



# **TOURNAMENT WALKING FOOTBALL RULES**

(Version 1.0 – February 2020)

## **GENERAL**

The welfare of players overrides all other considerations.

## **WALKING**

Running or jogging, on or off the ball, is not permitted by any player (including goalkeepers) and will result in an indirect free kick being awarded against the offending player.

The referee has sole discretion in deciding what is, and what is not, walking.

A walking action should generally be determined as a progression of steps where at least one foot maintains constant contact with the ground. Walking is normally characterised by a straight leading leg with the heel impacting the ground before any other part of the foot. For all practical purposes, if the referee does not recognise an action as typically those of a person walking, then it will be considered as “not walking”.

Speed of walking is not a consideration. That is, players can walk as fast as their legs can carry them. The only consideration is that they are, in fact, walking.

## **BALL HEIGHT LIMITATIONS**

Generally speaking, during normal outfield play, an infringement occurs when the ball rises to about 2m (head height).

Given player safety is the main reason for this rule, a referee may apply a lesser height limit if they consider the flight of the ball might endanger shorter persons on the playing field.

A player commits a foul if they cause the ball to rise to head height. This applies even if they have no control over it, for instance where a ball deflects off them. An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.

If a goalkeeper causes the ball to rise to head height by blocking a shot, and the ball rebounds into general play, the goalkeeper will be awarded possession of the ball. However, if the goalkeeper ‘deliberately’ causes the ball to rise to head height, either by throwing or kicking, a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team 3m outside the penalty area.

## **FIELD OF PLAY**

Goalkeepers must not leave the goal area unless momentum takes them there, and outfield players must not enter the goal area unless momentum takes them there.

The goal area is a zone marked by lines or flat discs in front of each goal.

A goal can be scored by any outfield player from anywhere on the field of play outside the goal area.

Outfield players must allow the goalkeeper to throw or kick the ball into general play. That is, they should retreat 3m from the goalkeeper when the goalkeeper has the ball in their possession.

## **OFFSIDE**

There is no offside in walking football.

## **OFFENCES**

Walking football is a non-contact sport in which any contact is incidental. Any situation that has the potential to cause harm to a player will be deemed an offence and an indirect free kick will be awarded against the offending player.

The most common offences include:

- A) Not walking;
- B) Causing the ball to rise to head height;
- C) Heading the ball (see Note 1 below);
- D) A player playing the ball while not on their feet;
- E) Tackling from behind, even if the tackle is clean and no contact is made. (See Note 2 below);
- F) Slide tackles, sliding blocks, stepping across a player or stepping into a player for whatever reason;
- G) Backing into a player;
- H) Preventing the goalkeeper from throwing or kicking the ball back into general play;
- I) Shoulder charges; and
- J) Any other reckless, excessive or intimidating behaviour.

**Note 1:** Heading the ball. This is a safety issue. A player should not make any attempt to head a ball. If a player deliberately heads a ball that has already risen to head height, they are committing an offence and causing the potential injury. This overrides the more passive head high rule and the free kick will be awarded against the player heading the ball rather than the player causing the ball to rise to head high.

**Note 2:** A tackle from the side may be deemed an offence if, in the referee's opinion, the action breaches either Offence F or Offence J above.

## **PENALTY KICKS**

Each of these offences will result in a penalty kick:

- A) An outfield player of a defending team enters their own goal area (unless as a result of momentum);
- B) An outfield player of a defending team plays the ball inside their own goal area;
- C) The goalkeeper leaves the goal area (unless as a result of momentum);
- D) The goalkeeper plays the ball outside the goal area; and
- E) An outfield player or the goalkeeper commits an offence in order to stop a clear and obvious goalscoring opportunity.

The ball is deemed to be inside the goal area, or outside the goal area, when the whole of the ball has crossed the whole of the line demarking the goal area.

A penalty kick is taken 6m from the goal line. The player taking the penalty can take a maximum of one step before striking the ball. The ball must be played forward and be played

within 6 seconds of the referee's whistle. The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line but can move from side to side. All other players should be behind the ball and at least 3m from the penalty spot.

If the one-step rule is not properly adhered to, and a goal is scored, the penalty kick will be retaken. If a goal is not scored, a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team. If a penalty kick is not taken within 6 seconds, a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.

## **INDIRECT FREE KICKS**

Apart from a penalty kick, all free kicks are indirect. This includes corner kicks and kick-ins from the sideline.

The player taking a free kick is permitted a maximum of one step before striking the ball and must play the ball within 6 seconds of the referee's whistle to restart the game. If the one-step rule is not properly adhered to, or if the ball is not played within 6 seconds, a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team. In the case of a corner kick not being properly taken, the ball will be given to the opposing goalkeeper to restart the game.

