

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Abandoning a Match Due to Insufficient Number of Players

Date: November 22, 2002

Each national association is given authority to set the minimum number of players in a match. The United States Soccer Federation has established this number at seven, one of whom must be identified as a goalkeeper. (Law 3 -- IFAB Decision 1).

Accordingly, the referee must abandon a match if a team either cannot or will not field at least seven players. This could occur as a result of a team having any combination of five or more players who:

- had been sent off the field for misconduct,
- failed to appear for the match despite being listed on the roster,
- were unable to play due to injury,
- had departed from the area of the field, or
- were unwilling to enter the field despite being present.

However, a match may continue if a team drops below seven players on the field as a result of a player requesting and receiving permission from the referee to leave the field temporarily (for treatment of an injury, for example) or a player being instructed to leave the field to correct equipment or for bleeding from a wound. In such cases, the referee should be satisfied that the team will be able to field the minimum number within a reasonable period of time as a result of the return of such players.

If a match has been officially started but must be abandoned due to a team not being able to field the minimum number of players (for whatever combination of reasons), the referee must provide a full report to the competition authority which includes information regarding the circumstances under which this occurred, what efforts were made to determine if qualified players or substitutes were available, and the score existing at the time the match was terminated. Before declaring the match terminated, the referee must determine if the rules of the competition provide for any alternative action.

In the absence of any rules from the competition authority requiring a different result, the team which was able to field the minimum number of players is declared the winner of the match, regardless of the score at the time the match had to be terminated.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee,
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
National Referees, Instructors and Assessors

CC: State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Advantage and Obvious Goalscoring Opportunities
Chivas USA at New England Revolution
UEFA Champion's Cup, Arsenal versus Barcelona

Date: June 2, 2006

Recent matches have caused considerable debate regarding the practical interpretation and application of advantage in obvious goal scoring opportunity situations. Two clips are attached: one is from a match played on May 13, Chivas at New England Revolution, and the other is from the final of the UEFA Champion's Cup, Arsenal against Barcelona (May 17). The guidance below should not be considered a commentary on the actions of the referees in the respective matches – the clips are included only to provide a practical basis for responding to questions regarding the options available to a referee who has applied advantage to a foul which interferes with a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity.

Some general principles need to be recalled:

- Applying advantage is a decision of the referee, whereas calling out "Play on!" and swinging the arms upward (the verbal and visual signal) is only the announcement of the decision.
- A sequence of plays can occur so quickly in a match involving skilled players that the conditions for an advantage decision may pass before it is possible to signal the decision. Nevertheless, advantage has been applied if that was the referee's decision.
- The referee is expected to stop play within a short time (roughly, 2-3 seconds) after the foul if the advantage does not develop or does not continue.
- Advantage is a **team concept** and thus the advantage gained by a team when the referee decides not to stop play can be enjoyed by the player who was fouled as well as by any teammate of that player.

Given a foul judged to be an interference with a goal or a goal scoring opportunity and given the referee's decision to apply advantage, the following scenarios should be considered carefully:

- If the advantage does not continue, the referee is expected to stop play as soon as this is evident. The defender committing the foul must be sent off and shown the red card, and play must be restarted correctly (based on the foul and its location).

- If the advantage continues and the attacking team is able to score a goal (regardless of whether it was by the attacker who was fouled or by a teammate), the defender who committed the foul **may not be sent off** (since a goal was not prevented and the team's goal scoring opportunity was not interfered with successfully). The misconduct would be more appropriately categorized as unsporting behavior (tactical foul) warranting a caution and the showing of the yellow card. However, if the foul involved violent conduct or serious foul play, a red card must be given.

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From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Advantage in the Penalty Area

Date: April 11, 2008

Special circumstances govern the application of advantage for offenses committed by defenders inside their own penalty area. Although the basic concept of advantage remains the same, the specific decision by the referee must be governed by both the close proximity to the goal and the likelihood of scoring from the penalty kick restart if play is stopped instead of applying advantage.

The basic elements of the decision are straightforward:

- Advantage is a team concept and thus the referee must be aware not only of the fouled player's ability to continue his or her attack but also of the ability of any of the player's teammates to continue the attack themselves.
- Advantage has been applied when the decision is made, not when the advantage signal is given. The signal itself may often be delayed for 2-3 seconds while the referee evaluates the advantage situation to determine if it will continue.
- Where it does not continue, the Laws of the Game provide for the referee to stop play for the original foul.
- If the original foul involved violence, the referee is advised not to apply advantage unless there is an immediate chance of scoring a goal.

Inside the penalty area, the competitive tension is much greater and the referee is called upon to make quicker decisions. The time during which the referee looks for advantage to continue becomes defined by the probability of scoring a goal directly following the foul or from the subsequent play.

In the attached clip of an incident occurring in the 27th minute of a match on April 9 between New England and Kansas City. NE defender #31 (Nyassi) fouls KC attacker #11 (Morsink) near the top of the penalty area. Just as Morsink is fouled, however, he passes the ball to his teammate #19 (Sealy).

The referee properly recognized the advantage but then whistled for the foul against Morsink after he decided that a goal would not be scored by Sealy. In fact, Sealy made a shot on goal just as the whistle sounded and the ball failed to enter the net.

- In the absence of a whistle stopping play and if the ball had entered the net, the advantage would clearly have continued and the goal would be counted.

- If, in this case, the ball had entered the goal after the whistle had sounded, the goal could not be counted.
- **Ideally, the referee in this incident should have delayed stopping play for the original foul until he saw more concretely what Sealy would have been able to do with the ball.**

In this incident, the penalty kick for the original foul was successful

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From: Alfred Kleinaitis
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Subject: Additional Instructions and Guidelines for Referees

Date: 2008

LAW 1 - THE FIELD OF PLAY

It is not permissible to mark the field with broken lines or furrows.

If a player makes unauthorized marks on the field of play using foot, the player shall be cautioned for unsporting behavior. If the referee notices this being done during the match, the referee shall caution the offending player for unsporting behavior when the ball next goes out of play.

Only the lines indicated in law 1 are to be marked on the field of play.

Artificial Turf

The color of artificial pitches shall be green.

Commercial advertising

Commercial advertising shall be at least 1 meter/yard from the boundary lines of the field of play.

LAW 2 - THE BALL

Additional balls

Additional balls may be placed around the field of play for use during a match provided that they meet the requirements of Law 2 and their use is under the control of the referee.

Extra balls on the field of play

If an extra ball enters the field of play during the match, the referee shall stop the match only if it interferes with play. Play shall be restarted by a dropped ball in the position where the match ball was at the time when the match was stopped. * (see page 3)

If an extra ball enters the field of play during the match without interfering with play, the referee shall have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

LAW 3 - THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Substitution Procedure

- A substitution may be made only during a stoppage in play
- The assistant referee signals that a substitution has been requested
- The player being substituted receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless he is already off the field of play for reasons that comply with the Laws of the Game
- Before entering the field of play, the substitute waits for the player he is replacing to leave the field
- The player being substituted is not obliged to leave the field of play on the halfway line
- Permission to proceed with a substitution may be refused under certain circumstances, e. g., if the substitute is not ready to enter the field of play
- A substitute who has not completed the substitution process by setting foot onto the field of play cannot restart play by taking a throw-in or corner kick - If a player who is about to be replaced refuses to leave the field of play, play continues
- If a substitution is made during the half-time interval or before extra time, the process is to be completed before the second half or extra time kick-off.

Extra persons on the field of play

Outside Agents

Anyone not indicated on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is deemed to be an outside agent as is a player who has been sent off.

If an outside agent enters the field of play:

- the referee shall stop play (although not immediately if the outside agent does not interfere with play)
- the referee shall have the person removed from the field of play and its immediate surroundings
- If the referee stops the match, play shall restart with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was at the time when the match was stopped. *(see page 3)

Team Officials

If a team official enters the field of play:

- the referee shall stop play (although not immediately if the team official does not interfere with play or if the advantage can be applied)
- the referee shall have the team official removed from the field of play and if the behavior is irresponsible the referee shall expel the person from the field of play and its immediate surroundings
- if the referee stops the match, play shall be restarted with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was at the time when the match was stopped * (see page 3)

Player outside the field of play

If a player re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission, after leaving the field of play to correct equipment or uniform, to be treated for an injury or bleeding, because of blood on the uniform or for any other reason with the referee's permission, the referee shall:

- stop play (although not immediately if the player does not interfere with play or if the advantage can be applied)
- caution the player for entering the field of play without permission
- order the player to leave the field of play if necessary (infringement of Law 4)

If the referee stops play, it shall be restarted

- with an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the position of the ball when play was stopped * (see page 3) if there is no other infringement
- in accordance with Law 12 if the player infringes this Law

If a player accidentally crosses one of the boundary lines of the field of play, this is not deemed an infringement. Going off the field of play may be considered to be part of playing movement.

Substitute or a substituted player

If a substitute or a substituted player enters the field of play without permission

- the referee shall stop play (although not immediately if the player in question does not interfere with play or if the advantage can be applied)
- the referee shall issue a caution for unsporting behavior
- the player shall leave the field of play

If the referee stops play, it shall be restarted with an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the position of the ball when play was stopped. * (see page 3)

Goals scored with an extra person on the field of play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realizes, before play restarts, that there was an extra person on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- the referee shall disallow the goal if:
 - the extra person was an outside agent and interfered with play
 - the extra person was a player, substitute, substituted player or team official associated with the team that scored the goal
- the referee shall allow the goal if:
 - the extra person was an outside agent who did not interfere with play
 - the extra person was a player, substitute, substituted player or team official associated with the team that conceded the goal

Minimum number of players

If the rules of a competition state that all of the players and substitutes must be named before kick-off and a team begins a match with fewer than 11 players, only the players named in the starting line-up may complete the 11 upon their arrival.

In the opinion of the International F. A. Board a match shall not be considered valid and shall be abandoned by the referee if fewer than seven players remain on either team.

However, if a team has fewer than seven players because one or more players has deliberately left the field of play, the referee is not obliged to stop the match and the advantage may be played. In such cases, the referee should not allow the match to resume after the ball has gone out of play if a team does not have the minimum number of 7 players.

LAW 4 - THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

Basic equipment

Colors:

- All players including goalkeepers must wear a jersey with colors that distinguish them from the referee and the assistant referees
- If the jerseys of the two goalkeepers are the same color and neither has another jersey to change into, the referee shall allow play to begin

If a player's footwear is lost accidentally and the player immediately plays the ball and/or scores a goal, there is no infringement and the goal is awarded because the footwear was lost by accident.

Goalkeepers may wear track suit bottoms as part of their basic equipment.

Other equipment

A player may use equipment other than the basic equipment provided that its sole purpose is physical protection and it poses no danger to any player.

All items of clothing or equipment other than the basic equipment must be inspected by the referee and determined not to be dangerous.

Modern protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material are not considered dangerous and are therefore permitted.

In view of the new technology that has made sports spectacles much safer, both for the wearer and for other players, referees should show tolerance when authorizing their use, particularly for younger players.

If an item of clothing or equipment that has been inspected at the start of a match and determined not to be dangerous becomes dangerous or is used in a dangerous manner during the match, its use must no longer be allowed. The use of radio communication systems between players and/or technical staff is not permitted.

Jewelry

All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands etc.) are strictly forbidden and must be removed.

Using tape to cover jewelry is not acceptable.

Referees are also prohibited from wearing jewelry (except for a watch or similar device for timing the match).

Disciplinary sanctions

The players are to be inspected before the match begins and substitutes before they enter the field of play. If a player is discovered to be wearing unauthorized clothing or jewelry during play, the referee shall:

- inform the player that the item in question must be removed
- order the player to leave the field of play at the next stoppage upon inability or unwillingness to comply
- caution the player upon willful refusal to comply or, having been told to remove the item, is discovered to be wearing the item again

If play is stopped to caution the player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the position of the ball when play was stopped. * (see page 3)

LAW 5 - THE REFEREE

Powers & Duties

The referee is authorized to stop play if, in the referee's opinion, the floodlights are inadequate.

If an object thrown by a spectator hits the referee or one of the assistant referees or a player or team official, the referee may allow the match to continue, suspend play or abandon the match depending on the severity of the incident. The referee shall, in all cases, report the incident(s) to the appropriate authorities.

The referee has the power to show yellow or red cards during the half-time interval and after the match has finished as well as during extra time and kicks from the penalty mark, since the match remains under the referee's jurisdiction at these times. [USSF Note: During the match includes the period of time immediately prior to the start of play during which players and substitutes are physically on the field warming up, stretching, or otherwise preparing for the match.]

If a referee is temporarily incapacitated for any reason, play may continue under the supervision of the assistant referees until the ball next goes out of play.

If a spectator blows a whistle and the referee considers the whistle interfered with play (e.g. a player picks up the ball with the hands, assuming that play has been stopped), the referee shall stop the match and restart the play with a dropped ball from the position of the ball when play was stopped. * (see page 3)

Advantage

Referees should consider the following circumstances in deciding whether to apply the advantage or stop play:

- The severity of the offense. If the infringement warrants an expulsion, the referee shall stop play and send the player off unless there is a subsequent opportunity to score a goal.
- The position where the offense was committed: the closer to the opponent's goal, the more effective it can be.
- The chances of an immediate, dangerous attack on the opponents' goal.
- The atmosphere of the match.

The decision to penalize the original offense must be taken within the next few seconds.

If the offense warrants a caution, it shall be issued at the next stoppage.

However, unless there is a clear advantage, it is recommended that the referee stops play and cautions the player immediately. If the caution is NOT issued at the next stoppage, it cannot be shown later.

Injured players

The referee shall adhere to the following procedure when dealing with injured players:

- Play is allowed to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in the opinion of the referee, only lightly injured
- Play is stopped if, in the opinion of the referee, a player is seriously injured
- After questioning the injured player, the referee may authorize one, or at most two doctors, to enter the field of play to assess the injury and arrange the player's safe and swift removal from the field of play
- The stretcher-bearers should enter the field of play with a stretcher at the same time as the doctors to allow the player to be removed as quickly as possible
- The referee shall ensure an injured player is safely removed from the field of play
- A player is not allowed to receive treatment on the field of play
- Any player bleeding from a wound must leave the field of play and may not return until the referee is satisfied that the bleeding has stopped. A player is not permitted to wear clothing with blood on it
- As soon as the referee has authorized the doctors to enter the field of play, the player must leave the field of play, either on a stretcher or on foot. If a player does not comply, a caution shall be given for unsporting behavior
- An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted
- When the ball is in play, an injured player must re-enter the field of play from the touch line. When the ball is out of play, the injured player may re-enter from any of the boundary lines
- Irrespective of whether the ball is in play or not, only the referee is authorized to allow an injured player to re-enter the field of play
- The referee may give permission for an injured player to return to the field of play if an assistant referee or the fourth official verifies that the player is ready
- If play has not otherwise been stopped for another reason, or if an injury suffered by a player is not the result of a breach of the Laws of the Game, the referee shall restart play with a dropped ball
- The referee shall allow for the full amount of time lost through injury to be played at the end of each period of play
- Once the referee has decided to issue a card to a player who is injured and has to leave the field of play for treatment, the referee shall issue the card before the player leaves the field of play

Exceptions to this ruling are to be made only when:

- a goalkeeper is injured
- a goalkeeper and an outfield player have collided and need immediate attention
- a severe injury has occurred, e.g. swallowed tongue, concussion, broken leg.

More than one offense occurring at the same time

- Offenses committed by two players from the same team:
 - The referee shall punish the most serious offense when players commit more than one offense at the same time.
 - Play shall be restarted according to the most serious offense committed.
- Offenses committed by players from different teams:
 - The referee shall stop play and restart it with a dropped ball from the position of the ball at the time of the stoppage * (see page 3) [USSF Note: Referees should take care not to use this option as a means of avoiding a difficult but necessary decision as to which player committed an offense first and which player retaliated. The referee must not use the dropped ball to restart play as a crutch in those cases where there is some question about the correct restart. The referee must make a decision and announce it firmly.]

GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES

1. Positioning with ball in play

Recommendations

- The play should be between the referee and the lead assistant referee.
- The lead assistant referee should be within the referee's field of vision. The referee should use a wide diagonal system.
- Staying toward the outside of the play makes it easier to keep play and the lead assistant referee within the referee's field of vision
- The referee should be close enough to see play without interfering with play
- "What needs to be seen" is not always in the vicinity of the ball.

The referee should also pay attention to:

- Aggressive individual player confrontations off the ball
- Possible offenses in the area towards which play is heading
- Offenses occurring after the ball is played away

2. Positioning in dead-ball situations

The best position is one from which the referee can make the right decision. All recommendations about positioning are based on probabilities and must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players, and events in the match up to that point.

The positions suggested in the following graphics are basic and recommended to referees. The reference to a "zone" is intended to emphasize that every recommended position is actually an area within which the referee is most likely to optimize effectiveness. The zone may be larger, smaller, or differently shaped depending on circumstances at the moment in question.

[See book for diagrams for all positioning situations]

3. Positioning for dead-ball situations – corner kick (1)
4. Positioning for dead-ball situations – corner kick (2)
5. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (1)
6. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (2)
7. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (3)
8. Positioning for dead-ball situations – free kick (4)
9. Positioning for dead-ball situations – penalty kick

REFEREE SIGNALS

Direct free kick, Advantage, Indirect free kick, Yellow card, Red card

Use of whistle

The whistle is needed to:

- start play (1st, 2nd half), after a goal

- stop play
 - for a free kick or penalty kick
 - if match is suspended or terminated
 - when a period of play has ended due to the expiration of time
- restart play at
 - free kicks when the opponents are ordered back the appropriate distance
 - penalty kicks
- restart play after it has been stopped due to
 - the issue of a yellow or red card for misconduct
 - injury
 - substitution

The whistle is NOT needed

- to stop play for:
 - a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in
 - a goal
- to restart play from
 - a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, throw-in

A whistle which is used too frequently unnecessarily will have less impact when it is needed. When a discretionary whistle is needed to start play, the referee should clearly announce to the players that the restart may not occur until after that signal.

Body language

Body language is a tool that the referee uses to:

- help control the match
- show authority and self-control

Body language is not:

- an explanation of a decision

LAW 6 - THE ASSISTANT REFEREE

Duties and responsibilities

The assistant referees help the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game. They also assist the referee in all other matters involving the running of the match at the request and direction of the referee.

This commonly includes such matters as:

- inspecting the field, the balls used, and players' equipment
- determining if problems with equipment or bleeding have been resolved
- monitoring the substitution process

- maintaining back-up records of time, goals and misconduct

Positioning and team work

1. Kick-off

The assistant referees shall be in line with the second last defender

2. General positioning during the match

The assistant referees shall be in line with the second last defender or the ball, if it is nearer the goal line than the second last defender. The assistant referees shall always face the field of play.

3. Goal kick

1. The assistant referees shall check first if the ball is inside the goal area:

- If the ball is not placed correctly, the assistant referee shall not move from the current position, but shall make eye contact with the referee and raise the flag

2. Once the ball is placed correctly inside the goal area, the assistant referee shall move to the edge of the penalty area to check that the ball leaves the penalty area (ball in play) and the attackers are outside:

- If the second last defender takes the goal kick, the assistant referee shall move directly to the edge of the penalty area

3. Finally, the assistant referee shall take a position to check the offside line, which is a priority in any case

4. Goalkeeper releasing the ball

The assistant referees shall take a position in line with the edge of the penalty area and check that the goalkeeper does not touch the ball with the hands outside penalty area.

Once the goalkeeper has released the ball, the assistant referees shall take a position to check the offside line, which is a priority in any case.

5. Penalty kick

The assistant referee shall be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the penalty area. If the goalkeeper blatantly moves forward before the ball is kicked and a goal is not scored, the assistant referee shall raise the flag. [USSF Note: Assistant referees in the United States must follow the instructions given by the referee in the pregame conference.]

6. Kicks from the penalty mark

One assistant referee shall be positioned at the intersection of the goal line and the goal area. The main duty is to check if the ball crosses the line.

- When it is clear that the ball has crossed the goal line, the assistant referee shall make eye contact with the referee without giving any additional signal.
- When a goal has been scored but it is not clear whether the ball has crossed the line, the assistant referee shall first raise the flag to attract the referee's attention and then confirm the goal.

The other assistant referee shall be situated in the center circle to control the remaining players from both teams.

7. “Goal – No Goal” situations

When a goal has been scored and there is no doubt about the decision, the referee and assistant referee shall make eye contact and the assistant referee shall then run quickly a short distance along the touchline towards the halfway line without raising the flag.

When a goal has been scored but the ball appears still to be in play, the assistant referee shall first raise the flag to attract the referee’s attention then continue with the normal goal procedure of running quickly 25-30 meters along the touchline towards the halfway line.

On occasions when the whole of the ball does not cross the goal line and play continues as normal because a goal has not been scored, the referee shall make eye contact with the assistant referee and if necessary give a discreet hand signal.

8. Corner kick

The assistant referee’s position for a corner kick is behind the corner flag in line with the goal line. In this position the assistant referee shall not interfere with the player taking the corner kick and shall check that the ball is properly placed inside the corner arc.

9. Free kick

The assistant referee’s position for a free kick shall be in line with the second last defender in order to check the offside line which is a priority in any case. However, the assistant referee shall be ready to follow the ball by moving down the touchline towards the corner flag if there is a direct shot on goal.

Gestures

As a general rule, the assistant referee shall give no obvious hand signals. However, in some instances a discreet hand signal may give valuable support to the referee. The hand signal should have a clear meaning. The meaning should have been discussed and agreed upon in the pre-match discussion.

Running technique

As a general rule the assistant referee should face the pitch when running. Side-to-side movement should be used for short distances, this is especially important when judging offside and gives the assistant referee a better line of vision.

Signal beep

Referees are reminded that the signal beep system is an additional signal to be used only when necessary in order to gain the attention of the referee.

Situations when the signal beep is useful include:

- Offside
- Fouls (outside the view of the referee)
- Throw-in, corner kick or goal kick (tight decisions)
- Goal situations (tight decisions)

Signals

Substitution, Throw-In for the attacker, Throw-In for the defender, Goal kick, Corner kick, Offside, Offside on the near side of the field, Offside on the center of the field, Offside on the far side of the field, Foul by defender, Foul by attacker

Flag technique and teamwork

The assistant referee’s flag shall always be visible to the referee, unfurled and still while running.

When making a signal, the assistant referee shall stop running, face the field of play, make eye contact with the referee and raise the flag with deliberate (not hasty or exaggerated) motions. The flag should be like an extension of the arm.

The assistant referees shall raise the flag using the hand that will also be used for the next signal in a sequence. If circumstances change and the other hand must be used for the next signal, the assistant referee should move the flag to the opposite hand below the waist.

Whenever the assistant referee signals that the ball is out of play, the assistant shall continue to signal until the referee acknowledges it.

Whenever the assistant referee signals for violent conduct and the signal is not seen immediately,

- if play has been stopped for disciplinary action to be taken, the restart must be in accordance with the laws (free kick, penalty kick, etc.)
- if play has restarted, only disciplinary action may be taken.

Throw-in

When the ball crosses the touchline near to the assistant referee's position, the assistant shall make a direct signal to indicate the direction of the throw-in.

When the ball crosses the touchline far from the assistant referee's position and the throw-in decision is an obvious one, the assistant referee shall also make a direct signal to indicate the direction of the throw-in.

When the ball crosses the touchline far from the assistant referee's position but the ball appears still to be in play or if the assistant referee is in any doubt, the assistant shall raise the flag to inform the referee that the ball is out of play, make eye contact with the referee and follow the referee's signal.

Corner kick / Goal kick

When the ball crosses the goal line near to the assistant referee's position, the assistant shall make a direct signal with the right hand (better line of vision) to indicate whether it is a goal kick or a corner kick.

When the ball crosses the goal line near to the assistant referee's position but the ball appears still to be in play, the assistant shall first raise the flag to inform the referee that the ball is out of play, then indicate whether it is a goal kick or a corner kick.

When the ball crosses the goal line far from the assistant referee's position, the assistant shall raise the flag to inform the referee that the ball is out of play, make eye contact and follow the referee's decision. The assistant may also make a direct signal if the decision is an obvious one.

Offside

The first action the assistant referee makes after an offside decision is to raise the flag. The assistant referee then uses the flag to indicate the area of the field in which the offense occurred.

If the referee does not immediately see the flag, the assistant referee shall keep signaling until it has been acknowledged or the ball is clearly in the control of the defending team.

The flag shall be raised using the right hand, giving the assistant a better line of vision.

Substitution

When dealing with substitutions, the assistant referee shall first be informed by the fourth official. The assistant referee shall then signal to the referee at the next stoppage in the match. The assistant referee does not need to move to the halfway line as the fourth official carries out the substitution procedure.

If there is no fourth official, the assistant referee shall assist with substitution procedures. In this case, the referee shall wait until the assistant referee is back in position before restarting play.

Fouls

The assistant referee shall raise the flag when a foul or misconduct is committed in the immediate vicinity or out of the referee's vision. In all other situations, the assistant shall wait and offer an opinion if it is required.

If this is the case, the assistant referee shall report to the referee what has been seen and heard and which players are involved.

Before signaling for an offense, the assistant referee shall determine that:

- the offense occurred closer to the assistant referee than to the referee (this applies, in certain circumstances, to offenses committed in the penalty area)
- the offense was out of the view of the referee or the referee's view was obstructed
- the referee would not have applied advantage if the referee had seen the offense

When a foul or misconduct is committed, the assistant referee shall:

- raise the flag with the same hand that will also be used for the remainder of the signal, this gives the referee a clear indication as to who was fouled,
- make eye contact with the referee,
- give the flag a slight wave back and forth (avoiding any excessive or aggressive movement)
- use the electronic BEEP signal, if necessary.

The assistant referee shall use the "wait and see technique" in order to allow play to continue and not raise the flag when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from the advantage. In this case, it is very important for the assistant referee to make eye contact with the referee

Fouls outside the penalty area

When a foul is committed outside the penalty area (near the boundary of the penalty area), the assistant referee shall make eye contact with the referee to see where the referee is positioned and what action has been taken. The assistant referee shall stand in line with the penalty area and raise the flag if necessary. In counter-attack situations, the assistant referee should be able to give information such as whether or not the foul has been committed and whether the foul was committed inside or outside the penalty area, which is a priority in any case, and what disciplinary action shall be taken.

Fouls inside the penalty area

When a foul is committed inside the penalty area out of the vision of the referee, especially if near to the assistant referee's position, the assistant referee shall first make eye contact with the referee to see where the referee is positioned and what action has been taken. If the referee has not taken any action, the assistant referee shall raise the flag and use the electronic BEEP signal and then visibly move down the touchline towards the corner flag. [USSF Note: Assistant referees should indicate a penal foul by the defense inside its penalty area and out of the referee's sight by holding the flag across the lower body.]

Mass confrontation

In situations of mass confrontation, the nearest assistant referee may enter the field of play to assist the referee. The other assistant referee shall also observe and record details of the incident.

Consultation

When dealing with disciplinary issues, eye contact and a basic discreet hand signal from the assistant referee to the referee may be enough in some cases. On occasions when direct consultation is required, the assistant referee may advance 2-3 meters/yards onto the field of play if necessary. When talking, the referee and assistant referee shall both turn to face the pitch to avoid being heard by others.

Wall distance

When a free kick is awarded very close to the touchline near the assistant referee's position, the assistant referee may enter the field of play to help ensure that the wall is positioned 9.15 m/10 yards from the ball. The assistant referee will assert the distance from the position of the ball. In this case, the referee shall wait until the assistant is back in position before restarting play.

LAW 7 - THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

Additional Time Allowance for Time Lost

Many stoppages in play are entirely natural (e.g. throw-ins, goal kicks). An allowance is to be made only when these delays are excessive.

The fourth official indicates the minimum additional time decided by the referee at the end of the final minute of each period of play.

The announcement of the additional time does not indicate the exact amount of time left in the match. The time may be increased if the referee considers it appropriate but never reduced.

The referee shall not compensate for a timekeeping error during the first half by increasing or reducing the length of the second half.

LAW 8 - THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY

Dropped Ball

Any player may challenge for the ball (including the goalkeeper). There is no minimum or maximum number of players required to contest a dropped ball. The referee cannot decide who may or may not contest a dropped ball.

LAW 9 - THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball inside the field of play touches a person other than a player

If, when the ball is in play, it touches the referee or an assistant referee who is temporarily on the field of play, play continues because the referee and the assistant referees are part of the match. [USSF Note: If the ball touches an outside agent on the field, other than at a penalty kick, restart with a dropped ball.]

LAW 10 - THE METHOD OF SCORING

No Goal

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line and immediately realizes the error, play shall be restarted with a dropped ball. * (see page 3)

LAW 11 - OFFSIDE

Infringements

When an offside offense occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played to that player by a teammate.

If a defending player steps behind the player's own goal line in order to place an opponent in an offside position, the referee shall allow play to continue and caution the defender for deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission when the ball is next out of play.

It is not an offense in itself for a player who is in an offside position to step off the field of play to show the referee non-involvement in active play. However, if the referee considers that the player has left the field of play for tactical reasons and has gained an unfair advantage by reentering the field of play, the player shall be cautioned for unsporting behavior. The player needs to ask for the referee's permission to reenter the field of play.

If an attacking player remains stationary between the goal posts and inside the goal net as the ball enters the goal, a goal shall be awarded. However, if the attacking player distracts an opponent, the goal shall be disallowed, the player cautioned for unsporting behavior and play shall be restarted with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was located. * (see page 3) [SERIES OF DIAGRAMS, 1-12; SEE BOOK ONLINE]

LAW 12 - FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Basis requirements for a foul

The following conditions must be met for an offense to be considered a foul.

- It must be committed by a player [against an opponent]
- It must occur on the field of play
- It must occur while the ball is in play

If the referee stops play due to an offense committed outside the field of play (when the ball is in play), play shall be restarted with a dropped ball in the position where the ball was located. * (see page 3)

Careless, reckless, using excessive force

“**Careless**” means that the player has shown a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acted without precaution.

- No further disciplinary sanction is needed if a foul is judged to be careless

“**Reckless**” means that the player has acted with complete disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent

- A player who plays in a reckless manner shall be cautioned.

“**Using excessive force**” means that the player has far exceeded the necessary use of force and is in danger of injuring the opponent.

- A player who uses excessive force shall be sent off.

Charging an opponent

The act of charging is a challenge for space using physical contact within playing distance of the ball without using arms or elbows.

It is an offense to charge an opponent

- in a careless manner
- in a reckless manner
- using excessive force

Holding an opponent

Holding an opponent includes the act of preventing the opponent from moving past or around using the hands, the arms or the body.

Referees are reminded to make an early intervention and to deal firmly with holding offenses especially inside the penalty area at corner kicks and free kicks.

To deal with these situations,

- the referee shall warn any player holding an opponent before the ball is in play
- caution the player if the holding continues before the ball is in play
- award a direct free kick or penalty kick and caution the player if it happens once the ball is in play.

If a defender starts holding an attacker outside the penalty area but continues holding the opponent inside the penalty area, the referee shall award a penalty kick.

Disciplinary sanctions

- A caution for unsporting behavior shall be issued when a player holds an opponent to prevent the opponent gaining possession of the ball or taking up an advantageous position
- A player shall be sent off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity by holding an opponent
- No further disciplinary action shall be taken in other situations of holding an opponent

Restart of play

- Direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred * (see page 3) or a penalty kick if the offense occurred inside the penalty area.

