

# Laws of the Game 2017/18

Modifications to the Laws by national FAs, including:

- Guidelines for Temporary dismissals (sin bins)
- Guidelines for Return substitutions

The International Football Association Board

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## Laws of the Game 2017/18

### Modifications to the Laws of the Game

The universality of the Laws of the Game means that the game is essentially the same in every part of the world and at every level. As well as creating a 'fair' and safe environment in which the game is played, the Laws should also promote participation and enjoyment.

Historically, The IFAB has allowed national football associations (FAs) some flexibility to modify the 'organisational' Laws for specific categories of football. However, The IFAB strongly believes that national FAs should now be given more options to modify aspects of the way their domestic football is organised if it will benefit football in their own country.

How the game is played and refereed should be the same on every football field in the world from the FIFA World Cup™ final to the smallest village. However, the needs of a country's domestic football should determine how long the game lasts, how many people can take part and how some unfair behaviour is punished.

Consequently, the 131<sup>st</sup> AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 unanimously agreed that national FAs (and confederations and FIFA) should now have the option, if they wish to use it, to modify all or some of the following organisational areas of the Laws of the Game for football for which they are responsible:

***For youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football:***

- size of the field of play
- size, weight and material of the ball
- width between the goalposts and height of the crossbar from the ground
- duration of the two (equal) halves of the game (and 2 equal halves of extra time)
- the use of return substitutes
- the use of temporary dismissals (sin bins) for some/all cautions (YCs)

***For any level except competitions involving the 1<sup>st</sup> team of clubs in the top division or 'A' international teams:***

- the number of substitutions each team is permitted to use up to a maximum of 5

In addition, to allow national FAs further flexibility to benefit and develop their domestic football, The IFAB AGM approved the following changes relating to 'categories' of football:

- Women's football is no longer a separate category and now has the same status as Men's football
- the age limits for youth and veterans have been removed – national FAs, confederations and FIFA have the flexibility to decide the age restrictions for these categories

- each national FA will determine which competitions at the lowest levels of football are designated as 'grassroots' football

National FAs have the flexibility to use different modifications for different competitions - there is no requirement to apply all of them to every competition. However, **no other modifications are allowed.**

National FAs are asked to inform The IFAB of their use of these modifications, and at which levels, as this information, and especially the reason(s) why the modifications are being used, may identify development ideas/strategies which The IFAB can share to assist the development of football in other national FAs. Please send details to: [info@theifab.com](mailto:info@theifab.com)

The IFAB would also be very interested to hear about other potential modification of the Laws of the Game which could increase participation, make football more attractive and promote its worldwide development.

## **Guidelines for Temporary dismissals (sin bins)**

The 131<sup>st</sup> AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 approved the use of temporary dismissals (sin bins) for all or some cautions/yellow cards (YCs) in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the approval of the competition's national FA, confederation or FIFA, whichever is appropriate.

Reference to temporary dismissals is found in the **Laws of the Game 2017/18**:

### **Law 5 – The Referee (Powers and duties):**

#### **Disciplinary action**

The referee:

- has the power to show yellow or red cards and, where competition rules permit, temporarily dismiss a player, from entering the field at the start of the match until after the match has ended, including during the half-time interval, extra time and kicks from the penalty mark

A temporary dismissal is when a player commits a cautionable (YC) offence and is punished by an immediate 'suspension' from participating in the next part of that match. The philosophy is that an 'instant punishment' can have a significant and immediate positive influence on the behaviour of the offending player and, potentially, the player's team.

