



Massachusetts State Referee Committee



Outline summary of 2016-2017 Law changes

Law 03 – The Players

- Substitutes may take a restart but must first step onto the field. This formality is to reinforce the fact that a substitute does not become a player until they step on the field.
- It is a Direct free kick (or penalty kick) if a substitute/team official interferes with active play. This was previously an Indirect free kick.

Law 08 – The Start and Restart of Play

- The Referee must determine that the ball clearly moves after the foot is removed, to be in play for all kicked restarts. This eliminates the foot tap on the top of the ball or rolling the ball under the foot as being considered sufficient to put the ball in play.
- Ball can be kicked in any direction at kick-off (previously had to go forward)
- Referee cannot 'manufacture' the outcome of a dropped ball, it is up to the teams to voluntarily participate or not

Law 11 – Offside

- A player in an offside position at the moment the ball is played or touched by a team-mate is only penalized when becoming involved in active play. In practice this meant the referee delayed blowing the whistle until it was clear the player in the offside position really did become involved in the play. That may result in a difference in where the resulting free kick would be taken. Offside free kick will now be taken at the position of the player when the offence occurs, regardless of when the referee decided to blow the whistle.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- All fouls involving contact between opponents is a Direct free kick
- When a defender in the penalty area denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity, the player committing the offense should no longer be red carded. The penalty kick effectively restores the goal-scoring opportunity so the punishment for the player should be less strong than when the offence is committed outside the penalty area. Exception: where the offence is handball or clearly not a genuine attempt to play or challenge for the ball the player will still be sent off.

Law 15 – The Throw-in

- New wording makes it clear that ball must be thrown with both hands

Law 16 – The Goal Kick

- If an opponent is in the penalty area when a goal kick is taken, that player cannot play the ball until it has been touched by another player