Handling the ball

Handling the ball involves a deliberate act of a player making contact with the ball with the hand or arm. The referee shall take the following into consideration:

- The movement of the hand towards the ball (not the ball towards the hand)
- The distance between the opponent and the ball (unexpected ball)
- Position of the hand does not necessarily mean that there is an infringement
- Touching the ball with an object held in the hand (clothing, shinguard etc.) counts as an infringement
- Hitting the ball with a thrown object (a shoe, shinguard etc.) counts as an infringement

Disciplinary sanctions

There are circumstances when a caution for unsporting behavior is required when a player deliberately handles the ball, e.g. when a player:

- deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession
- attempts to score a goal by deliberately handling the ball

A player is sent off, however, if that player prevents a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball. This punishment arises not from the act of the player deliberately handling the ball but from the unacceptable and unfair intervention that prevented a goal being scored.

Restart of play

- Direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred
* (see page 3) or penalty kick

Outside the goalkeeper's own penalty area, the goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as does any other player. Inside the goalkeeper's own penalty area, the goalkeeper cannot be guilty of a handling offense incurring a direct free kick or any misconduct related to handling the ball. He or she can, however, be guilty of several offenses that incur an indirect free kick.

Offenses by goalkeepers

Goalkeepers are not permitted to keep possession of the ball in their hands for more than six seconds. The goalkeeper is considered to be in possession of the ball:

- while the ball is between the hands or between the hand and any surface (e.g., ground, own body)
- while holding the ball in the outstretched open hand.
- while in the act of bouncing it on the ground or tossing it into the air

When a goalkeeper has gained possession of the ball with the hands the goalkeeper cannot be challenged by an opponent.

A goalkeeper is not permitted to touch the ball with the hand inside the goalkeeper's own penalty area in the following circumstances:

- If the goalkeeper handles the ball again after it has been released from possession and has not touched any other player.
 - The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of the hands or arms except if the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after making a save
 - Possession of the ball includes the goalkeeper deliberately parrying the ball,
- If the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands after it has been deliberately kicked by a teammate to a place where the goalkeeper can retrieve it.
- If the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.

Restart of play

- Indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred * (see page 3)

Offenses against goalkeepers

- It is an offense for a player to prevent a goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands
- A player must be penalized for playing in a dangerous manner if the player kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- It is an offense to restrict the movement of the goalkeeper by unfairly impeding the goalkeeper, e. g., at the taking of a corner kick

Playing in a dangerous manner

Playing in a dangerous manner is defined as any action that, while trying to play the ball, threatens injury to someone (including that player). It is committed with an opponent nearby and prevents the opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury. The action becomes an offense only when an opponent is adversely affected. A scissors or bicycle kick is permissible provided that, in the opinion of the referee, it is not dangerous to an opponent.

Playing in a dangerous manner involves no physical contact between the players. If there is physical contact, the action becomes an offense punishable with a direct free kick or penalty kick. In case of physical contact, the referee should carefully consider the high probability that misconduct has also been committed.

Disciplinary sanctions

- If a player plays in a dangerous manner in a "normal" challenge, the referee should not take any disciplinary action. If the action is made with obvious risk of injury, the referee should caution the player.
- If a player denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity playing in a dangerous manner, the referee should send off the player.

Restart of play

- Indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred * (see page 3)

- If there is contact, a different offense has been committed, punishable by a direct free kick or penalty kick.

Impeding the progress of an opponent

Impeding the progress of an opponent means moving into the path of the opponent to obstruct, block, slow down or force a change of direction by an opponent when the ball is not within playing distance of either player.

All players have a right to their position on the field of play; being in the way of an opponent is not the same as moving into the way of an opponent.

Shielding the ball is permitted. A player who places him- or herself between an opponent and the ball for tactical reasons has not committed an offense as long as the ball is kept in playing distance and the player does not hold off the opponent with the arms or body. If the ball is within playing distance, the player may be fairly charged by an opponent.

Delaying the restart of play to issue a card

Once the referee has decided to issue a card, whether to caution or send off a player, play shall not be restarted until the sanction has been administered.

Cautions for unsporting behavior

There are different circumstances when a player is cautioned for unsporting behavior, e.g. if a player

- commits in a reckless manner one of the six offenses punishable by a direct free kick
- commits a foul for the tactical purpose of interfering with or breaking up a promising attack
- holds an opponent for the tactical purpose of pulling the opponent away from the ball or preventing the opponent from getting to the ball
- handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession or developing an attack (other than the goalkeeper within the goalkeeper's own penalty area)
- handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal (irrespective of whether or not the attempt is successful).
- attempts to deceive the referee by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (simulation)
- changes places with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission
- acts in a manner which shows a lack of respect for the game
- plays the ball when walking off the field of play after being granted permission to leave the field of play
- verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart
- makes unauthorized marks on the field of play

Celebration of a goal

While it is permissible for a player to demonstrate joy when a goal has been scored, the celebration must not be excessive.

Reasonable celebrations are allowed, but the practice of choreographed celebrations is not to be encouraged when it results in excessive time-wasting and referees are instructed to intervene in such cases.

A player must be cautioned if:

- in the opinion of the referee, the player makes gestures which are provocative, derisory or inflammatory
- the player climbs on to a perimeter fence to celebrate a goal being scored
- the player removes the shirt or covers the head with the shirt.
- the player covers the head or face with a mask or other similar item

Leaving the field of play to celebrate a goal is not a cautionable offense in itself but it is essential that players return to the field of play as soon as possible.

Referees are expected to act in a preventative manner and to exercise common sense in dealing with the celebration of a goal.

Showing dissent by word or action

A player who is guilty of dissent by protesting (verbally or non-verbally) against a referee's decision must be cautioned.

The captain of a team has no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game but does have a degree of responsibility for the behavior of the team.

Delaying the restart of play

Referees must caution players who delay the restart of play by tactics such as:

- taking a free kick from the wrong position with the sole intention of forcing the referee to order a retake
- appearing to take a throw-in but suddenly leaving it to a teammate to take
- kicking the ball away or carrying it away with the hands after the referee has stopped play
- excessively delaying the taking of a throw-in or free kick
- delaying leaving the field of play when being substituted
- provoking a confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has stopped play

Persistent infringement

Referees should be alert at all times to players who persistently infringe the Laws. In particular, they must be aware that even if a player commits a number of different offenses, the player must still be cautioned for persistently infringing the Laws.

There is no specific number of infringements which constitutes "persistence" or the presence of a pattern – this is entirely a matter of judgment and must be reached in the context of effective game management.

Serious foul play

A player is guilty of serious foul play for using excessive force or brutality against an opponent when challenging for the ball when it is in play.

Any player who lunges at an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, from the side or from behind using one or both legs, with excessive force and endangering the safety of an opponent is guilty of serious foul play.

Advantage should not be applied in situations involving serious foul play unless there is a clear subsequent opportunity to score a goal.

The referee shall send off the player guilty of serious foul play when the ball is next out of play

A player who is guilty of serious foul play should be sent off and play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred * (see page 3) or a penalty kick (if the offense occurred inside the offender's penalty area)

Violent conduct

A player is guilty of violent conduct for using excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball.

A player is also guilty of violent conduct for using excessive force or brutality against a teammate, spectator, match official or any other person.

Violent conduct may occur either on the field of play or outside its boundaries, whether the ball is in play or not. Advantage should not be applied in situations involving violent conduct unless there is a clear subsequent opportunity to score a goal. The referee shall send off the player guilty of violent conduct when the ball is next out of play.

Referees are reminded that violent conduct often leads to mass confrontation therefore they must try to avert this with active intervention.

A player, substitute or substituted player who is guilty of violent conduct shall be sent off.

Restart of play:

- If the ball is out of play, play is restarted according to the previous decision.
 - If the ball is in play and the offense occurred outside the field of play
 - if the player is already off the field of play and commits the offense play is restarted with a dropped ball* from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped. *
 - If the player leaves the field of play to commit the offense, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped. *
 - If the ball is in play and a player commits an offense inside the field of play
 - against an opponent, play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position where the offense occurred * or a penalty kick.
 - against a teammate, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred. *
 - against a substitute or substituted player, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped*.
 - against the referee or an assistant referee, play is restarted with an indirect free kick from the position where the offense occurred *
 - against another person, play is restarted with a dropped ball from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped *
- * (see page 3)

Offenses where an object (or the ball) is thrown

If while the ball is in play, a player, substitute or substituted player throws an object at an opponent or other person in a reckless manner, the referee shall stop play and caution player, substitute or substituted player.

If while the ball is in play, a player, substitute or substituted player throws an object at an opponent or other person using excessive force, the referee shall stop play and send off the player, substitute or substituted player for violent conduct.

Restart of play:

- If a player standing inside the team's own penalty area throws an object at an opponent standing outside the penalty area, play is restarted with a direct free kick to the opponents' team taken from the position where the object struck or would have struck the opponent.
- If a player standing outside the team's own penalty area throws an object at an opponent standing inside the penalty area, the referee restarts play with a penalty kick.

- If a player standing inside the field of play throws an object at any person standing outside the field of play, the referee restarts play with an indirect free kick taken from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped * (see page 3)
- If a player standing outside the field of play throws an object at an opponent standing inside the field of play, the referee restarts play with a direct free kick to the opponents' team taken from the position where the object struck or would have struck the opponent or with a penalty kick.
- If a substitute or substituted player standing outside the field of play throws an object at an opponent standing inside the field of play, the referee restarts play with an indirect free kick to the opposing team from the position in which the ball was located when play was stopped. * (see page 3)

Denying a goal or a goalscoring opportunity

There are two sending-off offenses that deal with denying an opponent an obvious opportunity to score a goal. It is not necessary for the offense to occur inside the penalty area.

If the referee applies advantage during an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and a goal is scored directly, despite the opponent's handling the ball or fouling an opponent, the player cannot be sent off but may still be cautioned.

Referees should consider the following circumstances when deciding whether to send off a player for denying a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity:

- The distance between the offense and the goal
- The likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
- The direction of the play
- The location and number of defenders
- The offense which denies an opponent an obvious goalscoring opportunity may be an offense punished by a direct free kick or an indirect free kick.

LAW 13 - FREE KICKS

Procedure

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.

A free kick can be taken by lifting the ball with a foot or both feet simultaneously.

Feinting to take a free kick to confuse opponents is permitted as part of football. However, if in the opinion of the referee the feinting is considered an act of unsporting behavior, the player shall be cautioned.

If a player, while correctly taking a free kick, intentionally kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball a second time but neither in a careless nor a reckless manner nor using excessive force, the referee shall allow play to continue.

An indirect free kick should be retaken if the referee fails to raise the arm to indicate that the kick is indirect and the ball is kicked directly into the goal. The initial indirect free kick is not nullified by the referee's mistake.

Distance

If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent who is less than 9.15 m/10 yds from the ball intercepts it, the referee shall allow play to continue.

If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent near the ball deliberately prevents the taking of the kick, the referee shall caution the player for delaying the restart of play.

If, when a free kick is taken by the defending team from inside its own penalty area, one or more opponents remain inside the penalty area because the defender decides to take the kick quickly and the opponents did not have time to leave the penalty area, the referee shall allow play to continue.

LAW 14- THE PENALTY KICK

Procedure

Feinting to take a penalty kick to confuse opponents is permitted as part of football. However, if in the opinion of the referee the feinting is considered an act of unsporting behavior, the player shall be cautioned.

Preparing for the penalty kick

The referee shall confirm the following requirements before the penalty kick is taken:

- The kicker is identified
- The ball is properly placed on the penalty mark
- The goalkeeper is on the goal line between the goal posts and facing the kicker
- The teammates of the kicker and the goalkeeper are
 - outside the penalty area
 - outside the penalty arc
 - behind the ball

Infringements – After the whistle and before ball in play <i>Who infringed Law 14?</i>	What was the outcome of the kick?	
	<i>Ball goes into goal</i>	<i>Ball does not go into goal</i>
<i>Attacker (including the kicker)</i>	RETAKE PENALTY KICK	INDIRECT FREE KICK*
<i>Defender (including the goalkeeper)</i>	GOAL (KICK-OFF)	RETAKE PENALTY KICK
<i>Both attacker and defender</i>	RETAKE PENALTY KICK	RETAKE PENALTY KICK

LAW 15 - THE THROW-IN

Procedures – Infringements

Referees are reminded that opponents may be no closer than 2 m/yds from the point at which the throw-in is taken. Where necessary, the referee should warn any player within this distance before the throw-in is taken and caution the player if the player subsequently fails to retreat to the correct distance. Play shall be restarted with a throw-in. If a player, while correctly taking a throw-in, intentionally throws the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball a second time but neither in a careless nor a reckless manner nor using excessive force, the referee shall allow play to continue.

If the ball enters the opponents' goal directly from a throw-in, the referee shall award a goal kick. If the ball enters the thrower's own goal directly from a throw-in, the referee shall award a corner kick. If the ball touches the ground before entering the field of play, the throw-in shall be retaken by the same team from the same position provided that it was taken in line with the correct procedure. If the throw-in is not taken in line with the correct procedure, it shall be retaken by the opposing team.

LAW 16 - THE GOAL KICK

Procedures – Infringements

If a player who has taken a goal kick correctly, deliberately plays the ball a second time when the ball has left the penalty area before another player has touched it, this shall be penalized with an indirect free kick from the position where the second touch occurred. * (see page 3) However, if the player touches the ball with the hand, this should be penalized with a direct free kick and a disciplinary sanction if required.

If an opponent enters the penalty area before the ball is in play and is fouled by a defender, the goal kick shall be retaken and the defender may be cautioned or sent off depending on the nature of the offense.

LAW 17 - THE CORNER KICK

Procedures – Infringements

Referees are reminded that opponents must remain at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the corner arc until the ball is in play (the optional marks off the field of play may be used for assistance). Where necessary, the referee should warn any player within this distance before the corner kick is taken and caution the player who subsequently fails to retreat to the correct distance.

If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team in the position where the second touch occurred. * (see page 3)

If a player, while correctly taking a corner kick, intentionally kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball a second time but neither in a careless nor a reckless manner nor using excessive force, the referee shall allow play to continue.

The ball shall be placed inside the corner arc and is in play when it is kicked, therefore the ball does not need to leave the corner arc to be in play.

The diagram shows some correct and incorrect positions.

PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE THE WINNER OF A MATCH OR HOME-AND-AWAY

Kicks from the penalty mark

Procedure

- The kicks from the penalty mark are not part of the match.
- The goal may be changed only if it becomes unusable.
- Once all eligible players have taken a kick from the penalty mark, the same sequence does not have to be followed as in the first round of kicks.
- Each team is responsible for selecting the players from those on the field of play at the end of the match and the order in which they will take the kicks.

A player other than the goalkeeper who is injured may not be substituted during the taking of kicks from the Penalty mark.

- If the goalkeeper is sent off during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, the goalkeeper shall be replaced by a player who finished the match.
- A player, substitute or substituted player may be cautioned or sent off during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.
- The referee shall not abandon the match if a team remains with less than 7 players during the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.
- If a player is injured or sent off during the taking of kicks from the penalty marks and the team has one player less, the referee should not reduce the number of players taking kicks for the other team. An equal number of players from each team is required only at the start of the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Allowance for Time Lost

Date: April 22, 2008

Allowance is made in any period of play (including extra time) for time lost through substitutions, assessment of injuries, removal of players from the field of play for treatment, time wasting and any other cause. The specific amount of the allowance is at the discretion of the referee, although the International Football Association Board (IFAB) has advised that the full time lost due to injuries should be allowed. By tradition, the primary focus of this provision in Law 7 is on delays in the restart of play which are excessively prolonged. Among examples of "other cause" would be the need for the officiating team to confer regarding the identity of players committing misconduct; confrontations with officials; the removal of streamers, debris or other objects thrown onto the field which interrupts the game; pitch incursions by spectator(s); and so forth.

