in an official competition are reliable and accurate.

(...)

The following mark indicates that an EPTS (wearable or optical) ~~device/system~~ has been officially tested ~~and meets~~ to the requirements in terms of reliability and accuracy of positional data in football:





Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

Kicks from the penalty mark

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

Kicks from the penalty mark

Cautions (YCs) and warnings for players and team officials issued during the match (including during extra time) are not carried forward because kicks from the penalty mark (KFPM) are not part of the match.

A player/team official who receives a YC during both the match and the KFPM is not sent off; the two cautions are recorded separately for disciplinary purposes.

3. Kicks from the penalty mark

Kicks from the penalty mark are taken after the match has ended and unless otherwise stated, the relevant Laws of the Game apply. A player who has been sent off during the match is not permitted to take part; warnings and cautions issued during the match are not carried forward into kicks from the penalty mark.

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

Kicks from the penalty mark

Most goalkeeper encroachment results from mis-anticipating when the ball will be kicked, so the goalkeeper is warned for a first offence but must be cautioned (YC) for any further offence(s) at the retaken kick and/or any subsequent kick.

When (rarely) the goalkeeper and the kicker offend at exactly the same time, the kicker should be penalised, as it is the 'illegal' feinting that causes the goalkeeper's encroachment.

3. Kicks from the penalty mark

During kicks from the penalty mark

(...)

- *If the goalkeeper commits an offence and, as a result, the kick is retaken, the goalkeeper ~~must be cautioned~~ is warned for the first offence and cautioned for any subsequent offence(s)*

(...)

- *If both the goalkeeper and the kicker commit an offence at the same time:

 - ~~If the kick is missed or saved, the kick is retaken and both players cautioned~~
 - ~~If the kick is scored, the goal is disallowed, the kick is recorded as missed and the kicker is cautioned~~*



Law 11 – Offside

Deliberate handball

Law 11 – Offside

Deliberate handball

Clarification that deliberate handball by a defender is regarded as 'deliberate play' for offside. As 'legal' deliberate play (e.g. a kick or a header) causes a player in an offside position to no longer be offside, 'illegal' play should clearly have the same outcome.

This does not apply to handball offences which are not deliberate.

2. Offside offence

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately plays the ball ~~(except from a deliberate save by any opponent)~~, including by deliberate handball, is not considered to have gained an advantage, unless it was a deliberate save by any opponent.

LAW'S
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2020/21



FAB





Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Handball

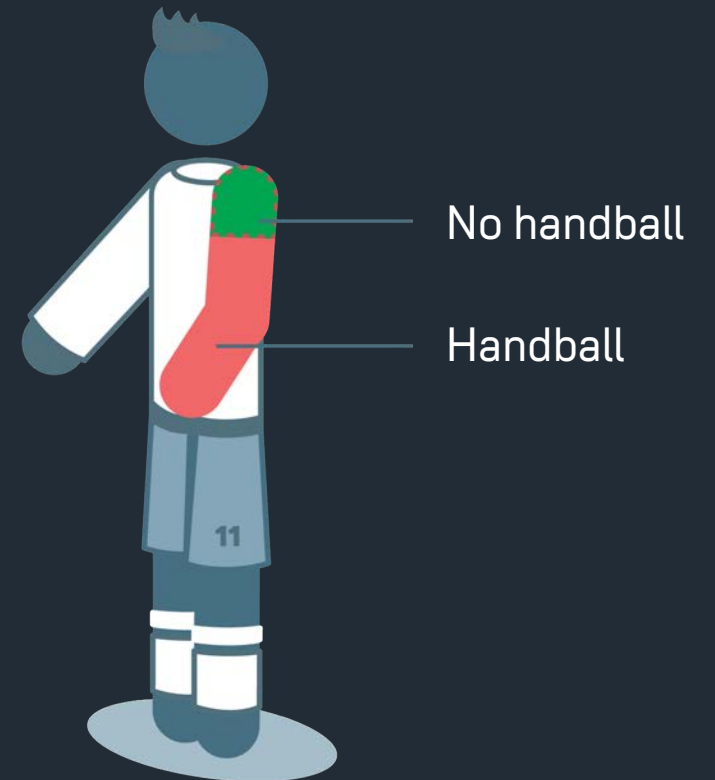
Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Handball

Wording has been added to clarify that, when considering possible handball offences, the shoulder is not part of the arm – the arm starts at the bottom/end of the armpit, as shown in the diagram in Law 12 (below).

1. Direct free kick – Handling the ball

For the purposes of determining handball offences, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit.



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Handball

The 2019/20 changes to Law 12 included a goal not being permitted to be scored directly from the hand/arm, even if accidental.

This concept includes an opportunity to score immediately after the ball has made contact with a team mate's hand/arm.

The wording of Law 12 has therefore been amended to clarify the 'spirit' (intention) of the Law:

- if the ball touches an attacking player's hand/arm and then goes to another attacker and a goal or scoring opportunity occurs immediately, this is a handball offence
- it is not an offence if, after an accidental handball, the ball travels some distance or there are several passes or there is a notable 'time interval' between the 'handball' and the goal or scoring opportunity.

