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Law 13 – Free Kicks



**U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Program
Entry Level Referee Course
Competitive Youth Training
Small Sided and Recreational Youth Training**



Free Kick Types

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There are two types of free kick restarts

- **Direct Free Kick (DFK)**

Goal can be scored directly (first touch)

- **Indirect Free Kick (IFK)**

Ball must be touched by another player other than the kicker before entering the goal



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Free Kick Types

When player commits a direct free kick (DFK) foul outside their own Penalty Area or when a player commits an indirect free kick (IFK) offense anywhere on the field, the referee stops play and restarts with a free kick.

If a direct free kick (DFK) offense is committed by a player within their own Penalty Area, the result is a penalty kick (PK) for the opposing team. See Law 14.



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Free Kick Types

Indirect Free Kick (IFK)

Referee uses a raised arm to signal





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Free Kick Types



- Referees should be sure to take note of the local rules of competition.
- Some small-sided and recreational youth games may require that all free kicks be either indirect or direct.



Ball Position

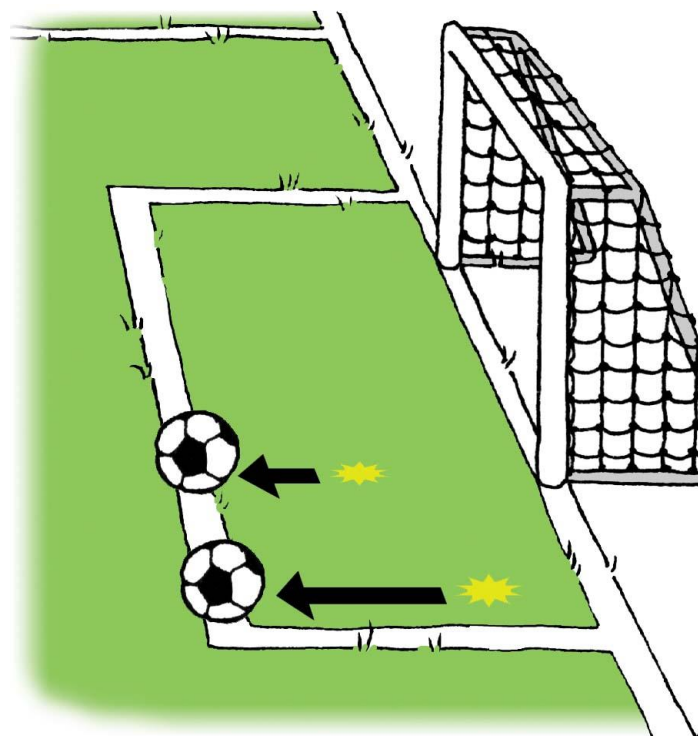
The free kick is usually taken from the location on the field of play where the foul occurred.



There are six (6) exceptions to this placement of the ball.

Ball Position Exception 2

When an indirect free kick (IFK) has been awarded to the attacking team inside their opponent's goal area.