A free kick should only be taken when the referee blows the whistle to restart the game; however, the referee can waive this option to keep the game flowing. If the referee intends to restart with a whistle, they should tell the kicker to wait for the whistle. Generally, any free kick close to the goal area must be taken on the referee's whistle.

All opposing players must be at least 3m from where the free kick is to be taken.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a free kick; a second player, from either side, must play the ball first. A direct shot that deflects off a defending player, or a goalkeeper, and crosses the goal line will not count as a properly scored goal; instead the defending goalkeeper will be given possession of the ball with which to restart the game.

## **GOALKEEPERS**

A goalkeeper must throw the ball underarm or kick it from the ground when they release the ball into general play. When taking a kick in to restart the game, the ball must be stationary before the kick is taken. The one-step rule for kick ins applies equally to goalkeepers. An overarm throw, a dropkick, a punt from the hands, or anything of a similar nature will result in an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken 3m from the edge of the goal area, closest to where the offence occurred.

A goalkeeper must release a ball under their control within 6 seconds. Failure to do so will result in an indirect free kick 3m outside the goal area, closest to where the offence occurred.

Once a goalkeeper has played the ball to a team member, the goalkeeper must not play the ball again until after a 3<sup>rd</sup> player has touched the ball (either a team member or an opposition player). If the goalkeeper plays the ball before a 3<sup>rd</sup> party has touched it, an indirect free kick 3m outside the goal area closest to where the offence occurred will be awarded. The offence occurs when the goalkeeper touches the ball.

Goalkeepers can play the ball while they are on the ground.

Goalkeepers can handle the ball on a back pass.

Goalkeepers can use any part of their body (including their head) to stop a goal being scored.

Goalkeepers cannot score a goal. If a goalkeeper 'scores', the ball will be deemed to be dead and retained by the opposing goalkeeper.

## **MISCONDUCT**

Referees will use a coloured card system for instances of misconduct.

### **Yellow Card**

A yellow card will be shown to a player who has been warned several times about committing an offence. The referee will advise the team captain that the player has been warned.

It is the referee's prerogative to determine when the yellow card will be shown.

As a rule of thumb, a yellow card can be shown to a player for:

1. persistently showing dissent, abusing other players or officials, exhibiting argumentative behaviour, swearing or expressing sarcasm;
2. denying a clear goalscoring opportunity by way of an offence that is punishable by a free kick or penalty;
3. acting contrary to a referee's ruling about entering or re-entering the field of play;
4. persistently failing to retreat the required 3m from a free kick, corner kick, kick-in, or not allowing the goalkeeper to play the ball;
5. committing 3 infringements (not necessarily the same infringement); or
6. behaving in a manner the referee considers not to be in the spirit of the game.

A player who is shown a yellow card must leave the game for 2 minutes. A substitute player cannot be brought on as a replacement during this time.

### **Red Card**

A red card will be shown when a player:

1. exhibits extreme behaviour with regard point 1 above;
2. exhibits aggressive, reckless or dangerous conduct in relation to other players; or
3. commits further yellow card offences after having already served a timed suspension in the same game.

A player shown a red card shall take no further part in the game. If a goalkeeper is red carded, a substitute goalkeeper can be brought on, but one outfield player must leave the game.

The referee will report the behaviour of the red-carded player to the tournament director. Depending on the severity of the offence, the tournament director may decide that the player takes no further part in the tournament.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Drop Ball restarts**

Generally, there will be no drop ball restarts. However, should a referee deem a drop ball restart is required, it will be uncontested, i.e. the referee will award the drop ball to the team last in possession. Opposing players must retreat 3m from a drop ball position.

If a referee is unsure which player caused an offence to occur, and has not indicated for play to continue, the ball will be given to the nearest goalkeeper to restart the game.

### **Player injury**

If a player is injured, or if the referee suspects a player is injured, the game will be stopped, and the injured player attended to. The game will restart with the ball given to the nearest goalkeeper.

Play may be allowed to continue where a player falls if, in the referee's opinion, no injury has occurred, and the fall was the result of incidental contact resulting in a loss of balance.

**Advantage rule**

Referees will consider playing advantage whenever possible, unless there are extenuating circumstances for the game to be stopped.

**Referee's hand signals**

The three major hand signals used by referees are as follows:

1. Rolling one hand over the other to indicate 'not-walking';
2. Waving one hand above head to indicate the ball has exceeded height limitations; and
3. Swinging arms behind back to indicate tackle from behind or illegal tackle from the side.