

# FA Learning

## Advice on the Application of the Laws of the Game

2006

## **Advice on the Application of the Laws of the Game (FA England June 2006)**

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## **FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In the early stages of the development of the game in countries throughout the world, it was natural that, in matters concerning interpretation of Laws, the advice of the four British Associations should be sought.

It seemed equally sensible that the United Kingdom, where the game had become established, should exert a strong influence in the control of the Laws of the Game.

The Laws were few in number and quite simply stated, but around them many practices (which were not described in the Laws of the Game) had become established. Some things were unacceptable, because they offended a traditional sense of sportsmanship. Other things were permitted because they had become accepted as part of the game.

It is, therefore, regrettable that some differences in the interpretation of the Laws of the Game have developed over the years.

The International FA Board is of the opinion that the Laws should be kept as simple and as straightforward as possible and that differences of application should be resolved by "rulings or decisions", rather than by further definitions of Law.

The International FA Board consists of the four British Associations and FIFA. It meets annually and its decisions are binding on all National Associations. No alterations to the Laws of the Game may be made by any Association until they have been passed by the Board.

All interpretations of the Laws of the Game are the responsibility solely of the International FA Board.

In this context, FIFA alone has the specific duty to communicate all relevant amendments and/or decisions to the National Associations affiliated to FIFA.

The International FA Board has reminded all National Associations that it is their duty to ensure the strict application of the Laws of the Game by referees and players.

The Council of The Football Association has decided that in England, instructions regarding the Laws of the Game will be issued only by The Football Association.

Consistent Law interpretation and application must be achieved. It is hoped that this booklet will assist towards that end.

### Male and Female

References to the male gender in this booklet in respect of referees, assistant referees, players and officials are for simplification and apply to both males and females.

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## **EXPLANATIONS AND GUIDELINES ON THE LAWS OF THE GAME**

### **LAW 1- The Field of Play**

A referee should visit the ground in good time before a match to see that everything is in order. If through bad weather or negligence the state of the ground is such that it may endanger the players, he should refuse to sanction play. If the lines are not properly marked, he should see that, if time allows, it is done before the start of the match.

He should also examine the goal nets before every match and ensure that they are properly pegged down and that they are intact.

#### Field Surface

Matches may be played on natural or artificial surfaces, according to the rules of the competition.

#### Technical Areas

Where a technical area exists, it must meet the requirements approved by the International FA Board.

#### Goalpost Safety

It is the responsibility of the match referee to point out to the participating clubs or pitch users before a game that any metal cup hooks on either the goalposts or crossbar could constitute a danger. This could constitute finger entrapment due to the wearing of a ring or create severe neck injuries due to other jewellery being worn such as earrings or necklaces. Whilst the Laws of the Game clearly state that jewellery should not be worn during any part of a match, such dangers could also exist prior to, or immediately after matches, where nets need to be fitted or removed by any user or club personnel.

If both teams are prepared to play, having had this fact pointed out to them, then it is The FA's view that the referee can be considered to have done as much as might be reasonable in the circumstances to the relevant League and County FA.

### **LAW 2 - The Ball**

Unless a Competition has specifically chosen to require the use of a ball with FIFA logos, to show its higher quality, referees should accept for use any ball satisfying the normal requirements of Law 2.

### **LAW 3 - The Number of Players**

#### (1) Substitutes

Players sent off under Law 12 before play begins may be replaced only by named substitutes. A team may commence a match with eleven players even when a player has been ordered off prior to the kick-off but a replacement substitute cannot be nominated.

Although the Law requires that Clubs inform referees of the names of substitutes before a match, and in friendly matches they have to reach an agreement on the maximum number to be used, referees are advised to be pro-active in obtaining the necessary information from Clubs prior to the game in order to eliminate possible problems later.

Referees are reminded to speed up the substitution procedure so that no unnecessary time is lost when players are exchanged. However, the procedure must be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Law and due allowance made for any time lost during the substitution procedure.

There are variations to the substitute procedure in Futsal, Mini-Soccer and Small sided football.

Substitute players may be nominated as substitutes for two matches taking place at the same time.

(2) Minimum number of players in a team

If a team with only 7 players subsequently has one dismissed from the field of play, that match must be abandoned.

(3) Players leaving the field of play before completion of a game

A player who leaves the field of play for any reason, including being sent off by the referee for misconduct, is permitted to take part in another game which is taking place at the same time, unless the Competition Rules state otherwise.

## **LAW 4 - The Player's Equipment**

(1) Safety

Referees should ensure that players do not wear articles which may constitute a danger to other players or to themselves. Referees should set a good example by removing or taping their own rings and jewellery. Referees, however, should make allowances for religious symbols (e.g. a player of the Sikh religion wearing a Kara in a match), provided that they are not dangerous and that adequate covering be applied as protection.

(2) Undershorts

The wearing of visible undershorts is now authorised, but they must be of the same main colour as the shorts of the team of the player wearing them and must not extend beyond the top of the knee. If a team wears multicoloured shorts, the undershorts must be of the same colour as the main colour. Where Competition Rules permit and a player breaches this aspect of Law, referees are advised to make every attempt to persuade the offending player to co-operate but, if this strategy is not successful, the player may be allowed to participate in the game with the referee reporting the facts to the Competition.

(3) Goalkeepers

Goalkeepers may choose to wear tracksuit trousers, if the state of the field of play or weather conditions render it necessary, provided that Competition Rules permit.

(4) Shirts

Where Competition Rules require shirts to be numbered and any player breaches the Rules, referees are advised to allow the player(s) to participate and later report the facts to the Competition. All shirts must have sleeves.

(5) Footwear

Competition Rules may require referees to examine footwear and/or players' equipment. Referees may do so additionally either during a match or at half-time if they have any reason to doubt their safety.

(6) Advertising

Advertising is permitted on a player's shirt, shorts, socks and footwear subject to individual Competition Rules.

## **LAW 5 - The Referee**

(1) Injury to players or the Referee

A player who has left the field of play for treatment for an injury when he is bleeding from a wound may only return to the field of play after inspection by the referee, neutral assistant referee or the 4th Official, which, through necessity, will normally be during a stoppage of the play and at the touchline. The player is only allowed to return to the field of play on receiving a signal from the referee.

Care needs to be exercised before a seriously injured player is removed from the field of play and referees must continue to be vigilant and err on the side of safety, accepting the advice of those who are medically qualified or claim to have similar skills. There is a particular need for a rapid assessment and action in cases of head injuries. However, in local football, when there are no medically qualified personnel in attendance, professional assistance should be quickly obtained and the advice offered acted upon. Referees are reminded to add the full amount of time lost to the end of each period of play.

