



2020 Law changes

Explanation for NWSF Clubs

Kick-Off - Law 8

- The team that wins the toss can now choose to take the kick-off or which goal to attack (previously they only had the choice of which goal to attack)

Goal Kick - Law 16

- The ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played before leaving the penalty area
- Attackers need to be outside the penalty area when the kick is taken. If not, and they get involved, then the goal kick is re-taken.

Free Kicks - Law 13

- When a defensive wall is formed – defined as three or more defenders – the attackers must remain 1m away from the wall. If they are within this when the kick is taken, they'll be penalised with an indirect free kick.
- Free kicks in the penalty area are now in play once the kick is taken (same as goal kicks)

Substitutes / Interchange - Law 3

- A player who is being substituted must leave the field by the nearest point on the touchline/goal line (unless the referee indicates the player can leave quickly/immediately at the halfway line or a different point because of safety, injury etc.)
- The player coming on must still be at halfway and must not enter the field until the substituted player has left.

Team Officials - Laws 5 & 12

- A team official guilty of misconduct will be shown a YC (caution) or RC (sending-off); if the offender cannot be identified, the senior coach who is in the technical area at the time will receive the YC/RC

Dropped ball - Laws 8 & 9

- A dropped ball restart will still occur if play is stopped without a foul occurring while the ball is in play.
- A dropped ball restart will now also take place if the ball hits the referee and:
 - Team possession changes; or
 - A goal is scored; or
 - A promising attack starts
- The ball is now dropped to the team that had possession, or if it's in the penalty area, it is dropped to the goal keeper. Dropped balls are no longer contested

Handball - Law 12

- Deliberate handball remains an offence
- The following 'handball' situations, even if accidental, will be a free kick:
 - The ball goes into the goal after touching an attacking player's hand/arm
 - A player gains control/possession of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then scores, or creates a goal-scoring opportunity
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm which has made their body unnaturally bigger
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm when it is above their shoulder (unless the player has deliberately played the ball which then touches their hand/arm)
- The following will not usually be a free kick, unless they are one of the above situations:
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm directly from their own head/body/foot or the head/body/foot of another player who is close/near
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm which is close to their body and has not made their body unnaturally bigger
 - If a player is falling and the ball touches their hand/arm when it is between their body and the ground to support the body (but not extended to make the body bigger)
 - If the goalkeeper attempts to 'clear' (release into play) a throw-in or deliberate kick from a team-mate but the 'clearance' fails, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball

More detail, some other minor changes, and explanation on the thinking behind each change can be found at <https://www.the-ra.org/news/ifab-law-changes-2019-2020>