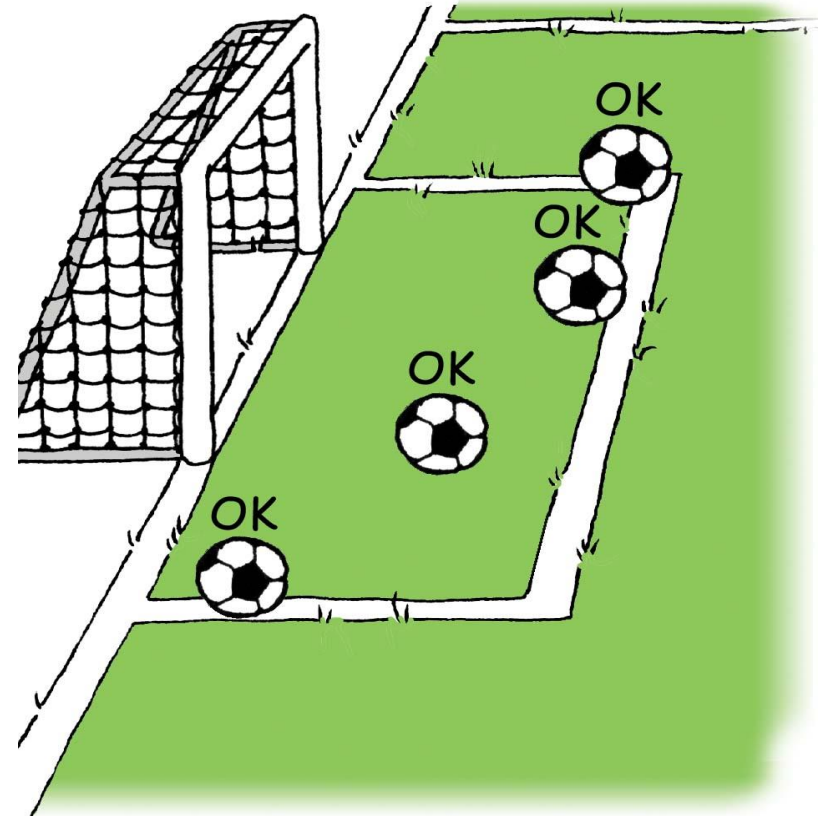


Here, the ball is moved and placed on the goal area line closest to where the infraction occurred.

Ball Position Exception 3

When a DFK or an IFK has been awarded to the defending team inside their goal area.

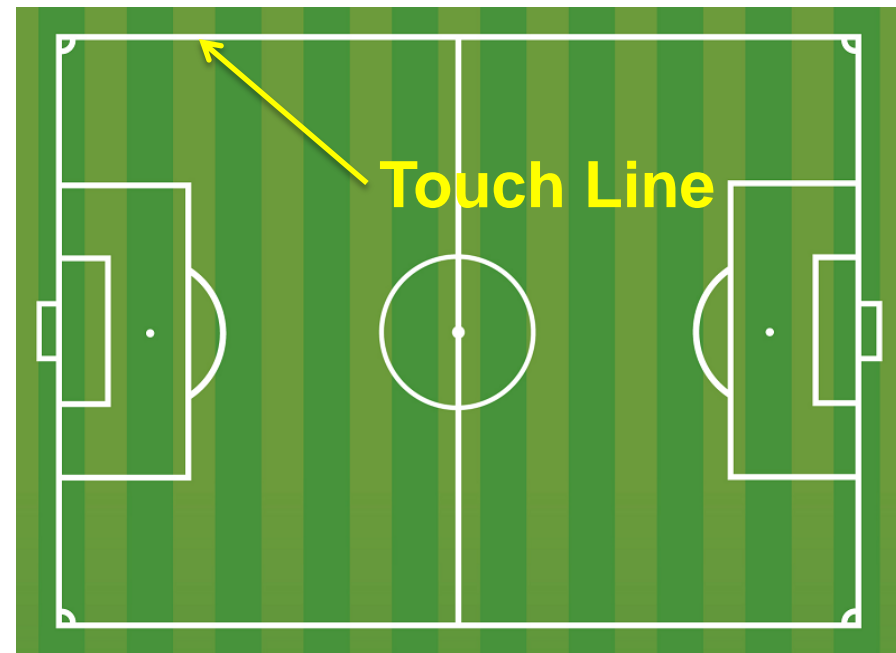
The free kick can be taken from anywhere in the Goal Area.





Ball Position Exception 4

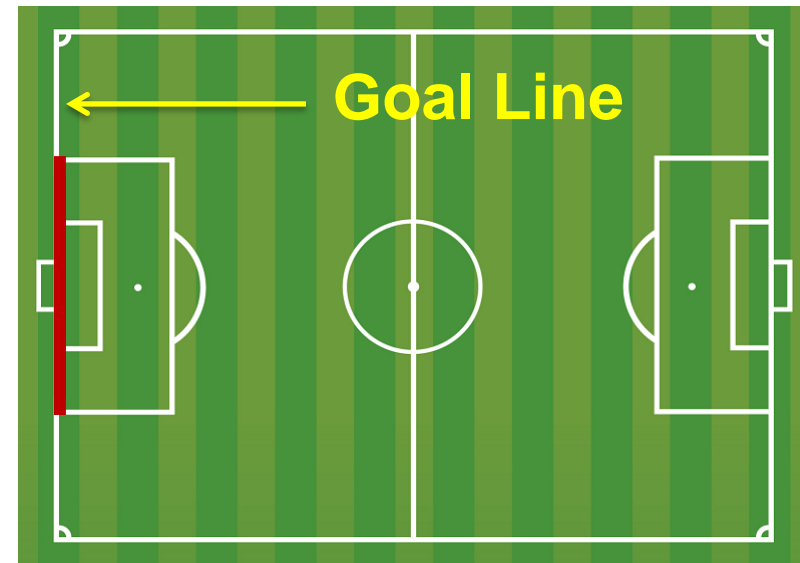
When a player running along the touch line leaves the field as part of play and commits an offense against another player.



