

TO THE MEMBERS OF FIFA

Circular no. 1310

Zurich, 2 July 2012

SG/mfa/jya

Amendments and corrections to the Futsal Laws of the Game 2012/2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

In collaboration with the subcommittee of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) and the FIFA Refereeing Department, the FIFA Futsal Committee has approved two amendments to the 2011 Futsal Laws of the Game, various instructions and directives issued by IFAB that have a direct impact on the Futsal Laws of the Game and a corrected version of the Laws in the four official FIFA languages. The details of the approved amendments, the corrections made to the Laws and the IFAB decisions are outlined below.

LAWS OF THE GAME AND IFAB DECISIONS

1. Law 1 – The Field of Play

Interpretation of the Futsal Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees:

Current text	New text
	<p><u>Commercial advertising around the field of play</u></p> <p>Upright advertising shall be at least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1m (1yd) from the touch lines, except in the technical area and substitution zone, in which all advertising is prohibited the same distance from the goal line as the depth of the goal net 1m (1yd) from the goal net

Reason

IFAB decision: There should be no upright advertising of any kind within a one-metre area surrounding the goal net to allow an unrestricted view of the goal for match officials.

2. Law 3 – The Number of Players

Until now, the Futsal Laws of the Game (Law 3) allowed a maximum of seven substitutions. Given the growing popularity of futsal and the increasing number of competitions, as well as the usual format of competitions with several matches back-to-back, there was a need to allow a greater number of players per match.

Current text	New text
Official competitions Up to a maximum of seven substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, the confederations or the member associations.	Official competitions Up to a maximum of nine substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, the confederations or the member associations. The rules of the competition must state how many substitutes may be nominated, up to a maximum of nine .

Reason

This modification will help prevent injuries in the long term as a result of playing several matches in a row. Nonetheless, the rules of each competition may establish the number of substitutes.

3. Law 3 – The Number of Players

Interpretation of the Futsal Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees:

Current text	New text
<p>If a named substitute replaces a player before the start of a match without the team officials informing the match officials, the referees, assisted by the assistant referees, must adhere to the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stop play (although not immediately if the advantage can be applied) • they do not caution him, but he must leave the pitch at the first stoppage in the match to complete the substitution procedure, i.e. enter via his team's substitution zone • if they apply the advantage, stop play once the substitute's team is in possession of the ball and restart it with an indirect free kick to 	<p>If a named substitute enters the field of play instead of a named player at the start of the match and the referee or assistant referees are not informed of this change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the referees allow the named substitute to continue the match • no disciplinary sanction is taken against the named substitute • the referee reports the incident to the appropriate authorities

<p>the opposing team from the position of the ball when play was stopped (see Law 13 – Position of free kick)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if they apply the advantage and stop play because the opposing team commits an infringement or because the ball leaves the pitch, they must restart play with an indirect free kick to the opponents of the substitute's team from the position of the ball when play was stopped (see Law 13 – Position of free kick). If necessary, they also take the disciplinary action corresponding to the infringement committed by the opponents of the substitute's team • if they apply the advantage and the substitute or another player of his team commits an infringement punishable with a direct free kick (see Law 13 – Position of free kick), they sanction his team with a direct free kick or a penalty kick. If necessary, they also take the disciplinary action corresponding to the infringement committed 	
--	--

Reason

IFAB decision: It is not rare that a substitution is made prior to the start of the match and after the referee has been informed of the names of the players and substitutes. This is normally due to a player being injured during the warm-up. If the match officials are informed of the substitution, this is permitted, but it is necessary to clarify how to proceed if the match officials are not informed of the change.

4. Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

Current text	New text
stockings	stockings: if tape or similar material is applied externally it must be the same colour as that part of the stocking it is applied to

Reason

IFAB decision: An increasing number of players are using excessive amounts of tape externally on their socks. This can be a multitude of colours and completely changes the look of the sock. This can

cause confusion among the match officials, who may need to look closely at the sock to determine who last played the ball before it went out of play.

5. Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment

Interpretation of the Futsal Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees: Other equipment

Current text	New text
<p>A player may use equipment other than the basic equipment, provided that its sole purpose is to protect him physically and it poses no danger to him or any other player.</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>The use of radio communication systems between players and/or technical staff is not permitted.</p>	<p>A player may use equipment other than the basic equipment, provided that its sole purpose is to protect him physically and it poses no danger to him or any other player.</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>The use of electronic communication systems between players and/or technical staff is not permitted.</p>

Reason

IFAB decision: The current wording “radio communications systems” does not reflect technological developments.

6. Law 7 – The Duration of the Match – Ending the periods of play

Current text	New text
<p>The timekeeper indicates the end of each period with the acoustic signal or whistle. After hearing the timekeeper’s whistle or acoustic signal, one of the referees announces the end of the period or match with his whistle, bearing in mind the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if a kick from the second penalty mark or direct free kick, beginning with the sixth accumulated foul, must be taken or retaken, the period in question is extended until the kick has been taken • if a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the period in question is extended until the kick has been taken <p>If the ball has been kicked towards one of the goals, the referees must wait for the kick to end before the timekeeper may sound the whistle or</p>	<p>The timekeeper indicates the end of each period with the acoustic signal or whistle. After hearing the timekeeper’s whistle or acoustic signal, one of the referees announces the end of the period or match with his whistle, bearing in mind the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if a kick from the second penalty mark or direct free kick, beginning with the sixth accumulated foul, must be taken or retaken, the period in question is extended until the kick has been taken • if a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the period in question is extended until the kick has been taken <p>If the ball has been played towards one of the goals, the referees must wait for the play to end before the timekeeper may sound the whistle or</p>

acoustic signal. The period ends when:

- the ball goes directly into the goal and a goal is scored
- the ball leaves the boundaries of the pitch
- the ball touches the goalkeeper, the goalposts, crossbar or ground, crosses the goal line and a goal is scored
- the defending goalkeeper stops the ball or it rebounds from the goalposts or crossbar and does not cross the goal line

If no infringement has been committed that requires a direct free kick or a penalty kick to be retaken or, during the trajectory of the ball, one of the teams does not commit an infringement that is sanctioned with a direct free kick, beginning with the sixth accumulated foul, or a penalty kick, the period will end when:

- the ball touches any player other than the goalkeeper after it has been kicked at the opposing goal

acoustic signal. The period ends when:

- the ball goes directly into the goal and a goal is scored
- the ball leaves the boundaries of the pitch
- the ball touches the **goalkeeper or another player in the defending team**, the goalposts, crossbar or ground, crosses the goal line and a goal is scored
- the defending goalkeeper **or another player in the defending team touches** the ball or it rebounds from the goalposts or crossbar and does not cross the goal line
- **the ball touches any player in the team that played the ball, except if an indirect free kick was taken and the ball was heading towards the opponent's goal after being touched by the second player**
- **no infringement has been committed that is sanctioned with a direct free kick, an indirect free kick or a penalty kick, and a direct free kick, indirect free kick or penalty kick does not have to be retaken**

If an infringement has been committed during this period that is sanctioned with a direct free kick after the fifth accumulated foul of one of the teams, or sanctioned with a penalty kick, the period ends when:

- the ball is not kicked directly at the goal
- the ball goes directly into the goal and a goal is scored
- the ball leaves the boundaries of the pitch
- the ball hits one or both posts, the crossbar, the goalkeeper or another player in the defending team and a goal is scored
- the ball hits one or both posts, the crossbar, the goalkeeper or another player in the defending team and a goal is not scored
- another infringement sanctioned with a direct free kick, indirect free kick or

	<p>penalty kick is not committed</p> <p>If during this period an infringement sanctioned with a direct free kick is committed before the sixth accumulated foul of one of the teams, the period ends when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ball is not kicked directly at the goal • the ball goes directly into the goal and a goal is scored • the ball leaves the boundaries of the pitch • the ball hits one or both posts, the crossbar, the goalkeeper or another player in the defending team and a goal is scored • the ball hits one or both posts, the crossbar, the goalkeeper or another player in the defending team and a goal is not scored • the ball touches a player in the team taking the kick • another infringement sanctioned with a direct free kick, indirect free kick or penalty kick is not committed <p>If an infringement sanctioned with an indirect free kick is committed during this period, the period ends when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ball goes directly into the goal without being touched by another player during its trajectory or touching one or both of the posts or the cross bar, in which case the goal will not be allowed • the ball leaves the boundaries of the pitch • the ball hits one or both posts or the crossbar after touching the goalkeeper or another player in the defending or attacking team, not the team taking the kick, and a goal is scored • the ball hits one or both posts or the crossbar after touching the goalkeeper or another player in the
--	---