Particular attention is drawn to Decision 1 of the International FA Board in relation to the liability of referees, assistant referees and fourth officials.

If a referee becomes incapacitated and an assistant referee replaces him, the "new" referee has the authority to reverse a decision made by his colleague, provided the game has not been restarted.

A club trainer or physiotherapist who has been guilty of misconduct should still be granted permission to enter the field of play to treat an injured player. However, a player sent from the field of play, by a referee, for misconduct, cannot return to the field in any official capacity. Suitable reports must be sent to the appropriate authority.

(2) Calling by a player

It is permissible for a player to call instructions to a player of his own side during a game. This includes calling for the ball. Referees should only penalise such calling where it is done deliberately to delude an opponent.

The resulting free kick is for the referee stopping the game to caution a player for unsporting behaviour.

(3) Team Captain

The captain of a team, although responsible for his team's behaviour, has no special rights.

(4) Use of red and yellow cards

The Law requires referees to use these cards at all levels of the game. The mandatory use of the cards is merely a simple aid for better communication. Referees should not use either card in an aggressive or provocative manner likely to inflame an already emotive situation. Neither should the cards be used in an over-demonstrative manner, which may humiliate a player and perhaps cause him to overreact.

The sequence of action approved by The Football Association and which should be followed is:

- i) State that the player is being cautioned;
- ii) Enquire his name;
- iii) Warn him about his future conduct;
- iv) Show a yellow card as described above.

Obviously, a red card will be used for a dismissal, unless that dismissal is for a 'second caution in the same match', in which case a yellow card will be shown immediately before the red card. However, referees operating at International and some National levels have the option to show red and yellow cards immediately after offences or as above, but only in exceptional circumstances such as to defuse a possible flashpoint or to prevent an act of retaliation. If a player is about to be sent from the field of play for sending off offences 1-6, it is advisable to enquire his name prior to the sending off.

If a player commits either a cautionable or sending off offence during the half time interval or on the field of play after the final whistle, the appropriate card(s) should be shown.

Only a player or substitute player or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card. The Referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions, as from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

If a named substitute commits an act of misconduct, he will be treated as a player, including being shown a yellow card or a red card depending on the offence. If he, at a later stage in the match, commits a further cautionable offence, he shall be sent from the field of play and shown a yellow card followed by a red card. This will apply even if he is acting as an assistant referee.

Although the Law requires a referee to show a yellow card to a player as part of the cautioning procedure, failure to do so does not mean that a caution has not been administered and the player concerned will be dealt with in accordance with the laid-down disciplinary procedures.

#### (5) Referees' powers regarding dismissal of players

A referee's authority permits him to order a player from the field of play.

After dismissal from the field of play the player is expected to leave the playing area, i.e. he is not allowed to sit on the trainer's bench. Club officials will need to make special arrangements for the player to leave the vicinity of the field of play. The referee should not restart the game until the player being sent off has left the field of play. If, when a referee is about to caution a player, and before he has done so, the player commits another offence which merits a caution, the player shall be sent off the field of play. A player sent from the field of play may not take part in the game as an assistant referee.

#### (6) Referees' uniforms

The Council of The Football Association has decided that in all Football Association Cup Competitions, referees and assistant referees must wear traditional plain black shirts, with white collar and cuffs. However, uniforms of other colours may be permitted in some Competitions involving Senior Professional Clubs, details of which are included in the relevant Competition Rules. Also, permission may be granted by The Football Association for match officials in a particular League or Competition to wear a uniform which is a colour other than black. Unless this permission is given, referees must wear the traditional black uniforms described above.

(7) Players felt to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Referees should always exercise extreme care in their choice of words to describe players who may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, especially in connection with drug influence. In such circumstances, the matter should be considered as a team responsibility and suitable attention be drawn to a club official, perhaps suggesting that a player was too ill to continue/participate or seemed to have a problem.

(8) Advantage

If a referee allows play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage, it is important that he should indicate clearly by voice, and the approved arm signal, that he is taking this action. This clause is also designed to ensure that the team offended against does not suffer unfairly if a referee reasonably attempts to invoke advantage but then extraneous factors contrive to immediately nullify the anticipated benefit (e.g. the ball "bobbles" awkwardly; the fouled player trips over his own feet/immediately loses his balance, etc). In the event, however, of the fouled player being allowed the advantage then wasting it as a result of a subsequent error (or a colleague who receives the ball immediately from the advantage loses it, or shoots wide of goal, etc.) then play should not be halted to penalise the original offence. Referees are advised to consider the ability levels of the players, the tempo of the game and the playing conditions before making use of this clause. Sometimes, it may be a greater advantage to the team offended against to have a free kick rather than the opportunity for the game to continue. For example, they may have a team tactic to take advantage from free kicks close to goal in which case, to award a free kick in this vicinity will be beneficial to this team.

The use of advantage does not absolve the referee from the responsibility of dealing with the offending player at the first opportunity, if the offence deserved disciplinary action. Failure to take action often leads to retaliation by the player who was offended against. However, if the offence is going to result in a sending off, then it is not recommended to allow advantage in order to reduce the risk of further misconduct.

(9) Delays, Postponements, Suspensions and Terminations

When considering any of the above possibilities, it is advisable to make a decision only after very careful consideration of all relevant factors. In some circumstances, it will be obvious that the game will not commence or restart. However, in the event of fog, hailstorms, floodlight failure, crowd intrusion or other similar situations, it may be possible to commence or continue the game after a suitable delay. Referees are reminded to communicate regularly with the club officials of both teams in these circumstances and to try to complete/play a game if at all possible provided it is safe to do so.

(10) Record of the Game

Referees are advised not to trust to memory alone in keeping a record of the game; note the time of start and the time at which, if no time has to be allowed for stoppages, half-time and the end of the game will fall due. Assistant referees may be used to confirm the amount of time played. Keep a note of the goals as they are scored.

(11) Outside Interference

Outside interference may be defined as anything or anybody other than the players actually partaking in the game at the time, plus the referee. For example, this may be club officials, spectators or animals encroaching onto the field of play. The game must be restarted in accordance with Law 8.

(12) Friendly Games

Referees are not permitted to adopt unapproved variations in the Laws of the Game in pre-season matches including the use of 'sin-bins' for punishment of misconduct. The punishment of cautions and sendings off must still apply when offences requiring these actions are committed.

The Laws of the Game must be applied correctly and consistently in all matches. Match officials should always consider sensible preventative measures to ensure the safety and co-operation of players. They will also benefit from adopting appropriate player management skills.

