ENGLAND FOOTBALL

WALKING FOOTBALL LAWS OF THE GAME

Summary of Changes

November 2026

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For implementation in January 2027

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Law 1 – The Field of Play (Playing Area)
The Penalty Area
"A penalty mark is made 7m from the midpoint between the goal posts."
Changed from 6.5m to 7m to ensure penalty taker does not encroach into the penalty area.

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

Other Equipment

Accessories are permitted as long as they are not dangerous and are safely and securely covered. Dangerous items must be removed and not taped or covered. The players must be inspected before the start of the match and substitutes before they enter the field of play. If a player is wearing or using unauthorised/ dangerous equipment or accessories, the referee must order the player to:

- *Remove the item*
- *Leave the field of play at the next stoppage*

A player who refuses to comply or wears the item again must be cautioned. Where head covers (excluding goalkeepers' caps) are worn, they must:

- *be black or the same main colour as the shirt (provided that the players of the same team wear the same colour)*
- *be in keeping with the professional appearance of the player's equipment*
- *not be attached to the shirt*
- *not be dangerous to the player wearing it or any other player (e.g. opening/ closing mechanism around neck) not have any part(s) extending out from the surface (protruding elements).*

Updated in line with other formats of the game.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Kick-Off Procedure

"a goal may not be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponent. If the ball directly enters the opponent's goal, a goal kick is awarded to the opponents. In these cases, a goal may only be scored following a deliberate play or touch by a player who has not taken the kick-off."

Additional clarification added.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Dropped Ball

"If, when play was stopped:

- *the ball was inside the penalty area, the referee drops it for the defending team's goalkeeper in their penalty area*
- *the ball was outside the penalty area, the referee drops it for one player of the team that would have retained or gained possession (including from the restart if the ball would have gone out of play)*

If this cannot be determined by the referee it is dropped for one player of the team that last touched it. The ball is dropped at its position when play was stopped, unless it hit a match official or outside agent, in which case it is dropped at the position of the interference/contact. All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4 m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play"

Updated in line with other formats of the game.

Law 9 – The Ball In And Out of Play

Height of Ball Restrictions

"A height restriction must apply, which cannot be less than the height of the crossbar and not greater than 2 metres. If the ball rises above the designated height restriction, an indirect free kick is awarded from where the offence took place. This refers to the location where the ball last made contact with the player."

If a height offence occurs within the penalty area and is committed by the goalkeeper who has control of the ball an indirect free kick should be awarded 3.5m from the penalty area line nearest to where the offence took place.

Any save or block from a goalkeeper that rises above the designated height restriction, will result in a side-line restart (kick-in) for the opposing team, in line with where the offence took place.

Additional clarification added to differentiate between a goalkeeper causing the ball to exceed the height restriction from a save or block as opposed to when they cause it to exceed the height restriction whilst distributing the ball back into play.

Changed from 3m to 3.5m to (to ensure 3m from defensive wall without encroaching penalty area line)

Law 12 – Fouls & Misconduct

Temporary Timed Suspensions

"A player temporarily suspended from play will be shown a blue card by the match official and informed that they are suspended from play for between three and five minutes.

The length of the temporary suspension must be set by the competition depending on match length.

If match length is:
Below 20 mins = 3 min suspension
Between 20-29 mins = 4 min suspension
30+ mins = 5 min suspension"

If a temporary dismissal period has not been completed at the end of the first half, the remaining period is served from the start of the second half; this also applies in extra time. A player who is still serving a temporary dismissal at the end of the match is permitted to take part in a penalty shoot-out

Added for alignment and consistency across competitions.

Law 13 – Free Kicks
Procedure
"All free kicks are taken from the place where the offence occurred, except: *free kicks to the attacking team are taken 3.5m from the penalty area line at the point nearest to where the offence occurred"*
Changed from 3m to 3.5m to ensure 3m from defensive wall without encroaching penalty area line

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

Procedure

"The player taking the penalty kick:

- *must kick the ball forward*
- *must not play the ball again until it has touched another player*
- *must start their approach with both feet on the ground no more than two metres from the ball*
- *must not feint to kick the ball after having completed the approach."*

Additional clarification added.

Law 15 – The Kick-In
All references to roll-ins removed.
Roll-ins are not generally used as a sideline restart method and as such all references are removed and all sideline restarts are kick-ins.

Law 16 – The Goal Clearance
Procedure
All references to throwing removed.
All goal clearances should be kicked.

Law 16 – The Goal Clearance
Offences and Sanctions
If, after releasing the ball, the goalkeeper touches the ball again, before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded 3.5m from the penalty area line from the place nearest to where the offence occurred. *If the goalkeeper receives the ball from a teammate in open play the goalkeeper is permitted to touch the ball and to pick the ball up.*
Changed from 3m to 3.5m to ensure 3m from defensive wall without encroaching penalty area line

Law 17 – The Corner Kick

The Corner Kick

"A goal may not be scored directly against the opponents from a corner; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponent. If the ball directly enters the opponents' goal, a goal clearance is awarded to the opponents. In these cases, a goal may only be scored following a deliberate play or touch by a player who has not taken the corner"

Amended to remove the ability to score directly from a corner.

Law 18 – Walking & Physical Contact

Offences & Sanctions

A blue card is given to a player who commits three individual offences of not walking and physical contact. This count will maintain for the entirety of the game and only reset after a temporary timed suspension has been completed due to a third offence.
A penalty kick is awarded to the opposition on the sixth accumulated not walking and physical contact offence committed by a team. This team count is then reset to zero and the not walking and physical contact offences will accumulate again.
The team count will reset at the interval periods except where the match duration is less than 20 minutes.

The following will not be included within the team count:

- *Any offence committed as per Law 14*
- *The awarding of a penalty and a blue card for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity*
- *A third individual not walking or physical contact offence punishable by a blue card*

Not walking and physical contact offences are now combined for both an individual and team count. This should act as a further deterrent to minimise these offences and promote the safety of all players.