In order to standardize the procedures by which "additional time" is being allowed in a period of play, the following guidelines are adopted:

- During the two minutes before the expiration of each period of play the Referee must inform the Fourth Official, either visually or verbally, of the amount of time allowed. This time shall be stated to the closest lower minute (i.e., 1 minute, 30 seconds will be expressed as 1 minute).
- The Fourth Official will be responsible for displaying this time at but not before the close of the affected period of play. Number panels or an electronic substitution board would be most commonly used for this purpose and the display of the remaining time should be prominent.
- Other Fourth Official duties (e.g., managing substitutions) must take precedence over the display of time remaining.
- In the absence of a Fourth Official, the referee will follow the above guidelines in all respects but will convey the remaining time to the assistant referee closer to the teams who will then so inform both coaches.

This minimum time does not indicate the exact amount of time left in the match nor does it preclude more time being added to the allowance for any subsequent injuries or additional delays (including time wasting). However, no further communication with or by the Fourth Official will be necessary.

Once the indication of the minimum time allowed has been given by the Fourth Official, this time cannot be reduced. It is the minimum expected by everyone involved in the game. Referees are therefore to ensure that a period of play is not ended prior to the expiration of the announced remaining time.

Clubs are reminded that the Public Address Announcer should announce "There will be a **minimum** of _____ minutes allowance for time lost. Official time is being kept on the field by the referee."

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee,
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
National Referees, Instructors and Assessors

From: David Mckee
Referee Committee Chairman

Subject: Assessment Policy & Procedure Updates

Date: May 27, 2004

This is a summary of the policy changes approved at the Referee Committee Meeting held in Dallas, Texas on April 4, 2004. These changes were reviewed at the SDI/SDA Workshop held in Colorado Springs on May 22, 2004. The Referee Administrative Handbook is being updated and these changes will be printed in the new edition. They should be implemented for the 2005 registration period. Please contact me by email if you have any questions. (NatDirASss@aol.com).

1. Change in requirements for attendance for:
 - A. Associated Assessor Class:

Enrollment limited to those who have attained a grade 7 or higher level as a referee.
 - B. State Assessor Course:

Enrollment limited to those who have been a Referee Assessor for one year (this criteria may be waived by the NDA for current National and retired National/International referees).
2. Change in Selection Process
 - A. Provisional National Assessor: By invitation only, from U.S. Soccer. Selection based on experience as a referee in professional matches, assessment experience in adult matches or higher and overall contributions to U.S. Soccer.
 - B. Candidates must have attained a grade 4 or higher level as a referee with significant professional referee experience.
3. Assessment Forms for 2005
 - A. New Developmental form (in triplicate) available from National Referee Office in paper form or on web as word or PDF format.
 - B. New Numerical form for all levels of referees for maintenance and upgrade assessments.
4. Changes to certifying and upgrade requirements:
 - A. Grade 8 to 7 upgrade: one assessment, with a score of 70 or higher, on a U17, U18 U19 or higher 90-minute match.

- B. Grade 7 maintenance: By state adoption, one developmental assessment at any level match designated by the state (U17 or higher recommended).
 - C. Grade 7 to 6 upgrade: 2 assessments as a referee (one at adult division 2 or higher) and one as an assistant referee, with a passing score of 70 or higher, on a competitive U19, or an adult men's or women's, or higher 90 minute match.
 - D. Grade 6 maintenance: 1 passing assessment, with a score of 70 or higher, on an adult men's or women's, 90-minute, Division 2 or higher match.
5. Limitation imposed on upgrade assessments:

For all referees seeking upgrade in a referee level, the assessments should be completed within a 12-month time period. No more than two failing assessments can occur within that time period. A third failure terminates the upgrade process for that registration year, starting with 0 assessments. National Referee candidates must get their upgrade assessments in the December 1-November 30 time period in the year prior to National Camp attendance. A 3rd failure terminates the upgrade process for that year for National candidates.

6. Maintenance assessment failures for National and State Referees:

For annual maintenance assessments for State and National referees, the 1st failure will require only 1 additional assessment (1 for 1). For the 2nd or additional failures, the 2 for 1 criteria applies. Make up assessments must be on the same level of game or higher.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee,
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
National Referees, Instructors and Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Assistant Referee Mechanics

Date: June 5, 2006

The support of soccer evolves through innovations in team strategies and tactics and advancements in player skills. This occurs at all levels but often starts at the most competitive matches and gradually filters downward, eventually reaching youth and recreational play. The skills, capabilities, mechanics and procedures used by referees must evolve as well. This is why deliberate experiments as well as gradual trends in referee mechanics are monitored closely to identify modifications that have proved successful.

US Soccer's *Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and 4th Officials* is the official source of advice on the proper standard mechanics to us in matches conducted in this country under the Laws of the Game. Based on developing trends in high level national and international matches, the following change in procedure should be given immediate consideration.

- The referee retains primary responsibility for announcing decisions regarding the throw-in, goal kick, and corner kick restarts when the ball leaves the field across the portion of the touchline (throw-in) or goal line (goal kick or corner kick) not given to the assistant referee (what is commonly termed the referee's end of the touchline or the referee's side of the goal line.).
- However, hereafter, the assistant referee should also provide a confirming flag signal after the referee has clearly signaled the restart decision.
- Nothing in this modification procedure alters the need for the assistant referee to provide a signal (if possible) when the referee makes eye contact to ask for assistance. *Similarly, nothing has changed regarding the assistant referee signaling* when the ball has entirely left the field but has returned and still being played (flag straight up, changing to the appropriate signal once eye contact is made with the referee).

The purpose of this change is, among other things, to provide an additional emphasis and visual confirmation for the restart which might be more easily seen by players, team officials, and spectators. The next published version of the **Guide** will reflect this change.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Automatic Suspension Following an Expulsion from a Match

Date: November 14, 2003

FIFA recently distributed Circular 866 to clarify and confirm any doubts remaining from its earlier Circular (821, dated October 1, 2002) regarding the issue of mandatory suspensions for a player who has been expelled from a match. The clarifications took the form of unambiguous answers to certain frequently asked questions.

1. Any player sent off during a football match shall automatically be suspended for the following match (Art. 19, para. 4; Art. 39 FDC)
2. Any appeal against an automatic suspension shall not have a suspensive effect. Under no circumstances may a player take part in the following match while awaiting a decision on his appeal, regardless of the reasons for his appeal.
3. Any appeals against an automatic suspension as a result of an obvious error made by the referee under the terms of Art. 83 FDC (principally an error regarding the identify of a player involved in an incident leading to a sending off) can and must be accepted or rejected immediately in order to allow any players who have been erroneously suspended to play in the next match.
4. The disciplinary body is able to reach an immediate decision with regard to such an appeal as obvious errors, by their very nature, can also be confirmed without delay. If any doubts remain, the referee has clearly not made an obvious error and the appeal will also be rejected immediately. We therefore ask the national associations of FIFA to make use of the judicial instruments referred to in the FIFA Disciplinary Code (Art. 134 and 140) in order to be able to make an immediate decision regarding appeals: either allow the disciplinary body to hold an immediate conference or permit a single judge to pronounce a decision.
5. If a player is unable to serve the automatic suspension in a domestic or continental club competition, the relevant bodies shall decide on how the suspension shall be carried over to another competition.
6. The principle of automatic suspension shall be applied in the same way, irrespective of the offence committed by the player. However, in the case of particularly serious offences, the relevant body may extend the sanction imposed to apply to all competitions organized under its jurisdiction in order to prevent a player, after having committed such an offence, from playing in any other competition.

All competition authorities under USSF must ensure that their disciplinary procedures take these clarifications into consideration.

- A one game suspension is mandatory following a send-off (red card).
- The suspension may be extended for more serious offenses but it cannot be reduced, no matter what the reason was for the send-off.
- The suspension must be served even if it is being appealed. Under no circumstances can the fact of an appeal be used to suspend or delay the suspension.

- All appeals must be decided quickly, before the match is played for which the affected player would be suspended. If the send-off was erroneous due to an obvious error in identifying the player, this appeal can be resolved quickly because the error was obvious; if the error was not obvious, the appeal will be quickly resolved by rejecting it.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Availability of Water During a Match

Date: April 6, 2002

The FIFA Medical Committee recently emphasized the importance of proper hydration during a match and the need for water (or other appropriate liquids) to be available to the players. Referees are advised to use the following common sense guidelines in determining the correct ways in which this concern can be implemented. Although the term "water" is used below, the guidelines apply to all liquids that may be provided for player hydration in the immediate area of the field.

- Players may drink water during play or at a stoppage but only by going to a touch line or goal line.
- While drinking water, players may not leave the field nor may they carry water containers onto the field. The players should stand at the touch line or goal line while drinking water.
- Water containers may not be held in readiness where they will interfere with the movement of the assistant referees. After water containers are used, they must be removed so as not to interfere with the movement of the assistant referees.
- Under no circumstances may water containers of any sort (regardless of material, size, or construction) be thrown onto the field or to players even during stoppages of play.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Cardable Offenses and the Restart of Play

Date: August 26, 2003

A situation in a recent U.S. Professional Division match presented a difficult decision involving a cardable offense and a quick restart of play. The referee must balance two competing objectives – effective management of misconduct and a team’s right to a quick free kick restart.

- A card for misconduct (caution or send-off) must be given at the next stoppage of play or the opportunity is lost. If the opportunity passes without the card being shown, the referee must nevertheless include all details in the match report.
- The referee may decide that a quick restart is significantly beneficial for a team and outweighs the particular value of preventing the restart in order to display the card.
- However, if the referee has decided that the red or yellow card **must** be given, **despite the benefit of play being restarted quickly**, the referee must act to prevent the restart and, should the restart occur before this decision can be announced, the referee can call the ball back so that the misconduct can be properly handled. The restart can now occur only by the express signal of the referee.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Cautions and Cautionable Offenses-2006

Date: July 1, 2006

The Laws of the Game identify seven cautionable offenses for which players may be cautioned (Law 12). These include fairly specific actions (leaving the field without the permission of the referee), very general actions (unsporting behavior), and highly judgmental areas (dissent). In all cases, the referee is expected to evaluate a player's behavior based on several factors:

- Does the act meet the generally accepted and understood meaning of the offense?
- Was the act, even if an offense, trifling?
- Would the issuance of a caution for this misconduct likely have desirable results for game and/or player management?

If the player's act meets the criteria for the offense, is not trifling, and its punishment will have a positive effect on the game, the caution should be given. Whether the referee should stop play to do so or whether play should be allowed to continue until the next stoppage involves the application of the same advantage concept that is used to decide whether to stop play for a foul.

Every caution must be given for one and only one of the seven reasons listed in Law 12. Player behavior, of course, may involve several forms of misconduct at the same time and the referee must decide whether to caution each one separately (in which case, the second caution must also be followed by a send-off and display of the red card) or to issue a single caution for the total behavior. If the latter is chosen, the referee must decide which specific reason in the Law will be reported as the basis for the caution. In either case, however, the referee should fully describe in the game report all misconduct the player has committed in addition to the misconduct for which the caution was given. A player may not avoid being reported for misconduct by apologizing for the offending behavior.

Please note that there are only three reasons for which a substitute or replaced player may be cautioned: unsporting behavior, dissent, or delaying the restart of play. This means that a caution for a substitute who enters the field illegally must be reported as unsporting behavior. These cautionable offenses for substitutes or replaced players should be evaluated and applied the same way they would be if it were a player who was involved.

There is much discussion among referees as to whether a caution is "mandatory" or "discretionary" and these terms have often been used in the past when the subject of misconduct has arisen. One purpose of this position paper is to reorganize the discussion on this matter and to recommend that referees avoid such terms in the future. *The Lawsof the Game* require that the referee consider a player's behavior as "cautionable" when it meets the standards for the offense. It does not require that the caution actually be given unless the referee further decides that the misconduct is not trifling and that the caution will result in a desirable change in player conduct.

Each caution must be approached as a series of decisions. The referee's judgment (discretion) is a critical element in deciding, for example, whether what a player has just said or done is dissent within the meaning of Law 12 and guidance from USSF (see the USSF memorandum on "Misconduct Involving Language/Gestures," dated March 14, 2003). If the referee decides that it is "dissent," then the offense must be considered cautionable, but this does not mean that the yellow card must be displayed.

In no case may a caution (or send-off) be delayed beyond the next restart. It must be given as soon as play is stopped, even if this means preventing a team from taking advantage of a quick restart (if the kick is taken, it must be called back and not taken until the delayed card is shown). No alteration of this procedure is permitted.

Because players have a right to some reasonable degree of predictability regarding how the referee will evaluate player actions in terms of the seven cautionable offenses, USSF has developed various guidelines for each of these offenses, designed to provide additional insight into their meaning. The USSF memorandum on player language, for example, provides detailed criteria the referee can use to help judge whether any particular example has crossed the line into misconduct and whether, having crossed the line, the player should be cautioned (or sent off). Referees must avoid purely personal standards in making these judgments. Further, many cautions can be avoided if the referee clearly advises players when their conduct is approaching the level of severity which would warrant a card (as is recommended, but not required, for persistent infringement or delaying the restart of play).

The International F. A. Board (IFAB) has also assisted referees by providing specific examples of various forms of misconduct. Stating explicitly that a particular action is a form of misconduct serves to draw attention to it and to emphasize the likelihood that it should be cautioned when it occurs. It is not that each of these specified actions **must** be carded but that the referee's judgment is simplified in determining if the action is cautionable. The decision actually to give the card remains discretionary based on the factors already noted.

Note: The items included under the category of "unsporting behavior" are simply those for which examples are found in official documents. Other such incidents can and do occur in games around the world. It is up to the referee to judge which acts constitute "unsporting behavior" and act accordingly, basing the decision on the circumstances of the incident itself, the referee's needs for proper player management, overall conditions in the game and general societal norms.

The referee may show cards after the match is finished and until he or she leaves the field of play. The referee must report information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match to the appropriate authorities. To avoid problems, referees should leave the field as soon as possible after the completion of the match.

The remainder of this paper is a compilation of the specific examples of cautionable misconduct found in FIFA and USSF publications:

- *The Laws of the Game* (LOTG),
- "Additional Instructions" (abbreviated here as AI and found printed in the Lawbook after the Laws),
- *Questions and Answers* (Q&A, last published in 2006),
- Advice to Referees (ATR), and
- USSF memoranda, including the annual publication *Instructions for Referees and Resolutions Affecting Team Coaches and Players* (Resolutions)

In all cases, the source of the specific example and the cautionable offense (from among the seven listed in Law 12) with which it is associated will be identified. Referees should read the Q&A carefully, as there are numerous cases mentioned in which only the referee's common sense and discretion will dictate whether a caution should be given.