For example:

- A goal or scoring opportunity follows a number of passes and/or a long pass
- a player runs some distance (dribbles) with the ball

The key word when applying this part of the Law is 'immediately'.

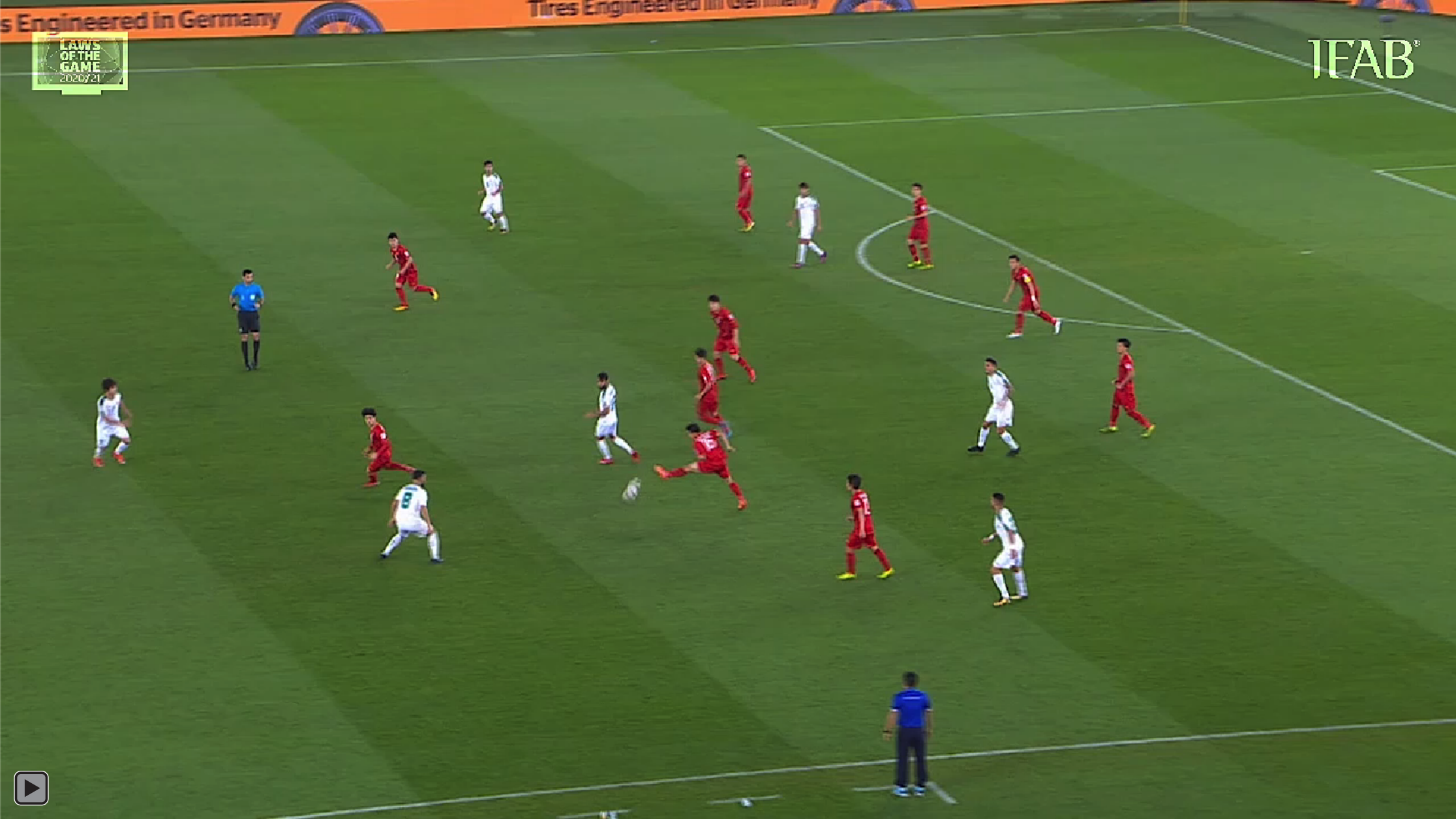
Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Handball

