



To: National Referees  
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Subject: **Kicks from the Penalty Mark Checklist**

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In many parts of the country, tournaments are starting to occur and often their rules include requirements for breaking ties. However, information about the mechanics and procedures involved in taking kicks from the penalty mark to break a tie is spread across several sources:

- the Laws of the Game,
- the new “Interpretation and Guidelines” section of the Laws of the Game published by FIFA (and available on the USSF website under “Laws of the Game”),
- Advice to Referees, and
- earlier memoranda distributed by US Soccer Referee Department.

The following checklist of responsibilities, guidelines, and procedures is provided as a useful single source of guidance for referees who need to conduct this process. The checklist begins at the top of the next page to facilitate printing out just the checklist.



## **Kicks From The Penalty Mark Checklist**

*(References below to “regular play” include any additional periods of play required by the competition authority as a means of breaking a tie prior to the use of kicks from the penalty mark. References to “round” mean the entire set of eligible players for a team.)*

### **Before the conclusion of regular play**

- Cover in the pregame basic requirements for this procedure
- In competitions using unlimited substitution rules, remind both coaches at a convenient stoppage (e.g., between the first and second additional periods of play) that:
  - Only players on the field at the end of regular play will be eligible to participate in kicks from the mark
  - Eligible players must be kept separate from ineligible players when regular play ends

### **Between the conclusion of regular play and the taking of the first kick**

- The “kicks from the penalty mark” phase of the match begins immediately upon the conclusion of regular play and includes the activities described in this section
- Determine the number of eligible players for each team
  - Eligible players include any players temporarily off the field with the permission or at the direction of the referee (e.g., receiving treatment, correcting equipment, bleeding, or blood on the uniform who have not been substituted with the permission of the referee)
  - A player temporarily off the field at the end of regular play who is declared unable to return after regular play has ended but before the first kick from the mark is taken may not be substituted for and will reduce the number of eligible players for that team
- If, based on this determination, the teams are of unequal numbers, the team with more eligible players must “reduce to equate”
  - The captain of the team with the greater number must identify the player(s) to be excluded from participating in kicks from the penalty mark as a means of making equal the number of eligible players on each team
  - The excluded player(s) must join team officials and substitutes in the technical area
- Allow eligible players to receive water, treatment, equipment repair, or other such assistance on the field near their bench. Team officials may temporarily enter the field but must exit the field when directed by the referee.
- Decide which end of the field will be used for this procedure

- The senior assistant referee takes a position at the intersection of the goal line and the goal area line
- The other assistant referee will be located in the center circle
- Conduct a coin toss (winner chooses which team will kick first)
- At the conclusion of the break time set by the competition authority, ensure that only eligible players remain on the field
  - Defending goalkeeper properly positioned at the goal
  - Non-defending goalkeeper at the intersection of the goal line and the penalty area line behind the senior assistant referee
  - All others off the field (substitutes and team officials in their respective technical areas)

**During kicks from the penalty mark (from the first kick onward)**

- All eligible players (including the goalkeeper) must conform with the uniform and equipment requirements of Law 4
- All players and substitutes remain under the authority of the referee
- A foul cannot be committed, but an appropriate card can be shown for misconduct
- A caution issued during regular play (including any extra time) is counted in causing a send-off if a second caution is given during kicks from the mark
- Team officials are required to behave in a responsible manner
- A player who is sent off or is injured and unable to continue will reduce the team's pool of eligible players but the opposing team will not further "reduce to equate"
- Substitutions are not permitted
  - However, an injured goalkeeper may be substituted if the team has not used all its permitted substitutions
  - If the goalkeeper had kicked before being replaced, the goalkeeper's substitute from off the field is considered also to have kicked
  - No eligible player will be permitted to kick more than once in the same round of that player's team
  - The goalkeeper may change places with an eligible teammate at any time provided the requirements of Law 3 are met
- Except where modified by rules specific to this procedure, kicks from the mark are conducted in accordance with the requirements and procedures in Law 14, the Guide to Procedures, and the officiating team's pregame discussion
  - However, once the ball is in play, the kicker may not play the ball again in any way (including if the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper, the crossbar, or a goalpost)
  - A goal is scored by a kick from the mark only if it meets the requirements of Law 10
  - If the kicker violates Law 14 and a goal is scored or if the goalkeeper violates Law 14 and a goal is not scored, the kick must be retaken
  - If, as a result of a violation, the kick must be repeated, it may be taken by a different eligible player
    - The other eligible player must not have kicked already in the same round

- The original kicker whose kick is retaken by a different eligible player is not counted as having taken a kick
  - The senior assistant referee assists the referee with determining if a goal has been scored and whether there has been illegal goalkeeper movement which affected the outcome of the kick
  - The other assistant referee assists in managing the eligible players in the center circle and maintaining an orderly movement of the players out from and back to the center circle, in accordance with the procedures discussed in the pregame
- If the end of the field being used for kicks from the mark becomes unplayable (field conditions and/or the condition of the goal), the referee may change to the other end of the field, but it is recommended that, if possible, this not be done until each team has kicked an equal number of times
- Unless otherwise specified by the rules of competition, the final match report will indicate the tied score at the end of regular play (including any extra time) and will then indicate the final tally of kicks from the mark which allowed one team to advance
- If, through misconduct, injury, or other cause, the number of players on a team falls below seven, the kicks from the penalty mark will continue so long as the team has at least a single eligible player

#### **Initial group of 5 kicks from the mark**

- Kicks from the mark are conducted in pairs, one from each team, for an initial round of up to five pairs
- Kicks from the mark are stopped and one team is declared the winner if that team has scored more goals than the other team and the number of kicks remaining for that other team is insufficient to make up the difference (e.g., 3-0 after three rounds -- the team with 0 cannot make up the difference since only two kicks remain)
- Kicks from the mark proceed past the initial round of five only if, after five kicks by each team, the score is still tied

#### **Initial round of all eligible players**

- Past the initial group of five, kicks from the mark proceed only in single pairs
- At this point, kicks from the mark are stopped and one team is declared the winner if that team has scored in its pair but the other team has not
- If kicks from the mark proceed beyond all eligible players into a second or subsequent round, players are not required to kick in the same order as in any previous round