



Time-limited substitution protocol

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Introduction

This protocol relates to the Law 3 requirement for a substituted player to leave the field of play within **ten seconds** to prevent time-wasting and disruption to the tempo of the match.

Procedure

- Once the substitution board has been shown or, where there is no substitution board, the referee signals for a substitution to take place,* the player being substituted must leave the field of play:
 - within **ten seconds**
 - at the nearest point on the boundary line, unless indicated otherwise by the referee

If the referee inspects the substitute's equipment at the halfway line, the **ten seconds start when the inspection is completed and the referee signals for the substitution to be made.*

- The referee may visually **count down the last five seconds** with a raised hand; this visual countdown may be accompanied by a verbal countdown where appropriate.
- If the player being substituted has not left the field of play within the **ten seconds**:
 - they **must still leave** the field of play as quickly as possible
 - the substitute is **not permitted to enter** the field of play
 - **play restarts**
 - the substitution cannot be cancelled nor the substitute changed
 - the substitute may only enter the field of play at the **first stoppage** after **one minute** has elapsed following the restart and after receiving a signal from the referee

- The **one minute** is timed using a running clock and is determined by the referee, who may be assisted by the other match officials.
- If more than one substitution is made during a stoppage, all players being substituted must be off the field of play within **ten seconds** of the substitution board being shown/signal being given for the final substitution; the board/signal must not be delayed between substitutions that are made during the same stoppage.
- Where the **ten seconds** are exceeded and the substitute is prevented from entering the field of play, the player being substituted is only cautioned (yellow card) if the delay is excessive.
- The referee may decide not to apply the **ten-second** time limit, including when:
 - a player's injury clearly prevents them from leaving the field within that time
 - a player cannot leave the field at the nearest point on the boundary line due to safety/security reasons

As the purpose of the countdown is to maintain the tempo of the match by preventing time-wasting, if the player being substituted is very close to or crossing the boundary line as the referee reaches the end of the countdown, the substitute should be allowed to enter the field of play.