Play is restarted with a free kick on the touch line nearest where the offense occurred.

Ball Position Exception 5

When a player running along the goal line leaves the field as part of play and commits an offense against another player.



Play is restarted with:

- **a free kick on the goal line nearest where the offense occurred ... or**
- **a penalty kick if a DFK offense is committed within the width of the offender's own Penalty Area.**



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Free Kick Rules

The ball must be stationary prior to being kicked back into play.



The ball is in play once it is kicked and **clearly** moves.

If the kick is taken by a team from within their own Penalty Area, the ball must also completely leave the Penalty Area (on the first touch) before it's in play.



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Free Kick Rules

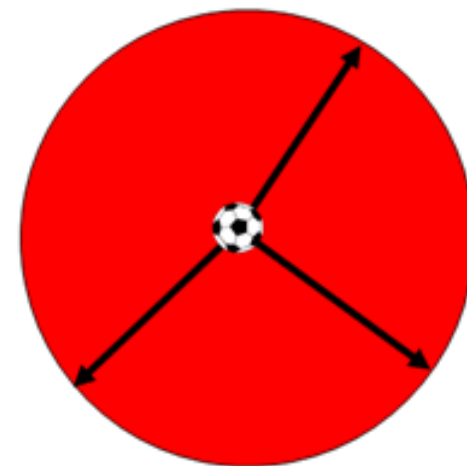
The player taking the free kick cannot touch the ball again until it has been touched any other player.



If the player taking the free kick touches the ball a second time before another player from either team touches it, an indirect free kick (IFK) is awarded to the opposing team (at the spot of the 2nd touch).

Player Position

All opponents should be at least the **minimum required distance** in all directions from the location of any free kick.



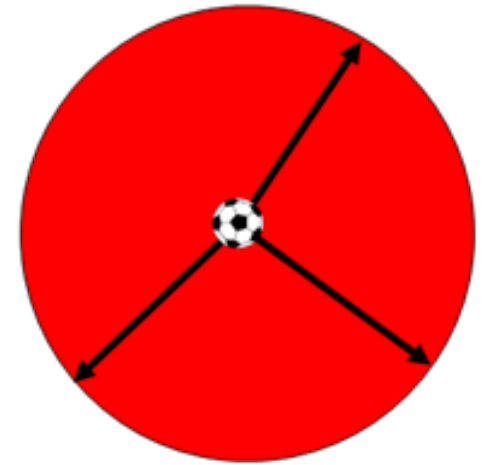
It's the opponents' duty to move the required distance away without being directed by the referee.



Player Position

The **minimum required distance** away from the free kick is:

- 10 yds. (U13 and older)
- 8 yds. (U9 thru U12)



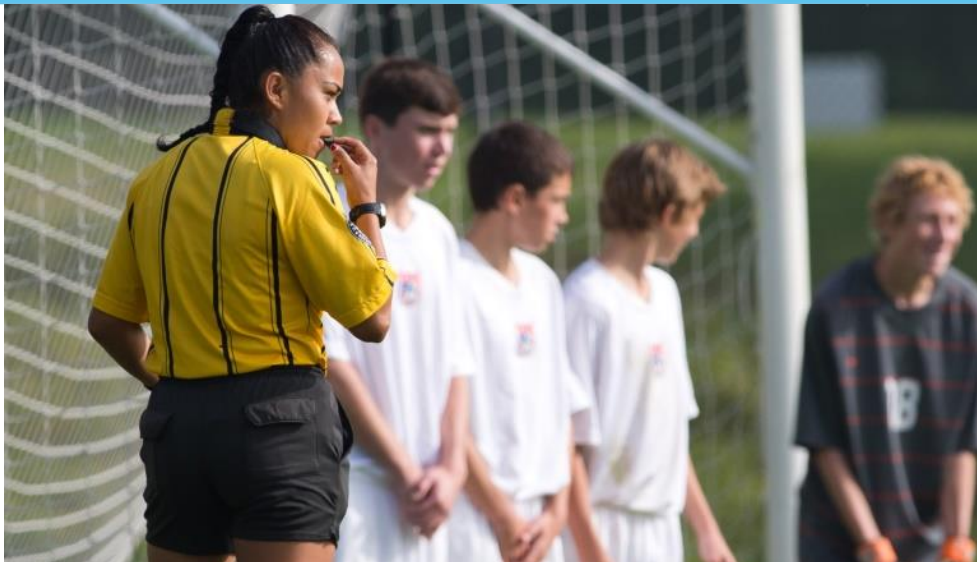
Officials must know the local competition rules to ensure that the proper guidelines are being followed.

