

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a whistle. The hand is wearing a black wristwatch and a black sleeve. The background is a dark blue sky with many small, bright white stars. A vertical white line is on the left side of the image.

Throw-in and goal-kick countdown protocol

Throw-in and goal-kick countdown protocol

Introduction

This protocol relates to the **five-second countdown** in Laws 15 and 16 to prevent time-wasting and disruption to the tempo of the match at throw-ins and goal kicks. If the time limit is exceeded, the restart is taken by the opposing team.

Procedure

When the referee determines that a throw-in/goal kick is being deliberately delayed by the team taking the restart:

- The referee may use their whistle and/or voice to indicate that the player should hurry up/not delay the restart.
- To start the **five-second countdown** (which may start without the above cue) the referee will:
 - blow the **whistle**
 - **signal** clearly with their hand/arm for the restart to be taken
 - visually **count down from five seconds** with a raised hand; this visual countdown may be accompanied by a verbal countdown where appropriate
- If the ball is not in play at the end of the **five-second countdown**, the referee will:
 - award the throw-in to the opposing team, to be taken from the same position as the original throw-in; or
 - award a corner kick to the opposing team on the side of the field closest to where the goal kick was to be taken

- Where the restart is awarded to the opposing team, a caution (yellow card) applies only if the player or a team-mate then excessively delays the restart by the opposing team.

The referee does not have to wait for a player to have possession of the ball to start the **five-second countdown**. The countdown can also be started if the player deliberately causes a delay by:

- slowly retrieving the ball
- taking up an incorrect position at a throw-in
- putting the ball in an incorrect position at a goal kick

As the purpose of the countdown is to maintain the tempo of the match by preventing time-wasting at throw-ins and goal kicks, the player should not be penalised if they are in the process of throwing/kicking the ball as the referee reaches the end of the countdown.