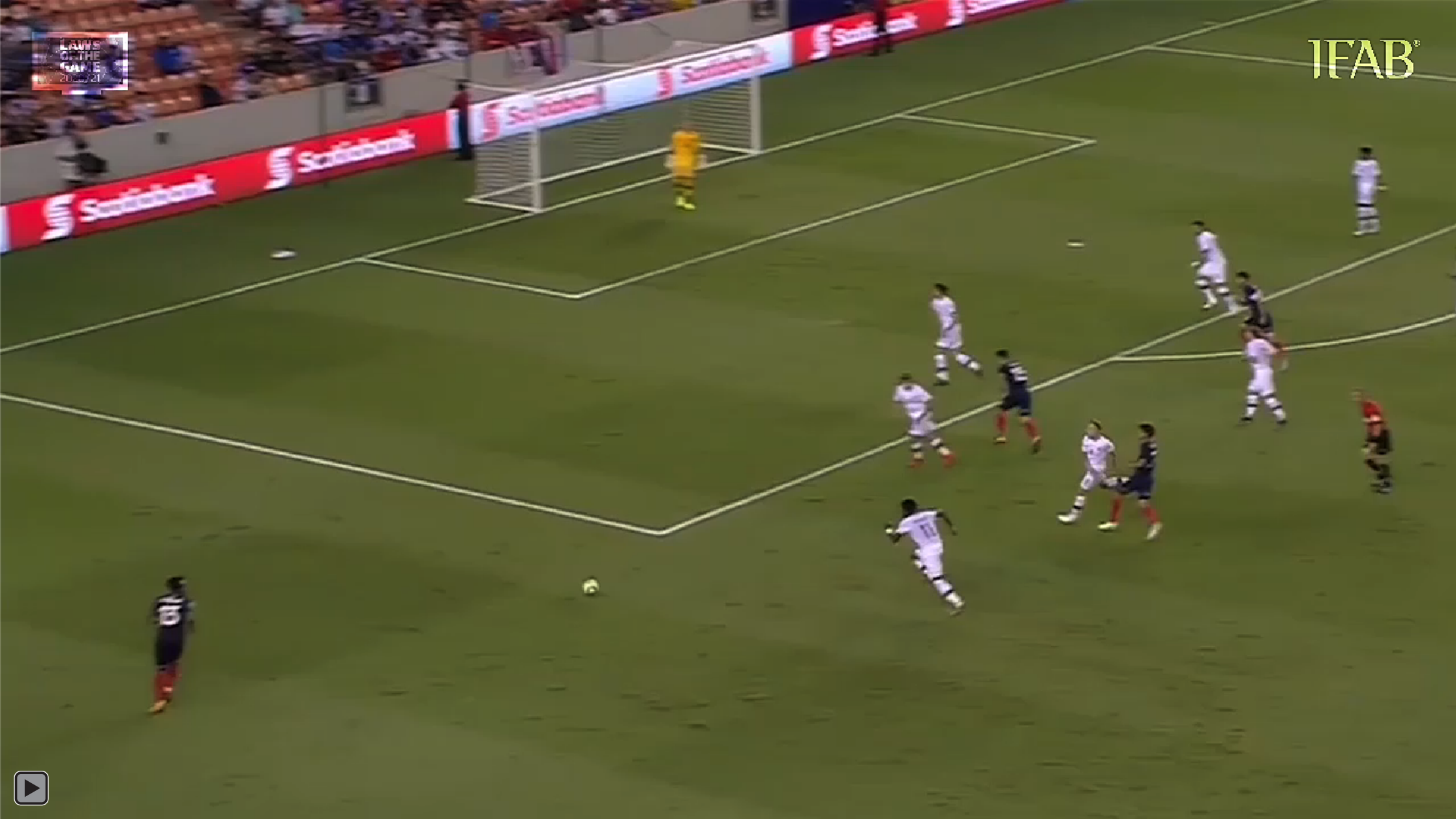
Examples of accidental handball which 'immediately' gives the player a goal or a scoring opportunity

→ Direct free kick should be awarded









Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Handball

Examples of accidental handball by a team-mate 'immediately' before a goal or scoring opportunity

