



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION

The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

“RETURN TO SOCCER” PLAN

Phase 2 - RETURN TO MODIFIED GAMES

June 2020 – Rules of Play



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Introduction

The Modified Games Rules of Play are designed to provide consistency to any games controlled by certified referees under the Alberta Soccer Phase 2 – Return to Modified Games Plan. The Rules are a hybrid combination of Alberta Soccer Outdoor 8v8 Rules and IFAB 2019-20 Laws of the Game.

Flexibility for competitions is allowed, where practical, to enable the game to be played based on what conditions or circumstances may apply during the COVID-19 pandemic in any particular jurisdiction. Any modifications should be limited to – Rules 1,2,3 or 7 only. Modifications within those specific rules do not require approval from Alberta Soccer, but must be clearly communicated to all participants.

Rule 1: Field of Play

The recommended range of field sizes is - 60 - 75 meters length X 42 - 50 meters width. This may be determined by the number of players per side (7v7, 8v8, 9v9).

For practical reasons this may not always be possible, and games could be played, for example across the width of a regular soccer pitch. However, the internal markings should remain the same.

The ideal goal size is 1.8 meters / 6 feet (H) x 5.4 meters / 18 feet (w), however; the size of goals could be standard portable goals from manufacturers which tend to be approximately 3.6 meters (12 ft) wide X 1.9 meters (6.5 ft) high.

Goal nets should be used, provided that they are properly supported, and do not interfere with the goalkeeper.

Portable goals may be used but must be securely anchored to the ground.

Corner flag posts are optional. If they are used, they must be at least 1.5 m (5 ft) high, with a non-pointed top.

The goal area and penalty area are one and the same and will be referred to as the penalty Area.

Field Markings:

Fields should be marked by distinctive lines not more than fifteen (15) centimeters wide.

The field is divided into two halves by the halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the touchlines. A centre mark is marked at the midpoint of the halfway line.

A circle with a radius of 5m (6 yards) may be marked around the center mark; however, this marking is not mandatory.

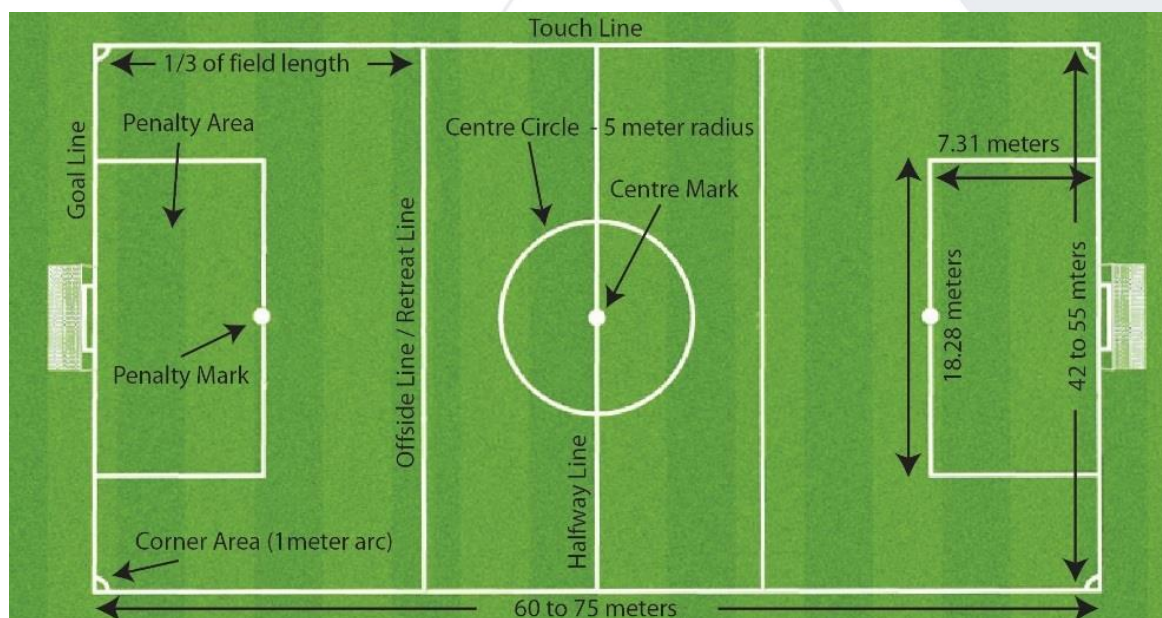
An offside line parallel to the halfway line should be marked from touch line to touch line at the attacking third mark. This may be a line on the field or marked with cones or flag posts placed 1m outside the touchline.