The national FA, confederation or FIFA, should approve (for publication in the competition rules) a temporary dismissal protocol within the following guidelines:

#### **Players only**

- Temporary dismissals apply to all players (including goalkeepers) but not for cautionable offences (YCs) committed by a substitute or substituted player

#### **Referee's signal**

- The referee will indicate a temporary dismissal by showing a yellow card (YC) and then clearly pointing with both arms to the temporary dismissal area (usually the player's technical area)

#### **The temporary dismissal period**

- The length of the temporary dismissal is the same for all offences
- The length of the temporary dismissal should be between 10-15% of the total playing time (e.g. 10 minutes in a 90-minute match; 8 minutes in an 80-minute match)
- The temporary dismissal period begins when play restarts after the player has left the field of play

- The referee should include in the temporary dismissal period any time 'lost' for a stoppage for which 'additional time' will be allowed at the end of the half (e.g. substitution, injury etc...)
- Competitions must decide who will help the referee time the dismissal period – it could be the responsibility of a delegate, 4<sup>th</sup> official or neutral assistant referee; conversely it could be a team official
- Once the temporary dismissal period has been completed, the player can return from the touchline with the referee's permission, which can be given while the ball is in play
- The referee has the final decision as to when the player can return
- A temporarily dismissed player can not be substituted until the end of the temporary dismissal period (but not if it is the player's 2<sup>nd</sup> temporary dismissal or the team has used all its permitted substitutes)
- If a temporary dismissal period has not been completed at the end of the first half (or the end of the second half when extra time is to be played) the remaining part of the temporary dismissal period is served from the start of the second half (start of extra time)
- A player who is still serving a temporary dismissal at the end of the match is permitted to take part in Kicks from the Penalty Mark (penalties)

### **Temporary dismissal area**

- A temporarily dismissed player should remain within the technical area (where one exists) or with the team's coach/technical staff, unless 'warming up' (under the same conditions as a substitute)

### **Offences before/during/after a temporary dismissal**

- A temporarily dismissed player who commits a cautionable (YC) or sending-off (RC) offence during their temporary dismissal period will take no further part in the match and may not be replaced or substituted

### **Further disciplinary action**

- Competitions/national FAs will decide if temporary dismissals must be reported to the appropriate authorities and whether any further disciplinary action may be taken e.g. suspension for accumulating a number of temporary dismissals, as with cautions (YCs)

## **Temporary dismissal systems**

A competition may use one of the following temporary dismissal systems:

- System A - for all cautions (YCs)
- System B - for some but not all cautions (YC)

### **System A – temporary dismissal for all cautions (YCs)**

- All cautions (YCs) are punished with a temporary dismissal
- A player who commits a 2<sup>nd</sup> caution (YC) in the same match:
  - will receive a second temporary dismissal and then takes no further part in the match
  - may be replaced by a substitute at the end of the second temporary dismissal period if the player's team has not used its maximum number of substitutes (*this is because the team has already been 'punished' by playing without that player for 2 x temporary dismissal periods*)

### **System B – temporary dismissal for some but not all cautions (YCs)\***

- A pre-defined list of cautionable (YC) offences will be punished by a temporary dismissal
- All other cautionable offences are punished with a caution (YC)
- A player who has been temporarily dismissed and then receives a caution (YC) continues playing
- A player who has received a caution (YC) and then receives a temporary dismissal can continue playing after the end of the temporary dismissal period
- A player who receives a second temporary dismissal in the same match will serve the temporary dismissal and then takes no further part in the match. The player may be replaced by a substitute at the end of the second temporary dismissal period if the player's team has not used its maximum number of substitutes
- A player who receives a second caution (YC) in the same match will be sent off and takes no further part in the match and may not be replaced/substituted

*\*Some competitions may find it valuable to use temporary dismissals only for cautions (YCs) for offence relating to 'inappropriate' behaviour, e.g.*

- *Simulation*
- *Deliberately delayed the opposing team's restart of the match*
- *Dissent or verbal gestures*
- *Stopping a promising attack by holding, pulling, pushing or handball*
- *Kicker illegally feinting at a penalty kick*

## **Frequently asked questions about temporary dismissals**

### **What offences do temporary dismissals apply to?**

- Temporary dismissals are only for cautions (YCs).
- Competitions may use temporary dismissals for all YCs or just some (usually those relating to unfair behaviour) – see *System B (above)*