→ Direct free kick should be awarded



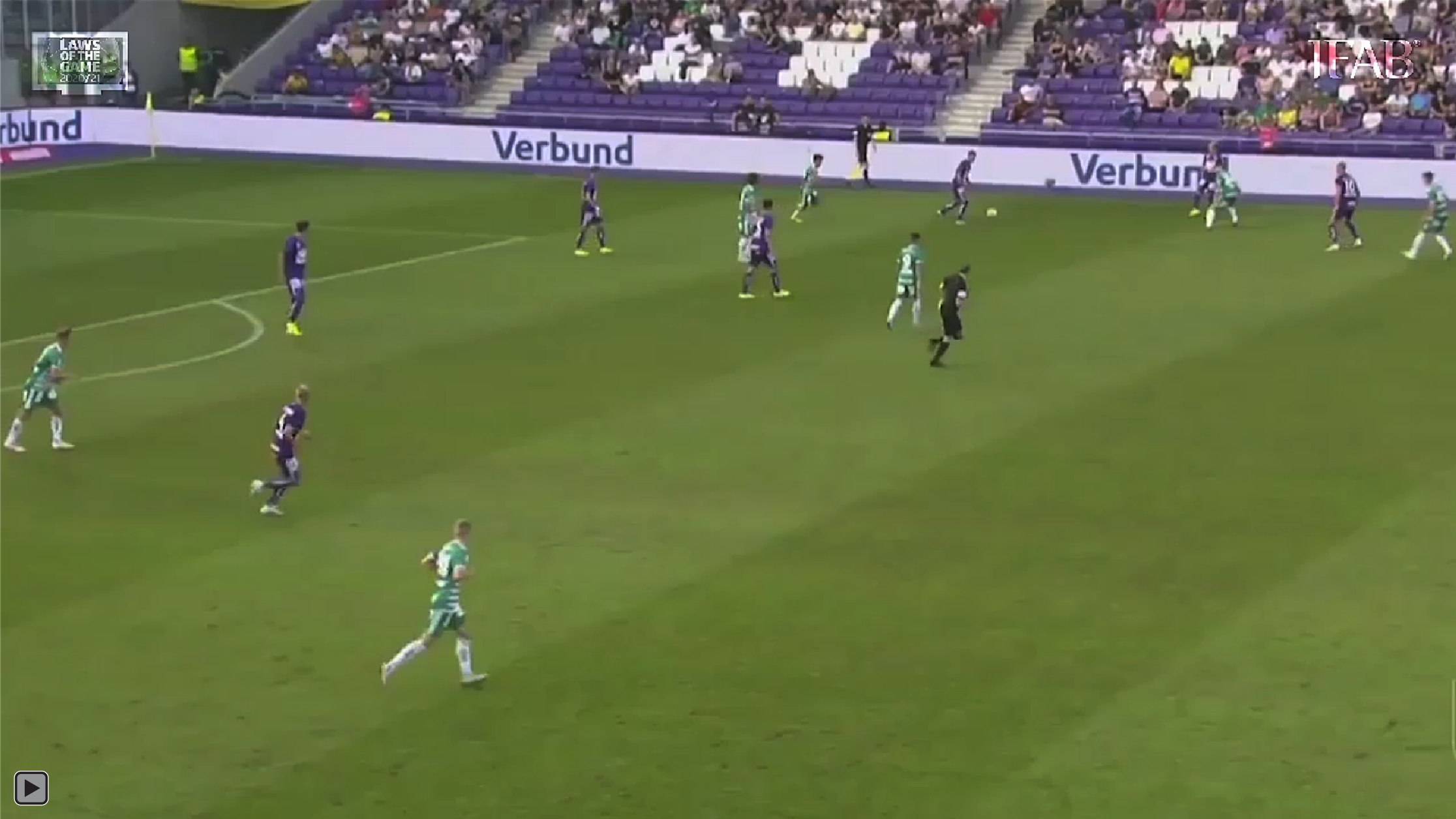


Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Handball

Examples of accidental handball which are NOT 'immediately' before a goal or scoring opportunity

→ No offence







Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Handball

1. Direct free kick – Handling the ball

It is an offence if a player:

- *deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball*
- *scores in the opponents' goal directly from their hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper*
- *gains possession/control of after the ball after it has touched their or a team-mate's hand/arm, even if accidental, and then the player immediately:*
 - *scores in the opponents' goal*
 - *creates a goal-scoring opportunity*

~~It is usually an offence if a player:~~

- *touches the ball with their hand/arm when:*
 - *(...)*

Except for the above offences, it is not ~~usually~~ an offence if the ball touches a player's hand/arm: (...)



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

'Illegal' second touch by the goalkeeper

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

'Illegal' second touch by the goalkeeper

If the goalkeeper takes a restart and then deliberately plays the ball a second time (before it has touched another player) and this 'illegal' second touch 'stops a promising attack' (SPA) or 'denies a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity' (DOGSO), in addition to the indirect free kick, the goalkeeper must now be cautioned (YC) or sent off (RC), as appropriate.

The YC/RC applies even if the second touch is with the hand/arm, as the offence is not 'handball' but 'illegally' playing the ball a second time.

1. Direct free kick – Handling the ball

The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. If the goalkeeper handles the ball inside their penalty area when not permitted to do so, an indirect free kick is awarded but there is no disciplinary sanction. However, if the offence is playing the ball a second time (with or without the hand/arm) after a restart before it touches another player, the goalkeeper must be sanctioned if the offence stops a promising attack or denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

‘Illegal’ second touch by the goalkeeper

Example of ‘illegal’ second touch by a goalkeeper





Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

No 'delayed' caution (YC) for 'stopping a promising attack' offence after a 'quick' free kick