An arc with a radius of 1m may be marked at the Corner Area – however this marking is not mandatory.

The Penalty Area is defined at each end of the field as follows:

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 7.31 meters (8 yards) and are joined by a 18.28 meter (20 yard) line drawn parallel with a goal line.

The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. On the edge of each penalty area a **penalty mark** is made 7.31 meters (8 yards) from the midpoint between the goalposts.



Rule 2: The Ball

The ball shall be spherical and constructed of material which is not dangerous to the players. The ball may not be replaced without the referee's permission. The size of the ball (size 4 or 5) will be determined by the Rules of the Competition (league).

If the ball becomes defective, it should be replaced, and play will restart with a dropped ball.

Rule 3: Number of Players

The game shall be played by two teams, one of whom shall be a goalkeeper. The number of players, including minimum numbers to start or continue a game will be decided by the Rules of the Competition (league).

Substitution Procedure

- To replace a player with a substitute, the following must be observed: the referee must be informed before any substitution is made
- the player being substituted receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless already off the field
- the player being replaced is not obliged to leave at the halfway line

The substitute only enters:

- during a stoppage in play
- at the halfway line
- after the player being replaced has left
- after receiving a signal from the referee

Extra persons on the field of play

The coach and other officials named on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are team officials. Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is an outside agent.

If a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player or outside agent enters the field of play the referee must:

- only stop play if there is interference with play
- have the person removed when play stops
- take appropriate disciplinary action

If play is stopped and the interference was by:

- a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player, play restarts with a direct free kick or penalty kick
- an outside agent, play restarts with a dropped ball. If a ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the ball enters the opponents' goal.

Goal scored with an extra person on the field of play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realizes, before play restarts, an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- the referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:
 - > a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of the team that scored the goal
 - > an outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'extra persons on the field of play'

Play is restarted with a goal kick, corner kick or dropped ball.

- the referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:
 - > a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of

- the team that conceded the goal
- > an outside agent who did not interfere with play

In all cases, the referee must have the extra person removed from the field of play.

If, after a goal is scored and play has restarted, the referee realizes an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, the goal cannot be disallowed. If the extra person is still on the field the referee must:

- stop play
- have the extra person removed
- restart with a dropped ball or free kick as appropriate

The referee must report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

Rule 4: Players' Equipment

Safety

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous. All items of jewellery (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewellery is not permitted.

The players must be inspected before the start of the match and substitutes before they enter the field of play. If a player is wearing or using unauthorised/ dangerous equipment or jewellery, the referee must order the player to:

- remove the item
- leave the field of play at the next stoppage if the player is unable or unwilling to comply

A player who refuses to comply or wears the item again must be cautioned.

Compulsory equipment

The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- a shirt with sleeves
- shorts
- socks
- shin guards – these must be made of a suitable material to provide reasonable protection and covered by the socks
- footwear

Goalkeepers may wear tracksuit bottoms.

A player whose footwear or shin guard is lost accidentally must replace it as soon as possible and no later than when the ball next goes out of play; if before doing so the player plays the ball and/or scores a goal, the goal is awarded.

Colours

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the match officials
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours that are distinguishable from the other players and the match officials
- If the two goalkeepers' shirts are the same colour and neither has another shirt, the referee allows the match to be played

Other equipment

Non-dangerous protective equipment, for example headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material is permitted as are goalkeepers' caps and sports spectacles.

Head covers

Where head covers (excluding goalkeepers' caps) are worn, they must:

- be in keeping with the professional appearance of the player's equipment
- not be attached to the shirt
- not be dangerous to the player wearing it or any other player (e.g. opening/ closing mechanism around neck)
- not have any part(s) extending out from the surface (protruding elements)

Additional Guidance on Player Equipment

Casts: Players wearing a hard cast are NOT permitted to play, even if it is padded.

Players wearing a soft cast may be permitted to play if the cast does not present a danger to him/herself or any other player. The soft cast must not contain any hard material.