### **LAW 7 - The Duration of the Match**

A referee has no power to set aside the Rules of Cup and other Competitions where the time to be played is specified. It is essential that referees are aware of precise details of Competition Rules, e.g. number of substitutions permitted to be nominated, method of deciding the outcome of drawn matches.

Normal period means 90 minutes, or if a shorter period is mutually agreed upon and is permissible under the Rules of the Competition, the period should be divided in equal halves.

Referees officiating in Small Sided games, Futsal, Mini Soccer, Girls' and Women's and Veterans football should check the Competition Rules to ensure they are fully familiar with the requirements applicable in these games.

### **LAW 8 - The Start and Restart of Play**

(1) Kick-off

The ball must be kicked forward into the opponents' half of the field of play at the kick-off and a goal may only be scored against the opponents.

(2) Restarting by a dropped ball

Occasions do occur in a game when a player having fallen to the ground, has the ball locked between his feet and legs. To dispossess him of the ball may not only be difficult, but fraught with danger of injury. The referee may, therefore, feel justified in halting play and restarting by dropping the ball appropriately, in accordance with the relevant Law. Similarly, there will be occasions when the goalkeeper, in taking possession of the ball, is injured and no offence has occurred. In this situation, the welfare and safety of the goalkeeper is paramount and the game should be stopped immediately. Once the goalkeeper, or his replacement, is ready to take part in the game, the ball must be dropped by the referee in accordance with Law. In keeping with the spirit of the game, referees should ensure that no unfair advantage accrues in favour of either team. Referees are reminded that it is not essential to have a player from either side present at the dropping of the ball.

As a means of restarting the game after a temporary suspension, referees should not bounce the ball or throw it in the air. The ball should simply be released from no higher than waist level and allowed to fall to the ground.

## **LAW 10 - The Method of Scoring**

Referees are reminded that it is not permitted to set aside the decisions of International FA Board in order to determine the winner of a match.

## **LAW 11 - Offside**

Whether a player commits an offside offence, or not, is determined by his position at the moment the ball is touched or played by a member of his own team **AND** whether he is (in the opinion of the referee) involved in active play by interfering with play, or interfering with an opponent, or gaining an advantage by being in that position. The fact that the ball later strikes an opponent does not negate the original offside. If any doubt exists then the referee should decide in favour of the attacker and allow the play to continue but should remember that football is played with the head, body and feet. If these are nearer the opponents' goal line, there is a potential advantage. There is no advantage to be gained if only the arms are in advance of the opponent.

A player not in an offside position at the moment the ball is touched or played by a member of his own team, but in an offside position when he receives the ball cannot be given offside.

If an attacking player kicks the ball directly into goal when a colleague is in an offside position but not involved in the active play, nor gaining an advantage by being in that position, no offence is committed and a goal is awarded. However, if the ball rebounds from the crossbar or goalpost to this player and he plays or touches the ball, he has gained an advantage and an offence has been committed. He should then be punished by the award of an indirect free kick against his team from where the offence occurred. If an attacking player indicates by gesture that he is not involved in the active play but subsequently gains an advantage, he must be penalised, even though this will mean a delayed flag signal by an assistant referee and/or a delayed whistle signal from a referee.

A player in an offside position may be penalised before playing or touching the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, no other teammate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball. If an opponent becomes involved in the play and if, in the opinion of the referee, there is potential for physical contact, the player in an offside position shall be penalised for interfering with an opponent.

Referees are reminded that the restart of the game will be with an indirect free kick taken from the initial place where the player was adjudged to be in an offside position.

## **LAW 12 - Fouls and Misconduct**

Undoubtedly, the application of Law 12, dealing as it does with fouls and misconduct, is of primary importance in controlling a game. So much depends upon the referee's instantaneous judgement and his determination to administer the Law without fear or favour.

The following are aspects of this Law to which particular attention is drawn:

### (1) Handling the ball

Law 12 is quite emphatic that it is only the deliberate offence which shall be penalised. Occasions do arise where it is impossible for a player to avoid handling the ball, as he has insufficient time to withdraw his hand or arm before the ball strikes him. Such non-deliberate handling should not be penalised no matter where it occurs on the field. The definition of 'hand' in the context of this Law includes the whole of the hand and arm.

## (2) Unsporting behaviour

Whilst it is not usual for a player to be cautioned under the heading of unsporting behaviour for handling the ball or holding an opponent, there are exceptional circumstances in which, in addition, to imposing the customary penalty, the referee must caution a player who commits one or other of those offences:

- when the player, in order to prevent an opponent from gaining possession of the ball and because he is unable to play it in any other way, stops it with one, or both hands, punches it or catches it
- when the player, in order to prevent an opponent from making progress towards goal by holding him or by pulling his shirt, unless this clearly denies an obvious goal or goal-scoring opportunity, shall be cautioned for unsporting behaviour as he has taken away the advantage from the opponent
- if a player leans on the shoulders of another player of his own team in order to head the ball, the referee shall stop the game, caution the player for unsporting behaviour and award an indirect free kick to the opposing side.

## (3) Denying goal-scoring opportunities

If a player who is moving towards the opposing team's goal is denied an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by unlawful means, or, if in the same circumstances, the ball is deliberately handled by a player other than a goalkeeper in his own penalty area (i.e. an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick), thus denying the attacking player's team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the offending player shall be sent off the field of play, in accordance with Law 12 (S4) (S5).

In the event of unfair impeding without any body contact and an obvious goal-scoring opportunity is denied, the restart will be by an indirect free kick and the offending player must be sent from the field of play.

These circumstances are most likely to arise when one of the teams, from a defensive position, sets up a favourable attacking position by quickly transferring the ball from one end of the field of play to the other. However, referees are reminded that **obvious** is the key word in this context. Therefore, factors to consider before making a judgement about such an offence are the distance from the goal, the direction that the attacking player is moving and the number of defenders that are in positions to make a challenge on the attacking player.

If the ball is deliberately kicked directly towards his own goalkeeper by a colleague and the goalkeeper prevents an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by handling the ball, the restart will be an indirect free kick from where the offence occurred notwithstanding the special circumstances covered in Law 8.

Further action could be taken against the goalkeeper if it was felt that he knew that without his illegal intervention, the ball would enter the goal. His action in intervening could be construed as unsporting behaviour by arguing that he could have chosen not to handle the ball deliberately but rather use another part of his body to change the path of the ball.

(4) Unfair play by a Goalkeeper

If the goalkeeper either strikes an opponent by throwing the ball at him or pushes him with the ball while still holding it, the referee shall award a penalty kick if the offence took place within the penalty area when the ball is in play.

