



To all national football associations  
and confederations

Circular no. 27

# **137<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of The International Football Association Board**

## **Decisions**

Zurich, 23 March 2023  
SEC/2023-C415/bru

Dear Sir or Madam,

The 137<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The International Football Association Board (The IFAB) took place in London on 4 March 2023 and was chaired by Debbie Hewitt, Chair of The FA. The main decisions taken and discussions held at the AGM are outlined below.

In order to ensure that preparations to implement the Law changes can begin without delay and to assist with the translation of the Laws of the Game, all the changes are set out in the enclosed document (Law Changes 2023/24), which is also available at <https://www.theifab.com/de/documents>.

Downloadable versions of the full Laws of the Game 2023/24 book will be available on our website shortly. The latest version of the Laws will also be accessible on the IFAB app (<https://www.theifab.com/logapp/>) as from 1 July 2023. As communicated by FIFA in July 2022, in an effort to help safeguard the environment, printed copies will no longer be distributed to the confederations, national FAs or FIFA match officials. However, hard copies can still be pre-ordered through The IFAB's webshop at <https://shop.theifab.com> as from 23 March, at the slightly increased price of CHF 3.50 per copy (due to higher production costs). To ensure the correct number of copies is produced, please place your order by **23 April 2023** at the latest. Please note that late orders may incur greater production costs and thus the price per copy may be higher.

### **1. Laws of the Game 2023/24**

The members approved various changes and clarifications for the Laws of the Game 2023/24, the exact wording of which can be found in the aforementioned enclosure.

The Laws of the Game 2023/24 will be effective from **1 July 2023**. Competitions starting before that date may implement the changes earlier or delay their implementation until no later than the start of the next competition.

#### **Main Law changes:**

##### **Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match**

The term 'kicks from the penalty mark' is to be replaced by 'penalties (penalty shoot-out)'.

##### **Law 11 – Offside**

The guidelines for distinguishing between 'deliberate play' and 'deflection', as outlined in IFAB circular 26 (27 July 2022), are to be incorporated into Law 11. These guidelines are based on the expectation that a player who is clearly in an offside position should not become onside on all occasions when an opponent moves and touches the ball.

##### **Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct**

Clarification that if the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which involved a defending team player challenging an opponent for the ball (excluding holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball), the same sanction should be issued to the offending player as for an offence which was an attempt to play the ball, i.e. if the offence stops or interferes with a promising attack – no caution (no yellow card); DOGSO offence – caution (yellow card).

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**Law 14 – The Penalty Kick**

The goalkeeper must not behave in a way that unfairly distracts the kicker, e.g. delay the taking of the kick or touch the goalposts, crossbar or goal net.

**Other changes and clarifications**

The other changes and clarifications approved for inclusion in the Laws of the Game 2023/24 are detailed in the aforementioned enclosure:

[http://theifab.com/downloads/lotg\\_changes\\_23\\_24\\_en](http://theifab.com/downloads/lotg_changes_23_24_en).

**2. 'Football Rules – simplified Laws of the Game'**

The IFAB has produced a simplified version of the Laws of the Game, which uses more straightforward language and a simpler structure than the official Laws of the Game book. This new compendium of simplified Laws is called 'Football Rules' has been created to make the Laws easier to understand, especially for young people, potential or newly qualified referees, adults who referee occasionally, players, coaches (including those working towards a coaching qualification), spectators and the media. For more information, visit <https://www.footballrules.com>, where you will also find downloadable versions of the simplified Laws that can be viewed alphabetically or by category.

**3. VAR developments**

The members confirmed that the conversations between match officials (including between the referee and the video assistant referee (VAR)) are not permitted to be broadcast or made public 'live'. They may, however, be recorded and used later for educational and informational purposes.

The members were informed of the decision taken at the previous Annual Business Meeting (ABM) to allow trials to take place in which the referee makes a public announcement after certain VAR-related decisions are taken. The initial trials are limited to international competitions organised by FIFA and, after a successful first test which took place during the FIFA Club World Cup 2023™ in Morocco, FIFA will continue to identify best practices during a number of other FIFA tournaments this year, before other competitions may join the trial for a more global experience of how this might work.

The wearing of cameras and microphones by players remains forbidden, and match officials may only wear cameras as part of an approved IFAB trial.

VAR 'light' trials have been positive, and the VAR protocol has been updated in the Laws of the Game 2023/24 to reflect the fact that VAR 'light' does not involve the use of a replay operator. An additional level of video review system was presented with the intention of making this available across the game worldwide.

Other potential developments were discussed, and it was agreed that, after six years of successful implementation, now is an appropriate time to review the VAR protocol with stakeholders to identify if there are any areas which need improvement.

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#### **4. Concussion/head injuries**

The members received an update on the trials with additional permanent concussion substitutes (<https://www.theifab.com/laws/latest/concussion-substitutes/>).

It was agreed that the trials would continue without imposing a time limit, as more data is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of concussion substitutions.

It was also agreed that trials with temporary concussion substitutes would not take place at this stage but would remain under consideration.

The FA reported on the IFAB-approved trial that bans heading for players aged 12 and under in certain competitions where heading in practice or training is already banned or restricted.

#### **5. Increasing playing time/reducing time wasting**

The members discussed the importance of increasing playing time and reducing time wasting, while remaining mindful of the fact that breaks in play give players recovery time and are part of the game.

FIFA reported on the success of calculating additional time more strictly and accurately during the FIFA World Cup 2022™. **Law 7 – The Duration of the Match** has been amended to emphasise the importance of taking into consideration time lost through goal celebrations.

The members agreed that the stricter approach to calculating additional time should be adopted by competitions worldwide, as it will bring consistency to all competitions and ensure a fair amount of playing time.

#### **6. Respect for match officials, players and team officials**

The members agreed to continue to focus on the behaviour of players and to explore ways to ensure that match officials and other participants are treated with more respect. The members approved the recommendation of the ABM to form a working group consisting of stakeholders from all levels of the game.

The FA reported on the launch of an IFAB-approved trial in grassroots football consisting of referees wearing body cameras to record inappropriate behaviour. It is hoped that this measure will act as a deterrent to such behaviour.

#### **7. Decision-making process and application of the Laws of the Game**

The AGM confirmed that the FIFA Statutes require confederations and national FAs to ensure that matches are played in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

Trials involving adaptations of the Laws of the Game (including the VAR protocol) are not permitted in organised matches without the prior agreement of The IFAB.

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Further details will be published soon and will include the procedure for requesting approval for a potential test or trial of an adaptation to the Laws of the Game.

## **8. Other matters**

The members approved the 2024 budget, changes to the Statutes of The IFAB and the composition of the Football and Technical Advisory Panels (FAP-TAP). A report was provided on the trial of a new approach to offside, and it was agreed that a proposal to replace the throw-in with a kick-in will not be pursued.

The IFAB greatly appreciates the support and many suggestions from across the football world, which help the Laws of the Game to continue to evolve to make football, from grassroots to international level, even fairer, more accessible and more enjoyable.

We will maintain our global consultation so that the Laws of the Game continue to promote and protect fairness and integrity on the field of play.

Thank you for your attention. Please contact us if you have any questions or enquiries.

Yours faithfully, The IFAB



Lukas Brud Secretary

cc: FIFA  
Encl.: as mentioned