Some small-sided and recreational youth games may have minimum distance requirements other than what's listed above.



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Player Position Exceptions

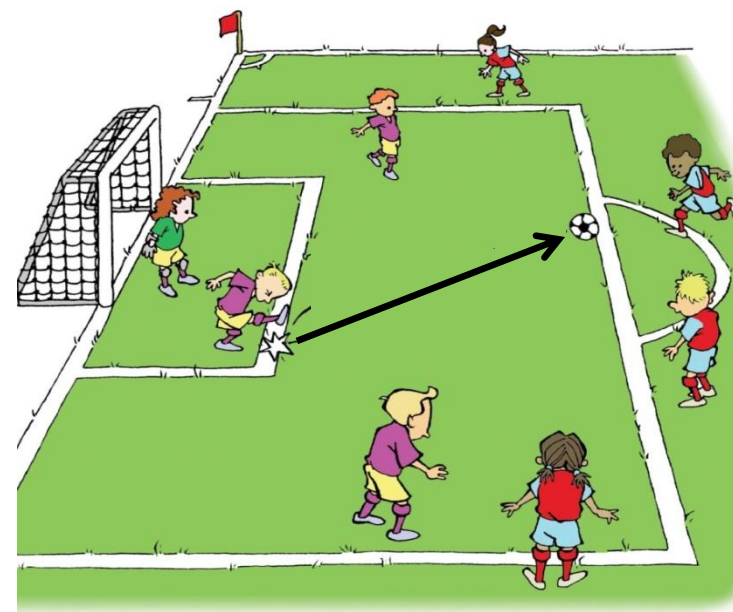


There are a few situations where the opposing players may be required to be more than or allowed to be less than the required minimum distance from the ball at the taking of a free kick.



Position Exceptions 1

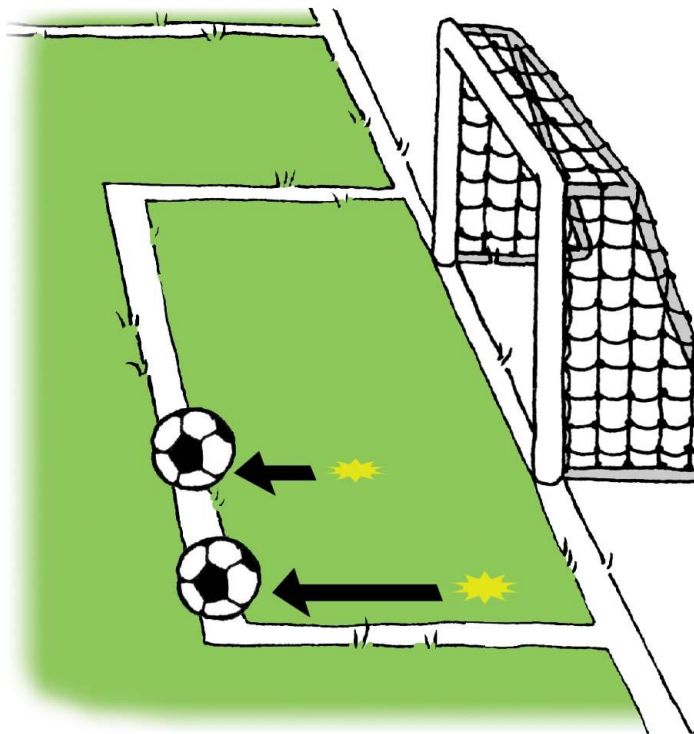
When a defensive team takes a free kick from inside their own Penalty Area.



Since the opposing players must be outside of the Penalty Area, the minimum distance oftentimes might be greater than the minimum required distance.

