

Law

08

The Start and Restart of Play

A kick-off starts both halves of a match, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored. Free kicks (direct or indirect), penalty kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are other restarts (see Laws 13–17). A dropped ball is the restart when the referee stops play and the Law does not require one of the above restarts.

If an offence occurs when the ball is not in play this does not change how play is restarted.

1. Kick-off

Procedure

- the team that wins the toss of a coin decides which goal it will attack in the first half
- their opponents take the kick-off
- the team that wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half
- for the second half, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals
- after a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by their opponents

For every kick-off:

- all players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field of play
- the opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play
- the ball must be stationary on the centre mark
- the referee gives a signal
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- a goal may 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 opponents

Offences and sanctions

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick, or for deliberate handball a direct free kick, is awarded.

In the event of any other kick-off procedure offence the kick-off is retaken.

2. Dropped ball

Procedure

The referee drops the ball at the position where it was when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area in which case the ball is dropped on the goal area line which is parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.

The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

Any number of players may contest a dropped ball (including the goalkeepers); the referee cannot decide who may contest a dropped ball or its outcome.

Offences and sanctions

The ball is dropped again if it:

- touches a player before it touches the ground
- leaves the field of play after it touches the ground, without touching a player

If a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players play is restarted with:

- a goal kick if it enters the opponents' goal
- a corner kick if it enters the team's goal