

# Ask a Soccer Referee

## Answers to Laws of the Game

### And Practical Refereeing Questions:

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As of February 23, 2000, all replies to technical questions posted in this column will have been coordinated with and approved by the U. S. Soccer Federation's National Program for Referee Development.

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#### GOALKEEPER CHANGE NOT REPORTED

Your question:

In a U11 girls tournament game this past weekend, the opposing team changed GK during a water break in the middle of the second half of the match (very warm day). The new GK didn't report to the center to inform her of the change. When this new GK handled the ball for the first time after play resumed, the ref whistled, showed the keeper the yellow card & awarded our team a PK.

All of us on the touchlines (some refs, myself included) were a little puzzled, since the correct restart for what we deemed was handling a pass-back would be an IFK. We discovered that the ref in fact knew that the new GK had entered the game, and was waiting for her to handle the ball & whistle the foul & award a PK. She also made the comment that at U10, she would merely caution the GK, but at U11 she opted to take the action that she did. Of course, the opposing coach should have known to have the new GK report to the center ref, which I assume was an error/oversight and not an attempt to deliberately deceive the referees (which we all know would NEVER happen).

I feel this was extremely inappropriate, as she should merely have cautioned the new GK and awarded an IFK when she discovered the infraction. To me, this virtually is trickery applied to the players by the ref, given the circumstances and the young age of the players involved, and as a ref I would never do this. Your thoughts/comments??

#### My answer (June 28, 2000):

The referee dealt with the matter incorrectly. There can be no penalty kick in such a case and the intelligent referee would not give any caution, no matter what the age of the players. The intelligent referee will have found the following information in the **Advice to Referees: 8.3 PLAYER COUNT** Count the number of players in both teams before the beginning of each half and after any substitution. The referee's signal to start the second half is a tacit acknowledgment that the persons on the field are players and the persons wearing a goalkeeper jersey are the goalkeepers—so long as the persons themselves are not illegal and the team is fielding the proper number of players.

If the unintelligent referee were to call the goalkeeper for not reporting in, that would be a major mistake (and an indication that the referee is extremely anal retentive). The Law is VERY clear about the correct action to take in such a situation—the referee waits for the next stoppage of play and then cautions both the former and the current goalkeepers. Play is restarted in accordance with the reason for the stoppage. If the referee were to stop play for the (new) goalkeeper touching the ball after a deliberate kick by a teammate, the only possible restart is an indirect free kick from the place where the goalkeeper handles the ball (keeping in mind the special circumstances described in Law 8). The unintelligent referee, eager to convince both players and spectators that he or she didn't have a clue, could then administer the caution to both the old and the new goalkeepers prior to the restart.

**My comment: Caution to the referee for terminal foolishness.**