

## 2025-26 REFEREE'S LOTG SUMMARY

### PRE-GAME ACTIVITIES

- Check field, goals, flags, and markings for safety and correctness
- Check players' uniforms and equipment for safety
- Check ball for proper inflation, size, and safety (no cuts)
- Meet with your referee team and discuss responsibilities

### COIN TOSS

- Referee tosses a coin, a team captain calls, winner chooses to kick off or direction to attack
- Teams switch sides for second half. The team that did not kick off in the first half, kicks off to start the second half

### KICK-OFF

- Players must be in their own half of the field – except the player taking kick-off
- Opponents of the kicker must not enter center circle until ball is kicked
- The ball is stationary on the center mark
- The referee whistles for the start of play after ensuring ARs are ready
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves in any direction
- Don't forget to start your game timer
- If the kick-off is not taken as above it must be retaken
- If kicker touches the ball again before anyone else, IDFK to opponent

RESTART	WHEN AWARDED	BALL PLACEMENT	OPPONENTS	SCORE DIRECTLY?	WHEN IN PLAY	OFFSIDE
<b>Kick-off (KO)</b>	Start of each half; after each goal	Center mark	10 yards from ball; in own half	Yes, but only against opponent	Kicked and clearly moves	N/A
<b>Throw-in (TI)</b>	Ball out over touchline	Where it went out	2 yards from point of throw-in	No	Breaks plane of touchline	No
<b>Goal kick (GK)</b>	Ball out over goal line, not goal, last touch by an attacker	Anywhere in goal area	Outside penalty area	Yes, but only against opponent	Kicked and clearly moves	No
<b>Corner kick (CK)</b>	Ball out over goal line, not goal, last touch by a defender or GK > 8 sec	Anywhere in corner area	10 yards from corner arc ***	Yes, but only against opponent	Kicked and clearly moves	No
<b>Dropped ball (DB)</b>	Referee stops play and no other restart applies	Dropped to one player from team that had or would have had possession at the ball's position when play was stopped*	4.5 yards from ball (all other players from both teams)	No, must first touch two different players	Touches ground	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Free kick (FK)</b>	Foul or other offense	Place of offense **	10 yards*** Note: for IDFK less than 10 yds from goal line - defenders may be on goal line between goalposts; FK inside own PA - opponents outside PA	DFK: Yes, but only against opponent IDFK: No	Kicked and clearly moves	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Penalty kick (PK)</b>	DFK foul by a defender in own PA	Penalty mark	10 yards, outside PA, behind ball	Yes	Kicked and clearly moves	N/A

\* If ball was in/last touch in penalty area, drop ball to goalkeeper \*\* In goal area, place ball on "6yd line" if against defenders; place ball anywhere in goal area if against attackers \*\*\*Wall of 3 or more defenders, attackers must be 1 yd away from wall

### OFFENSES

#### DIRECT FREE KICKS

- Generally given for unfair/unsafe contact between opponents
- Kicks, strikes, trips, pushes, unfairly charges, jumps at, or tackles/challenges an opponent
- Attempts to kick, strike, or trip an opponent
- Spits/bites someone on team roster/match official, holds an opponent, impedes an opponent with contact, handball, throws object at ball/opponent/official, or contact with ball with a held object

#### PENALTY KICK

##### ENCROACHMENT

Encroachment	Ball goes in Goal	Ball does not go in Goal
By defender	Goal	No retake, unless <b>clear</b> impact
By attacker	Goal unless impact	IDFK for defenders if <b>clearly</b> impacted
By both teams	Goal unless impact	No retake, unless <b>clear</b> impact
By Goalkeeper	Goal	Retake, if <b>clearly</b> impacted by keeper

#### CORNER KICK

- Goalkeeper controls the ball with their hands for more than 8 seconds (verbally count last 5)

#### INDIRECT FREE KICKS

Generally given for a non-contact offense between opponents

- Referee must give the indirect free kick signal (raised arm)
- By anyone:
  - Dangerous play, impeding opponent without contact, preventing keeper from releasing ball, guilty of dissent/offensive/insulting/abusive language or gestures, initiates a deliberate trick play for the ball to be passed to the goalkeeper, commits any other offense (not mentioned in the laws) for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player
- By goalkeeper:
  - Touches ball a second time with hands after releasing without it touching another player
  - Deliberately handles ball after receiving it directly from a teammate's throw-in
  - Deliberately handles ball after a deliberate kick to the goalkeeper from a teammate
- By team official or player:
  - Unintentionally contacts the ball (while still in play) as it is leaving the field of play

