

Sport

3 substitutions allowed

ZURICH, Mar 5: Teams will be allowed to use three substitutes in the World Cup finals following changes to the laws of soccer agreed by FIFA and the International Board on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The main stipulation of the new ruling is that one of the substitutes must be a goalkeeper who can only be used to replace the goalkeeper already on the field.

Up to now only two substitutions have been allowed.

The board agreed to continue with the present ruling under law three which allows a goalkeeper who is sent off to be replaced by the substitute goalkeeper, ostensibly the replacement for an outfield player.

But there were no changes made to Law 11 — the offside law. Instead, following submissions from both the English and Scottish Football Associations, a working party will be established to study the effects the new backpass law is having on the interpretation of offside.

Any proposals by the working party will be considered at the International Board's next annual meeting with FIFA in Glasgow in March 1995.

Referees at the World Cup will also be able to act on a special FIFA instruction to automatically send off any player who tackles from behind.

FIFA's general secretary Sepp Blatter said: "This is one of the most important steps forward for the future of football. There was unanimous agreement today about this and the only reason it is not already law is because of a technicality."

"But it will become law in due course and every World Cup referee will be empowered to send off offenders this summer."

The law-making International Board, which comprises the four British associations

plus representatives from FIFA also considered a number of other changes to the game.

The experiment with kick-ins replacing throw-ins is to continue and will be examined in more depth over the length of a season, probably using a senior non-professional league in Britain.

So far the experiment has been limited to youth competitions.

FIFA has also become increasingly alarmed by the recent spate of injuries caused to players through the use of elbows and reckless play and will be circularising clubs, players and officials warning against this trend.

Both the English and Scottish FA's argued against the idea of a goalkeeper who has been sent off being replaced by a substitute goalie. We felt this went against the spirit of the law but we were defeated.

"My argument is that a goalkeeper would think twice about committing an offence if he knew there was no substitute goalie to replace him."

The other major discussion point involved the proposed changes to the offside law.

Jim Farry, chief executive of the Scottish FA said the Board decided not to discuss any changes to the offside law now but would look again at "One of the shortest-worded but most contentious and complex laws of the game in a year's time."

The law needs clarification on a worldwide scale because there is a general lack of awareness about the interpretation of the law.

The backpass law means a

change might be needed in the way the law is interpreted and we need more time to study its effects. It is still not an offence to be in an offside position as such but the interpretation is changing.

International Board decisions normally come into force on July 1, but as that date falls in the middle of the World Cup the new rulings, applicable to all levels of soccer, will take effect from immediately before the tournament starts on June 17.

Following a proposal by the Scottish FA a designated technical area around the dugout will be clearly defined at major championship and international matches.

The area will extend one

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