	<p>defending or attacking team, not the team taking the kick, and a goal is not scored</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • another infringement sanctioned with a direct free kick, indirect free kick or penalty kick is not committed
--	---

Reason

The existing text was incongruous, as if the ball touched a defender, not the goalkeeper, and it went into his goal, the goal was not valid; it also did not seem in the spirit of fair play to allow an infringement to be committed and, as it was not sanctioned with a penalty kick or that team had already committed five accumulated fouls, the period or the match was ended, which could in extreme cases lead to offences being committed to alter the result of a match.

7. Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Current text	New text
<p>Dropped ball (...) Infringements and sanctions The ball is dropped again at the same place where it was dropped the first time: (...)</p>	<p>Dropped ball (...) Infringements and sanctions The ball is dropped again at the same place where it was dropped the first time: (...) If the ball enters the goal directly after touching the ground and subsequently being played or touched by a player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the ball is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, a goal kick is awarded • if the ball is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded

Reason

IFAB decision: There have been a number of occasions where goals have been scored from "uncontested" dropped balls. This has put a great deal of pressure on the referee as he has to allow the goal to stand. We then have the unseemly situation where the opposition allows the team to score from the kick-off without any players trying to stop them in order to rebalance the game. However, this does not necessarily happen, and serious problems can arise.

8. Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees: Disciplinary sanctions

(p. 132)

Current text	New text
<p>Disciplinary sanctions</p> <p>There are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, e.g. when a player: deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession</p>	<p>Disciplinary sanctions</p> <p>There are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behaviour is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, e.g. when a player: deliberately handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession</p>

Reason

IFAB decision: It is more important to punish the consequence that the hand ball created rather than the fact that it was blatant. In fact, a hand ball could be inconspicuous but certainly very important. Furthermore, it is difficult to define what is meant by “blatantly”, and therefore to have a uniform interpretation, especially by referees from different countries or confederations with very different experiences. Deleting the word “blatantly”, and providing that if the hand ball prevented the opponent from gaining possession the player must be cautioned, makes the interpretation easier.

9. Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees: Offences committed by goalkeepers (English only)

Current text	New text
<p>A goalkeeper is not permitted to touch the ball inside his own half of the pitch in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if he is in possession of the ball in his own half of the pitch for more than four seconds, whether <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – with his hands inside his penalty area – with his feet in his own half of the pitch – with his hands inside his penalty area and with his feet in his own half of the pitch <p>In all these cases, the referee nearest to the goalkeeper must publicly make the four-</p>	<p>A goalkeeper is not permitted to touch the ball inside his own half of the pitch in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if he is in possession of the ball in his own half of the pitch for more than four seconds, whether <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – with his hands inside his penalty area – with his feet in his own half of the pitch – with his hands inside his penalty area and with his feet in his own half of the pitch <p>In all these cases, the referee nearest to the goalkeeper must publicly make the four-</p>

<p>second count</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if, after playing the ball, he touches it again in his own half of the pitch after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate without an opponent playing or touching it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his body, except if the ball accidentally rebounds off him 	<p>second count</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if, after playing the ball, he touches it again in his own half of the pitch after it has been deliberately played to him by a team-mate without an opponent playing or touching it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his body, except if the ball accidentally rebounds off him
---	--

Reason

Error in the English edition, which is authoritative.

Implementation

The decisions regarding changes to the Laws of the Game are binding for confederations and member associations as from 2 July 2012, but confederations or member associations whose current season has not ended by 2 July may delay the introduction of the adopted alterations to the Laws of the Game until the beginning of their next seasons.

Yours faithfully,

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Jérôme Valcke
Secretary General

cc. FIFA Executive Committee
FIFA Referees Committee
FIFA Futsal Committee
Confederations