



Sutherland Shire Football Referees Association 2017 Laws of the Game Amendments

If you have watched any football competition that kicked off after 1 July 2016, you would have noticed that a number of the laws have changed. Some are very obvious (like the new kick-off rule) but most only occur occasionally. With over 70 law changes, there is too much detail to go into in a one-page summary. However, that is why the referees have been undergoing online and in-person training since September to make sure they are as across the changes as they can be. These changes will apply to SSFA and FNSW competitions from 2017 onwards.

The law changes that will definitely impact most matches you participate in:

1. Kick-offs can now be kicked in any direction (backwards or forwards).
2. The end of "triple-punishment" for denying a goal scoring opportunity (penalty kick, send-off and suspension). This will only apply where a defender makes a genuine attempt at winning the ball in a tackle inside the penalty area and fouls the opponent without committing serious foul play. Such fouls will now be punished with a penalty kick and a caution (yellow card). Fouls denying a goal scoring opportunity outside the area have not changed. Fouls denying a goal scoring opportunity inside the penalty area that involve gamesmanship such as holding, pushing, pulling or making no effort to win the ball will still result in triple punishment. Tackles endangering the safety of opponents will still result in send offs no matter where they occur.
3. Players injured during a foul that incurs a yellow card or red card to the other player no longer need to leave the field to receive treatment (so long as the treatment can be done quickly).
4. The ball must be stationary and then clearly move after being touched for all restarts. This removes the ambiguity of whether the ball has been "touched and moved".
5. Offside free kicks are now to be taken from where offence occurred (even if now in own half). This means that players in an offside position in the attacking half when the ball is kicked by a teammate who then interfere with play will be penalised, and the free kick will be taken from wherever they interfere. Players who are in their own half when the ball is kicked are not in an offside position and still cannot be penalised.

Some other law changes that may affect you from time-to-time:

1. Players may return during play if they left the field for equipment reasons if they have the referee's permission and the equipment has been checked by any match official. Previously only injured players who had left for treatment could return during play.
2. If an interchange player enters the field of play and interferes with play, it is now a direct free kick or penalty kick. It used to be an indirect free kick. It is still also a caution (yellow card).
3. If a ball deflects off an outside agent (e.g. a dog, beach ball) and still goes into the goal, a goal can be awarded if the deflection had no impact on what would have happened anyway.
4. Referees can send off players from the pre-match inspection of the field onwards.
5. Striking the head when not challenging for the ball is a send off (unless the force is negligible).
6. Fouls that occur off the field while ball is in play are penalised with a direct FK on the closest boundary line (which would be a penalty kick if this occurs in the defender's own penalty area).

There are other changes that will occur from time-to-time. For those who are interested, a link to laws of the game and all of the changes follows : <http://www.theifab.com/#!/laws>. Should you wish to become a referee in 2017, please go to www.ssfra.org.au and follow the relevant links for more information.