1. Unsporting behavior

A substitute or replaced player enters the field of play without permission during play (LOTG; ATR 3.18(c))

A named substitute who takes the place of a player before the start of the match without the referee's permission (Q&A)

Any "other infringements" of Law 3, such as entering the field of play to celebrate a goal (LOTG)

Uses a deliberate trick while the ball is in play in order to circumvent the Law, i. e., to avoid penalty for the goalkeeper handling a ball deliberately kicked to him or her by a teammate (LOTG)

Uses a deliberate trick to circumvent the Law while taking a free kick—as above (LOTG)

A player commits a "reckless" foul (ATR 12.3)

A player uses a teammate's shoulders as a support in jumping for the ball (formerly in the Additional Instructions; still valid)

Two players of the same team commit any form of unsporting behavior towards one another (Q&A)

A player commits an act deemed by the referee as bringing the game into disrepute (also known as showing a lack of respect for the game, e. g., aggressive attitude, inflammatory behavior, or taunting) (See ATR 12.28.1)

A player removes the jersey when celebrating a goal (LOTG; Q&A)

A player gives an excessive demonstration of jubilation—e. g., by removing the jersey or covering the head with the shirt, jumping over the boundary fence, gesticulating at the opponents or spectators, ridiculing them by pointing at his or her shirt, or similar provocative action (Q&A; AI 2006)

Unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower at a throw-in, even when more than two yards/meters from the thrower (LOTG; also in Q&A; ATR 15.7)

Deliberately handles the ball to score a goal (AI 2006; Q&A; ATR 12.28.1; Resolutions)

Deliberately and blatantly handles the ball to prevent an opponent gaining possession (AI 2006; Q&A)

Blatantly holding an opponent to play the ball or to gain possession, including holding the shirt or other parts of the uniform (Q&A; AI 2006; ATR 12.7)

Holding or hindering when the ball is out of play to prevent an opponent from running into position or otherwise interfering with play (Resolutions)

A player holds an opponent to prevent him or her gaining possession of the ball or taking up an advantageous position (AI 2006)

A player does not comply with the referee's instruction to leave the field after play has been stopped for this player's bleeding or serious injury (AI 2006)

Feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (simulation, AI 2006)

Goalkeeper or another player draws unauthorized marks on the field of play with his or her foot (Q&A; ATR 1.6, ATR 12.28.1)

A player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission (Q&A; LOTG; ATR 8.3, ATR 12.28.1)

A player who has been replaced subsequently returns to the field as a substitute (Q&A; ATR 3.10; Note: This does not apply when the rules of the competition allow multiple substitutions)

A player smokes a cigarette or uses a mobile phone during the game (ATR 12.28.1)

A player participates in play after receiving the referee's permission to leave the field (Q&A; ATR 3.11)

A player who has left the field to receive treatment trips an opponent inside the field (Q&A)

A player who has left the field to avoid offside but returns to the field and engages in play should be cautioned for unsporting behavior if the referee believes this movement had a tactical aim or was in some way a feint (Q&A; ATR 11.8)

A player leaves the field to put an opponent in an offside position unfairly (Q&A; ATR 11.10)

A player whose movement carries him or her off the field distracts an opponent as the ball is being kicked into goal (Q&A)

A player intentionally lies on the ball for an unreasonable length of time (Q&A)

The goalkeeper hits the ball with a shinguard or other object to prevent it from entering the goal (Q&A)

A player holds an opponent who is beyond the touchline to prevent the opponent from continuing a run (Q&A)

A teammate of the identified kicker at a penalty kick rushes forward to take the kick instead (Q&A)

A player performs a direct free kick foul in a reckless manner (ATR 12.28.1)

A player commits a direct free kick foul while tackling for the ball from behind without endangering the safety of an opponent (ATR 12.28.1)

A player interferes with or prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands into play (ATR 12.28.1)

A player on the defending team verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart (ATR 12.28.1)

A player fails to follow the referee's request to remove jewelry—or other unsafe equipment (Q&A)

A ball is thrown in and a defender punches it over the bar (Q&A: no goal is possible directly from a throw-in)

A player tries to prevent a goal by deliberately handling it, but is unsuccessful and the ball enters the goal (Q&A)

A player deliberately handles the ball, but fails to prevent it reaching an opponent (Q&A; caution at next stoppage)

2. Dissent by word or action

Protesting a referee's decision (AI 2006; ATR 12.28.2)

A goalkeeper who leaves the penalty area (not beckoned by the referee) to engage the referee or an assistant referee in debate regarding a decision has committed dissent. (ATR 12.28.2)

3. Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game

Referees should be alert at all times to players who persistently infringe the Laws. In particular they must be aware that even if a player commits a number of different offenses he or she must still be cautioned for persistently infringing the Laws (AI 2006)

Examples given in ATR 12.28.3:

- violates Law 14 again, having previously been warned (also ATR 14.3)
- fails to start or restart play properly or promptly, having previously been warned
- if playing as a goalkeeper, wastes time, having previously been warned or penalized for this behavior

4. Delays the restart of play

Delaying the restart of play (AI 2006)

Taking a free kick from the wrong position with the sole intention of forcing the referee to order a retake (AI 2006)

Appearing to take a throw-in but suddenly leaving it to a teammate to throw-in (AI 2006; Resolutions)

Kicking the ball away or carrying it away with the hands after the referee has stopped play (AI 2006; ATR 12.28.4; Resolutions)

Excessively delaying the taking of a throw-in or free kick (AI 2006; ATR 12.28.4)

Delaying leaving the field when being substituted (AI 2006)

Provoking confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has stopped play (see ATR 12.28.4 and 12.28.9)

Fails to restart play after being so instructed by the referee (ATR 12.28.4)

Performing a throw-in improperly with the apparent intention of being required to perform the throw-in again, thus wasting time (ATR 12.28.4)

The thrower deliberately delays taking a throw-in (Q&A)

Performs any restart in such a way that the ball is not properly put into play, thus forcing a repetition of the restart (Resolution)

Unnecessarily moving a ball which has already been properly placed on the ground for a goal kick (ATR 12.28.4)

Stands or strolls in front of the ball when a free kick has been awarded to the opposing team in order to give the defending team time to organize the wall (Resolutions)

5. Fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in

Fails to respect the required distance when play is being restarted (Q&A; AI 2006; ATR 12.28.5, ATR 12.28.3)

Opponents who move nearer the ball at a free kick before it is in play (Q&A)

6. Enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission

A player enters the field of play without the referee's permission (Q&A). If this is done by substitute or replaced player the caution is for unsporting behavior.

Note: Entering or re-entering the field of play without permission is mentioned numerous times within LOTG, as well as within the ATR: see ATR 12.28.6.

7. Deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission

See Law 12 (LOTG)

A player on a team with only seven players leaves the field and fails to return (Q&A)

A player who has left the field of play fails to return for the kick-off (Q&A)

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committees
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Ceremonial Restart after Misconduct

Date: October 26, 1999

After stopping play for a foul, the referee must remember the other team's right to restart play as quickly as it may wish. The referee should not interfere with this right except under certain exceptional circumstances (see *Advice to Referees* 12.27, 13.3, and 13.5). The decision to caution or send off a player is one of those exceptions.

If misconduct has been committed (standing alone or in conjunction with a foul) and if the referee has decided that a card will be displayed at the next stoppage of play, the very first action the referee must take when that stoppage occurs is to inform all players that the restart may not occur except by a signal from the referee, i.e., a "ceremonial" restart. This applies whether the referee has stopped play immediately for the infringement or has applied advantage and is waiting for the next stoppage of play.

The referee's first responsibility is to make it clear to both teams that the free kick must be delayed until a signal is given. This can be done verbally, by holding an arm outward toward the attackers and showing the palm (the classic "stop" gesture), or by other means, but the referee should also move as quickly as possible to give the caution which is causing the delayed restart. The practice of raising the whistle and pointing toward it should be used as a last resort when the referee is not certain the players understand the situation (due to crowd noise, language barriers, etc. Standing in front of the ball is neither approved nor recommended as it invites dissent and other attempts to engage the referee in discussions about the decision.

In the case of a ceremonial restart, the referee should proceed deliberately and in accordance with standard mechanics to book the misconduct and display the appropriate card. It is important to remember that players will be focused intently on listening for the whistle to restart play and therefore the whistle should not be used for other purposes (e.g., gaining the attention of defenders in the process of enforcing the minimum distance).

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committees
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Changes in the Laws of the Game for 2005

Date: March 29, 2005

Changes in the Laws of the Game for 2005 recently announced by FIFA are not due to be implemented until July 1, 2005. Under the rules of the International Football Association Board, member associations are required to delay the introduction of alterations in the Law if the playing season began prior to July 1, 2005.

Certain decisions taken by the International Board were clarifications rather than changes in existing Law. These **and only these are** adopted now by the USSF and should be implemented immediately.

- In the definition of offside position, “nearer to his opponents” goal line means that any part of the attackers head, body or feet is nearer to his opponent’s goal line than both the ball and the 2nd to last opponent. The arms are not included in this definition.
- A tackle, **regardless of the direction**, which endangers the safety of the opponent, must be sanctioned as serious foul play.
- The referee has the authority to take disciplinary actions (including displaying of yellow and red cards) from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Contact with Game Officials

Date: August 9, 2006

In several recent matches, there have been instances where players have indicated their disagreement with decisions by match officials by initiating or continuing unacceptable, unwanted, and aggressive physical contact with the referee, an assistant referee, or the fourth official. It does not matter if this contact occurs during a match or when the official is still in the area of the field before or after a match. Four clips related to this issue are attached.

Obviously, not every occasion when a player physically makes contact with a match official is misconduct. Players may seek to offer sincere congratulations for the work of the official or to greet in friendly fashion an official with whom they have had previous experience. Officials should **not** tolerate physical contact by a player (including a substitute, substituted player, or any other person under the authority of the referee) which:

- involves force or aggression (grabbing, pushing, slapping, bumping, stepping on feet, and so forth)
- the official has sought to avoid by moving away and by making a gesture which clearly indicates any further approach is unwelcome (continued pursuit by a player, if performed in a threatening manner, is included here even if physical contact does not result)
- is initiated from an unexpected direction and unaccompanied by any warning
- is delivered in a context which clearly includes disapproval, lack of friendliness, or anger
- restrains or prevents an official from withdrawing from the contact (e.g., by blocking retreat or holding)

It follows, however, that officials themselves should not initiate contact with players under similar circumstances except to the minimum extent needed to perform the responsibilities required by the Laws of the Game. Where an official observes one or more approaching players who appear intent on making impermissible contact, it is appropriate to take reasonable measures to avoid the confrontation, but this should not require the official to retreat in haste or for an excessive distance. The official should indicate as quickly as possible that the approach is unwelcome, at which point player movement toward the official should cease. If it does not, the action by the player could be dealt with in accordance with this memorandum or, if it involves several players without physical contact, under the guidelines for mass confrontation.

Under no circumstances can aggressive, unwanted physical contact with officials be tolerated and all instances must be dealt with firmly both by the appropriate action under the Law (red card for violent conduct) and by including all details in the match report.

The four video clips associated with this memorandum provide useful examples of how these guidelines can be applied.

- NY Red Bulls and FC Dallas (July 8, 2006): the referee's hands are

slapped down by a player. This is aggressive contact and must be dealt with severely (USSF advises a red card).

- Chivas and Colorado (July 20, 2006): a player grabbed the referee and forced him to turn around. Again, this entirely unnecessary and aggressive contact requires a very strong response (USSF advises a red card).
- Kansas City and Los Angeles (July 1, 2006): the referee is aggressively pursued despite attempts to indicate that the player should not approach further (preferably, some sort of warning gesture in addition to moving away would have sent this message even more clearly to the player). This is covered by the second bullet point (the player had already been sent off so his subsequent impermissible actions need to be described in detail in the match report).
- Colorado and Real Salt Lake (June 9, 2006): The player's actions are aggressive and unwanted. Even more importantly, they were directed toward the assistant referee who was then forced to call upon the referee for a response. This behavior also needs a firm response under these guidelines (USSF advises a yellow card).

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committees
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Control of the Ball by the Goalkeeper

Date: December 19, 2005

Below are 2 examples which illustrate the necessity of understanding and applying correctly the Law regarding when a goal keeper has a ball in control and thus when a ball may or may not be played. It is well established that a ball which is controlled by the goalkeeper cannot be legally played by an opponent. Less clear, perhaps, is when goalkeepers relinquish that control by releasing the ball into play.

The 1st example is from an English professional match. The goalkeeper has the ball in his hands and then, apparently not realizing that an opponent remains behind him, sets the ball on the ground with the obvious intent of playing it to a teammate. The opponent, however, runs up from the goalkeeper's right, steps in, and kicks the ball into the net for a goal.

In the 2nd example (an international match between Trinidad-Tobago and Bahrain), we again have the ball clearly controlled by the goalkeeper who tosses it slightly into the air with the obvious intent of punting the ball away. An opponent, who was following the goalkeeper's movement forward from the right hand side, kicks the ball as it leaves the goalkeeper's hands and is approximately chest high.

The critical difference between these 2 situations, and why the goal must count in the 1st but not in the 2nd, hinges on when the goalkeeper has released the ball into play. By placing the ball on the ground, the English Premier goalkeeper had relinquished control. The Trinidad-Tobago goalkeeper was still in the process of releasing the ball when it was kicked by the opponent – it was still in the control of the goalkeeper even though it was not physically in his hands. The “toss into the air” was merely preparatory to or an integral part of the distribution process.

Accordingly, the “act of distribution” includes the process of setting the ball on the ground, throwing the ball away, punting the ball (kicking it directly from the release), and drop kicking the ball (kicking the ball after it is released and hits the ground). An opponent commits an offense by challenging for the ball before any of these acts of distribution is completed. An opponent may also commit an offense if the opponent is so close to the goalkeeper that an attempt to challenge for the ball immediately following the act of distribution would, in the opinion of the referee, be considered interference with the release of the ball into play or a playing the ball in a dangerous manner.

The current “Questions and Answers on the Laws of the Game” includes a question regarding this matter (#19 under Law 12). FIFA asks if it is permitted for an opponent to play the ball before it hits the ground “as a goalkeeper release the ball to kick it into play” an answers that it is not because “the releasing of the ball” and the “kicking of the ball” are considered to be “a single action”.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors/National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Courageous Call

Date: February 13, 2009

On February 11, 2009, in a World Cup qualifier match between the United States and Mexico (played in Columbus, Ohio) a courageous call was made by the referee under circumstances which, while clearly requiring a red card, might well have been handled less correctly by many referees.

In the 65th minute, Mexico captain Rafael Marquez tackled US goalkeeper Tim Howard and, as a result, Marquez was sent off with no hesitation by the referee. The photograph below captures the moment:

(Picture did not transfer)

Note the nature of the tackle: studs up, delivered in the knee area, while the victim was entirely up in the air.

Given that the match up to this point had been calm, generally friendly, and virtually devoid of misconduct, referees must decide whether they would have the presence of mind and courage to take the necessary action.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committees
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Dealing with Weather

Date: April 6, 2005

This position paper provides basic guidelines for dealing with lightning, windstorms, and other severe weather conditions. (This paper supersedes the paper dated September 23, 2003, on the same topic.) The peak season for severe weather occurs in the United States between May and August, typically in the late afternoon and early evening. Before taking any of the actions outlined in sections 1 (Lightning) or 2 (Other types of severe weather), you must consider the instructions in the following paragraph:

Many stadium operators, park districts, and school districts have acquired and installed **advanced technology that can aid the referee in making decisions about weather conditions.** If there is any indication that severe weather may occur, check with the appropriate authorities (field or park manager, athletic director, stadium operations personnel, city or county parks or education departments, etc.) for the latest information before making any decisions. Also check with these authorities during any weather-related interruption, as the new technology may allow you to restart earlier than indicated after a stoppage. It is not necessary to wait thirty (30) minutes when this assistance is available.

1. Lightning
 - a. Recognizing the threat
 - (1) Apply the 30-30 rule
When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is 30 seconds or less, seek proper shelter. If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule. Wait 30 minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving shelter.
 - (2) Know and heed warning systems and community rules
Many communities or park systems have lightning detection and warning systems. Use this information and obey the rules established by the community or park system.
 - (3) Know and apply the rules or procedures established by the competition authority
 - (4) Minimize the risk of being struck
Protect the safety of all participants by stopping game activities quickly, so that participants and spectators may retire to a safer place before the lightning threat becomes significant.

- Remember, if you can hear the thunder, you are within reach of lightning.
- b. Seeking proper shelter
 - (1) No place outside is safe near thunderstorms
 - (2) The best shelter is a large, fully enclosed, substantially constructed building. A vehicle with a solid metal roof and metal sides is a reasonable second choice.
 - c. If there is no proper shelter, **avoid** the most dangerous locations: Higher elevations; wide open areas, including fields; tall isolated objects, such as trees, poles, or light posts; unprotected open buildings; rain shelters; bus stops; metal fences and metal bleachers.
 - d. If you cannot avoid these locations, crouch down on the balls of your feet, with your head tucked into your chest and your hands over your ears. If someone is hit, remember that all deaths from lightning result from cardiac arrest and stopped breathing. CPR and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, respectively, are the recommended first aid. Referees should become involved in such assistance only if they have proper training.
 - e. Remain calm. A calm official will often be able to prevent panic by young players.
2. Other types of severe weather

For all other types of severe storms, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and hail, obey local rules and heed warnings. Clear the field and seek proper shelter immediately – see above. Remember, according to standard weather warning terminology a "*warning*" represents a more immediately likely occurrence than a "*watch*."