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

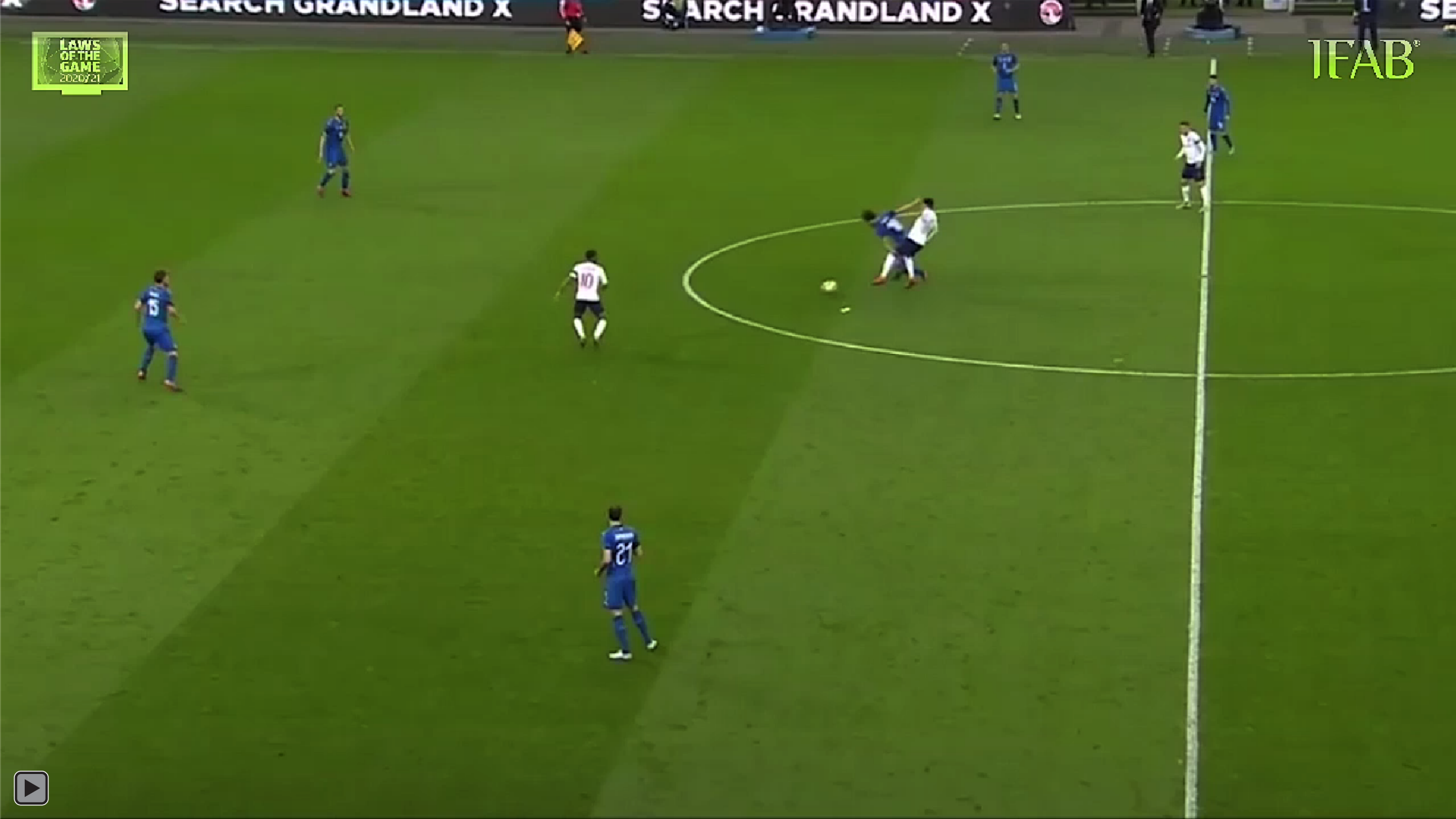
No 'delayed' caution (YC) for 'stopping a promising attack' offence after a 'quick' free kick

