



WFA Laws of the Game 2018



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Introduction

Whilst it is acknowledged there are no universal laws commonly used throughout the various interpretations of walking football, the WFA 'Laws of the Game' reflect the ethos and values of this unique sport, namely:

To ensure all matches are played safely with full consideration of every participant's age, gender and ability.

It is therefore expected that all players, managers and club members will conduct themselves accordingly, including respecting referees and other match officials. Failure to do so is likely to result in disqualification from an event.

The following rules which are primarily for the WFA National Cup can be applied throughout the walking football community.

Section A: Players, Pitches and Equipment

Players

1. A team can field a maximum of 6 players on the pitch at any one time.
2. A team squad must not exceed 9 players per match.
3. Rolling substitutes are permitted to enter and leave play, but only with the consent of the referee.
4. Players must adhere strictly to the minimum age criteria for each category, determined by a player's age when he/she participates in their first match. For example no one under the age of 50 may participate in the over 50s competition. This does not, however, prevent 'over-aged' players participating. For example someone over 60 years of age may play in the over 50s competition.
5. A player can only represent one team per age category.
6. Goalkeepers must be clearly distinguishable from outfield players on either team.
7. Substitutes must be clearly distinguishable from players on either team, until they are called into play.

Pitches

8. The standard pitch dimensions for competition are a width between 16 metres (min) and 35 metres (max) and a length between 25 metres (min) and 50 metres (max).



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9. A goal area must be clearly marked at each end of the pitch. This may be a semi-circle or rectangle and should extend between 4 metres (min) and 6 metres (max) from the goal line.
10. A clearly marked penalty spot should be positioned in line with the centre of the goal and 6 metres from the goal line.
11. The position of the ball on the pitch is determined when it crosses a line entirely (i.e. the whole of the ball). A ball located on the line marking the goal area is considered to be live and playable by any player (including goalkeepers).

Equipment

12. The standard goal size for competition is a width between 3 metres (min) and 5 metres (max) and a height between 1.2 metres and 2 metres (max).
13. The 'official' ball size and type for competition is a size 5 regular. Clubs, however, are permitted to use a size 4 ball or a futsal in early rounds, providing it is agreed by all parties (including match officials) prior to kick-off.

Section B. Foul Play

Running and Jogging

1. Running or jogging on or off the ball is not permitted by any player (including goalkeepers) and will usually result in an indirect free kick being awarded. If, in the opinion of the referee, such conduct results in a clear goal-scoring opportunity being denied, then the offending players should be removed from play for 2 minutes (blue card) and a penalty kick considered if the offending player is a goalkeeper.
2. The referee shall have sole interpretation on deciding what is and what is not walking. A walking action will generally be determined as a progression of steps throughout which at least one foot will maintain constant contact with the ground and that both feet will be momentarily planted with the advancing leg straightened.

Ball above Head Height

3. The ball is not permitted to travel above head height:
 - I. The ball should be deemed dead once it has exceeded head height.
 - II. Head height is defined as 1.83 metres or the height of the goal cross bar, providing it does not exceed 2 metres.
 - III. The whole of the ball must exceed head height to be deemed an infringement.
 - IV. The referee shall have sole interpretation on the ball exceeding head height.
 - V. A player commits a foul if they cause the ball to travel above head height.
 - VI. A player commits a foul if the ball deflects off them and goes above head height.
 - VII. A player commits a foul if they play the ball off a barrier and it exceeds head height.



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- VIII. If a ball deflects off the goal frame and exceeds head height, it is not regarded as a foul, but the ball must immediately be deemed dead and retained by the goalkeeper.
- IX. If a ball deflects off the goalkeeper in the process of making a save and exceeds head height before returning to play, it is not regarded as a foul, but the ball must immediately be deemed dead and retained by the goalkeeper.
- X. If a ball deflects off the goalkeeper in the process of making a save and exceeds head height, but then drops into the goal, a goal should be awarded.
- XI. If a ball deflects off the goalkeeper in the process of making a save and exceeds head height, but then leaves the field of play, a corner or throw-in should be awarded, depending at which point the ball crossed the line.

Dangerous or Reckless Conduct

- 4. Players are not permitted to head the ball in any circumstance.
- 5. Deliberate or reckless physical contact is not permitted by any player; this includes:
 - I. Slide tackling and/or slide blocking.
 - II. Tackling across a player at a barrier.
 - III. Blocking or cornering a player against a barrier.
 - IV. Crowding (two players vs one) a player against a barrier.
 - V. Shoulder charging, pushing or barging.
 - VI. Stepping across or obstructing an opponent to gain an advantage or deny that player access to the ball or position.
 - VII. Tackling (or poaching) from the side or behind causing physical contact with a player or in a manner likely to cause injury.
 - VIII. Reckless or excessive conduct regardless of whether or not there is any physical contact.

Goal Area Infringements

- 6. An outfield player commits a foul upon entering the goal area regardless of whether or not they play the ball. This does not, however, include occasions when they do so as a result of momentum.
- 7. A goalkeeper commits a foul if he/she leaves the goal area, unless they do so as a result of momentum, and the ball is retained within the goal area.
- 8. A goalkeeper when facing a penalty kick is permitted to move any part of his/her body and travel along the goal line, but is not permitted to advance off the goal line prior to the kick being taken; such conduct should result in the retaking of a saved or missed penalty.