NO SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY GUIDELINES WILL GIVE 100% GUARANTEED TOTAL SAFETY, BUT THESE STEPS WILL HELP YOU AVOID THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASUALTIES.

If there is a possibility of severe weather, the referee and assistant referees should discuss these guidelines in their pregame meeting and ensure that all officials have a clear understanding of their respective duties. Referees in particular should clearly identify what assistance they expect in detecting and bringing to their immediate attention any dangerous weather conditions which may not be directly visible to them. If such conditions develop only after a match has begun, the referee should take the first stoppage opportunity to quickly review these matters with the assistant referees. A brief word to the coaches regarding steps the referee will take to ensure player safety in threatening weather conditions would be useful.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Disallowed Goal from A Pass Back Violation Restart

Date: July 31, 2008

In the 26th minute of a match played July 27 by Columbus at Colorado, the referee stopped play for an indirect free kick violation. An apparent goal scored from a quick restart was disallowed. All elements of this sequence of events were handled properly.

First, the assistant referee and the referee recognized an uncommon Law 12 offense often referred to as a "pass back" violation. The offense rests on three events occurring in the following sequence:

- The ball is kicked (played with the foot) by a teammate of the goalkeeper,
- This action is deemed to be deliberate rather than a deflection, and
- The goalkeeper handles the ball directly (no intervening touch or play of the ball by anyone else)

The attached clip clearly demonstrates that these requirements were met.

- The ball was deliberately kicked by Columbus player #12 (Gavin).
- The ball was then directly handled by the Columbus goalkeeper (Hesmer).

If the ball had continued on into the net, despite having been handled by the Columbus goalkeeper, the referee would have applied advantage and counted the goal. Second, the referee did not interfere with the restart and thus allowed Colorado to perform a quick free kick. Quick restarts generally, and quick free kicks in particular, are favored by the Laws of the Game and should be allowed unless:

- the ball is not stationary,
- the location is not correct based on where the offense occurred, or
- a specific and compelling reason exists to delay the restart (e.g., a serious injury or the need to card for misconduct).

Third, because the ball was kicked directly into the net by Colorado #11 (Cooke) from an indirect free kick restart, the goal could not be allowed. Before announcing his decision, the referee took a quick look at the lead assistant referee and confirmed that the assistant referee was indicating that the goal was not valid. If the Columbus goalkeeper had made contact with the ball in any way, the goal would not have been scored "directly" from the indirect free kick and would have counted.

The officiating team's decisions and actions were soundly grounded in their knowledge of the Laws of the Game and recommended mechanics.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
Chair, State Referee Committee
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
National Referees
National Instructors

cc: State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Enforcing the Minimum Distance - Throwin

Date: January 18, 2006

In 2005, the International Board approved a change in Law 15 (The Throw-In) to impose a minimum distance requirement for opponents. The Board noted that, with this modification, all restarts conducted by players now mandate that opponents be some minimum distance away so as not to interfere with the taking of the restart.

In the case of a throw-in, the Board specified that opponents must be at least two meters from the thrower. USSF has indicated that two yards is an acceptable alternative to two meters.

Since the appearance of this requirement, referees have raised questions about the correct method of enforcing it. *The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on managing the minimum distance requirement at a throw-in.*

- First and foremost, **all** procedures, including those described below, must be discussed in the pregame meeting, particularly the division of responsibilities between the referee and the nearest assistant referee.
- Second, USSF recommends that the minimum distance requirement be enforced based on the same principles and guidelines used in connection with the ten yard minimum distance requirement in Law 13 (The Free Kick).

The following points briefly summarize these principles and guidelines.

- • Quick throw-ins are preferable
- The referee should interfere with the throw-in restart as little and as seldom as possible
- If the thrower requests assistance in enforcing the minimum distance, the referee should:
 1. Clearly announce that the throw-in cannot be taken except by a signal from the referee (ceremonial restart) and
 2. Establish the minimum distance quickly and fairly
- Blatant and obvious violations of the minimum distance which interfere with the thrower can be considered misconduct and should be dealt with appropriately.

Several issues are specific to the throw-in.

- The minimum distance is measured from the touchline. The fact that a player may perform the throw-in from as much as a yard back from the touchline does not permit an opponent to be closer than two yards from the touchline.
- The minimum distance from the touchline is measured from the point where the ball will actually enter the field. The fact that the thrower may take the throw-in from as much as a yard up or down the touchline from where the ball left the field does not permit an opponent to be closer than two yards from this point.
- An opponent is not permitted to jump about and wave his or her arms if, in the opinion of the referee, this action unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower even if the opponent is more than two yards from the thrower. Referees are strongly encouraged to prevent such behavior from occurring or interfering with the restart.

MEMORANDUM

To: Referees and Assessors Assigned to Professional League Games

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Feinting at the Taking of a Penalty Kick

Date: April 5, 2001

The 115th Annual Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) met on March 10, 2001, and dealt with various matters, including its publication last year of a revised *Questions and Answers on the Laws of the Game*. Question 10 under Law 14 reads:

A player taking a penalty kick feints before kicking the ball. Is this permitted? **Yes.**

The International Board has reasoned that, since a penalty kick is awarded for a violation which otherwise would cause play to be restarted with a direct free kick, the team taking the kick should have at least some of the same latitude which is given for a direct free kick restart. It is permissible to feint at the taking of a direct free kick (Question 6 under Law 13 notes that "feinting tactics to confuse opponents" are permitted and are "part of football").

Nevertheless, referees must still decide if any particular action by the kicker is clearly unsporting. An example of this was seen recently in a pre-season MLS game. The kicker ran past the ball, backed up, during which time various players (teammates and opponents) entered the penalty area, the penalty arc, or moved closer than 12 yards from the goal line, and the goalkeeper moved off the line. This sort of conduct, which produced mass confusion, should be whistled immediately upon seeing the movement past the ball, the kicker cautioned, and play resumed in accordance with Law 14.

The kicker should also be considered guilty of misconduct if his behavior before actually kicking the ball results in unnecessary delay in restarting play (for example, by excessively changing direction during the run to the ball). Where possible, this also should be dealt with before the ball is kicked.

However, in situations where the manner of taking the kick is deemed unsporting but the referee is unable to stop play before the kick occurs, the referee must follow Law 14 by allowing the kick to proceed. If the ball goes into the goal, the penalty kick is retaken after cautioning the kicker for unsporting behavior. If the ball does not enter the goal, play continues and the kicker should be cautioned at the next stoppage of play.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees, National Instructors, National Assessors
State Directors of Instruction, State Directors of Assessment
State Referee Administrators, State Youth Referee Administrators,
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Fouls, Misconduct, and the Restart of Play

Date: August 18, 2006

A basic principle in the Laws of the Game is that an offense cannot be considered a foul (within the meaning of Law 12) unless the action is committed

- by a player,
- on the field of play, and
- while the ball is in play.

Accordingly, any offense which does not meet at least these three criteria cannot be considered a foul (a substitute or substituted player, for example, cannot commit a foul under any circumstances). The action can, of course, be misconduct.

If play is stopped for an offense which is only misconduct (no foul occurred), play must restart with either

- an indirect free kick if the misconduct was by a player on the field or
- a dropped ball if the misconduct was committed off the field by anyone (player, substitute, or substituted player).

In connection with restarts for misconduct, it is important to remember several things.

- The restart is unchanged if the misconduct is committed by anyone during a stoppage of play.
- When play is stopped for an offense which is both a foul and misconduct, the restart is determined by the foul, not the misconduct.
- Whether the misconduct results in a caution (yellow card) or a send-off (red card), the restart is not affected.

In the attached clip from a match between the Columbus Crew and Real Salt Lake on August 16, RSL #16 (Forko) actively challenged Crew #7 (Thomas) for the ball just above the RSL goal line in the 21st minute. Their momentum carried them both off the field where Thomas went down (the ball left the field shortly thereafter).

- If the referee's decision was that Forko in fact caused Thomas to fall (trip, charge, push, etc.) while off the field, this would be misconduct only and play should restart with a dropped ball where the ball was at the time (just above the goal line) after showing Forko the appropriate card.
- If the referee's decision was that Forko's actions off the field were not misconduct, then no offense at all was committed and play should restart with a goal kick based on how the ball subsequently left the field.
- If the referee decided that Forko began committing a direct free kick foul while still on the field and merely continued this offense after leaving the field, play should restart with a penalty kick since the foul was committed by a defender inside his penalty area.

It is important to remember that the actual stoppage of play by the referee is marked from when the referee decided to stop play, not when the whistle sounds.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Handling Injuries

Date: October 12, 2007

An incident at the first U.S. Soccer Development Academy Fall Showcase tournament led to extensive discussions regarding the correct referee actions to be taken when a goalkeeper and opponent are injured. The lack of a single clear answer among the many experienced observers gathered there is the reason for this position paper.

Injuries pose numerous difficult decisions for the referee. On the one hand, soccer is a game of continuous action in which stoppages are and should be infrequent. On the other hand, player safety is an obvious matter of concern. Since stopping play may be beneficial for one team, an added issue is the possibility of a player simulating an injury or its degree of severity in an effort to gain that benefit.

Law 5 establishes several basic principles regarding player injuries:

- If, in the opinion of the referee, the injury is serious, play must be stopped.
- If, in the opinion of the referee, the injury is not serious, treatment of the injury is delayed until play is stopped for some other reason.
- If the referee stops play for an injury, the injured player must leave the field and cannot return until play is restarted and the referee gives permission.

The International Football Association Board (IFAB), in its Additional Instructions and Guidelines (AIG) which accompany the Laws of the Game, has clarified certain issues:

- An injured player may not receive treatment on the field unless the injury is "severe" (immediate medical attention is needed).
- An injured goalkeeper is not required to leave the field and may receive treatment while on the field.
- The refusal of an injured player to leave the field despite being required to do so is a cautionable offense (unsporting behavior).
- The removal of an injured player must be swift but safe.
- The referee may signal permission for medical personnel (including stretcher-bearers) to enter the field to assist in the player's removal from the field (or to provide emergency first aid).

Referees should keep in mind the following additional guidelines regarding the handling of player injuries:

- A player may seek assistance and treatment off the field during play if given permission by the referee to do so (permission is also needed to return to the field, which may occur during play).

- A player who is injured may leave the field for treatment and return to the field before play resumes if the stoppage was not solely for that player's injury and if medical personnel were not called onto the field by the referee to aid the player's removal.
- "Medical personnel" for purposes of these guidelines includes any team official who has responsibility for the player in the absence of available trained medical staff.
- If a goalkeeper is seriously injured as a result of a collision with a teammate or opponent and the teammate or opponent is also injured, all players injured in the collision may be treated on the field and are not required to leave the field.
- A player for whom the referee has requested medical personnel to enter the field at a stoppage is required to leave the field and may return with the referee's permission only after play has resumed even if the stoppage was not expressly for the injury.

Evaluating and balancing these factors must be done quickly and fairly, with appropriate regard for the age and skill of the players. In all cases of doubt, the safety of the player must be the referee's primary concern.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Assessors
National Instructors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Instruction

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Handling Offenses

Date: April 27, 2005

Recent incidents in the professional leagues involving possible handling offenses have caused considerable comment and debate. For those not officiating the match, multiple camera angles, instant replay, and slow-motion viewing make the debate easier because they allow a leisurely analysis of the facts well after the relevant decision has to be made.

The Laws of the Game declare that a direct free kick is given to the opposing team if a player “handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area).” This simple statement defines one of the ten listed offenses in the first part of Law 12 (Fouls and Misconduct) and lies at the historical and traditional heart of soccer, a game played with all parts of the body other than the hands. Only the goalkeeper is exempt from this restriction and only while within his own penalty area.

What are the characteristics of a clear handling offense?

- A player deliberately carries, strikes, or propels the ball with the hand or arm
- It is the player’s action that initiates the contact with the ball

What characteristics of ball contact are clearly **not** handling offenses?

- The ball strikes the hand or arm (i.e., the ball initiates the contact)
- The contact is accidental (not the result of action by the player)
- The contact is the result of a purely reflexive effort at self-protection

What are the standards of judgment which the referee will apply when the handling offense is not immediately clear?

- The distance or time within which the player had to react to avoid contact – if there was time to avoid the contact, the likelihood of an offense is greater
- The position of the player’s hand or arm at the time of the contact – if the hand or arm is carried in an unnatural or unusual position (e.g., high up in the air or, while defending against a free kick, far away from the body), the likelihood of an offense is greater
- Directing the ball after initial accidental or reflexive contact – if the player takes advantage to control or push the ball away, a handling offense has occurred

The referee, with input from the assistant referees, must make the immediate decision based on the best available evidence in an increasingly fast-paced game. This difficult decision must be **respected and final**.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Assessors
National Instructors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Instruction

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Instructions for Referees and Resolutions Affecting Team Coaches and Players

Date: April 2007

The decisions and instructions to referees appointed to Regional and National Cup Competitions and Tournaments contained herein conform to the Laws of the Game, the decisions of the International F.A. Board, and guidance from USSF through its Advice to Referees, Guide to Procedures, and various official memoranda. This document is therefore regarded as authoritative and may be quoted as such. For further details on any of these points, consult the sources listed above.

Decisions made during play depend entirely on the opinion of the referee, who makes a decision at the time of the incident. Coaches are requested to inform their players of the points specified below and to ensure that every game is played sportingly.

Note: Changes from the previous edition of the instructions/Resolutions are indicated by a vertical line at the left side of the changed section.

1. Serious Foul Play and Violent Conduct

Soccer is a tough, combative sport. The contest to gain possession of the ball should nonetheless be fair and sporting. Any actions meeting these criteria, even when vigorous, must be allowed by the referee.

Serious Foul Play and Violent Conduct are, however, strictly forbidden and the referee must react to them by stringently applying the Laws of the Game.

These two offenses can be defined as follows:

- (a) It is serious foul play when a player uses excessive force, formerly defined as "disproportionate and unnecessary strength," when challenging for the ball on the field against an opponent. There can be no serious foul play against a teammate, the referee, an assistant referee, a spectator, etc.
- (b) It is violent conduct when a player is guilty of aggression (excessive force or deliberate violence) towards an opponent when they are not competing for the ball. It is also violent conduct if the excessive force is used when the ball is not in play, if it is committed by a substitute or substituted player, or if it is directed at anyone other than an opponent (e. g., teammate, referee, assistant referee, coach, spectator, etc.). If the violent conduct is committed by a player against an opponent on the field during play, the restart is a direct free kick for the opposing team where the foul occurred (or a penalty kick if it was committed by a player inside the player's penalty area). If the violent conduct is by a player during play against anyone on the field other than an opponent, the restart is an

indirect free kick where the misconduct occurred. If the violent conduct is committed during a stoppage of play, the restart is not changed. A dropped ball where the ball was when play is stopped is the correct restart if the violent conduct is committed during play and off the field. If the violent conduct is committed by a substitute or substituted player on the field of play, the correct restart is an indirect free kick.

2. Tackling

A tackle as such is not an infringement of the Laws of the Game. It becomes an infringement only if the tackler plays carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force, or places the opponent in danger.

- (a) A sliding tackle from the front or side, made with one or both legs, is permissible if, in the opinion of the referee, it is not dangerous. If, however, the player making the tackle trips the opponent before, during, or after making contact with the ball, the referee shall award a direct free kick to the opposing team. The referee must judge whether an illegal trip occurred or whether the opponent fell over the leg of the player making a legal tackle.
- (b) Tackling with the foot lifted from the ground may be dangerous, whether contact is made with the ball or not. Lifting of the foot should be penalized if the referee considers the player is endangering an opponent by so doing. If the player deliberately plays over the ball and makes contact with the opponent's leg, this is serious foul play and must be sanctioned with a send-off (red card) and a direct free kick (or a penalty kick, if appropriate).
- (c) Tackling with two feet together, studs up, if uncontrolled and from a distance, could be judged as at least reckless and possibly dangerous to the opponent. If controlled and from a short distance, there may be no danger.
- (d) A tackle, regardless of direction, which endangers the safety of a opponent must be sanctioned as serious foul play. The player must be sent from the field (red card) and play restarted with a direct free kick (or penalty kick if committed by a player inside the player's team's own penalty area).