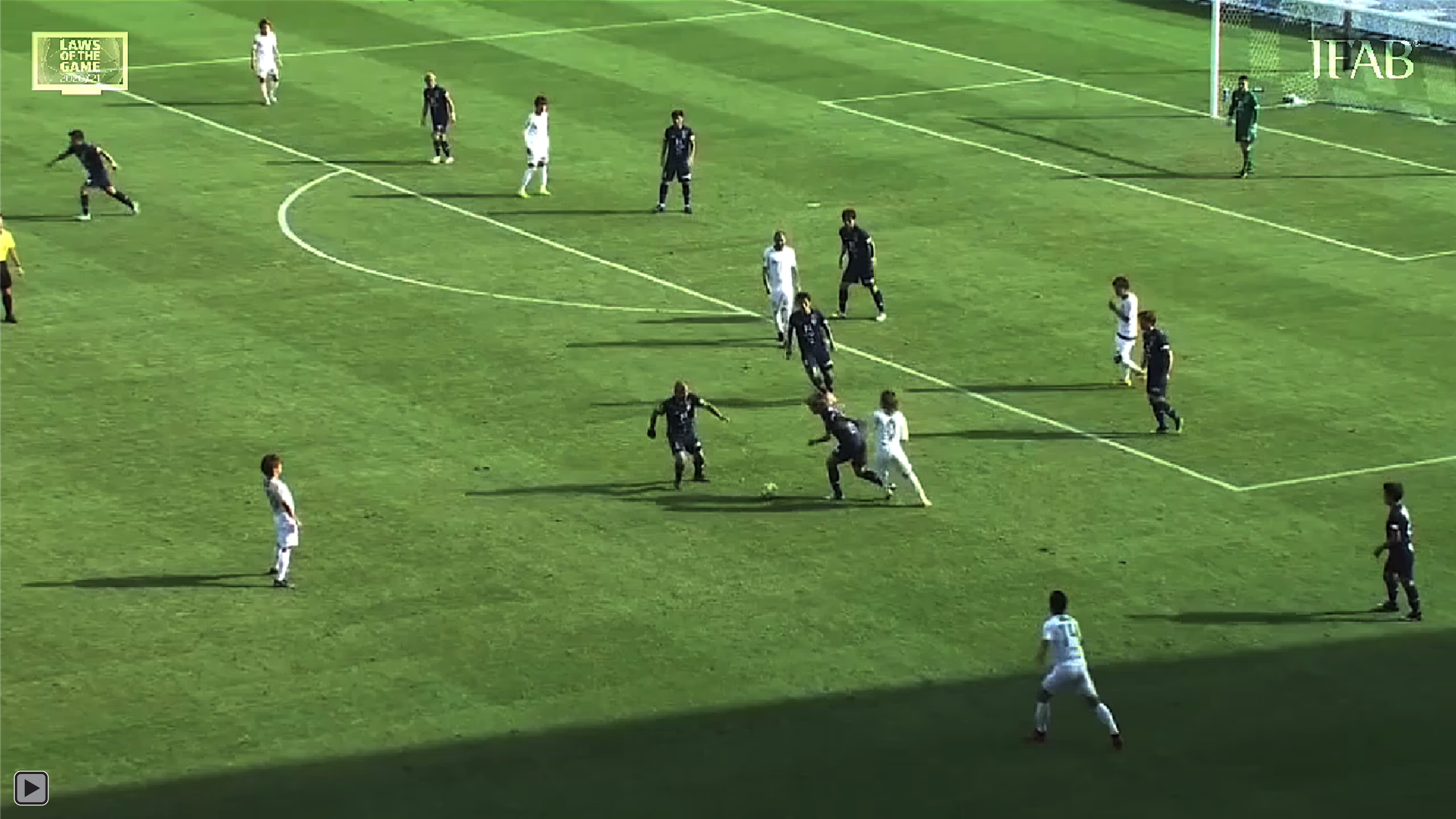
If the referee allows a 'quick' free kick after a DOGSO offence, the (delayed) sending-off (RC) becomes a caution (YC).

To be consistent, the Law has been changed so that if the referee allows a 'quick' free kick after an offence which interfered with or stopped a promising attack (SPA), the (delayed) caution (YC) is not issued.

Examples of 'quick' free kick after a 'stopping a promising attack' (SPA) offence

→ YC is not issued





Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

No 'delayed' caution (YC) for 'stopping a promising attack' offence after a 'quick' free kick

3. Disciplinary action

Delaying the restart of play to show a card

Once the referee has decided to caution or send off a player, play must not be restarted until the sanction has been administered, unless the non-offending team takes a quick free kick, has a clear goal-scoring opportunity and the referee has not started the disciplinary sanction procedure. The sanction is administered at the next stoppage; if the offence was denying the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the player is cautioned; if the offence interfered with or stopped a promising attack, the player is not cautioned.



