

## Ask a Soccer Referee

### Answers to Laws of the Game and Practical Refereeing Questions: *Jim Allen, National Instructor Staff/National Assessor*

Ladies and gentlemen,

There has been a lot of foolishness propagated in the past several days regarding the throw-in. Much of what has been said is total rubbish and it only clouds a good understanding of the matter.

Let me put it simply: The throw-in is **SIMPLY A WAY OF RESTARTING PLAY** when the ball has left the field of play over one of the touch lines. It is **NOT** a big deal! Please do not complicate things through erroneous explanations for things that do not need explaining.

The secret to understanding the throw-in is to follow the text of Law 15:

#### **QUOTE**

Procedure

- At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:
- faces the field of play
- has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line
- uses both hands
- delivers the ball from behind and over his head

#### **END OF QUOTE**

Some other points of importance:

- As long as part (and the Law does not specify any particular part) of each foot is either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line, there is no problem.
- The part of the foot that makes contact with the touch line can be the toe, the ball of the foot, or the heel.
- The Law does not care about where the ball is, except the place from which it must be delivered, "from behind and over" the thrower's head.
- There is no mention of the ball being entirely off the field -- which would be impossible if the thrower were leaning into the field as the ball was correctly delivered.
- The ball need only break the plane of the outside of the touch line to be in play (once it has been released by the thrower).
- The thrower can never be accused of deliberately handling the ball if he does not release the ball before it crosses the touch line.
- Nowhere is it written that the thrower must stand at least partly in touch.

- All the fuss about whether the line is part of the field or part of touch is rubbish; the line is simply a place for the restart, and the thrower's feet may be on that line, just as it states in the Law.
- As long as the throw is taken from the correct location, with both of the thrower's feet on the line or outside it, and with the thrower facing some part of the field, and if the throw is properly delivered, then it is a good throw.

Most of this is already covered in the USSF publication "**Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game.**" If you don't have a copy, get one.

## **QUOTE**

### **15.3 PROPERLY TAKEN THROW-IN**

A throw-in must be performed while the thrower is facing the field, but the ball may be thrown into the field in any direction. Law 15 states that the thrower "delivers the ball from behind and over his head." This phrase does not mean that the ball must leave the hands from an overhead position. A natural throwing movement starting from behind and over the head will usually result in the ball leaving the hands when they are in front of the vertical plane of the body. The throwing movement must be continued to the point of release. A throw-in directed straight downward (often referred to as a "spike") is therefore not correctly performed and may result in the restart being awarded to the opposing team. There is no requirement in Law 15 prohibiting spin or rotational movement. Referees must judge the correctness of the throw-in solely on the basis of Law 15.

The acrobatic or "flip" throw-in is not by itself an infringement so long as it is performed in a manner which meets the requirements of Law 15.

A player who lacks the normal use of one or both hands may nevertheless perform a legal throw-in provided the ball is delivered over the head and provided all other requirements of Law 15 are observed.

//SNIP//

### **15.4 ILLEGAL OR IMPROPERLY TAKEN THROW-IN**

Referees must distinguish between a throw-in which infringes on the requirements of Law 15 and one which is performed improperly such that the restart is said not to have been taken. In the first case (infringement), possession of the restart is given to the opponents and taken from the same location; under no circumstances may advantage be applied to a throw-in performed illegally. In the case of a throw-in which is not properly completed, the restart must be taken again by the same team from the same location.

A throw-in may not be performed from a kneeling position under any circumstances.

If the ball touches the ground outside the field before entering the field or if it does not enter the field at all, the throw-in has not properly been taken and must be performed again.

## **15.5 TRIFLING INFRINGEMENTS OF LAW 15**

Referees are reminded that the primary function of the throw-in is to put the ball back into play as quickly as possible. At competitive levels of play, therefore, apparent technical infringements of Law 15 should often be deemed trifling or doubtful so long as an advantage is not obtained by the team performing the throw-in and the restart occurs with little or no delay.

**END OF QUOTE**

Let me close by repeating the earlier statement: The throw-in is SIMPLY A WAY OF RESTARTING PLAY when the ball has left the field of play over one of the touch lines. It is NOT a big deal! Please do not complicate things through off-the-wall explanations for things that do not need explaining.

Please.....

Make it easy on yourselves and on the players and just follow the requirements of Law 15.

Please!

**Jim Allen**

**USSF National Instructor Staff**

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