The referee (or a Supervisor of Officials if one has been appointed to the match or competition) will make the final decision as to the acceptability of any soft cast.

Rule 5: Referees

As per the IFAB Laws of the Game.

Rule 6: Assistant Referees

If used, as per the IFAB Laws of the Game.

Rule 7: Duration of the Game

The game shall be divided into two equal halves. The length of halves will be determined by the published Rules of the Competition (league).

Rule 8: Start & Restart of Play

Kick off

A kick-off starts both halves of a match, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored.

- the team that wins the toss of a coin decides which goal to attack in the first half or to take the kick-off.
- depending on the above, their opponents take the kick-off or decide which goal to attack in the first half.
- the team that decided which goal to attack in the first half takes the kick-off to start the second half
- for the second half, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals
- after a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by their opponents

For every kick-off:

- all players with the exception of the player taking the kick must be in their own half of the field of play
- the opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 5m (6 yds) from the ball until it is in play
- the ball must be stationary on the centre mark
- the referee gives a signal

- the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves in any direction
- a goal may be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off

Dropped Ball

For any stoppage not mentioned in these Rules, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball. A goal may not be scored directly from a dropped ball.

Procedure

- The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:
 - the ball was in the penalty area or
 - the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area
 - In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent or, as outlined in Rule 9, a match official
 - All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4 m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play
- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

Offences and sanctions

The ball is dropped again if it:

- touches a player before it touches the ground
- leaves the field of play after it touches the ground, without touching a player

If a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- a goal kick if it enters the opponents' goal
- a corner kick if it enters the team's goal

Retreat Line (U12 and Younger ONLY)

The **Retreat Line** will come into effect in two situations during the game:

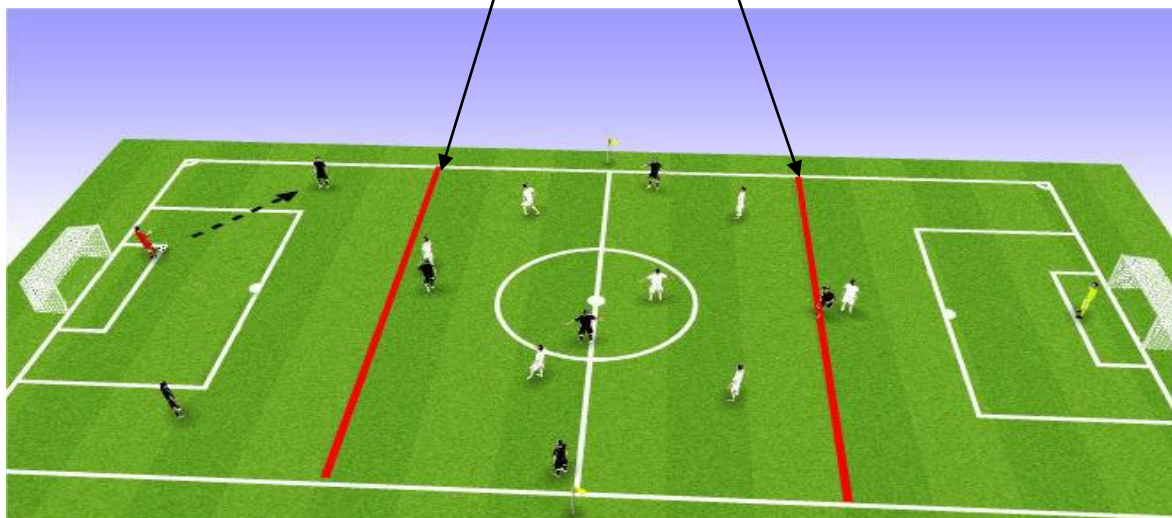
- Goal Kick
- Free Kick to the defending team within its own penalty area

At these two restarts, the opposing team is required to move beyond the Retreat Line. The player taking the kick can then pass the ball to one of his team-mates without the pressure of an opposing player nearby. When the **ball is in play**, the play will resume as normal and the "opposing" team can move inside the Retreat Line.

If a member of the opposing team comes inside the Retreat Line before the **ball is in play** and interferes with play, the Referee will stop play and the restart will be retaken.

Players can choose to play the ball long if they wish.

