



NCYSA UPDATE:

*Clarification Regarding Amended Implementation of
Updated IFAB LAWS OF THE GAME: Law 3 for NCYSA Classic League Matches*

UPDATED: IFAB Law 3 – Time-Limited Substitution Protocol

This newly revamped Law 3 introduces an updated substitution protocol ***designed to prevent time-wasting and disruption of the tempo of the match.***

As currently written, the IFAB / FIFA Law 3.3 – Substitution Procedure – Time-Limited Substitution Protocol states:

- *Once a substitution is signaled, the player being replaced must **leave the field of play within 10 seconds at the nearest boundary line**, unless otherwise directed by the referee.*
- *If the substitute's equipment is inspected at the halfway line, the 10-second period begins once the inspection is complete and the referee signals for the substitution to proceed.*
- *The substituted player **must be off the field of play within 10 seconds** of the substitution board being shown or, when no board is used, of the referee's signal for the substitution to take place. Exceptions apply when leaving within 10 seconds is not possible due to **safety, security, or injury**.*
- *For multiple substitutions made during the same stoppage, **all substituted players must leave the field within 10 seconds of the final substitution being indicated**.*

FOR NCYSA CLASSIC LEAGUE MATCHES

AMENDED IMPLEMENTATION of Law 3: PROTOCOL:

August 21, 2026 – For immediate effect on NCYSA Classic League Matches

In an effort to preserve the intent of the updated Law 3 while adapting its application to be appropriate for varying levels of play and practical league circumstances, **NCYSA has established the following modified protocol, effective immediately.**

- If a player is **unnecessarily delaying a substitution** by failing to leave the field in a timely manner, the referee will whistle to initiate a **10-second countdown**. The referee will visually count down the 10 seconds using one raised hand, and the exiting player **must be off the field before the countdown expires**.



- Except when leaving the field within the allotted 10 seconds **is not possible due to injury, safety, or security concerns**, a player who fails to exit the field before the 10-second countdown expires will be subject to the following:
 - The **incoming substitute may not enter the field immediately**. The incoming substitute must remain off the field and may enter only with the referee's permission at the **first stoppage after one minute has elapsed following the restart of play**.
- If the **outgoing player has not left the field of play within the required 10 seconds** after the referee initiates the count, the following will apply:
 - The **incoming substitute must remain off the field** and may only enter with the referee's permission at the first stoppage after one minute has elapsed following the restart of play.

RATIONALE FOR AMENDED IMPLEMENTATION:

In NCYSA Classic matches, **player safety remains the priority**, and substituted players must exit the field at midfield or near their team bench.

Because of this requirement and the standard substitution procedures used in Classic matches, a substitution may reasonably take longer than 10 seconds without being considered an unnecessary delay.

Under this adapted protocol, referees will have the discretion to determine when a player is **unnecessarily delaying a substitution** and, at that point, initiate the 10-second countdown.

This approach prioritizes player safety while introducing players to the intent of the updated Law and giving referees the discretion to appropriately address deliberate or unnecessary delays.

** NCYSA Sanctioned Scheduling Leagues and Tournaments may implement this policy as desired.*