(5) Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game

It is necessary to give serious attention to obvious infringements of Law 12. Referees should also be alert to persistent foul play. The fouls may be petty and less obvious in character; however, the player shall be cautioned if he persistently infringes the Laws of the Game. It is not possible to define persistence in terms of the actual number of fouls committed by a player but, when an offender commits three or four penal offences in close succession, the possibility of a caution under Law 12 [C3] must be considered. Equally, a similar number of offences spread over the duration of a game may be perceived differently. Action by the referee may avoid retaliation from a victim who feels that he has received no protection from the referee. In order to monitor possible persistent offenders, referees need to concentrate and memorise such an offender probably by making a mental note of his shirt number or by any personal characteristics that will aid accurate recall.

(6) Unfair Impeding

A player having the ball under his control and within playing distance (i.e. the distance in which the player covers the ball for tactical reasons), in order to avoid it being played by an opponent is not guilty of an offence unless he uses his arm or body to hold the opponent, in which case a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Any player who unfairly impedes the progress of an opponent by crossing directly in front of him or running between him and the ball, or intervening so as to form an obstacle with the aim of delaying his advance, must be punished with the award of an indirect free kick in favour of the opposing team.

However, any player who unfairly impedes the progress of an opponent by physical contact, whether by using his hand, his arm, his leg, or any other part of his body, shall be penalised by the award of a direct free kick to the opposing team, or by a penalty kick, if the offence was committed within his penalty area. This constitutes holding an opponent and is, therefore, a penal offence.

If a player positions his arms to impede an opponent and steps from one side to the other, moving his arms up and down to delay his opponent, forcing him to change course, but does not make body contact, the referee may deem this to be unsporting behaviour and award an indirect free kick and also caution the offender.

During any match, in the ordinary course of play, there are many occasions when a player will come between an opponent and the ball but, in the majority of such instances, this is quite natural and fair. He is intent upon playing the ball and is entitled to make every legitimate move to obtain or retain possession of it. Provided that the ball is within playing distance, the player may interpose his body between the opponent and the ball in a feint to play at it and yet allow it to go to a colleague. This is legitimate.

It is when the ball is not within playing distance of a player and when he is not making any attempt to play the ball that this offence may occur. But it is strongly emphasised that the offence must be deliberate. It is quite possible for a player, when not playing the ball, to be in the path of an opponent and yet not be impeding.

A simple rule of thumb to enable referees to differentiate between a penal and a technical offence in this context is that when there is body contact it is a holding offence and, therefore, a direct free kick must be awarded but when there is no body contact an indirect free kick will be the correct restart.

### (7) Players and officials

Coaching of players during a game is permitted. However, coaching must be from within the confines of the technical area, where such an area is provided.

In the higher echelons of the game, where such a technical area is recognised, the latter is defined in terms of the length of the bench, plus one metre at each side of the bench and the area in front of the bench, up to one metre distant from and parallel to the touchline. Competition Rules must show how many persons may be in the technical area.

Where no such area is provided, referees should exercise common sense and allow the passing on of tactical instructions. Only if the coaching is not carried out in a responsible manner should a referee take action and report the misconduct.

It is important that players, coaches, managers and officials in charge of teams should all co-operate in stamping out acts which bring the game into disrepute.

### (8) Time wasting

There is sometimes too much time wasting in taking free kicks, goal kicks and throw-ins, especially when one team is winning and is endeavouring to retain that lead. It is important to appreciate the difference between time wasting and time consuming. Any time lost shall, in such circumstances, be meticulously allowed.

A few examples of time wasting are as follows:

- The ball, having been placed in position for a free kick, is sometimes kicked away to allow the defending team's players to take up defensive positions.
- An opponent may stand over the ball, in order to delay the taking of a free kick.
- In both of these cases the offending players shall be cautioned under Law 12 (C4).
- Sometimes, a player or players may refuse to retire the required distance at the taking of a free kick, a corner kick or throw-in.
- Referees should be alert to players who claim a throw-in and take possession of the ball, walking away with it and only passing it to the thrower when they and the players of their own side have taken up an advantageous position.

Time consuming is not an offence against the Laws of the Game. An example of this is the act of passing the ball between the goalkeeper and a colleague, when an opponent comes in to challenge. As long as the ball is in play and opponents have a chance of possession, no offence against the Laws is committed.

Referees are advised to be seen to be managing situations when there are attempts to delay a restart by speaking in an obvious manner to the player[s] concerned and, if they repeat such actions, a caution will be appropriate.

### (9) Playing dangerously

Football is a game where body contact occurs and the Laws are framed so that the players can play without danger to themselves, if their opponents respect both the letter and spirit of the Laws. Each incident must be judged by the referee as it happens and the question of danger rests entirely on his opinion.

(a) The "Scissors" kick:

This is a clear example of the importance of judging an action according to the situation in which it is performed. A player who kicks or attempts to kick the ball in this way, with no other player near him, cannot be penalised for dangerous play. The same action with a player nearby could be dangerous and would be punished by the award of an indirect free kick. If contact is made, then a direct free kick must be awarded against the offending player.

(b) Playing dangerously close to goalkeepers:

Kicking or attempting to kick the ball whilst it is in the goalkeeper's possession is universally considered to be dangerous; raising the foot to block the ball as he kicks it from his hands is equally dangerous. Attempts to kick the ball powerfully as it is about to come into the goalkeeper's possession are also a common source of danger to goalkeepers. Depending on the degree or intensity of the offender's action, the referee may have to caution or send off the player committing such an offence.

(c) Goalkeepers:

Goalkeepers, when advancing to catch the ball, sometimes raise one leg in an outward direction to keep opposing players at a distance. If an opponent is in close proximity to the goalkeeper, the referee may well consider such action constitutes careless or even reckless play, but if the opponent is further away then it would be deemed dangerous play and be punished accordingly.

(10) Tackling

Fair tackling (e.g. making direct contact with the ball) is permitted as it is a skill similar to passing the ball, shooting for goal, etc. However, if a player makes contact with an opponent before touching the ball, then he must be punished by the award of a direct free kick. Depending on the degree and intensity of the challenge, a player may receive an additional punishment in the form of a caution or a sending off.

(a) Tackling with the foot lifted from the ground:

This may be dangerous, but is not necessarily so. Using the sole of the foot is an effective method of controlling the ball, but a player who lifts his foot should be penalised if the referee considers he is endangering an opponent by doing so. If the player deliberately plays over the ball and makes contact with his opponent's leg, this is a serious foul.

