

Interpretation  
of the Laws of  
the Game and  
Guidelines for Referees

## Powers and duties

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The referee is authorised to stop play if, in his opinion, the floodlights are inadequate.

If an object thrown by a spectator hits the referee or one of the assistant referees or a player or team official, the referee may allow the match to continue, suspend play or abandon the match depending on the severity of the incident. He must, in all cases, report the incident(s) to the appropriate authorities.

The referee has the power to show yellow or red cards during the half-time interval and after the match has finished as well as during extra time and kicks from the penalty mark, since the match remains under his jurisdiction at these times.

If a referee is temporarily incapacitated for any reason, play may continue under the supervision of the assistant referees until the ball next goes out of play.

If a spectator blows a whistle and the referee considers the whistle interfered with play (e.g. a player picks up the ball with his hands, assuming that play has been stopped), the referee must stop the match and restart the play with a dropped ball from the position of the ball when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

If an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match, the referee must stop the match only if it interferes with play. Play must be restarted by a dropped ball from the position of the match ball when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

If an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match without interfering with play, the referee must have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Advantage

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The referee may play advantage whenever an infringement or offence occurs.

The referee should consider the following circumstances in deciding whether to apply the advantage or stop play:

- the severity of the offence: if the infringement warrants an expulsion, the referee must stop play and send off the player unless there is a subsequent opportunity to score a goal
- the position where the offence was committed: the closer to the opponent's goal, the more effective it can be
- the chances of an immediate, promising attack
- the atmosphere of the match

The decision to penalise the original offence must be taken within a few seconds.

If the offence warrants a caution, it must be issued at the next stoppage.

However, unless there is a clear advantage, it is recommended that the referee stops play and cautions the player immediately. If the caution is NOT issued at the next stoppage, it cannot be shown later.

## Injured players

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The referee must adhere to the following procedure when dealing with injured players:

- play is allowed to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in the opinion of the referee, only slightly injured
- play is stopped if, in the opinion of the referee, a player is seriously injured
- after questioning the injured player, the referee may authorise one, or at most two doctors, to enter the field of play to assess the injury and arrange the player's safe and swift removal from the field of play
- stretcher-bearers should only enter the field of play with a stretcher following a signal from the referee
- the referee must ensure an injured player is safely removed from the field of play
- a player is not allowed to receive treatment on the field of play
- any player bleeding from a wound must leave the field of play. He may not return until the referee is satisfied that the bleeding has stopped. A player is not permitted to wear clothing with blood on it
- as soon as the referee has authorised the doctors to enter the field of play, the player must leave the field of play, either on a stretcher or on foot. If a player does not comply, he must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour
- an injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted
- when the ball is in play, an injured player must re-enter the field of play from the touch line. When the ball is out of play, the injured player may re-enter from any of the boundary lines
- irrespective of whether the ball is in play or not, only the referee is authorised to allow an injured player to re-enter the field of play
- the referee may give permission for an injured player to return to the field of play if an assistant referee or the fourth official verifies that the player is ready

- if play has not otherwise been stopped for another reason, or if an injury suffered by a player is not the result of a breach of the Laws of the Game, the referee must restart play with a dropped ball from the position of the ball when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped
- the referee must allow for the full amount of time lost through injury to be played at the end of each period of play
- once the referee has decided to issue a card to a player who is injured and has to leave the field of play for treatment, the referee must issue the card before the player leaves the field of play

Exceptions to this ruling are to be made only when:

- a goalkeeper is injured
- a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need immediate attention
- players from the same team have collided and need immediate attention
- a severe injury has occurred, e.g. swallowed tongue, concussion, broken leg

### **More than one offence occurring at the same time**

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- Offences committed by two players from the same team:
  - the referee must punish the most serious offence when players commit more than one offence at the same time
  - play must be restarted according to the most serious offence committed
- Offences committed by players from different teams:
  - the referee must stop play and restart it with a dropped ball from the position of the ball at the time of the stoppage, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped

## Positioning with ball in play

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### Recommendations

- The play should be between the referee and the lead assistant referee
- The lead assistant referee should be within the referee's field of vision. The referee should use a wide diagonal system
- Staying towards the outside of the play makes it easier to keep play and the lead assistant referee within the referee's field of vision
- The referee should be close enough to see play without interfering with play
- "What needs to be seen" is not always in the vicinity of the ball. The referee should also pay attention to:
  - aggressive individual player confrontations off the ball
  - possible offences in the area towards which play is heading
  - offences occurring after the ball is played away