Other Infringements

- 9. A player commits a foul if they fail to take a free kick, penalty, kick-in or corner in accordance with the rules or as instructed by the referee.
- 10. A player commits a foul if they take a free kick, penalty, kick-in or corner whilst the ball is moving.
- 11. A player commits a foul if they take a kick-in whilst the ball is not behind the line which marks the pitch area.



12. A player commits a foul if they hold onto a barrier in order to shield the ball or obstruct an opposing player. This does not include circumstances when such contact is necessary to prevent a collision or maintain balance.
13. A player commits a foul if they deliberately play the ball with their hand or arm.
14. A player, other than a goalkeeper, commits a foul upon deliberately playing the ball whilst on the ground. A player is deemed to be on the ground if they have any part of their body other than their feet on the pitch.
15. A goalkeeper commits a foul if they deliberately play the ball other than by throwing it under-arm or kicking it from the ground.

Section C. Sanctions

Free Kicks

1. All free kicks are indirect, with opposing players being at least 3 metres from the ball.
2. A player taking a free kick (including a penalty) is permitted to take one step immediately prior to striking the ball.
3. There are, however, a number of exceptions for free kicks:
 - I. If a goalkeeper is deemed to have deliberately caused the ball to exceed head height, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team 3 metres outside the goal area adjacent to where the infringement occurred.
 - II. If a goalkeeper is deemed to have deliberately played the ball other than by throwing it under-arm or kicking it from the ground, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team 3 metres outside the goal area, adjacent to where the infringement occurred.
 - III. If a goalkeeper, upon leaving the goal area, deliberately plays the ball or does anything in an attempt to deny a goal-scoring opportunity, a penalty kick should be awarded to the opposing team.
 - IV. If a defending 'outfield' player enters the goal area, regardless of whether or not they play the ball (other than through momentum), a penalty kick should be awarded to the opposing team
 - V. Free kicks awarded to an attacking team must not be taken within 3 metres of their opponents' goal area, but must be moved back accordingly, directly in line to where the infringement occurred
4. If a player, whilst taking a free kick, has a direct shot at goal which deflects into the goal off an opponent or the goalkeeper, the goal should be disallowed and a free kick awarded to the opposing team.

Kick-ins and Corners

5. Kick-ins and corners are indirect with opposing players being at least 3 metres from the ball.
6. A player taking a kick-in or corner is permitted to take one step immediately prior to striking the ball.
7. If a player, whilst taking a kick-in or corner, has a direct shot at goal which deflects into the goal off an opponent or the goalkeeper, the goal should be disallowed and a free kick awarded to the opposing team.



Blue Card and Red Card Infringements

8. If a player commits 3 infringements (totting up), for running, foul play or a combination of both, the referee should show a blue card and cause them to leave the game (sin-bin) for 2 minutes.
 - I. A player receiving such a sanction must miss 2 minutes of playing time
 - II. If a player returning from the sin-bin commits a further 3 infringements, the referee should cause them to play no further part in the game (sent-off)
 - III. The referee shall have sole discretion to determine which infringements are worthy of 'totting up'. For example, causing the ball to travel above head height may not necessarily warrant such action.
9. If a player is guilty of violent conduct, the referee should show a red card and cause them to play no further part in the game (sent-off) and the competition (if applicable).
10. If a player (including an off-field substitute) uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards any other player, a referee, an official or any other participant, the referee should show a red card and cause them to play no further part in the game (sent-off) and the competition (if applicable).

Section D. Starting, Stopping and Continuing Play

Starting a Match

1. A coin toss shall be used at the start of a game to determine whether a team wishes to kick-off or chose which end they wish to attack. The team winning the toss is granted first choice.
2. The match shall commence only when the referee blows the whistle.
3. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-off, even in the event of a deflection into the goal from an opposing player or the goalkeeper. The goal should be disallowed and a free kick awarded to the opposing team.

Stopping and Resuming Play

4. If the referee blows the whistle to stop play, it must only be resumed upon a further blow of the whistle. For example, quick free kicks without a referee's whistle to resume play are not permitted.
5. A drop ball may be used to resume play when it is not possible to determine which team should have possession. For example, following a sudden halt in play due to an injury.
6. A kick-in shall resume play (on pitches with touchlines) at the point where the ball left the field of play.
7. A corner kick shall resume play (on pitches with goal lines) on the same side of the pitch that the ball left the field of play.

Continuing Play

8. Goalkeepers may distribute the ball when grounded.
9. Unlimited back passes between a player and goalkeeper are permitted.



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10. Goalkeepers can handle the ball directly from a back pass.
11. Goals can be scored by any player from any outfield position (except goalkeepers). In the event of a goalkeeper scoring a goal, the goal should be disallowed, the ball deemed dead and retained by the opposing goalkeeper.

Section E. Safety

1. Players must refrain from openly wearing jewellery or watches. Tape may be used to cover rings
2. All players must wear shin pads, covered by their socks.