

The authority of the referee

Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed.

Powers and duties

The Referee:

- enforces the Laws of the Game
- controls the match in cooperation with the assistant referees and, where applicable, with the fourth official
- ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2
- ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4
- acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match
- stops, suspends or abandons the match, at his discretion, for any infringements of the Laws
- stops, suspends or abandons the match because of outside interference of any kind
- stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that he is removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted
- allows play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured
- ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped
- allows play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalises the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time
- punishes the more serious offence when a player commits more than one offence at the same time
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences. He is not obliged to take this action immediately but must do so when the ball next goes out of play

- takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds
- acts on the advice of the assistant referees regarding incidents that he has not seen
- ensures that no unauthorised persons enter the field of play
- indicates the restart of the match after it has been stopped
- provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match

Decisions of the referee

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.

The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee or the fourth official, provided that he has not restarted play or terminated the match.

Decisions of the International F.A. Board

Decision 1

A referee (or where applicable, an assistant referee or fourth official) is not held liable for:

any kind of injury suffered by a player, official or spectator

any damage to property of any kind

any other loss suffered by any individual, club, company, association or other body, which is due or which may be due to any decision that he may take under the terms of the Laws of the Game or in respect of the normal procedures required to hold, play and control a match.

Such decisions may include:

- *a decision that the condition of the field of play or its surrounds or that the weather conditions are such as to allow or not to allow a match to take place*
- *a decision to abandon a match for whatever reason*
- *a decision as to the suitability of the field equipment and ball used during a match*
- *a decision to stop or not to stop a match due to spectator interference or any problem in spectator areas*
- *a decision to stop or not to stop play to allow an injured player to be removed from the field of play for treatment*
- *a decision to require an injured player to be removed from the field of play for treatment*
- *a decision to allow or not to allow a player to wear certain apparel or equipment*
- *a decision (where he has the authority) to allow or not to allow any persons (including team or stadium officials, security officers, photographers or other media representatives) to be present in the vicinity of the field of play*
- *any other decision that he may take in accordance with the Laws of the Game or in conformity with his duties under the terms of FIFA, confederation, member association or league rules or regulations under which the match is played*

Decision 2

In tournaments or competitions where a fourth official is appointed, his role and duties must be in accordance with the guidelines approved by the International F.A. Board, which are contained in this publication.

Decision 3

Where goal-line technology (GLT) is used (subject to the respective competition rules), the referee has the duty to test the technology's functionality before the match. The tests to be performed are set out in the FIFA Quality Programme for GLT Testing Manual. If the technology does not function in accordance with the Testing Manual, the referee must not use the GLT system and must report this incident to the respective authority.