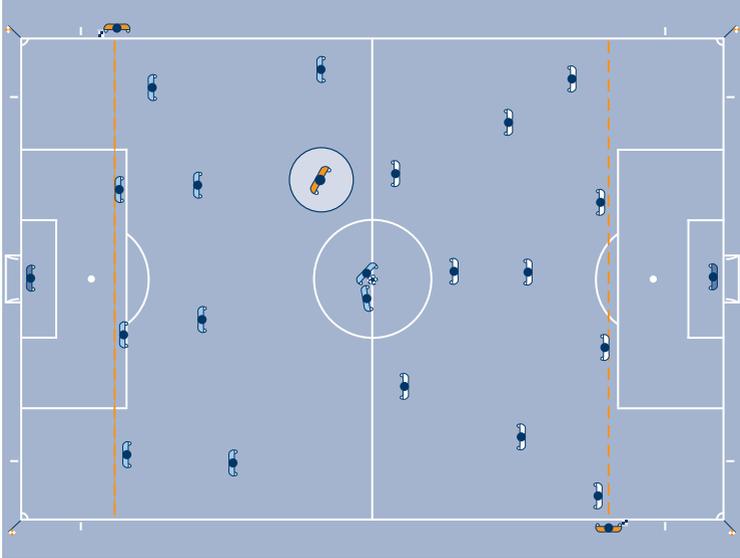
## Positioning in ball out of play situations

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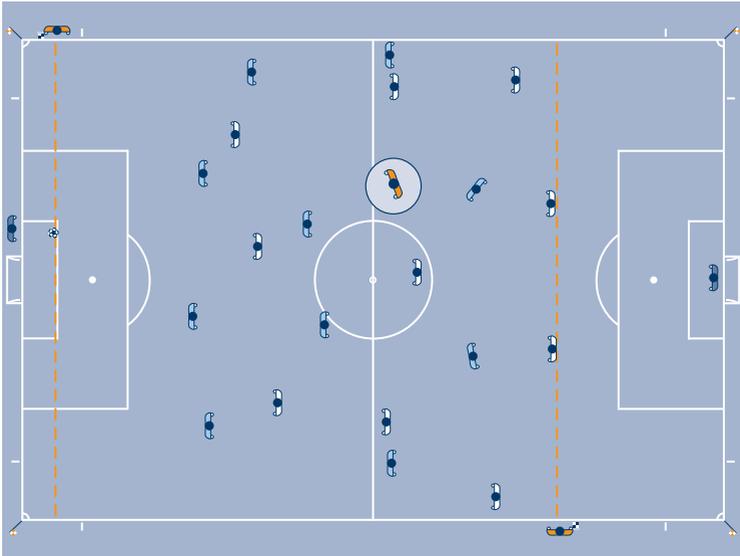
The best position is one from which the referee can make the right decision. All recommendations about positioning are based on probabilities and must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players and events in the match up to that point.

The positions suggested in the following graphics are basic and recommended to referees. The reference to a "zone" is intended to emphasise that every recommended position is actually an area within which the referee is most likely to optimise his effectiveness. The zone may be larger, smaller or differently shaped depending on circumstances at the moment in question.