Position Exceptions 2

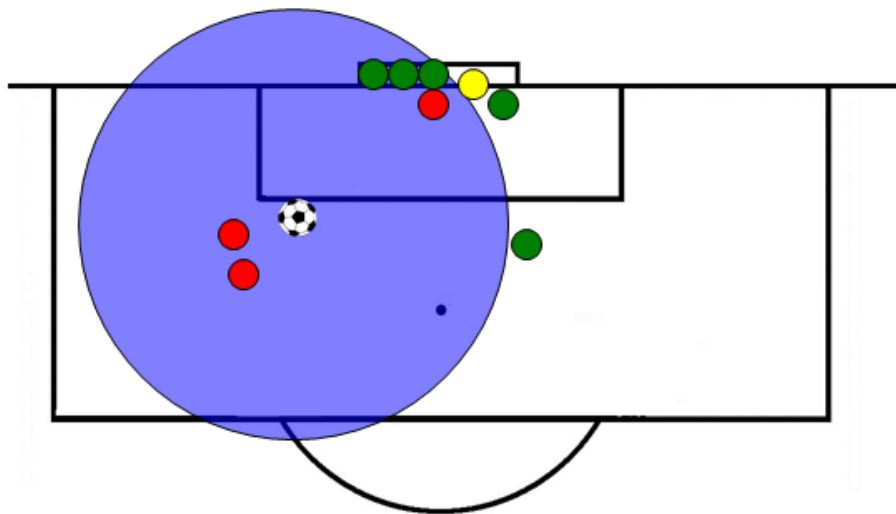
When an indirect free kick (IFK) has been awarded to the attacking team inside their opponent's goal area.



Here, the ball must be moved out to the goal area line.

The defenders are allowed to make a wall on the goal line between the goalposts.

Position Exceptions 2



All opposing players standing outside the goalposts, whether on the goal line or not, may not be closer than the minimum required distance away from the ball.

When the opposing players make a wall on the goal line between the goalposts, they might be closer than the minimum required distance away from the ball. This is allowed by the Law and is the only time an opponent may be closer than the minimum required distance.



Free Kick Management

There are also two types of management for free kicks, whether DFK or IFK

1) Quick Free Kick

A quick free kick is initiated by the kicking team and does not require involvement from the referee.

2) Ceremonial Free Kick

A ceremonial free kick restart should be used anytime the referee determines that the free kick must be delayed for any reason.



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Quick Free Kick

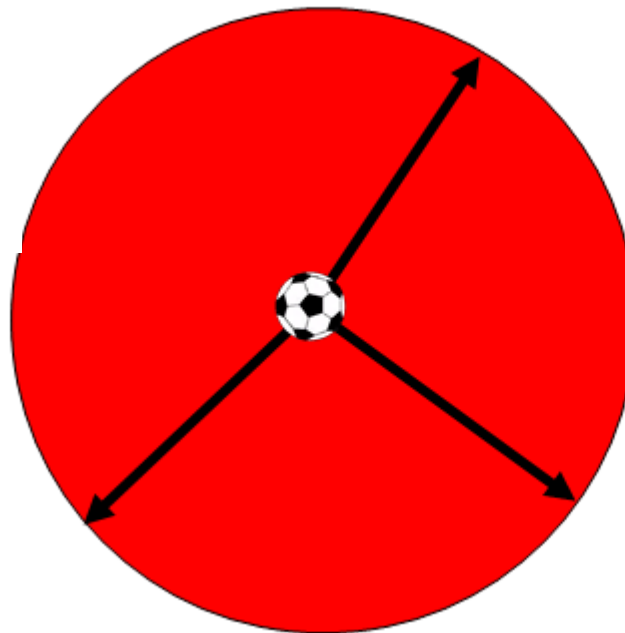
As stated before, Law 13 requires all opposing players quickly move away to the required distance without being directed by the referee.

But the team taking the free kick has the right to start play quickly even if one or more opponents have not yet moved back the required distance, provided all the other restart requirements of Law 13 have been met.

Player Position Encroachment

Encroachment is when opposing players do not respect the minimum required distance during the taking of a free kick.

Min. req'd
distance
in all
directions



Failure to
respect
the required
distance is a

**cautionable
offense**



Player Position Encroachment



An encroaching defender who tries to play the ball and makes contact with it, must be cautioned for not respecting the required distance and the free kick retaken.



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Quick Free Kick

As soon as the ball has been properly placed and is stationary, the attacking team is permitted to play the ball.