## Who do temporary dismissals apply to?

- Temporary dismissals only apply to players (including goalkeepers) – they are not used for substitutes, substituted players or team officials

## Are temporarily dismissals reported to the appropriate authority?

- The national FA will decide if temporary dismissals must be reported after the match and if any further action results e.g. suspension for a number of temporary dismissals (as with YCs)

## How does the referee signal a temporary dismissal?

- The referee signals a temporary dismissal by showing the yellow card (YC) and then clearly pointing with both arms to the temporary dismissal area (usually the player's technical area)

## How long does the temporary dismissal last?

- The temporary dismissal period:
  - is the same for all offences
  - should be between 10-15% of the total playing time (e.g. 10 minutes in a 90-minute match; 8 minutes in an 80-minute match)
  - begins when play restarts after the player has left the field of play
  - will include any time 'lost' for a stoppage for which 'additional time' will be allowed at the end of the half
- Competitions must decide who will help the referee time the dismissal period e.g. delegate, 4<sup>th</sup> official or neutral assistant referee; conversely it could be a team official.

## What happens if the half ends and the temporary dismissal period has not been completed?

- If a player's temporary dismissal period is not over at the end of the first half, the remaining time is served from the start of the second half (this is the same at the end of the match if extra time is to be played)
- If a player's temporary dismissal period is not over at the end of the match, the player is permitted to take part in Kicks from the Penalty Mark (penalties)

## Where does the temporarily dismissed player go?

- A temporarily dismissed player should stay in the team's technical area; if there is no technical area the player should stay with the team's coach/technical staff (unless warming up)

## Can a temporarily dismissed player warm up?

- For reasons of injury prevention, a temporarily dismissed player is allowed to warm up as if he/she were a substitute

## When can the temporarily dismissed player return?

- Once the temporary dismissal period has been completed, the player can return from the touchline with the referee's permission, which can be while the ball is in play

## Can a temporarily dismissed player be substituted?

- A temporarily dismissed player can only be substituted at the end of their temporarily dismissal period. However, he/she can not be substituted if:
  - it is the player's second temporary dismissal
  - the team has already used all its permitted substitutes

## What happens if a temporarily dismissed player commits another offence during a temporary dismissal?

- A temporarily dismissed player who commits a caution (YC) or sending-off/red card (RC) offence during their temporary dismissal period is not allowed to play again in the match and may not be replaced or substituted

## Guidelines for return substitutes

Following approval at the 131<sup>st</sup> AGM of The IFAB held in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 The Laws of the Game now permit the use of return substitutes in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the approval of the competition's national FA, confederation or FIFA, whichever is appropriate.

Reference to temporary dismissals is found in the **Laws of the Game 2017/18**:

**Law 4 – The Players** (Number of substitutions):

### Return substitutes

*The use of return substitutions is only permitted in youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football, subject to the agreement of the national football association, confederation or FIFA.*

A 'return substitute' is a player who has already played in the match and has been substituted (a substituted player) and later in the match returns to play by replacing another player.

Apart from the dispensation for a substituted player to return to play in the match, the provisions of Law 3 and the Laws of the Game apply to return substitutes. In particular, the substitution procedure outlined in Law 3 must be followed.

## Frequently asked questions about return substitutes

**How many times can a player be a return substitute in a match?**

- There is no limit to the number of times a player can be a return substitute

**Does the game need to be stopped for a return substitution to take place?**

- All the requirements of the substitution procedure must be followed:
  - play must be stopped
  - the referee must give permission for the substitution to take place
  - the procedure is completed when the player being substituted has left the field and the (return) substitute has entered the field

**Can a return substitution be made during kicks from the penalty mark?**

- The Laws state that only players on the field of play at the end of the match (unless off injured etc.) can take part in kicks from the penalty mark (penalties) so no substitutions are permitted, except for a goalkeeper who is unable to take part

**Can a player who has been sent off still be a return substitute?**

- Once a player has been sent off he/she can not play in the rest of the match