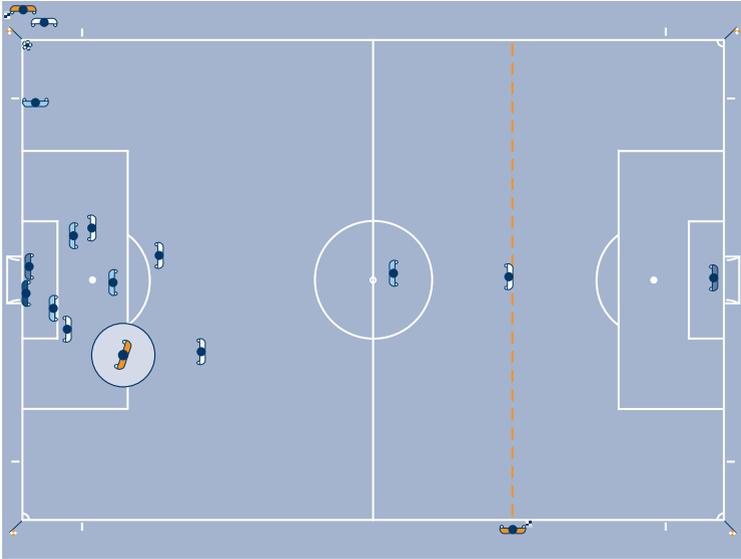
### 1. Positioning for the kick-off



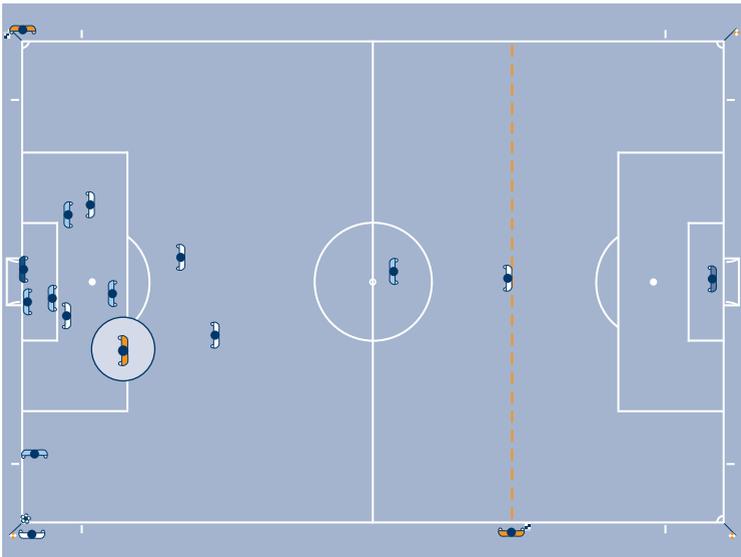
### 2. Positioning for a goal kick



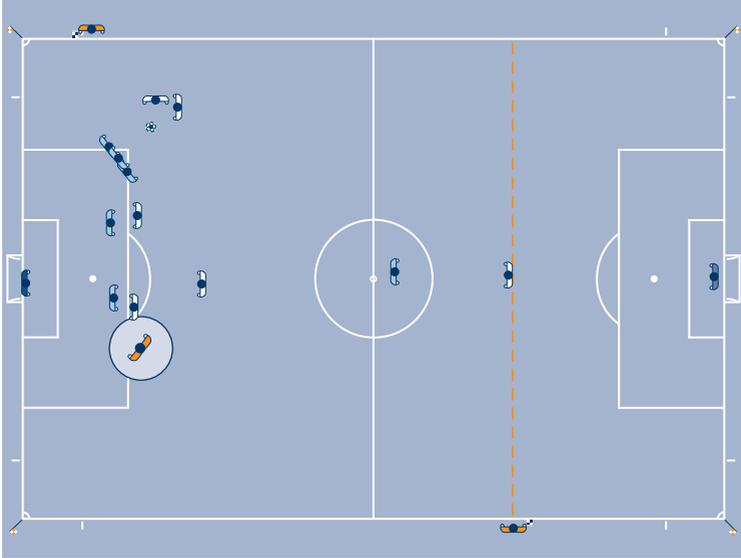
### 3. Positioning for a corner kick (1)



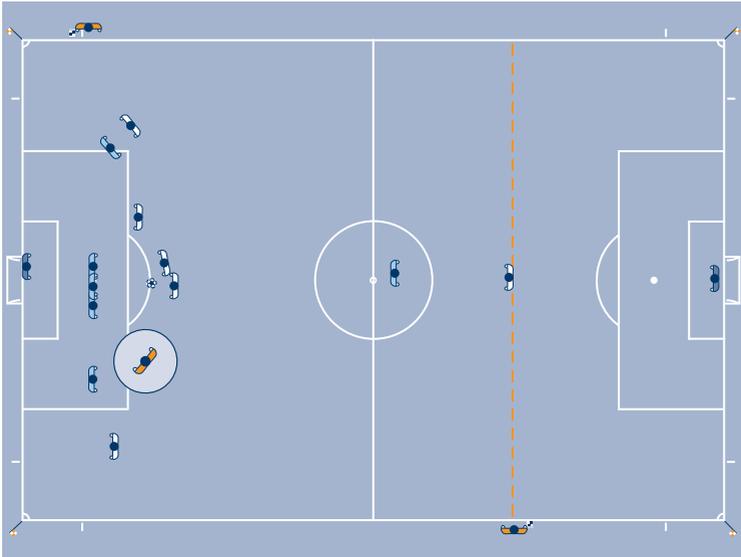
### 4. Positioning for a corner kick (2)



