

Law 13 Free Kicks

Hey kids it's a tough world out there and nothing in life is free...lighten up, we got free kicks in soccer!

WHAT IS A FREE KICK? - A free kick is a restart of play where one team is allowed to kick the ball freely to start play. To kick the ball freely means that one team is allowed to kick the ball without pressure, delay or hindrance from the other team.

WHEN IS A FREE KICK GIVEN?- One team is awarded a free kick after a foul, and/or misconduct, offside infringement, or other illegal circumstances such as an illegal second touch. The team that did not commit the infringement of the Law will be awarded one of two types of free kicks.

WHAT ARE THE TWO TYPES OF FREE KICKS? – Before we discuss the differences of the two types, let's talk about what they have in common. For a legal free kick of any type the ball must be stationary when kicked and the player taking the kick must not touch the ball a second time until it touches a player from either team.

Now let's talk about the differences:

- **Direct Free Kicks (DFK)** - This kick can have the ball go directly in the goal for a legal score without touching another player. It is a dangerous live ball for the defending team. Just remember, directly into the goal.
- **Indirect Free Kicks (IDFK)** - Indirect kick is the opposite of direct because the ball must touch another player before it can be scored as a goal. The ball must touch another player from either team before it can be scored, hence the indirect kick. That's why some teams that are within shooting distance from the goal when taking an indirect kick will have a teammate slightly kick the ball forward and then the other player will fire the shot. If the first touch did not occur the keeper could let the ball fly into the back of the net and they would get a goal kick. Just remember, indirect cannot go directly into the goal.

HOW DOES THE REFEREE SIGNAL THE DIFFERENCE? Let's say you are a player or a fan and a free kick, has been awarded, how do you know if it's a DFK or IDFK? Sure if you know what foul was called you should know if it's direct or indirect, but what if you did not know what foul was called? Regardless of what foul was called, it is the signal of the referee that is important. The referee will tell you by his or her hand position.

If it is an IDFK the referee will raise an arm straight in the air before the kick. It will remain in this position until the ball has touched another player from either team or the ball exits the field of play. The lowering of the arm signifies that someone has touched the ball and it can now be shot in the goal or it has went out of bounds. So if it's indirect you get to gaze into the referee's underarm area, maybe that thought will help you remember. It's the pits that we did not get a direct free kick....get it?

During a direct kick, the referee will briefly use his or hand to show which direction has possession and then will quickly return his arm to a normal position. Every player must know the difference and know how a referee signals for the different kicks. The attack and defense may be played differently depending if the kick is a DFK or IDFK.

WHAT DETERMINES FOR THE REFEREE IF IT IS A DIRECT OR AN INDIRECT KICK?- For right now I want to keep it basic and say the type of foul committed determines what type of kick is awarded. This can get pretty lengthy and I will save it for a discussion on fouls and misconduct. I will add a foul committed inside the penalty area that is a DFKs, results in a penalty kick. This is special kick that will be discussed in Law 14.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR TAKING A FREE KICK? - Like I stated above the ball must be stationary. There are restrictions on the defending team. All opponents must be 10 yds from the ball at the moment of the kick. This is a requirement for the defending side and not the kicking team. This means the defense is required to give the 10 yds to the kicking team, but the kicking team can take the kick quickly while opponents are closer if they deem it to their advantage. Fouls should never benefit the team that fouled so the kicking team has the

right to their 10 yard distance and/or the quick free kick. The only exception to the distance requirement is IDFK inside the penalty area when there may be less than 10 yds of distance between the ball and goal.

WHAT IS THIS QUICK FREE KICK YOU SPEAK OF?- The referee should move quickly out of the way for a free kick, as it is a RIGHT of the kicking team to take a quick free kick. The only exception would be if the referee has to take care of some form of misconduct and then he must purposely slow down the process. Defense does NOT have a guaranteed right to form a wall. Many teams will infringe on the 10 yd rule and then the kicking team will ask the referee to enforce the 10 yd rule or the ref will delay the restart for that reason, hence the wall building. If an attacking team has to ask for their 10 yds then their right to quickly attack has been somewhat stifled. Let me say this again, defense does not have a constitutional right that guarantees their pursuit of happiness and the right to build a wall. If they don't like that rule then don't foul.

The referee is expected to deal with opponents that purposely try to infringe on the 10 yd right of the attacking team. This is a common tactic that can bring out a yellow card for the player or players that are trying to damage the integrity of the game. Remember it was the a teams foul that put them in that predicament, not the referee, and the fouled team is not suppose to be the one punished. Unfortunately not all teams realize this.

I SEE REFEREES SLOW DOWN THE GAME ALL THE TIME DURING FREE KICKS?- If a referee decides to slow down a restart because of an opponent infringing upon the 10 yds and/or the attacking team asking for 10 yds, the kicking team may not kick the ball until the referee gives a clear go-ahead signal. If the attacking team attempts to take the kick before the referee signals, a stern warning is likely and a possible card can be issued. Once you have asked for your 10 yards (even though you should not have to), or the referee decides to delay the restart, you have lost your right to take a quick kick.

MISCONCEPTIONS

- During a free kick you must wait for the referee- FALSE (unless the ref says so) This is not American football where players and fans wait for the referees to set up everything and as a fan you get to make a run for a hot dog. This is not basketball where the referees have to be part of the show and touch every ball before a player puts it into play. This is soccer and the attacking team is rewarded for the foul. The reward is the right to take a quick kick without pressure and a 10 yd minimum distance on the kick. Go QUICKLY and ATTACK! Who ever said haste makes waste did not play soccer.
- During a free kick the defense has the right to build a wall- NOPE! If they don't want the free kick against them then don't foul. It is a myth that a defending team has a right to build a wall.
- Can a card be given to a player that infringes the 10 yard rule- YES Especially in situations when the referee has already instructed them to move back but some brave soul creeps forward. Yes a card should be shown for unsporting behavior.
- Can a card be given to a player that takes a free kick if the referee told them to wait- YES
- If a team takes free kick and hits a player that was closer than 10 yds, they get to do the kick over- NO If a team takes a quick kick before the other team has given the 10 yds then that was their choice, no freebies. If they want the 10 yds and the defending team is infringing upon their right, then tell the guy in the striped shirt and black knee socks (referee) that you want your 10 yards. You should not have to ask but as Josey Wales said," there is the way it should be and there is the way it is."
- Everyone in the stadium knew it was a DFK from 20 yards out and that is what the referee called at first, but the referee became confused and signaled IDFK with his arm straight in the air. The player took that shot anyway knowing the correct call for the foul and ignored the hand signal. The keeper purposely let it go directly into the goal since it was indirect. One team is jumping up and down in celebration of a goal while the other team is yelling goal kick. What is the correct call? – NO GOAL, RETAKE KICK. The referee is always right even when he is wrong! His call was right but his hand signal was wrong, he misled the defending team. He apologizes and does the best he can, take it over.
- Free kicks can be kicked in any direction?- TRUE Nothing states you must kick the ball forward.

- Okay it's an IDFK and the first player runs up and lightly touched the ball. The second player shoots the ball into the net...it's a goal right? - NO The Laws say the ball must be moved by a kicking motion. A lightly tapped ball that quivers does not qualify; it should be a goal kick. Now with that being said most refs do not enforce this so remember "The referee is always right even when he is wrong!"