(b) Tackling with two feet together:

The ball acts as a natural "cushion" between the players. If the two-footed tackle is controlled and made from a short distance away, there is no danger to the opponent. If it is an uncontrolled jump at the ball from a distance, the tackle certainly entails a large element of danger to the opponent.

(c) Tackling by sliding:

This tackle is carried out with one or both legs outstretched, and the same considerations as for the two-footed tackle apply. The player tackling in this way, whether or not he may bring his opponent down, should be penalised if he connects with the opponent before the ball.

(d) Tackling which endangers the safety of an opponent

A tackle which is violent with little or no attempt to play the ball and which endangers the safety of an opponent is prohibited and must be sanctioned as serious foul play.

Referees should watch for players who tackle the ball with one foot but trip the opponent with the other foot. In these circumstances, a penal offence has been committed.

(11) Carrying by the goalkeeper

One cannot deviate from the fundamental principle that the goalkeeper should not be prevented and hence forbidden from playing the ball with his feet in his own penalty area. The goalkeeper is, and remains, a player who is entitled to participate fully in the game, including within his own penalty area.

Hence, the following principles of application are valid:

Once he has the ball under control (with his hands), the goalkeeper can take up to the 6 seconds allowed to him, thus

- holding the ball with his hands, or
- letting the ball bounce on the ground, or
- throwing the ball in the air and catching it again.

After having taken 6 seconds, he must release the ball into play.

However, if after having the ball under control (with his hands), the goalkeeper decides to put it on the ground, he loses the rights listed above, thereby revealing his intention to play with his feet. From then on, he can no longer touch the ball with his hands, even if he has taken less than 6 seconds. He must, therefore, release the ball or continue to play it with his feet because he then only has the same rights as the other players.

There will, however, be occasions when a goalkeeper receives the ball at his feet from a pass or throw-in by a colleague and proceeds to dribble the ball into his own penalty area. If he then touches/handles the ball, he must be penalised by the award of an indirect free kick taken from where the offence occurred unless covered by the special circumstance listed in Law 8.

Referees should be aware that some players may try to prevent goalkeepers from releasing the ball into play within the prescribed time and, if this happens, they need to take the necessary action against the offender as specified in Law 12.

(12) Deliberate kicks to the goalkeeper

It is widely believed that the ball has to be passed backwards to the goalkeeper before he commits an offence in the event of him handling the ball. This is not so and the ball may be passed to him from any direction and, if he then handles the ball, he has committed an offence for which an indirect free kick shall be awarded. If a goalkeeper takes control of the ball with his feet from such a kick before dribbling it into the penalty area and then handling the ball, this, too, would constitute an offence. The goalkeeper would be penalised by the award of an indirect free kick to the opposing team from where he handled the ball, notwithstanding the special circumstances in Law 8.

(13) Serious foul play and violent conduct

Football is a bodily contact sport. However, the contest to gain possession of the ball should nonetheless be fair. Where play is vigorous, but fair, the referee must recognise this and allow play to proceed.

Serious foul play and violent conduct are, however, strictly forbidden and the referee must react to them by stringently applying the Laws of the Game.

Players who, in the referee's opinion, are guilty of serious foul play or violent conduct shall be sent off the field of play, even if they have not already been cautioned.

The difference between serious foul play and violent conduct can be defined as follows:

(a) Serious foul play can only occur when the ball is in play and when a player unfairly challenges for the ball against an opponent using excessive force.

(b) Violent conduct occurs when a player is guilty of aggression towards an opponent even if he is not challenging for the ball. The ball can be in or out of play. If the ball is in play he shall be sanctioned with a direct free kick in favour of the team of the player who was attacked, from the place where the offence was committed, or with a penalty kick if it took place within the penalty area. If the ball is out of play, the game shall be resumed at the stage where it was interrupted prior to the offence (throw-in, free kick, etc.).

Moreover, if a player, substitute player or substituted player attacks one of his teammates, the referee, an assistant referee, a spectator, etc., this shall also be considered violent conduct. As mentioned above, this offence can arise when the ball is in or out of play. If the ball is in play, the player shall be penalised by the award of an indirect free kick against his team from the spot where the violent conduct occurred or with a dropped ball taken at the place where the ball was situated at the time of the offence, if this occurred beyond the boundaries of the field of play. If the ball is out of play the game shall be resumed at the stage where it was interrupted prior to the offence (throw-in, free kick, etc.).

Any player, substitute player or substituted player, whether he is within or outside the field of play, whose conduct is unsporting or violent, whether or not it is directed toward an opponent, the referee, an assistant referee, colleague or other person, or who uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures is guilty of an offence and shall be dealt with according to the nature of the offence.

(14) Offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures

The attention of players, managers, coaches, referees and administrators is drawn to increasing concern expressed as a result of problems both on and near football grounds involving the use of offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures. The award of an indirect free kick in these circumstances, without the offending player being sent off, is not permitted in Law.

There are occasional incidents when a player, substitute player or substituted player makes an obscene or offensive gesture towards a match official, another player, a coach or a spectator. If such an action is seen by the referee or reported to him by a neutral assistant referee, the player must be dealt with under this part of Law 12.

Referees are reminded that racist remarks constitute a dismissal offence in accord with Law 12 (S6) and must be punished accordingly.

An increasing number of complaints have been received from members of the public concerning offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures in football and The Football Association expects all concerned in the playing, controlling and organising of matches, at all levels, to make every effort to eradicate these problems. Players, managers, coaches, referees and administrators all have a responsibility in ensuring that the image of the national game is not tarnished either by the use or the acceptance of such language. Referees are reminded to take the necessary and appropriate action when offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures are used.

(15) Celebration of a goal

Referees must endeavour to accelerate the restart of play after a goal has been scored. While it is permissible for a player to demonstrate his joy when a goal has been scored, the demonstration must remain reasonable.

Players will only be cautioned (for unsporting behaviour) if their celebrations are provocative and intended to incite or ridicule opponents or opposing spectators. Players guilty of excessive time wasting whilst celebrating a goal will also be cautioned.

(16) Simultaneous Offences

When the same player commits two offences simultaneously, the more serious offence of the two must be penalised.

(17) Play stopped without separate breach of Law

If play is stopped by reason of a player being ordered from the field for an offence without a separate breach of the Law having been committed, the game shall be resumed by an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing side from the place where the infringement occurred, subject to the overriding conditions imposed in Law 12.

(18) Play stopped to administer a caution or to send off a player

If play is stopped by the referee in order to administer a caution or to send off a player from the field of play, the game must be restarted from where the offence occurred and not from where the play was taking place at the time of the offence.