### MISCONDUCT

#### CAUTIONABLE (YELLOW CARD) OFFENSES (aka PUDDLED)

- Persistent offenses
- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent by word or action
- Delaying the restart of play
- Entering, reentering, or leaving field without referee's permission
- Failure to respect required distance on FK, CK, TI, or DB

#### SEND OFF (RED CARD) OFFENSES (SAVS 2 Dogs)

- Serious foul play
- Spitting or biting at someone
- Abusive, insulting, or offensive language or gestures
- Denies obvious goal scoring opportunity (DOGSO) by an offense punishable by FK
- DOGSO by deliberately handling the ball (except GK in own penalty area) or non-deliberate
- Violent conduct
- 2nd caution in the same match

Abbreviated language used to save space. See the 2025-26 Laws of the Game for official terminology and full details.

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## 2025-26 REFEREE'S LOTG SUMMARY

### MISCONDUCT RESTARTS (Ball in Play/on field - Simplified Version)

- Offense and/or misconduct against opponent – IDFK or DFK/PK
- Misconduct against teammate/subs/officials/coach – DFK/PK
- Misconduct against outside agent - DB
- If misconduct occurs while ball is out of play, restart per original reason for stoppage

### OFFSIDE

#### OFFSIDE POSITION

- If any part of the head, body or feet is
- In the opponent's half of the field (excluding the halfway line), AND
  - closer to opponent's goal line than the ball, AND
  - closer to opponent's goal line than the second-last opponent

*Offside position is determined at the moment the ball is played or touched by a teammate. Offside position by itself is not an offense.*

*Cannot be offside if a player receives the ball directly from a GK, TI, or CK. (i.e., restarts where the ball left the field of play)*

#### OFFSIDE OFFENSE

- In offside position moment ball is played or touched by teammate, AND THEN:
  - Interferes with play (plays the ball); OR
  - Interferes with an opponent (keeps them from playing the ball); OR
  - Interferes by otherwise gaining an advantage (ball rebounds to them)
- Restart: IDFK for opponents where offside player interferes  
AR should run to stay even with the ball if kicked past the 2<sup>nd</sup>-to-last defender, then raise flag when player in offside position interferes with play

### REFEREE TEAM MECHANICS AND SIGNALS

#### REFEREE POSITIONING

- Left (standard) diagonal: run toward left corner flag; try to stay to the left of ball
- Right diagonal: run toward right corner flag; try to stay to the right of ball
- During dynamic play try to be approximately 10-15 yards from play
- Try to keep play between the referee and the lead assistant referee to enable simultaneous visibility of play and the AR

#### ASSISTANT REFEREE POSITIONING

- Default position: stay even with second-to-last defender to watch for offside (the last defender is usually, but not always, the goalkeeper)
- If the second-to-last defender moves into the opponent's half of the field, stay at the halfway line (or buildout line in younger divisions)
- If the ball moves closer to the defenders' goal line than the second-to-last defender, stay even with the ball – all the way to the goal line if necessary

#### REFEREES SHOULD...

- Look at the lead assistant when the ball is played forward
- Look at the lead assistant when a goal is scored
- Occasionally look back at the trail assistant
- Look at both assistants when the ball is out of play
- Give them a smile or a subtle "thumbs up"

#### ASSISTANT REFEREES SHOULD...

- Raise the flag with a deliberate (not hasty or exaggerated) motion
- Keep flag in hand closest to referee/field, switch if needed for signal
- Make eye contact with the referee whenever they signal
- Watch players who are behind the referee's back
- Mirror the offense/misconduct signals of the other assistant referee that the referee can't see
- Always be prepared to signal if the ball goes out of play and the referee looks to you for help

#### WORDS OF WISDOM FROM AN OLD REFEREE

- Be a thinking referee/assistant referee at all times
- Keep the game safe, fair, and fun – in that order
- If it looks unsafe, blow the whistle even if you're not sure what offense to call – player safety is your most important job
- If you're not sure about an offense, don't blow the whistle
- Don't let the sidelines get out of hand. . . expect positive, respectful participation from coaches and spectators
- Smile – If you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong

