



FA Walking Football LOTG 2025/26 EXPANDED &  
EXPLAINED

DRAFT VERSION 0.1 (MH&TN)

# Introduction

- The most recent version of the FA LOTG was released in Feb 2025.
- The main feedback and comments from everyone are the concerns of players interpreting the Laws to suit their needs, inconsistency of Referees and the incorrect explanations of the Laws by organisers.
- This is our attempt to help players, managers, coaches, clubs, and Referees get a better understanding of the Laws so we can try and get a more consistent approach across the country.
- This is by no means a fully expanded or explained version of the FA LOTG but looks at the main contentious/misinterpreted Laws that are modified across England by way of local amendment.
- This is not saying that local laws cannot be used, but this guidance is just covering the National FA Laws.

# FA Law 18 WALKING

- The Law is about Walking and relates to how a player moves around the pitch with or without possession of the ball.
- This includes on and off the ball from the first whistle including when the ball is dead. So many players still think that when a ball is dead and waiting for a kick in or corner to be taken, they can run into position, this can gain a player an advantage and therefore is illegal.
- For example, the ball goes out of play by just a short distance and a player runs to collect the ball place it on the side-line and takes a quick kick in. Other players who continued to walk may not have been able to get back into position and as such the player taking the kick in has gained an advantage from their run to collect the ball. Referees should be aware of this and ensure that the player waits to take their kick in so that all players have a reasonable opportunity to get into suitable positions without the need to run.

# FA Law 18 WALKING (Continued)

- Walking Definition: To advance or travel on foot at a moderate speed or pace; proceed by steps ; move by advancing the feet alternately with the heel down so that there is always one foot in contact with the ground.
- This does not mean just because you have one foot on the ground it's Walking. Jogging, skipping, hopping, dragging your feet or any combination of this is NOT Walking and should be penalised as such.
- There is NO Law that says you MUST have one foot on the ground, so yes Goalkeepers can dive and have both feet off the ground, yes you can jump from a stationary position to control the ball on your chest instead of your face. Yes, you can jump over the ball to allow it to travel on to a teammate
- **(FEB 2025 clarification,** A goalkeeper is exempt from this rule whilst in the action of making a save, for example diving or jumping with both feet off the ground)

# FA Law 18 WALKING (Continued)

- A good indicator for referees when making decisions on walking or not walking is the body position of the player. When adopting a gait akin to the speed walking technique a player is more upright and maintains a steady head position but when jogging the body position is leaning forward, the knees are bent, and the head moves up and down through the movement.



# Indicators for not walking



Upright stances with straighter legs more likely to be walking



Forward leaning stance, legs bent more likely not to be walking



# FA LAW 18

## Walking

### (Continued)

- Times when 'not walking' occurs
  - Poorly placed passes causes the recipient to chase the ball
  - Ball going out of play, player 'not walking' to keep it in play
  - Interceptions – players 'not walking' over short distances to intercept a pass or to come from behind a player to intercept before the ball arrives
  - Shooting – players quicken in pace for two or three strides in order to generate more power in their shots

# PENALTY AREAS / PENALTIES

- The Laws relating to the Penalty Area are probably the Laws that cause the most concern, disagreements etc.
- The penalty area is a semi-circle of 6m radius from the centre of the goal line. The penalty spot must be 6.5m out. **(Feb 2025 amendment)**
- If the Area is marked out as described by the FA LOTG, then a penalty is taken from the penalty mark which is 6.5m from the centre point of the goal, if plastic discs are used to mark the penalty area, then the ball should be placed 0.5m from the line.
- No need to add an extra metre or two as some referees seem to have adopted.



# The award of a penalty

a defending player deliberately enters their own penalty area

a goalkeeper committing any of the seven sending off offences within their penalty area

a goalkeeper deliberately exits their own penalty area

denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within their own penalty area)

denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick

the opposition accumulating a fourth team 'not walking' count

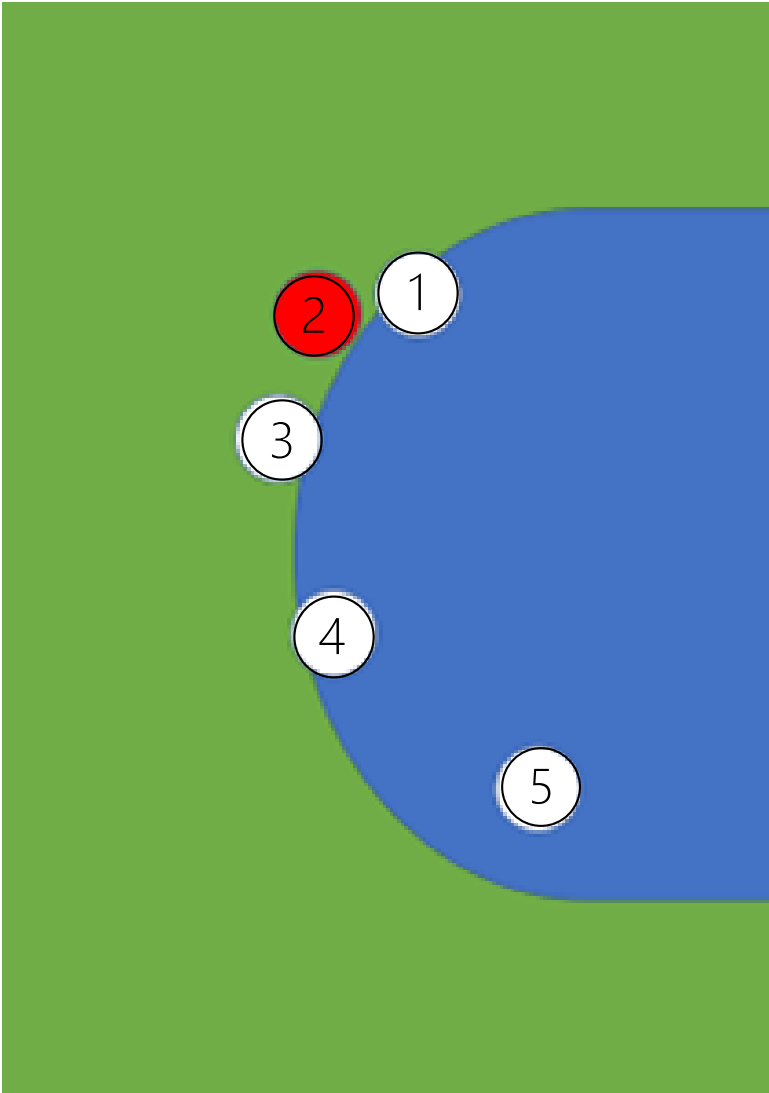
# PENALTY AREAS / PENALTIES

One contentious part of the penalty area is you must imagine there is an invisible wall up from the line, if a defender or attacker attempts to kick the ball in the air but inside the area, they have crossed the invisible line so should be penalised, the same if a keeper reaches to grab a ball in the air but outside the area.

The penalty area line is NOT in open play and belongs to the penalty area. However:-

Outfield players can be penalised if when standing on the line they are doing so deliberately and gaining an advantage.

**Feb 2025 clarification.** A ball on the line is in a 'neutral zone' and can be played by either an attacker, defender or goalkeeper if they remain within their designated playing area.



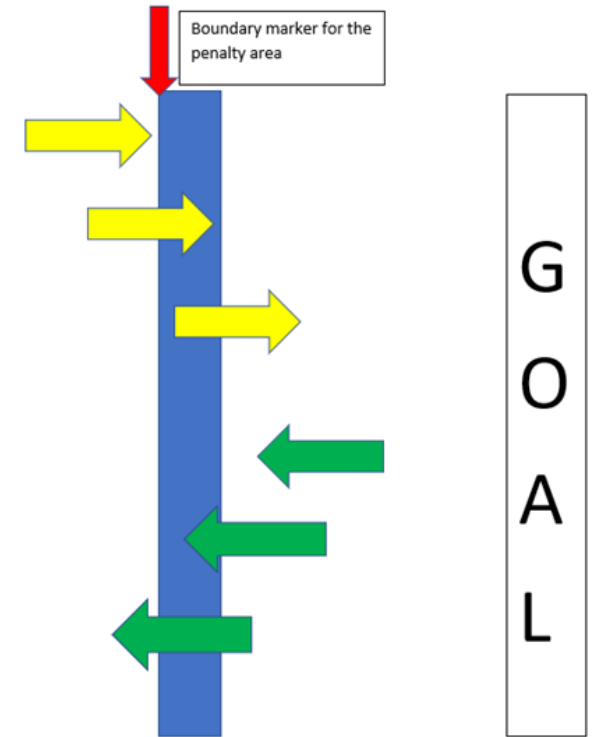
# Ball Inside the Penalty Area

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- All the white balls are classed as being inside the penalty area. Outfield players may play the part of the white balls in the general field of play but must not touch the penalty area line in doing so.
- Likewise, the goalkeeper's hands must not go beyond the boundary of the penalty area when handling balls 1,3 and 4.
- Only the red ball is classed as outside the penalty area

# Players inside the penalty area

- Yellow = outfield player from top to bottom
- outside the area
- inside the area
- inside the area
- Green = goalkeeper from top to bottom
- Inside the area
- Inside the area
- Outside the area



# The Penalty Kick

## Penalty Kicks

This Law is no longer one step or 1m. The player taking the penalty must start their approach with both feet on the ground no more than two metres from the ball.

So as long as the kicker stays within the 2m distance they can take as many steps as they like in their approach to the ball.



# DOGSO



Under Law 12 (Temporary Dismissals)

C8 and C9 result in the award of a penalty kick and blue card for the offender.

C8 Denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within their own penalty area)

C9 Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the players goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick and that particular offence is not deemed to be reckless or using excessive force.

# Height Restriction

let's get away from calling this part of law 'Head Height'. Players come in all shapes and sizes so let's use height restriction as the correct phraseology.

This Law is the same as a ball over the side line or goal line, so if the FULL ball must be over the line to be a dead ball. The FULL ball must be over the height restriction limit to be dead and deemed a high ball. The majority deem the 6ft/cross bar as the height restriction, so a ball skimming the head of a 5ft player is NOT a high ball.

