

SOCCKER RULES

Introduction

In the beginning of the 19th century, a people's game that has been around ever since medieval times started becoming more and more popular in England: soccer. Back then soccer was played using ad-hoc pitches and most teams were formed either because they were part of the same village, organization, factory or whatnot.

Obviously, these guys were playing along to some basic soccer rules, but without a referee to enforce them, or clear specifications to these rules. For example, what would have been considered a foul in Liverpool might have been accepted as a fair tackle in London.

Since soccer sparks some pretty intense competition at times, playing it without a lot of strict rules and without a referee to enforce them caused serious troubles in mid 19th century England. Soccer fights became something that was seen as normal and they gave the game an aura of violence that in truth it didn't deserve.

By 1860, soccer clubs were already popping up in England, especially around London and they were becoming semi-professional, as the competition level started rising.

Ball In and Out of Play

According to the official soccer rules, the ball is in play all throughout the match duration, except when it passes a bounding line (goal lines and touch lines), when an offence occurs or when play is stopped by the referee. In these particular cases, the ball is out of play and the soccer players cannot score goals or interact with the ball. In addition, substitutions can only occur when the ball is out of play according to the rules for the game of soccer.

Scoring

As long as the ball is in play and no infringements of any soccer rules are being made, the players can score goals. A goal is considered when the ball crosses one of the goal areas with its entire circumference. Goals can be scored from action, from penalty spots and direct free kicks.

The Start and Restart of Play

There are **8** reasons for which the game can be stopped and similarly, **8** ways to restart it.

- (1) A game begins with a **kick off** and the game is also restarted with a kick-off if a team scores a goal.
- (2) If the ball goes out on the side lines, the player who last touched the ball conceded a **throw-in**. The game is restarted with the other team throwing the ball back into play.
- (3) A **goal kick** is awarded to the defending team, if the attacking team took the ball out of play on the defending team's goal line. The game is restarted with the goalkeeper kicking it from within the safety box.

- (4) A **corner kick** is awarded if the defending team touches the ball last and it goes over their own goal line, outside of the goal itself, then the opposing team earns a corner kick.
- (5) An **indirect free kick** is awarded when a team produces a non-penal foul (dangerous play or offside for example) and the game is restarted with a ground kick that cannot score directly.
- (6) A **direct free kick** is caused by a foul or handball and unlike the indirect free kick it can be struck directly towards the goal and score.
- (7) A **penalty kick** is similar to a direct free kick in that it is caused by a foul or handball, but the offence occurs inside the defending team's penalty area. The game is restarted with one of the attacking team's players shooting for goal from the penalty spot (11 meters, perpendicularly on goal), with nothing but a goalkeeper to beat.
- (8) The **dropped ball** occurs when the referee stops the game for a special reason (an injured player, ball becoming defective or the interference of an external factor) and the game is restarted with him/her dropping the ball from shoulder height in front of two players who will battle for possession (sort of how basketball matches decide initial possession).

FIELD DIMENSIONS