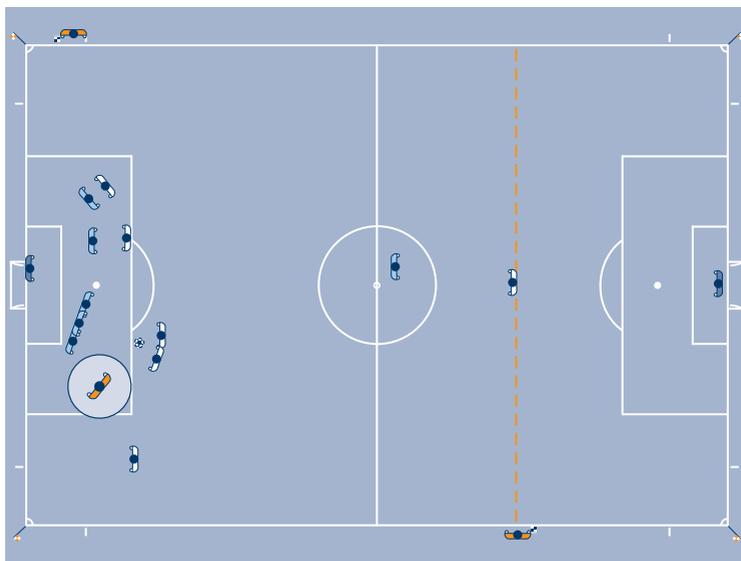
### 5. Positioning for a free kick (1)



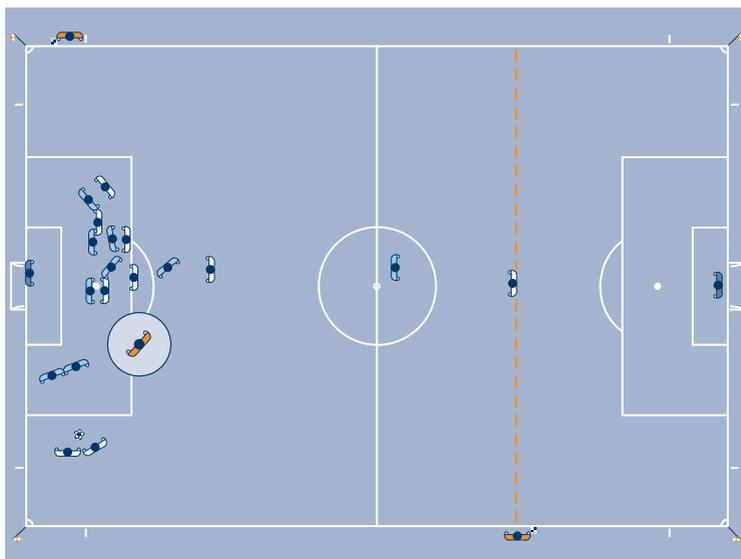
### 6. Positioning for a free kick (2)



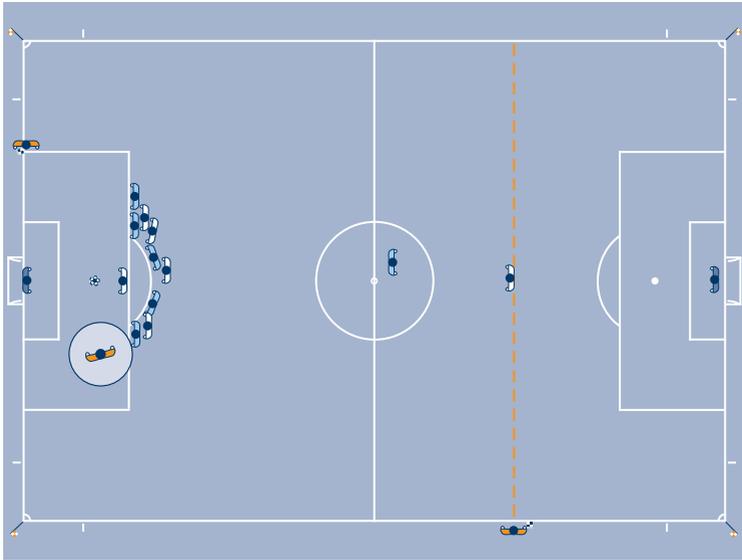
### 7. Positioning for a free kick (3)



### 8. Positioning for a free kick (4)



### 9. Positioning for a penalty kick





**Direct free kick**



**Advantage**



**Indirect free kick**



**Yellow card**



**Red card**

## Use of whistle

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The whistle is needed to:

- start play (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> half), after a goal
- stop play:
  - for a free kick or penalty kick
  - if the match is suspended or abandoned
  - when a period of play has ended due to the expiration of time
- restart play for:
  - free kicks when the appropriate distance is required
  - penalty kicks
- restart play after it has been stopped due to:
  - the issue of a yellow or red card for misconduct
  - injury
  - substitution

The whistle is NOT needed to:

- stop play for:
  - a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in
  - a goal
- restart play from:
  - a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, throw-in

A whistle which is used too frequently unnecessarily will have less impact when it is needed. When a discretionary whistle is needed to start play, the referee should clearly announce to the players that the restart may not occur until after that signal.

## Body language

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Body language is a tool that the referee uses to:

- help him control the match
- show authority and self-control

Body language is not:

- an explanation of a decision