(19) Simulation

The Law requires a referee to caution for unsporting behaviour any player where simulating action is intended to deceive him. However, a referee should be 100% certain that a player has simulated (feigned) an unfair challenge before cautioning him for unsporting behaviour. He must be convinced that there has been no physical contact whatsoever by the player challenging him for the ball.

If, however, the referee is not totally sure but there is a hint of simulation, the referee is advised to take the earliest opportunity to be seen to speak clearly to the player(s) involved. It is not recommended that a referee makes any gesture with arm or hand as this may inflame the situation.

Players who clearly simulate injury in order to deceive the referee must also be dealt with under Law 12, International Board Decision No. 5.

### **LAW 13 - Free Kicks**

At the taking of free kicks, no limitation is imposed on the position of the players of the defending team, except that they shall be at least 9.15 metres/10 yards from the ball, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts. Such free kick situations often produce tactical manoeuvres between attackers and defenders. It is, therefore, considered that "feints" and similar tactics by the players of the team awarded the kick, designed to deceive opponents, are just as acceptable as they would be in the normal course of play.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. It is, therefore, permissible for a player to 'flick' the ball with one or both feet into the air to restart the play. However, the player taking the kick may not touch or play the ball a second time until it has touched or been played by another player.

In order to recognise the spirit of the Law relating to free kicks, referees and players are reminded that there must be no undue delay in allowing the non-offending side to take a free kick.

Law 13 does not justify a referee allowing the offending side an opportunity to consolidate its defence and it does not absolve him from taking action against a player who intentionally prevents the free kick from being taken quickly, or who does not at once retire to the correct distance. Such a player commits an offence. If, when a free kick is being taken, any of the players dance about or gesticulate in a way calculated to distract their opponents, it shall be deemed unsporting behaviour for which the offender(s) shall be cautioned.

While the Law states that all opposing players should retire at a distance of at least 9.15 metres/10 yards from the ball, the referee has discretion to disregard this requirement to enable a free kick to be taken quickly. A player who does not retire to the correct distance when a free kick is about to be taken, or who stands in front of the ball when a free kick has been given against his team, in order to delay the restart and to allow his team to organise the defensive wall, must be cautioned under the appropriate section of Law 12 as must a player who runs out of a defensive 'wall' before the ball is in play.

Referees are reminded that the Law allows a defending side, having been awarded a free kick in its own goal area, to take a free kick from any point within the goal area in which the kick has been awarded. This avoids penalising the offended side by making them take free kicks from restricted positions close to the goalposts or netting.

This part of Law 13 should be borne in mind when reading any reference to free kicks in this document.

### **LAW 14 - The Penalty Kick**

A player taking a penalty kick may try to deceive the goalkeeper as to his intentions and such action is allowed. This is quite different from "trickery", when the player stops his kicking action in order to make the goalkeeper move in one direction and then kicks it to the other. This is quite contrary to the spirit of the Laws and the player at fault should be cautioned for unsporting behaviour and the kick retaken if a goal has resulted. If the ball does not enter the goal, the referee stops play and restarts the match with an indirect free kick to the defending team from the place where the infringement occurred.

If time is extended before half time or at the end of the match to allow for a penalty kick to be taken, or for one to be retaken, a goal shall not be disallowed if, before passing the goalposts under the crossbar, the ball touches one of the two goalposts, or the crossbar, or goalkeeper, or a combination of these, providing no infringement has been committed.

Referees have many responsibilities in Law having awarded a penalty kick. It is advisable not to allow the restart until all aspects of the Law have been checked. Having established that all the players are on the field of play and that the kicker is identified, it may be helpful to walk past the players close to the penalty area line and the 9.15m arc to ensure they are complying with Law and to remind them not to move until the ball is in play. A word with the goalkeeper is also advisable to seek his co-operation in remaining on the goal line between the goal posts until the ball is kicked and moves. It is then important to take up a position to observe all the players involved before indicating that the kick is taken.

## **LAW 15 - The Throw-in**

Law 15 states, "the thrower shall deliver the ball from behind and over his head". This phrase does not mean that the ball must leave the hands from an overhead position. A natural throwing movement starting from behind and over the head will usually result in the ball leaving the hands when they are in front of the vertical plane of the body. The throwing movement must be continued to the point of release. The side taking the throw-in should be able to take advantage of a quick restart of the game, provided that it is in accordance with the conditions of Law 15.

Referees and assistant referees are advised, through effective communication, to help players to take throw-ins from the correct places. If, however, this guidance is not followed, the referee must award a throw-in to the opposing team.

## **PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE THE WINNER OF A MATCH**

### **Kicks from the Penalty Mark**

Referees are reminded of the procedure laid down in the Laws of the Game and of any Competition Rules regarding Kicks from the Penalty Mark. The provisions set out below must be rigorously applied.

### **Checklist for Referees**

1. It is very important that the referee organises the taking of kicks from the penalty mark correctly. Make sure you fully understand the instructions.
2. If, at the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, the light fails badly and the kicks, therefore, cannot be completed, the result shall be decided by the tossing of a coin or the drawing of lots.
3. When all the players in the team have taken a kick from the penalty mark, it is not necessary that they follow the same order in taking their second kick as they had for the first series of kicks.
4. A substitute who has not taken part in the match, including extra time where it is played, may not take part in kicks from the penalty mark, except to replace an injured goalkeeper.
5. If, at the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, or when extended time is being allowed for a penalty kick to be taken in normal playing time, the ball strikes the goalpost or crossbar, strikes the goalkeeper and enters the goal, a goal shall be awarded.

## **SIGNALS BY THE REFEREE AND ASSISTANT REFEREES**

The signals reproduced in "The Laws of Association Football" have been approved by the International FA Board for use by registered referees of affiliated National Associations. The signals are simple, universally in use and well understood. The following guidelines offer helpful advice to referees:

1. While it is not the duty of the referee to explain or mime any offence that has caused him to give a particular decision, there are times when a simple gesture or word of guidance can aid communication and assist toward greater understanding, and gaining more respect, to the mutual benefit of both referee and players. Improving communication should be encouraged by the use of subtle gestures, but the exaggerated miming of offences can be undignified and confusing and is not recommended.
2. An indication by the referee of the point where a throw-in should be taken may well help a player from taking a throw-in improperly. A call of 'Play on: Advantage' confirms to the player that the referee has not missed a foul, but has chosen to apply advantage. The call should be accompanied by the approved arm signal. An indication that the ball was minutely deflected by touching another player on its path across a touchline might be helpful in generating a greater understanding between referee and players.
3. All signals given by the referee should be simple, clear and distinctive. They should be designed to control the game efficiently and to ensure continuous play as far as is possible; they are intended essentially to indicate what the next action in the game should be and not to justify the action.
4. An arm pointing to indicate a corner kick, goal kick or foul, and the direction in which the kick is to be taken, will normally be sufficient. The raised arm to indicate that a free kick is indirect is clearly understood, but if a player queries politely whether the award is a direct free kick or an indirect free kick, a helpful word from the referee, in addition to the regular signal, will lead to a better understanding in future.
5. The proper use of the whistle, voice and hand signals by the referee and the flags by the assistant referees should all assist understanding through clear communication.