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

No caution (YC) for 'stopping a promising attack' offence after advantage

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

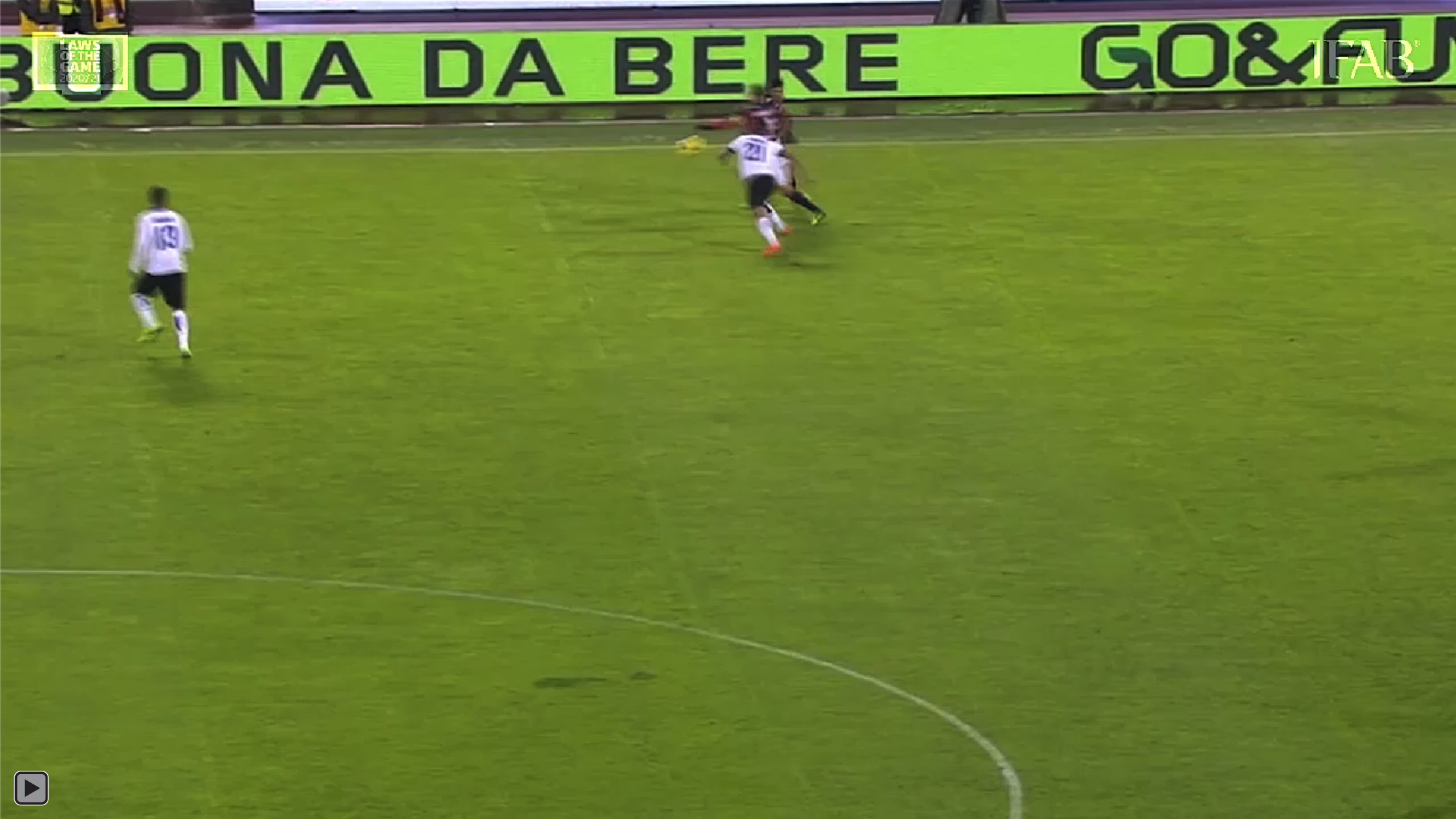
No caution (YC) for 'stopping a promising attack' offence after advantage

If the referee plays advantage for a DOGSO offence, the sending-off (RC) becomes a caution (YC).

To be consistent, the Law has been changed so that if the referee plays advantage for an offence which interfered with or stopped a promising attack, the caution (YC) is not issued.

Example of advantage for a 'stopping a promising attack' (SPA) offence

→ YC is not issued



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

No caution (YC) for 'stopping a promising attack' offence after advantage

3. Disciplinary action

Advantage

If the referee plays the advantage for an offence for which a caution/sending-off would have been issued had play been stopped, this caution/sending-off must be issued when the ball is next out of play. However, if the offence was denying the opposing team except for the denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, when the player is cautioned for unsporting behaviour; if the offence was interfering with or stopping a promising attack, the player is not cautioned.



Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Not respecting 4m at a dropped ball

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Not respecting 4m at a dropped ball

Inclusion of dropped ball in the list of cautionable offences for 'failing to respect the required distance'.

3. Disciplinary action

Cautionable offences

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

(...)

- failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a dropped ball, corner kick, free kick or throw-in*

Example of players not respecting 4m





Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Cautions for unsporting behaviour

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Cautions for unsporting behaviour

A promising attack can be stopped or interfered with by an offence which is not a foul challenge (e.g. 'illegally' playing the ball a second time after a restart), so the wording now includes all such offences other than handball, which is covered in the previous bullet point.

3. Disciplinary action

Cautions for unsporting behaviour

There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour including if a player:

(...)

- *Commits ~~a foul~~ any other offence which interferes with or stops a promising attack, except where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which was an attempt to play the ball*



Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Offences at penalty kicks

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Offences at penalty kicks

Confirmation (as outlined in Circular 17 of 21 August 2019) that if the goalkeeper offends at the taking of a penalty kick and the ball misses the goal or rebounds from the goalposts or crossbar (i.e. the goalkeeper does not 'save' the kick), the goalkeeper is not penalised unless the goalkeeper's action(s) had a clear impact on the kicker.

Example of goalkeeper offence which does not clearly impact the kicker

→ No retake



Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Offences at penalty kicks

Most goalkeeper encroachment results from mis-anticipating when the ball will be kicked, so the goalkeeper should not be cautioned for a first offence but must be cautioned for any further offence(s) at that kick and/or any subsequent kick.