3. Charging from behind

Charging from behind is permissible only if the opponent is intentionally impeding while shielding the ball. The charge, however, must be made fairly and under no circumstances to the back (spinal area).

4. Reckless challenges

Referees should take stringent measures against players moving their arms and elbows without due care, by applying the sanctions available to them under Law 12.

5. Offenses against goalkeepers

It is an offense if a player:

- (a) jumps at a goalkeeper under the pretext of heading the ball;
- (b) moves or jumps about near a goalkeeper in order to distract or interfere with or prevent the goalkeeper from releasing the ball;
- (c) who is standing in front of a goalkeeper when a corner kick is being taken, takes advantage of the position to impede the goalkeeper before the kick is taken and before the ball is in play
- (d) makes any play for the ball while the goalkeeper is still controlling it with the hands. Kicking or attempting to kick the ball held by the goalkeeper is considered to be dangerous play.

6. Impeding the progress of an opponent

A player who has the ball under control within playing distance (i.e., the distance at which the playcovering the ball for tactical reasons in order to avoid its being played by an opponent, without using the arms) is not guilty of impeding the progress of the opponent.

Any player who intentionally impedes the progress of an opponent by crossing directly in front of or running between the opponent and the ball or intervening so as to form an obstacle with the aim of delaying the opponent's advance, must be sanctioned with an indirect free kick in favor of the opposing team. However, any player who intentionally impedes the progress of an opponent by physical contact, whether using the hand, arm, leg, or any other part of the body, shall be penalized for holding by the award of a direct free kick to the opposing team, or by a penalty kick, if the offense was committed within the player's team's penalty area.

7. Scissors or bicycle kick

Such a kick is permissible, provided that in the opinion of the referee it is not dangerous to an opponent.

8. Jumping at an opponent

A player who jumps at an opponent under the pretext of heading the ball shall be penalized by the award of a direct free kick to the opposing team.

9. Prohibited use of body

A player who holds off an opponent using the hand, arm, leg, or body (except through a legal charge) is guilty of an infringement of Law 12 and shall be punished by the award of a direct free kick to the opposing team. Holding or hindering when the ball is out of play in order to prevent the opponent from running into position is misconduct and shall be penalized by a caution for unsporting behavior.

10. Caution for handling the ball or holding an opponent

A caution for unsporting behavior is appropriate if a player:

- (a) holds an opponent to interfere with attacking play (e.g., prevents the opponent from getting to the ball or pulls an opponent away from possession of the ball),
- (b) handles the ball to interfere with attacking play, or
- (c) handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal.

(Note: if handling the ball or holding the opponent prevents a goal or interferes with a goal scoring opportunity, the offender must be shown the red card and sent off the field.)

11. Free kicks

A player who delays the restart of play or fails to respect the required distance when play is being restarted must be cautioned.

12. Use of advantage

If the referee applies the advantage and the advantage which was anticipated does not develop after a short time, i.e., 2-3 seconds, and the ball remains in play, the referee should immediately stop the game and penalize the original offense.

13. Denying a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity

- (a) If, in the opinion of the referee, a player who is moving towards the opponent's goal, with an obvious opportunity to score a goal, is denied that goalscoring opportunity by an offense punishable by a free kick or penalty kick, the offending player shall be shown the red card and sent off the field of play.
- (b) If, in the opinion of the referee, a player, other than the goalkeeper within the goalkeeper's own penalty area, deliberately handles the ball to prevent it from entering the goal and thus denies the opposing side a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity, the player shall be shown the red card and sent off the field of play. There need not be an opponent nearby with an opportunity to play the ball.

14. Penalty kick

- (a) Positioning of ball and players during a penalty kick. During a penalty kick, the goalkeeper shall stand on the goal line. Apart from the goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, all the players shall take up a position on the field of play behind the penalty mark and outside the penalty area at least 10 yards (9.15 m) from the penalty mark and stay there until the ball is in play (kicked and moved forward).
- (b) Penalty kick at the end of a half or at the end of the match. If play is prolonged before half-time or at the end of the match to allow for a penalty kick to be taken or for one to be retaken, a goal shall be allowed if, before going into the goal, the ball touches any combination of the goalposts, crossbar, goalkeeper, or ground (providing no other infringement has been committed).
- (c) Unless the ball has entered the goal (in which case the kick is retaken), infringements of Law 14 by the kicking team must be punished with an indirect free kick from the place where the infringement occurred.

15. Player in offside position

- (a) It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position.
- (b) A player shall be penalized for being offside if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of that player's teammates, the player is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in the active play by:
 - 1. interfering with play or with an opponent, or
 - 2. gaining an advantage by being in that position.
- (c) A player shall not be penalized for offside by the referee
 - 1. merely because the player is in an offside position, or
 - 2. if the player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, a corner kick, or a throw-in.

An assistant referee must not signal merely because a player is in an offside position. Furthermore, if an assistant referee is in any doubt as to whether a player is offside (active position) or not, the referee should decide in favor of the attacker; in other words, refrain from signaling offside.

16. Goalkeeper restrictions

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside the goalkeeper's own penalty area,

- takes more than six seconds from the moment of establishing control with the hands until the ball is released into play
- touches the ball again with the hands after it has been released from the goalkeeper's possession and has not touched any other player outside the penalty area or has touched only a teammate inside the penalty area
- touches the ball with the hands after it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate
- touches the ball with the hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate

17. Persistent infringements

Any player who repeatedly infringes the Laws of the Game by committing multiple fouls or by participating in a pattern of fouls directed at an opponent shall be cautioned and shown the yellow card.

18. Substitution

When a substitution is to take place, the substitute shall report to the fourth official (or assistant referee) and surrender the substitution card (if applicable), properly completed, at the halfway line. A player who is going to be replaced may not leave the field of play without the referee's permission and then only when the ball is out of play. The substitute may then enter the field at the halfway line after receiving a signal to do so from the referee.

The substitute must be fully ready to play before reporting to the appropriate official. Referees should not delay the timely restart of play to allow substitutes to correct their equipment or uniforms before entering the field nor shall the referee prevent a team from restarting play if the substitute has not reported to the appropriate official prior to play being stopped. There is no requirement that the player leaving the field must do so at the halfway line.

19. Injury of a player

If a player is bleeding, that player must leave the field immediately to have the bleeding stopped and the skin and uniform cleaned as thoroughly as possible. When the player is ready to return to the game, the player's injuries and the uniform must be inspected by an official. This can be the referee or, if delegated by the referee in the pregame conference, the fourth official or, if there is no fourth official, an assistant referee. Only then will the referee give permission for the player to re-enter the game; the game need not be stopped in this situation.

Only the referee may permit the return to the field of play of a player who was instructed to leave the field for treatment of an injury. This is not a substitution. The player who left the field for treatment of an injury may return during play with the permission of the referee, but only from the touch line. If the ball is out of play, the player may return with the permission of the referee across any boundary line.

Up to two team officials are permitted to enter the field of play with the referee's permission solely for the purpose of assessing an injury—not to treat it—and to arrange for the player's removal.

The referee must exercise care before allowing removal of a seriously injured player from the field. In all cases where an injury was the sole reason for the stoppage of play, the injured player is required leave the field and cannot be permitted to return until the referee gives permission after play has restarted

20. Attitude towards referees

Any player who protests at an official's decision may be cautioned. Any player who assaults or insults an official shall be sent off. The captain of a team, although responsible for the team's behavior, has no special rights.

21. Throw-in

A throw-in may not be taken from a distance of more than one yard (one meter) outside the touch line. Players who stand in front of the thrower in such a way as to harass the thrower or to interfere with the throw-in must be cautioned for unsporting behavior and shown the yellow card. Opponents must remain at least two meters/yards from the point where the throw-in is taken. If they do not, they must be cautioned and shown the yellow card for failing to respect the required distance.

22. Delaying the restart of play

Any player who delays the restart by wasting time shall be cautioned. The following actions are examples of this behavior:

- takes a free kick from a wrong position with the sole intention of forcing the referee to demand a retake;

appears to prepare for a throw-in but suddenly leaves it to a teammate to perform the throw-in;

- performs any restart in such a way that the ball is not properly put into play, thus forcing a repetition of the restart;

- kicks the ball away or carries it away with the hands after the referee has stopped play for any reason;

- stands in front of the ball when a free kick has been awarded to the opposing team in order to give the team time to organize the defensive wall;

- excessively delays taking any restart;

- delays leaving the field when being substituted;

- provoking a confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has stopped play.

23. Celebration of goal

(a) After a goal has been scored, the player who has scored it is allowed to share the joy with teammates. However, the referee must not allow them to spend an excessive amount of time in their opponents' half of the field. Neither shall the referee allow players to taunt their opponents. In any of these cases, the referee will caution the offending player for unsporting behavior. Referees must look beyond the behavior of players celebrating goals and consider as misconduct only those actions which are provocative, obscene or insulting, or which unnecessarily delay the restart of play.

(b) If a player removes the shirt to celebrate a goal, the player must be cautioned for unsporting behavior and shown the yellow card.

(c) A player may not celebrate a goal by covering his or her head or face with a mask or similar item.

A player must be cautioned when he or she:

- in the opinion of the referee, makes gestures which are provocative, derisory or inflammatory
- climbs on to a perimeter fence to celebrate a goal being scored
- removes the shirt over the head or covers his/her head with the shirt

Leaving the field to celebrate a goal is not a cautionable offence in itself but it is essential that players return to the field as soon as possible. Referees are expected to act in a preventive mode and to exercise common sense in dealing with the celebration of a goal.

24. Liquid refreshments during the match

Players shall be entitled to take liquid refreshments during a stoppage in the match but only on the touchline. Players may not leave the field during play to take liquids. It is forbidden to throw plastic water bags or any other water containers onto or from the field.

25. Players' equipment

(a) The referee shall ensure that each player wears the uniform properly and check that anything worn by the player conforms with the requirements of Law 4. Players shall be made aware that their jersey remains tucked inside their shorts and that their socks remain pulled up. The referee shall also make sure that each player is wearing shinguards and that none of them is wearing potentially dangerous objects (such as watches or other jewelry of any nature).

- (b) Players are permitted to wear visible undergarments such as undershirts, thermopants or undershorts. The undershirts or undershorts/thermopants must, however, be the same color as the predominant color of the shirts or shorts, respectively, of the team of the player wearing them. Undershorts or thermopants may not extend beyond the top of the knee.
- (c) The referee, assisted as needed by the assistant referees, shall ensure that player equipment and uniforms comply with Law 4 and will pay particular attention to any items (e.g., braces) worn by a player which are not included in the standard uniform.
- (d) All items of jewelry are considered potentially dangerous. Jewelry may not be worn. Taping jewelry is not adequate protection. Rings, earrings, leather or rubber bands are not necessary to play and the only thing they can bring about is injury.
- (e) The player's equipment may not carry any visible political, religious or personal statements. Violations of this instruction are to be reported to the competition authority but are not considered misconduct unless the statement additionally involves dissent (caution) or abusive, insulting or offensive language (send off).

26. The Role of the Fourth Official

The Fourth Official will assist the referee at all times. The fourth official must indicate to the referee if the wrong player is cautioned or when a player who has been given a second caution is not sent off or when violent conduct occurs out of the view of the referee and assistant referees. The referee, however, retains the authority to decide on all points connected with play.

27. Trickery (cf. Law 12 IFAB Decision 3)

A player using a deliberate trick to circumvent the text and spirit of Law 12 regarding deliberate passes to the goalkeeper shall be cautioned for unsporting behavior and shown a yellow card.

28. Technical area

Team officials may convey tactical instructions to players during the game. However, team officials must remain within the confines of the technical area while doing so and must conduct themselves, at all times, in a responsible manner. Only one person at a time may be standing in the technical area, giving instructions to the team.

The technical area may be defined as an area covering the length of the substitutes' bench plus one yard on either side and extending from the front of the bench up to a distance of one yard (one meter) away from the touchline. It is recommended that markings be used to define this area, but the absence of such markings does not relieve team officials from the obligation to behave responsibly. The referee may sketch out a technical area if one is not marked and if, in the opinion of the referee, this is needed to assist in the control of sideline behavior.

29. Simulation (Law 12, IFAB Decision 5)

Any simulating action anywhere on the field, which is intended to deceive the referee, must be sanctioned as unsporting behavior. A number of specific actions may be considered cautionable as unsporting behavior. These include faking an injury or exaggerating the seriousness of an injury and faking a foul (diving) or exaggerating the severity of a foul.

30. Misconduct by substitutes or substituted players

- (a) Referees must caution and show the yellow card for unsporting behavior, dissent, or delay of restarts by substitutes or substituted players.
- (b) Substitutes or substituted players who are sent off and shown the red card must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area. If their offense involved the use of violence or excessive force, the referee must report the reason as violent conduct.

31. Dealing with injured players

Referees must follow the instructions below when dealing with injured players:

- play is allowed to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in the referee's opinion, only slightly injured
- play is stopped if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured
- after questioning the injured player, the referee authorizes one, or at most two doctors, to enter the field to ascertain the type of injury and to arrange the player's safe and swift removal from the field
- the stretcher-bearers should enter the field with a stretcher at the same time as the doctors to allow the player to be removed as soon as possible
- the referee ensures an injured player is safely removed from the field of play
- a player is not allowed to be treated on the field
- any player bleeding from a wound must leave the field of play. The player may not return until the referee is satisfied that the bleeding has stopped. A player cannot wear clothing with blood on it
- an injured goalkeeper, however, may be treated on the field and is not required to leave
- as soon as the referee has authorized the doctors to enter the field, the player must leave the field, either on the stretcher or on foot. A player who does not comply is cautioned for unsporting behavior
- an injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted
- an injured player may only reenter the field from the touch line when the ball is in play. When the ball is out of play, the injured player may reenter from any of the boundary lines
- the referee alone is authorized to allow an injured player to reenter the field whether the ball is in play or not
- if play has not otherwise been stopped for another reason, or if an injury suffered by a player is not the result of a breach of the Laws of the Game, the referee restarts play with a dropped ball
- the referee allows for the full amount of time lost through injury to be played at the end of each period of play.

32. Players or substitutes sent off

A player, substitute or substituted player who is sent off the field and shown the red card is required to be removed entirely from the area of the field and may play no further part in the match. If a competition rule specifies a manner or location of such a departure, it must be followed. In the absence of any rule, the referee must ensure that someone who is sent off is far enough away to be out of sight and not within hearing distance. Lacking any possibility of adult supervision away from the field, a youth who is sent off may be permitted to remain with the team but cannot participate in any way.

A player, substitute or substituted player who is sent off the field and shown the red card is required to be removed entirely from the area of the field and may play no further part in the match. If a competition rule specifies a manner or location of such a departure, it must be followed. In the absence of any rule, the referee must ensure that someone who is sent off is far enough away to be out of sight and not within hearing distance. Lacking any possibility of adult supervision away from the field, a youth who is sent off may be permitted to remain with the team but cannot participate in any way.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

Cc: State Presidents
Affiliated Members

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Jersey Sleeves Rule Suspended

Date: November 4, 2002

USSF has been informed by FIFA that it has decided to temporarily set aside the new provision regarding jersey sleeves found in International Board Decision 1 of Law 4.

Accordingly, effective immediately and until further notice:

- Referees will have no responsibility for determining the legality of jersey sleeves or for enforcing the provision in Law 4 related to jersey sleeves.
- Referees are directed not to include in their game reports any information regarding the presence, absence, or altered status of jersey sleeves unless required to do so by the rules of competition under which a particular game is being played.
- The only concern a referee has with respect to the condition of a player's jersey is **safety**.
- Referees are, however, expected to enforce all relevant provisions in the Rules of Competition governing a match, meaning, if a state association, organization, league or tournament has a rule regarding jersey sleeves, that rule should be enforced.