The following guidelines offer helpful advice to assistant referees.

When play has been stopped the assistant referee should assist the referee by signalling in the following manner for the following incidents:

- a) Offside - the assistant referee should first hold the flag aloft and once the referee has confirmed the offence, the assistant should lower his flag a full arm's length to the positions illustrated, and point across the field of play to indicate the spot from which the kick should be taken.
- b) Throw-in - when the ball goes out of play over the touchline on his side of the field, the assistant referee should indicate the direction of the throw. He should also signal if the thrower's feet, at the moment of release of the ball, are incorrectly placed.
- c) Corner and Goal Kicks - when the whole of the ball goes out of play over the goal line the assistant referee should indicate whether a corner kick or a goal kick should be given. This advice will have credibility if the assistant referee has moved along the touch line to a position behind the corner flag post when making an indication with his flag.
- d) Goal - when the referee indicates that a goal is scored the assistant referee should return to a position towards the halfway line. If an assistant referee indicates that a goal is scored, a pre-arranged signal will be used to advise the referee of this fact.

- e) Law 12 - requires an assistant referee to advise the referee of any offence of which he has a clearer view of the action than the referee. This will usually relate to an assistant referee who is close to the play but may, in exceptional circumstances, be the assistant who is further from the action. This will only be undertaken where the assistant referee is totally certain of what he has seen. The assistant will signal by raising his flag and making a slight agitation then holding it aloft until the referee sees it when the direction of the restart should be indicated. A pre-arranged signal, which should be subtle, may be used if the assistant needs to convey further information to the referee.
- f) Substitution - when a substitution is to be made the assistant referee nearest the point of substitution shall attract the attention of the referee by raising his flag as shown in the illustration in "The Laws of Association Football".

## **CO-OPERATION BETWEEN REFEREE AND ASSISTANT REFEREES**

The "Laws of Association Football" contain no instructions regarding the positioning of referees and assistant referees during a game. There are powers and duties of match officials in Laws 5 and 6 which require co-operation and the advice below may be helpful to match officials in controlling a football match.

A limitation is placed upon ASSISTANT REFEREES attached to clubs. They would normally be expected to only indicate when the ball has passed out of the field of play and that a substitution is required. It is appreciated that there must be a different attitude adopted by the referee in the case of assistant referees, because in effect there are THREE officials supervising the play; the REFEREE remains as principal official, but the assistant referees are there to assist him to control the game in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

### **Assistant Referees attached to Clubs**

To get the most effective co-operation from ASSISTANT REFEREES attached to clubs the following procedure should be adopted:

- 1) BOTH assistant referees should report to the referee BEFORE the start of the match, and receive his instructions, and be informed that no matter what may be their personal opinion the decision of the referee is final, and must not be questioned.
- 2) The work allotted to them as assistant referees is to signal WHEN the ball is ENTIRELY over the touchline, subject always to the decisions of the referee and to inform the referee that a substitution is required. However, in some circumstances an assistant referee may be given additional responsibilities provided that the referee has confidence in his competence. For example, he may have undertaken a Course of Instruction in the Laws of the Game or a Course for assistant referees and, in these circumstances; the referee may seek his assistance or advice with goal kicks, corner kicks or offside.

Keeping in mind their distinctive duties outlined above, referees should decide beforehand exactly WHAT they want their assistant referees to do, and should be able to tell them distinctly how they can best help him. It is essential that there should be some conference between the three officials BEFORE any match. As the chief of this trio, the referee must be able to indicate clearly to his assistants how they may best help him. His instructions must be specific, in order to avoid confusion. On their side, the ASSISTANT REFEREES must fully appreciate the referee's prior authority, and accept his rulings without question, should there be any difference of opinion amongst them. Their relationship to him MUST be one of assistance and neither undue intervention nor opposition.

The referee will operate the diagonal system of control when his assistant referees are qualified as referees. When they are assistant referees attached to clubs he shall inform them which method he intends to operate.

## **Assistant Referees who are qualified as Referees**

A referee will co-operate with his assistant referees on the following matters which will be discussed in a pre-match briefing:

- the time by his watch;
- the side of the field which each assistant referee will take in each half of the match;
- duties prior to the commencement of the game, such as the examination of the appurtenances of the game;
- who shall be the senior assistant referee in case of need; 21
- the position to be taken for corner kicks;
- a sign that he has seen his assistant referees signal but elected not to act on it;
- which action at throw-ins shall be the responsibility of the assistant referee, and which will be that of the referee, e.g. many referees ask their assistant referees to watch for foot faults, whilst they look for the hand faults;
- requirements in terms of the assistant's advice on unfair play;
- requirements at penalty kicks;
- responsibilities to be taken for monitoring substitutions;
- liaison with fourth officials, where appropriate;
- emphasis on a clear, practical application of Law 11;
- who is to record information re misconduct, substitutions, etc.;
- when it may be necessary to consult with other members of the team;
- time signals;
- his requirements when a confrontation takes place.

These instructions may vary in some Competitions where there are specific practices determined by those Competitions.

Referees should not necessarily keep to one diagonal of the field of play. If the state of the ground, wind, sun or other conditions demand a change to the opposite diagonal, a referee should indicate to his assistant referees his intention to make such a changeover, and the assistant referees will at once take over the other half of their particular lines. One advantage of such a change of diagonal is that the surface of the ground, next to the touchline, will be less severely worn because the whole length of the field will be utilised.

Other co-operative matters may be added, but it is important that the three officials should know each of these.

The Football Association Refereeing Department Training Booklet "Guide to Assistant Referees" contains a great deal of helpful information for referees in relation to Signals and Co-operation and it is recommended for further reading by all active match officials.