Retreat Line – U12 & younger only



Rule 9: Ball in and out of Play

Ball out of play

The ball is out of play when:

- it has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the referee
- it touches a match official, remains on the field of play and:
 - a team starts a promising attack or
 - the ball goes directly into the goal or
 - the team in possession of the ball changes

In all these cases, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Ball in play

The ball is in play at all other times when it touches a match official and when it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flag post and remains on the field of play.

Rule 10: Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence or infringement of the Rules of the Game has been committed by the team scoring the goal.

If the goalkeeper throws the ball directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded.

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Rule 11: Offside

The offside rule is in effect in the attacking 3rd of the field. This line may be marked as a dotted line, and solid line or single cones or flags on the touch line. Coaches from both teams should bring cones to mark this line in the event that the attacking 3rd line is not clearly marked on the field.

Offside Position:

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

A player is in an offside position if:

- He or she is nearer to their opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent

A player is not in an offside position if:

- He or she is not in the attacking third of the field of play
- He or she is level with the second-last opponent or
- He or she is level with the last two opponents

Offence:

A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play or
- Interfering with an opponent or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position

No Offence:

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- A goal kick
- A throw-in
- A corner kick

Infringements and Sanctions:

In the event of an offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the offside offence occurred.

Rule 12: Fouls and Misconduct

Fouls and misconduct are penalized as per the IFAB Laws of the Game:

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- Charges
- Jumps at
- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses:

- A handball offence (except for the goalkeeper within their own penalty area)
- Holds an opponent
- Impedes an opponent with contact
- Bites or spits at someone
- throws an object at the ball, an opponent or a match official, or makes contact with the ball with a held object

A direct free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper commits any of the following offenses:

- controls the ball with the hand/arm for more than six seconds before releasing it
- touches the ball with the hand/arm after releasing it and before it has touched another player
- touches the ball with the hand/arm, unless the goalkeeper has clearly kicked or attempted to kick the ball to release it into play, after:
 - it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate
 - receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referees, a player:

- plays in a dangerous manner
- impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made
- is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures or other verbal offences
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it

commits any other offence, not mentioned in the Laws, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player

An indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred

Disciplinary Sanctions:

The yellow card communicates a caution and the red card communicates a sending off.

The red card is used to communicate that a player, substitute or substituted player has been sent off. Any player receiving a red card may not play for the remainder of the game.

- In U12 games and younger, the team will not play shorthanded if a player is sent off and the offending player may be substituted.
- In U13-19 games and adult games, the sent-off player may not be replaced, and the team plays short for the remainder of the game.

Only a player, substitute, substituted player or team official may be shown the red or yellow card.

The referee has the authority to take disciplinary action from entering the field of play for the pre-match inspection until leaving the field of play after the match ends.

Cautionable Offences

A player who commits a cautionable or sending-off offence, either on or off the field of play, whether directed towards an opponent, a team-mate, the referee, an assistant referee or any other person, is disciplined according to the nature of the offence committed.

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

- delaying the restart of play
- dissent by word or action
- entering, re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission
- failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- persistent offences (no specific number or pattern of offences constitutes 'persistent')
- unsporting behaviour

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if guilty of:

- delaying the restart of play
- dissent by word or action
- entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission
- unsporting behaviour

For cautionable offences for team officials, refer to the IFAB 2019-20 Laws of the Game.

For additional cautionable offences see COVID Related Rules and Precautions (page 15)

Sending Off Offences

A player, substitute or substituted player who commits any of the following offences is sent off:

- denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick (unless as outlined below)
- serious foul play
- biting or spitting at someone
- violent conduct
- using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- receiving a second caution in the same match

Denying a goal or obvious goalscoring opportunity

Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.

Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:

- The offence is holding, pulling or pushing - or
- The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball - or

- The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc.)

In all the above circumstances the player is sent off.

The following must be considered in the case of Denying an Obvious Goalscoring Opportunity:

- distance between the offence and the goal
- general direction of the play
- likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
- location and number of defenders

A player, substitute or substituted player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area. **Youth players must remain under supervision of a responsible adult.**

For sending off offences for team officials, refer to the IFAB 2019-20 Laws of the Game.

