

Ask the Ref # 3, 2011 – Start and restart of the game.

Hi all football enthusiasts, coaches, referees, players and long suffering parents,

Welcome back after the Easter break and to the next slightly edited edition of Ask the Ref, the Adelaide Hills Referee Branch's weekly bulletin on the rules of the game that is sent out each year.

This week the bulletin looks at the Start and Restart of the Game.

As usual please distribute this bulletin as widely as possible through your club contacts and networks. The aim of this bulletin is to reach those who know nothing about the game so that they may learn and grow to enjoy the game more as a result. If it also informs those who have been around for a while then that's a bonus.

The start of the game

A coin is tossed. Traditionally the *Away* team calls head or tails. The team that wins the toss decides **which goal it will attack** in the first half of the match. The other team takes the kick-off to start the first half of the match and the team that has won the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half of the match. In the second half of the match the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals. This toss is also made at the start of any first period of extra time.

Kick-off

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play at the start of the match, after a goal has been scored, at the start of the second half of the match and at the start of each period of extra time, where applicable.

Kick Off Procedure

At the kick off all players must be in their own half of the field. The **opponents** of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 9.15 m (10 yards) from the ball **until it is in play**. This means that they are all standing on their side of the field and outside of the centre circle. The team taking the kick off can have as many players within the centre circle as they wish. The ball must be stationary on the centre mark. The referee gives a signal, traditionally a whistle and arm movement in the direction of play. The ball is **in play when it is touched and moves forward** (not when the referee whistles). The kicker must not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

Infringements/Sanctions

If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

For any other infringement of the kick-off procedure the kick-off is retaken. For instance, when players from the opposite side encroach on the required distance before the ball is touched by the team taking the kick off.

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a way of restarting the match after a temporary stoppage has become necessary while the ball is in play. You may see this if a player goes down injured and the referee stops play to attend to the injured player, or if another ball comes onto the field of play, an animal or if the game is interfered with in any other way. Wherever the ball is **at the time that play was stopped** is where the dropped ball restart is taken from.

In some cases, when a player is injured, the team in possession of the ball is encouraged to kick the ball out of play in order for the player to be attended to. In the AHJSA competition, as with most junior competitions, we believe that referees should stop the game as soon as they suspect that a serious injury to a player has occurred and that player is in need of attention. If a player does act in an unsporting way and

feigns injury, and the referee is very confident that such a thing has occurred, the player runs the risk of being cautioned with a yellow card for 'unsporting behaviour'.

Procedure for the drop ball

The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped. The referee cannot decide who takes part in the dropped ball restart. Note that there is no minimum or maximum number of players allowed to participate in the dropped ball restart but it is generally two. Play restarts **when the ball touches the ground**. The ball is dropped again if a player touches it before it makes contact with the ground (this is because play has not restarted until it has touched the ground therefore no infringement has occurred until the ball is in play). The ball is also dropped again if the ball leaves the field of play after it makes contact with the ground without a player touching it – a very rare thing, but still!

On the subject of the referee deciding who takes part in the dropped ball restart, it is worth taking a look at a regular occurrence that can seem baffling for observers. What you often see happen on the field is when the game is restarted through a drop ball the **sporting thing to do is to allow the team that had possession at the time of stopping the game to regain the possession**. This is usually done by one of the players from the opposing team taken part in the dropped ball restart indicating that they will kick it back to the opposing side or kick it out of play. Often, it is kicked to the keeper if they are within the right distance.

There are no laws governing protocol in this matter, but a tradition has built up around this procedure over the years. One thing you might see in the AHJSA competition is that the younger players do not quite grasp this concept and will contend for the ball or try and score a goal from the drop ball. There isn't much that a ref can do about this as it is not against the laws of the game but **we will try to offer clear advice to the players before the drop ball and check to see if they understand the concept of 'fair play' and hope they do the right thing**. But it is not the referee's responsibility to ensure this therefore **coaches** should take heed and instil in their players a sense of fair play and instructions on how they would like them to act on the field of play in such situations.

Goal area restarts

A free kick awarded to a defending team inside its own **goal area** is taken from any point within the goal area.

An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team in its opponents' goal area (for a pass back infringement, for instance) is taken from the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

A dropped ball to restart the match after play has been temporarily stopped inside the goal area takes place on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

Other restarts

Other common restarts are: corner kicks, goal kicks and the throw in. These will be discussed in a future Ask the Ref. However, if you do have any burning questions regarding these or any other issue discussed above and in the past, just ask the ref.!

For all the laws of the game for 2010/11, go to:

http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/generic/81/42/36/lawsofthegame_2010_11_e.pdf

and for some instructional material for this law in particular go to:

http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/afdeveloping/refereeing/law_8_the_start_and_restart_of_play_en_47396.pdf

Regards,
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