
LAW 5 - TIME

5.1 DURATION OF A MATCH

A match lasts no longer than eighty minutes plus time lost, extra time and any special conditions. A match is divided into two halves each of not more than forty minutes playing time.

5.2 HALF-TIME

After half-time the teams change ends. There is an interval of not more than 10 minutes. The length of the interval is decided by the match organiser, the Union or the recognised body which has jurisdiction over the game. During the interval the teams, the referee and the touch judges may leave the playing enclosure.

5.3 TIME KEEPING

The referee keeps the time but may delegate the duty to either or both the touch judges and/or the official time-keeper, in which case the referee signals to them any stoppage of time or time lost. In matches without an official time-keeper, if the referee is in doubt as to the correct time the referee consults either or both the touch judges and may consult others but only if the touch judges cannot help.

5.4 TIME LOST

Time lost may be due to the following:

- (a) Injury. The referee may stop play for not more than one minute so that an injured player can be treated, or for any other permitted delay.

The referee may allow play to continue while a medically trained person treats an injured player in the playing area or the player may go to the touch-line for treatment.

If the referee believes that the player is feigning injury, the referee arranges for the player to be removed from the playing area, and re-starts play at once. Alternatively, the referee may allow play to continue while a medically trained person examines the player in the playing area.

- (b) Replacing players' clothing. When the ball is dead, the referee allows time for a player to replace or repair a badly torn jersey, shorts or boots. Time is allowed for a player to re-tie a boot-lace.

- (c) Replacement and substitution of players. Time is allowed when a player is replaced or substituted.
- (d) Reporting of foul play by a touch judge. Time is allowed when a touch judge reports foul play.

5.5 MAKING UP FOR TIME LOST

Any playing time lost is made up in the same half of the match.

5.6 PLAYING EXTRA TIME

A match may last more than eighty minutes if the Union has authorised the playing of extra time in a drawn match in a knock-out competition.

5.7 OTHER TIME REGULATIONS

- (a) In international matches, play always lasts eighty minutes plus lost time.
- (b) In non-international matches a Union may decide the length of a match.
- (c) If the Union does not decide, the teams agree on the length of a match. If they cannot agree, the referee decides.
- (d) The referee has the power to end the match at any time, if the referee believes that play should not continue because it would be dangerous.
- (e) If time expires and the ball is not dead, or an awarded scrum or line-out has not been completed the referee allows play to continue until the next time that the ball becomes dead. If time expires and a mark, free kick or penalty kick is then awarded, the referee allows play to continue.
- (f) If time expires after a try has been scored the referee allows time for the conversion kick to be taken.
- (g) When weather conditions are exceptionally hot and/or humid, the referee, at his discretion, will be permitted to allow one water break in each half. This water break should be no longer than one minute. Time lost should be added on at the end of each half. The water break should normally be taken after a score or when the ball is out of play near the half way line.