In the case of a quick free kick, the attacking team does not stop and ask for the opponent to back up the required distance

However, the referee should intervene immediately if an opponent is preventing the quick free kick from being taken and warn the defender (maybe caution) for delaying the restart of play.



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Quick Free Kick

If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and kicks the ball directly to an opponent, who is less than the minimum required distance from the ball, the referee should allow play to continue.

If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent, who is less than minimum required distance from the ball, deliberately prevents the player from taking the kick, the referee must stop play and warn (maybe caution) the defending player.



Ceremonial Free Kick

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There are times when a ceremonial free kick is necessary because the referee has determined that the restart must be delayed due to some reason considered more important than allowing the kick to be taken quickly.



Ceremonial Free Kick

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Examples of such reasons include:

- when the referee shows a card for misconduct,
- if a player was injured before or during the stoppage,
- when a legal substitution is requested,
- when a request is made by the attacking team to enforce the minimum distance,
- when an opponent prevents the quick free kick from being taken or
- for any other reason related to game or player management.



Ceremonial Free Kick

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Play must be restarted with a whistle

When the restart is ceremonial, the referee should inform all players to wait for the whistle to restart play and get visual or verbal confirmation that the kicker understands this.

When ready for play to continue, the referee signals for the restart by blowing the whistle.

If the ball is kicked before the referee's whistle, the kick must be retaken, and only when the referee is ready.



Walls

Defenders may form a wall to defend against free kicks.

If the wall is not at least the minimum distance away and the kicking team requests the proper distance, the referee should move the wall back and then the free kick becomes ceremonial.





Walls

Again, the referee should tell the kicker to wait for the whistle to restart play and get visual or verbal confirmation from the kicker that they understand.



The referee should then back up from the properly placed ball and indicate the required distance, so the wall of players can correctly adjust their position.



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Walls

After the wall is set the referee should move to their preferred position for the taking of the free kick.



When ready, only then should the referee signal for the restart by blowing the whistle.



Managing Free Kicks



When managing free kicks, referees can use preventative techniques to avoid potential problems and misconduct.

Some of these techniques include

- **having a presence near the free kick,**
- **being aware of the situation and the potential tactics that the teams might attempt,**
- **being proactive rather than reactive, and**
- **communicating with players, visually and/or verbally.**



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Free Kick Infringements



An indirect free kick (IFK) is awarded to the opposing team if the kicker taking the free kick touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player.



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Free Kick Infringements



On any free kick, if an encroaching opponent tries to play and makes contact with the ball, the opponent must be cautioned for not respecting the required distance and the free kick retaken.



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Free Kick Infringements



Remember, a free kick taken by the defending team from within their own penalty area, the ball must leave the penalty area (on the first touch) before it's in play.

If the kicker (or a teammate) touches the ball again before it leaves the penalty area, the kick is re-taken because the ball was not put in play.

When an attacker runs into the penalty area while the ball is still in the area and not yet in play, the referee must stop play, retake the free kick and warn (maybe caution) the attacker.



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Free Kick Infringements



During a ceremonial free kick, the referee must not whistle until and unless all opponents are the required minimum distance away.

If an opponent moves forward after the whistle but before the kick, the referee should stop play if this player makes contact with the ball.

The player is cautioned and the free kick retaken.

If there was no contact with the ball, the referee can let play continue and just verbally warn the opponent.



Review Question

78. A defender commits an indirect free kick offense against an opponent in the goal itself, while the ball is in-play. If the referee stops play, what is the correct restart?

- A. Dropped ball
- B. Indirect free kick
- C. Penalty kick
- D. Corner kick
- E. Goal Kick
- F. Direct free kick



Review Question

79. What action should the referee take if an opponent fails to respect the required distance by lunging toward and blocking a free kick?

- A. The player should be cautioned and the kick should be retaken
- B. Play should continue and the player should be cautioned at the next stoppage



Review Question

80. When should the referee allow for a quick free kick to be taken instead of requiring a ceremonial free kick?

- A. When the referee delays the taking of the free kick for any reason
- B. When the defending team is still within the required distance, but retreating from the ball, when the kicking team quickly takes the kick



Review Question

81. What is the correct restart if a player kicks the ball directly into the opponent's goal without it being touched by another player from an indirect free kick?

- A. Corner kick
- B. Goal kick
- C. Indirect free kick
- D. Kick-off