



Summary of the 2010 Changes to The Laws of the Game

The International Football Association Board met in Switzerland on March 5-7, 2010. This document summarizes the changes to the FIFA Laws of the Game that they adopted, which are also applicable to AYSO.

Law 1 – The Field of Play

A small wording change limits the possible shapes of the goalposts and crossbar to square, rectangular, round, or elliptical. Previously, the wording could have been interpreted as permitting other shapes.

Law 5 (Interpretations) – The Referee

A clarification requires stretcher-bearers to await a signal by the referee before entering the field.

Law 5 (Interpretations) – The Referee

The Interpretations detail the procedure to be taken by the referee in dealing with injured players. The Interpretations allow for specific cases in which exceptions to the procedure are permitted. An additional case has been added, indicated in italics below.

Exceptions to this ruling are to be made only when:

- a goalkeeper is injured
- a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need immediate attention
- *players from the same team have collided and need immediate attention*
- a severe injury has occurred, e.g. swallowed tongue, concussion, broken leg

Law 14 (Interpretations) – The Penalty Kick

Since 2000, the Laws have permitted feinting by the kicker during a penalty kick, but the referee has had to distinguish legal feinting from unsporting behavior. Guidance is now provided by new text, which reads:

Feinting in the run-up to take a penalty kick to confuse opponents is permitted as part of football. However, feinting to kick the ball once the player has completed his run-up is considered an infringement of Law 14 and an act of unsporting behavior for which the player must be cautioned.

Additionally, USSF, in a memo dated July 12, 2010, characterizes when feinting constitutes illegal deception as follows:

This would include clearly stopping and waiting for a reaction by the goalkeeper before taking the kick or any similar clear hesitation after the run to the ball is complete and before kicking the ball into play. In other words, once the kicker has reached the ball, the kick must be taken without hesitation or delay.

The Fourth Official and Reserve Assistant Referee

The duties of the fourth official have been broadened by generalizing the fourth-to-last bullet in which they are described. Formerly, the text of this bullet specified the fourth official's role in the administration of disciplinary sanctions. It now specifies a broader role:

- He assists the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game. The referee, however, retains the authority to decide on all points connected with play.

Note that the first sentence is virtually identical to one in Law 6 defining the role of the assistant referees.

The amendments to the *Laws of the Game* and decisions of the IFAB become mandatory from 1 July, but for seasons not ended by that date the adopted alterations to the Laws may be delayed until the following season.

The 2010/2011 *Laws of the Game*, AYSO Edition, are available from the AYSO Supply Center.