For additional sending-off offences see COVID Related Rules and Precautions (page 15)

Rule 13: Free Kick

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player guilty of an offence. Free kicks are taken from where the offence occurred, with the following exceptions:

- indirect free kicks to the attacking team for an offence inside the opponents' penalty area are taken from the nearest point on the penalty area line which runs parallel to the goal line
- any free kick to the defending team for an offence inside their own penalty area may be taken from any point in the penalty area,

The ball must be stationary and is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves, including a free kick from within a team's own penalty area.

Until the ball is in play, all opponents must remain:

- 5m (6 yards) from the ball)
- Outside the penalty area for all free kicks inside the opponents' penalty area.
- **For U12 'Retreat Line' – see Rule 8.**
- If, when a free kick is taken, an attacking team player is less than 1 m (1 yd) from a 'wall' formed by three or more defending team players, an indirect free kick is awarded to the defending team.

Indirect free kick signal

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising the arm above the head; this signal is maintained until the kick has been taken and it is clear that a goal will not be scored directly from the free kick.

An indirect free kick must be retaken if the referee fails to signal that the kick is indirect, and the ball is kicked directly into the goal.

- if a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded
- if an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded
- if a direct or indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded

Rule 14: Penalty Kick

A penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark. All players, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, shall be outside the penalty area but within the field of play, and not less than 6 yards from the ball (and behind the ball) until it has been kicked.

The goalkeeper remains on his/her goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.

The player taking the penalty kick must not touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player.

Play shall be extended at half-time, or at full-time to allow a penalty kick to be taken. In the event that time is extended, play shall end when the kick is complete.

For offences and sanctions at penalty kicks, please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game.

Rule 15: Throw in

A throw-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

Players taking a throw in shall stand facing the field of play and have part of both feet on the ground, on or behind the touch line. The thrower shall use both hands to throw the ball from behind and over their head. The ball shall be in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

Players taking a throw in must not touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

All opponents must stand at least 2m (2 yds) from the point on the touchline where the throw-in is to be taken.

Rule 16: Goal Kick

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored.

The ball shall be kicked into play from any point in the penalty area.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

At the taking of a goal kick, all opponents must be outside the penalty area and 5m (6 yards) from the ball, until the ball is in play. **For U12 'Retreat Line' – see Rule 8.**

The player taking the goal kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.



Rule 17: Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored.

The corner kick shall be taken within the corner area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. All opponents shall be not less than 5m (6 yards) from the ball until it has been kicked.

The player taking the corner kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.



COVID Related Rules and Precautions

General

In the Alberta Soccer Return to Modified Games Plan, there are requirements by Alberta Health Services and Alberta Soccer that are in place to ensure that the health and safety of the participants is protected as much as possible during COVID-19. The plan and its requirements **MUST** be followed to ensure that we are continued to be allowed to play soccer and that we can hopefully return to 'normal' soccer soon.

Authority of the Referee

The referee has the authority to – stop, suspend or terminate the match for any for any breach of the requirements of the Return to Modified Games plan by participants or spectators.

COVID Related Spitting Offences

- Spitting AT any person will remain a sending off offence, as per the IFAB Laws of the Game.
- For all other types of spitting, if a player, substitute or team official is seen to be spitting or clearing nasal passages on or around the field of play, or if a goalkeeper is seen to be spitting on their gloves:
 - The first incident will result in a verbal warning to the individual.
 - The second incident by that same person will result in a Yellow Card (Caution) for Unsporting Behavior.
 - The third incident by the same person will result in a second Yellow Card (Caution) and therefore a Red Card and dismissal from the game.
- **Note – spitting on the field or spitting on gloves will be an in-game suspension only and no further sanction will be administered by competitions. The player's team will not play short as a result of the COVID spitting offence.**

COVID Related Cautionable Offences

- A player, substitute, substituted player or team official who yells AT another person is cautioned. This does not include yelling instructions etc., which are a normal part of soccer, but should be used when the yelling is considered a health risk under COVID-19. If the yelling AT another person is excessive or persistent, the player should be sent off.

COVID Related Sending-Off Offences

- Any players who are involved in a physical altercation will be sent off. If the altercation involves more than two players, the game will be terminated.
- A player, substitute, substituted player or team official who yells AT another person in a manner to considered by the referee to be excessive or persistent is sent off.

The sanction for sending off for physical altercations will be determined based on the review of the referee's report by a league discipline panel or officer.



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