Not a High Ball



High Ball



Not a High Ball



Height Restrictions



# Height Restriction

- The height restriction should be identified before each game commences and can vary due to the facility or goal size being used.
- It should be a maximum of 2m or crossbar height.
- Most facilities have futsal style goals and use the crossbar as the indicator.
- Some facilities have smaller 'letterbox' style goals so 2m is used or in some facilities the height of a barrier surrounding the pitch.



# Height restriction

Remember a DEAD ball is out of play, you wouldn't shout play on if a ball clearly went over the side line so why would you call play on if it clearly was a high ball exceeding the height restriction.

An indirect free kick is taken from where the ball was last touched before it went on to exceed the height restriction apart from when it is deflected above the height restriction by a goalkeeper making a block or save. When this happens the game restarts with a kick in or roll in from the sideline nearest to the point where the ball was deflected above the height restriction.

If a Goalkeeper kicks or throws a high ball an indirect freekick is given 3 metres outside the area, nearest the point it left the area.

# Height restriction - Exception

When the ball exceeds the height restriction following a save or block performed by a goalkeeper, play then restarts with a kick in or roll in from the sideline by the opposition at the nearest point to where the ball was deflected high.

If in the process of making a block or save, as soon as the ball goes above the height restriction the ball is out of play, if it ends up back in the field of play, if it ends up in the goal, ( it's NO Goal ), if it goes over the crossbar, all result in a side line restart. Wherever the ball ends up after a high ball it's out of play (left the field of play)

If the ball goes wide and crosses the line before it goes above the designated height restriction, it's a corner as it's out of play once it crosses the line





- Ball going wide after a save by the keeper = a Corner kick

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- Goalkeeper tips the ball over the bar whilst making a save. NO CORNER- restart with a sideline kick in or roll in by the opposing team.





# THE 'BACK PASS' RULE

After the goalkeeper has distributed the ball, they can only receive a pass if the ball has either touched an opponent or if the ball has been touched by at least two of their teammates.

. Player- Goalkeeper- Player is okay

Goalkeeper – player – Goalkeeper is NOT okay

# THE 'BACK PASS' RULE



Goalkeeper passes to a teammate who passes directly back is an offence



Player passes back to goalkeeper who then passes straight back to the same player is no offence

# Non Contact

All tackles should be carried out in a safe manner and should be penalised if they are careless, reckless or use excessive force. The safety of players is paramount.

Players Cannot slide tackle, tackle from behind or back into players when in possession. All of these challenges are deemed at least to be a careless challenge and therefore a free kick should be awarded.

When it comes to the tackle from behind a very simple approach for both players and Referee's to adopt "if a player can see any part of an opponent's back, he/she is behind their opponent, therefore they have no right to attempt a tackle". All tackles from behind are deemed at least careless so should be penalised. A tackle from the side is acceptable if they are not careless, reckless or use excessive force.

Players should not be using deliberate physical force in an effort to win possession of the ball when attempting to tackle an opponent





## Non Contact

- Tackling from the side in a safe and fair manner. There may be some accidental or incidental contact by the arms but there is no offence being shown here.



## Non Contact

- Red player coming in from the side using their body weight to assist in gaining possession. The use of this force should be deemed a careless challenge and penalized. The use of the force could cause the player in black to lose balance and possibly fall.



# Free Kicks

All Free Kicks are INDIRECT.

A Goal cannot be scored directly from a free kick in Walking Football.

The laws state that a goal can only be scored if the ball is played by another player first.

So, if a player taking an indirect free kick shoots at goal looking to get a deflection off a defender or goalkeeper, they can be penalised by the referee for acting in a careless manner.

# Free Kicks

All opponents must be 3m away from where the kick is being taken. This includes when they stand alongside or behind the ball. They **MUST** be 3m away. Referees should always ensure that this is done in order to provide the maximum advantage to the attacking team. All attackers must be at least 1m away from any defensive 'wall'.

When an offence takes place within 3m of the goal area against the defending team. The free kick must be moved back sufficient distance so that the defending team can take up positions 3m away from the kick without being in their own goal area. So referees should position the ball 3m outside of the goal area using the goal area line as the indicator for where defenders are allowed to take up their positions but not on the goal area line.



# Goal Clearance, returning the ball back into play



A Goalkeeper can only deliver the ball back into play by an under arm roll in or kicking the ball from a stationary position from anywhere within the area when making a goal clearance after the ball has been out of play.

The ball may be kicked by the goalkeeper when it is moving in open play.

NO DROPKICKS or SIDEWINDER throws. Any offence is penalised by a free kick 3m outside the area nearest to where the offence occurred.

# Kick-in/Roll-in



The Ball must be Stationary on the touch line

It may be kicked or rolled in any direction

The player must have part of each foot on the touchline or on the ground outside the touchline at the moment of kicking/rolling the ball.

They must use an underarm action when rolling the ball in.



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# Walking Football Leagues Alliance

- FA Walking Football LOTG 2025 EXPANDED & EXPLAINED

- **Acknowledgements;**
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