If the kicker and goalkeeper offend at exactly the same time (a very rare event), the goalkeeper's offence is usually caused by the kicker's 'illegal' feinting, so the kicker is penalised.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Offences at penalty kicks

2. Offences and sanctions

*If, before the ball is in play, one of the following occurs:
(...)*

- *the goalkeeper offends:*
 - *if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded*
 - *if the ball misses the goal or rebounds from the crossbar or goalpost(s), the kick is only retaken if the goalkeeper's offence clearly impacted on the kicker*
 - *if the ball is prevented from entering the goal by the goalkeeper, the kick is retaken*

If the goalkeeper's offence results in the kick being retaken, the goalkeeper is warned for the first offence in the game and cautioned for any subsequent offence(s) in the game

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Offences at penalty kicks

2. Offences and sanctions

*If, before the ball is in play, one of the following occurs:
(...)*

- *~~the goalkeeper or a team-mate~~ of the goalkeeper offends:*
 - *if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded*
 - *if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken; ~~the goalkeeper is cautioned if responsible for the offence~~*
- *a player of both teams offends ~~the Laws of the Game~~, the kick is retaken unless a player commits a more serious offence (e.g. 'illegal' feinting)*
- *~~if both the goalkeeper and~~ the kicker commit an offence at the same time:*
 - *~~if the kick is missed or saved, the kick is retaken and both players cautioned~~*
 - *if the kick is scored, the goal is disallowed, the kicker is cautioned and play restarts with an indirect free kick to the defending team*

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Offences at penalty kicks

Summary table:

The summary table for offences at the taking of a penalty kick has been updated as shown below:

	<i>Goal</i>	<i>No Goal</i>
<u><i>Encroachment by defending and attacking player</i></u>	<u><i>Penalty is retaken</i></u>	<u><i>Penalty is retaken</i></u>
<i>Offence by goalkeeper</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<u><i>Not saved: penalty is not retaken (unless kicker is clearly impacted)</i></u> <u><i>Saved: penalty is retaken and warning for goalkeeper; caution for any further offence(s)</i></u>
<u><i>Goalkeeper and kicker offend at the same time</i></u>	<u><i>Indirect free kick and caution for kicker</i></u>	<u><i>Indirect free kick and caution for kicker</i></u>



VAR protocol and handbook updates

VAR protocol and handbook updates

'Check' procedure

Reference to the final decision is removed, as the VAR is permitted to give advice to the referee about the decision, but the referee always makes the final decision.

4. Procedures

Check

(...)

If the 'check' indicates a probable 'clear and obvious error' or 'serious missed incident', the VAR will communicate this information ~~(but not the decision to be taken)~~ to the referee who will then decide whether or not to initiate a 'review'.

VAR protocol and handbook updates

Only one 'TV signal' is needed for a 'VAR-only review' (unless a signal is also required after stopping play).

The text has been reorganised to emphasise that when there is a review for an incident/decision which is subjective/non-factual, an 'on-field review' (OFR) is expected.

4. Procedures

Review

- *If play has not already stopped, the referee stops play when the ball is next in a neutral zone/situation (usually when neither team is in an attacking move) and shows the 'TV signal'*
- ~~*In both situations, the referee must indicate that a 'review' will take place by clearly showing the 'TV signal' (outline of a TV screen)*~~
- *The VAR describes to the referee what can be seen on the TV replay(s) ~~but not the decision to be taken~~, and the referee then:*
 - *shows the 'TV signal' (if not already shown) and goes to the referee review area to view replay footage – 'on-field review' (OFR) – before making a final decision. The other match officials will not review the footage unless, in exceptional circumstances, asked to do so by the referee*
 - or*
 - *makes a final decision based on the referee's own perception and the information from the VAR, and, where appropriate, input from other match officials – VAR-only review*
- *At the end of both review processes, the referee must show the 'TV signal' ~~again~~, immediately followed by the final decision*



Glossary

Holding and restart position

Glossary

Holding offence

Clarification that a player should only be penalised for holding an opponent's body/equipment if it affects the opponent by restricting/impeding their movement. Football does not expect 'minor' holding to be penalised.

Holding

A holding offence occurs only when a player's contact with an opponent's body or equipment impedes the opponent's movement

Glossary

Position (at a restart)

When judging encroachment, a player's position at a restart (9.15m at a penalty kick, free kick, corner kick and kick-off, 4m at a dropped ball, 2m at a throw-in) has always been defined as the position of the player's feet.

However, following (incorrect) use of VAR triangulation technology to identify 'encroachment' by other parts of a player's body, e.g. a player standing outside the penalty area but leaning forward so their head is technically inside the area, a player's restart position is now included in the Glossary.

Restart position

A player's position at a restart is determined by the position of their feet or any part of their body which is touching the ground, except as outlined in Law 11 – Offside





Laws of the Game 2020/21

Clarification

Clarification

Goal kick/free kick in the penalty area

“Flick-up”

Confirmation of the clarification published in Circular 16 of 7 August 2019:

“If at a goal kick or free kick the goalkeeper ‘flicks’ the ball up and a team-mate heads/chests the ball back for the goalkeeper to catch, the kick is retaken; there is no disciplinary sanction (unless this occurs persistently).”

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