## THE DIAGONAL SYSTEM OF CONTROL

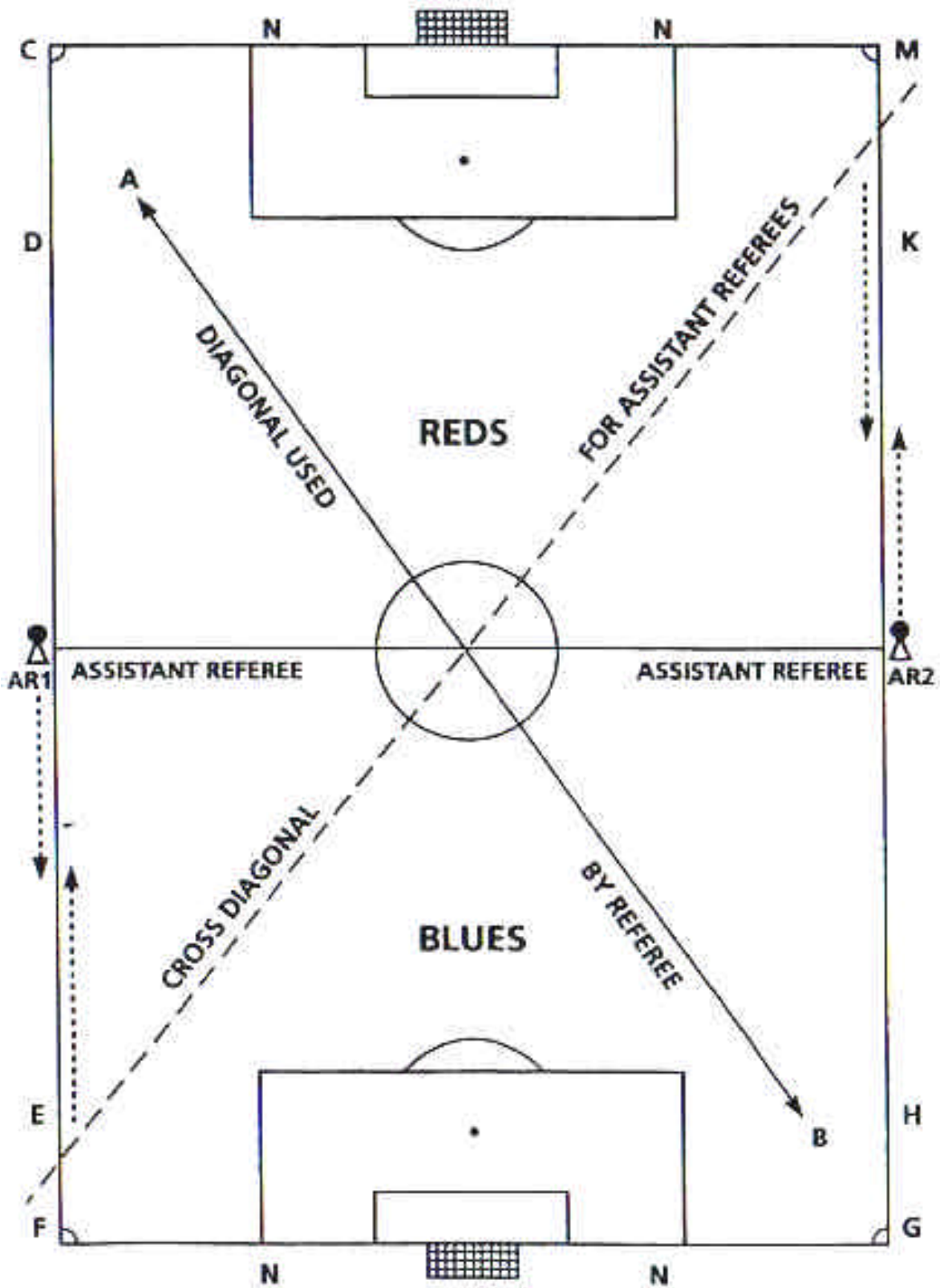
The imaginary diagonal used by the referee is the line **A-B**; the cross diagonal used by the assistant referee is adjusted to the position of the referee.

If the referee is near **A**, assistant referee **AR2** will be at a point between **M** and **K**; when the referee is at **B**, assistant referee **AR1** will be between **E** and **F**. This gives TWO officials control of the respective 'danger zones', one at each side of the field.

Assistant referee **AR1** adopts the REDS as his side; **assistant referee AR2** adopts the BLUES' defence and as RED's forwards move towards the BLUE goal, assistant referee **AR1** maintains a position in line with their second rearmost defender, so in actual practice he will rarely get into RED's half of the field. Similarly, assistant referee **AR2** maintains a position in line with the second rearmost BLUE player, and will rarely move into BLUE's half.

At **corner kicks** or **penalty kicks** the assistant referee in that half where the corner kick or penalty kick occurs positions himself at **N** and the referee takes up a position to monitor the players close to the penalty area.

*(NB - Some referees prefer to use the opposite diagonal, from **F** to **M**, in which case the assistant referees should adjust their positions accordingly.)*



## **CONDUCT ON THE FIELD OF PLAY**

Referees are reminded of their duties in connection with breaches of the Laws. The Football Association will support them in any steps which they may take to stamp out violent and unsporting behaviour. All club directors, managers and coaches, having the best interests of the game at heart, will know that a referee cannot be blamed for the bad behaviour of players. Players should, therefore, be made to understand that acts of misconduct and displays of ill temper at referees' decisions will not be tolerated. The Football Association will deal severely with offenders.

## **SPIRIT OF THE GAME**

The Laws of the Game and the decisions of the International FA Board cannot by themselves bring about the exemplary code of behaviour, which is so often referred to as "The Spirit of the Game". If football is to continue to be one of the greatest and most popular games in the world, then those who take part in it must maintain its great tradition. Everyone wishes to win and there is often much temptation to win at all costs, but true sportsmen can find small satisfaction in victory won by unfair means. The Spirit of the Law must be observed as well as the letter of the Law.

At the end of a match, referees are occasionally drawn into unwise and unnecessarily prolonged discussion with club officials, managers, trainers, coaches and players, with regard to particular decisions or aspects of control. It is thought inappropriate for referees to become involved in detailed discussions at this time. Any observations made should be designed merely to illustrate clearly how an aspect of Law was interpreted and applied correctly. Players are similarly reminded to be cautious in their comments in the often-heated moments at the end of a match. The attention of all concerned is drawn to these observations, with particular regard to the press and television reporters.

The Football Association, however, is always anxious to encourage the closest possible co-operation between club officials, managers, trainers, coaches, players and referees. Discussion between these various parties on aspects of the Laws of the Game and their interpretations can only be for the benefit of football, if they take place at more appropriate times.

Ian Blanchard

Head of National Referee Development

May 2006