MEMORANDUM

To: Referees Officiating Professional Matches
All Affiliate Members
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Law 4, Players' Equipment (Jewelry)

Date: March 17, 2003

Law 4 (The Players' Equipment) states very clearly that "A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry)." In addition, FIFA included in the 2002/2003 edition of the *Laws of the Game* a section on "Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials" in which this requirement is further emphasized: "Referees are reminded that, in accordance with Law 4, players may not wear any kind of jewelry."

Referees officiating in professional matches must ensure that this clear restriction is properly enforced.

USSF reaffirms its advice to referees that jewelry worn solely for medical purposes may be permitted but only if, in the opinion of the referee, the item is not dangerous. Such items can often be worn safely if appropriately taped. Additionally, for married players, a wedding ring may also be permitted if it does not include any dangerous projections. An item of jewelry permitted by the referee under these provisions must have been carefully inspected prior to the commencement of the match.

The match must not be permitted to start with any player wearing illegal equipment or apparel, including jewelry. Players who insist on retaining such items will *not be permitted to participate in the match*. Any player who, having been instructed to correct illegal equipment, nevertheless attempts to participate in play without having made the correction is subject to being cautioned for dissent.

The referee, assistant referees, and the fourth official all share in the responsibility to enforce the clear requirements of Law 4 related to jewelry and are advised to discuss in their pregame meeting specific measures each will take to ensure compliance prior to as well as throughout the match.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees
Referee Committee

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Kicks From the Penalty Mark (Updated)

Date: October 14, 2004

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the important elements of the kicks from the penalty mark procedure. It updates and expands prior memoranda on this subject.

- Only the players on the field at the end of the match or at the end of any extra time can participate. This includes any player temporarily off the field to correct equipment, for treatment of an injury, or to correct bleeding or blood on the uniform.
- The kicks from the penalty mark procedure officially begins immediately at the conclusion of the match or after any extra time.
- An injured goalkeeper may be substituted if the team has not used its maximum allowed substitutions permitted under the competition rules. Under no circumstances may a field player be substituted after any extra time is over.
- The team whose captain wins the coin toss decides which team will kick first.
- Players who are waiting to kick or who have already kicked are required to be in the area of the center circle. No other persons are permitted on the field.
- The referee selects the goal toward which kicks will be taken. However, the referee should consult with the competition authority to determine if any additional information should be taken into account in deciding this matter (e.g., television or other video recording needs).
- If the condition of the selected goal or of the field in front of this goal seriously deteriorates once kicks have begun, the referee may switch to the other goal. In this rare circumstance, the referee should endeavor to make the change only after the teams have taken an equal number of kicks.
- If a team finishes the match and any extra time with fewer players than the opposing team (due to injury or misconduct), the captain of the opposing team must select and identify for the referee those players who will not participate in kicks from the penalty mark. In other words, the team must "Reduce to Equate" so that the kicks from the penalty mark procedure begins with teams having an equal number of players.

- The goalkeeper not defending against a kick from the penalty mark must be positioned at the intersection of the penalty area line and the goal line, behind the assistant referee, until it is his turn to defend.
- Only one player at a time (other than the goalkeepers) may leave the center circle and only for the purpose of taking a kick. The kick is taken, without unnecessary delay, only after the referee signals.
- Kicks will proceed in an initial group of five for each team, unless a point is reached when no further kicks could alter the outcome. If all five kicks for each team are taken with each team having an equal number of goals, kicks thereafter will proceed in pairs of one per team until one team scores and the other team does not.
- All kicks from the penalty mark are taken in pairs, alternating by each team. A player may not kick again until all team members have kicked. If a player is required to leave the field during kicks from the penalty mark (due to injury or misconduct), the opposing team will not remove players to equal the reduced number of opponents. In such a case, the team with fewer players may use all its eligible players before the other team and will therefore begin allowing its players to kick a second time before this occurs for the other team.
- During the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, player uniforms (e.g., the wearing of shinguards) must still meet the requirements of Law 4. The authority of the referee under Law 5 to deal with any misconduct or irresponsible behavior also continues.

A player is guilty of unsporting behavior at the taking of a kick from the penalty mark if, in the opinion of the referee:

- he delays unnecessarily after being signaled by the referee to proceed,
- he runs past the ball and then backs up to take the kick,
- he excessively changes direction during the run to the ball, or
- he makes any motion of the hand or arm which is clearly intended to misdirect the attention of the goalkeeper.

In such cases, the referee should suspend the procedure, caution the player involved, and then signal once again for the kick to be taken. If the kick has already been taken, the referee should order it retaken only if the ball enters the goal. The player must still be cautioned for his misconduct regardless of the outcome.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referees
National Assessors
National Instructors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: **Kicks from the Penalty Mark - The “Reduce to Equate” Principle**

Date: June 11, 2002

The *Laws of the Game* provide for the taking of kicks from the penalty mark as one way to decide which team will advance when, after regulation play and any extra periods of play required by the rules of competition are ended, the score remains tied.

The specific rules governing the match (“**the rules of competition**”) can differ in this regard. For example, FIFA requires up to two fifteen minute periods of play with the first goal ending the match.

The purpose of this position paper is to focus on one particular element of the taking of kicks which has recently been introduced and remains subject to some uncertainty – the “**reduce to equate**” principle. Introduced into *The Laws of the Game* in 2001, the principle ensures that teams begin the procedure with the same number of players.

The following guidelines are to be used in implementing “**reduce to equate**” in those matches for which the rules of competition mandate the taking of kicks from the penalty mark. “**Regulation play**” includes any extra periods of play called for by the rules of competition. “**Kicks**” will refer generally to the taking of kicks from the penalty mark.

- The kicks phase of the match begins at the moment regulation play ends (including any overtime periods of play.)
- A team might have fewer than eleven players eligible to participate at the end of regulation play due to injury or misconduct or because the team began the match with fewer players.
- The captain of the team with more players must identify which of its players will not participate if regulation play ends with the team at unequal sizes. · “Players eligible to participate” includes those players who are legally on the field at the end of regulation play, plus any other players off the field temporarily (e.g., to correct equipment, bleeding, or having an injury tended).
- Only the goalkeeper may be substituted in the case of injury during the kicks phase and only if the team has a substitution remaining from its permitted maximum.
- Once kicks begin (following any “reduce to equate” adjustment), a player may become unable to participate due to injury or ineligible to participate due to misconduct.

- Under no circumstances will a team be required to “reduce to equate” if the opposing team loses one or more players due to injury or misconduct occurring during the kicks phase of the match.
- Until a result is produced, both teams must continue to use their eligible players without duplication until all (including the goalkeeper) have kicked, at which time players who have already kicked may kick again. If one team has fewer players than the other, it will need to begin using again its players who have already kicked sooner than will the opposing team.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
Chair, State Referee Committee
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
National Referees, Assessors and Instructors

State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Management of Behavior in the Technical Area

Date: March 22, 2006

The "technical area" is provided for in International Board Decision 8 of Law 1 (The Field of Play) and, in more detail, in the section labeled "The Technical Area" in the Law book. Additionally, the permissible behavior of team officials as regards the technical area is described in International Board Decision 2 of Law 3 (The Number of Players).

USSF's annual law change memorandum for 2004 noted that "many matches are played on fields which have no designated technical area." This is particularly the case in youth and at lower competitive levels. USSF advised that, in such cases, the referee could "sketch out an approximation of team technical areas for game control purposes."

In general, as far as matters which pertain to the responsibilities of the referee, only three types of persons are permitted within the technical area, depending on the rules of competition:

- Players temporarily off the field with the permission of the referee,
- Substitutes (including substituted players), and
- Team officials.

The category of "team official" includes but is not limited to such persons as coaches, assistant coaches, trainers and other medical support persons, together with any other persons formally associated with the team which the rules of competition allow. These rules may or may not specify that team officials must be named (e.g., included on a team roster), but the Laws of the Game require that the team roster list and identify the players and substitutes. Rules of competition may also mandate standards of dress for team officials.

In short, in match conditions where spectators are not allowed near the immediate area of the field (for example, restricting spectators to stadium seats or behind barriers), the persons allowed in or near the field are strictly limited to players, substitutes, and team officials. **For purposes of this memorandum, anyone officially allowed in the technical area who is not a rostered player or substitute (or substituted player) is a team official.**

Substitutes

Law 3 provides that "all substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee, whether called upon to play or not." One important practical consequence of this is that substitutes (and substituted players) may be cautioned or sent off for misconduct exactly as they would be were they players on the field. Examples of behavior that might be considered misconduct if committed by a substitute or substituted

player would include:

- Dissent
- Offensive, insulting, or abusive language
- Entering the field without the permission of the referee
- Violent conduct
- Unsporting behavior
- Receiving a second yellow card in the same match

Team Officials

Law 5 (The Referee) provides that team officials must conduct themselves in a "responsible manner" (language echoed in Law 3, IBD 2, and in the section on the technical area). If they do not, the referee may "expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds." Law 12 (Fouls and Misconduct) expressly provides that only players, substitutes, and substituted players may be shown a red or yellow card.

What this means in practice is that team officials cannot commit misconduct within the meaning of Law 12. All actions by team officials which result in expulsion from the field must be identified as "irresponsible behavior" in the match report. The match report, of course, must provide a specific description of the behavior. The following are examples of behavior that might be considered irresponsible:

- Throwing objects in protest
- Speaking insulting words or making offensive gestures
- Kicking chairs
- Making unwanted contact with opponents
- Striking advertising boards
- Persistently and flagrantly protesting decisions by an official
- Interfering with the performance of assistant referee or fourth official duties
- Refusing to return to the technical area
- Entering the field of play without the permission of the referee

Assistant referees and fourth officials assist the referee in monitoring the behavior of persons in the technical area and in alerting the referee when such behavior exceeds reasonable bounds.

In dealing with impermissible actions (whether misconduct or irresponsible behavior) by persons who are off the field, the referee should use the same criteria and concerns they would apply to similar behavior by players on the field. For example, a substitute might proclaim disagreement with a decision by the referee. Is it dissent? Detailed guidelines have been developed and published regarding this matter and should be followed whether the speaker is a player, substitute, or team official. Language might be tolerated if uttered in a brief emotional outburst but would be unacceptable under other circumstances. After all, substitutes and team officials may become just as caught up in the emotion of the moment as any player and should be provided comparable leeway.

Although team officials **may not** be cautioned and shown the yellow card, they may be warned that their behavior is at risk of being considered irresponsible. If the behavior continues, they may be expelled from the field but not shown the red card.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Managing Match Time

Date: March 4, 2003

Law 7 requires the referee to make allowance in either period for "all time lost through:

- substitution(s)
- assessment of injury to players
- removal of injured players from the field of play for treatment
- wasting time
- any other cause"

Law 7 notes that the "allowance for time lost is at the discretion of the referee." More recently, in Memorandum 2001, USSF reported FIFA's position that, although the safety of players must be the main priority, referees were "instructed to add the full amount of time lost for reasons relating to injuries."

Most stoppages of play are ordinary elements of the game and "time lost" is a much more restricted concept than "time not played." The *Laws of the Game* encourage a match management approach by the referee that keeps the game moving with as few stoppages of play as possible and a minimum amount of delay in all restarts.

Referees must provide players with full adjustments of time for delays that are longer than what is minimally needed for the purpose of the restart. In general, most ordinary restarts can be accomplished quickly, regardless of the reason (substitution, goal celebration, disciplinary action, assessment of injury, and so forth). In such cases, the referee is not expected to consider the time as "lost."

Where delays are excessive, however, the referee is obliged to take their length fully into account in timing each half. Such decisions must always be made in accordance with the referee's **feeling for the spirit of the game.**

MEMORANDUM

To: State Associations
Professional Leagues

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Mandatory Suspension Following Dismissal

Date: October 22, 2002

FIFA Circular 821, dated October 1, 2002, reminds all national associations that any player dismissed from the field is to be **automatically suspended** from the next match of the competition in which the player was dismissed.

This mandatory suspension is to be enforced for **all** dismissals (red cards) regardless of the reason and will include send-offs for receiving a second yellow card as well as for actions leading directly to the dismissal. The duration of the suspension can be extended beyond one match by the competition authority.

All national associations are reminded in particular that they may not seek to avoid this binding instruction by passing "exceptional rules," i.e., a provision which creates any sort of exception. The automatic one-match suspension may **only** be waived if it is proven that the referee dismissed the wrong player in a case of mistaken identity.

In no case may the decision of the referee be modified after the game, as is clearly stated in Law 5 of *The Laws of the Game*.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Mass Confrontation

Date: March 14, 2003

The referee's ability to maintain composure in the face of dissent from a player is magnified when he becomes the focus of dissent and challenge from several players simultaneously. For the purpose of this guidance, a *"mass confrontation"* is defined as the concerted actions of three or more players from the same team who are disputing a decision while surrounding the referee or hindering or forcing movement by the referee. Such situations bring the game into disrepute, are inherently intimidating, and create a strongly negative public image.

The *Laws of the Game* provide adequate tools to deal with dissent on an individual level, but mass confrontations add a dangerous element calling for special measures involving all members of the officiating team. Instances of mass confrontation are significant events that transcend the sum of the individual acts of misconduct which the referee must handle.

Referee

- Attempt to assess the likelihood of a mass confrontation and move out of the area where it would probably occur.
- Distinguish between those players who are actively and aggressively increasing the tension and those who, though physically nearby, are clearly trying to reduce tension.
- Pay particular attention to those who instigate the confrontation, those who join it from the immediate area, and those who move a considerable distance in order to participate in the confrontation.
- Consult with the assistant referees and the fourth official before taking disciplinary action.
- Assess the appropriate punitive measures individually and, if a player is to be sent off, ensure that this occurs before moving on to other players who are to be disciplined.
- Ensure that *all* cards for misconduct are displayed and recorded before play is restarted.

Assistant Referees

- Both assistants move along the touchline to a point as near as possible to the confrontation and, if necessary, prepare to enter the field for a better viewing position.

- The nearer assistant should concentrate fully on the confrontation and attempt to identify the instigator(s) while the farther assistant concentrates on players who join the confrontation from a distance.
- The senior assistant (on the bench side of the field) should additionally monitor persons coming from the bench into the field to participate in the confrontation, but this assistant's primary objective remains monitoring the confrontation itself.
- After the confrontation has ended, both assistants should be ready to provide information to the referee regarding the identities of persons they observed and the role each such person played in the confrontation.

Fourth Official

- The fourth official assists the referee at all times.
- The fourth official's primary task in a mass confrontation situation is to observe and record the behavior of persons (substitutes and team officials) in the technical areas.
- After the confrontation has ended, the fourth official should be ready to provide information to the referee regarding the behavior of persons whom he has observed. If any relevant behavior involved violence and was not observed by either the referee or the assistant referees, the fourth official must be ready to include such observations in his report.

The referee's game report must list and describe separately any instances of mass confrontation in addition to the actions the referee took to handle individual misconduct that may have been part of the confrontation. Individual misconduct is clearly the responsibility of the referee and must be handled during the match in accordance with standard procedures. Competition authorities reserve the right to administer supplementary discipline to players involved in mass confrontations who may have escaped the attention of the officiating team.

Officials should not rely on the right of any competition authority in this regard but instead make every effort to properly administer justice for misconduct at the time it occurs.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Match Reports Involving Discipline

Date: April 7, 2008

A Circular (No. 1137) recently received from FIFA's General Secretary emphasized the importance of referee match reports in properly evaluating acts of misconduct for any further response by FIFA's Disciplinary Committee. The issues raised by the Circular are equally important for the professional leagues, high level youth and amateur leagues, and major tournaments in this country. The same concerns are also felt in the regional and state associations.

Although all aspects of the referee's match report must meet high standards of clarity, accuracy, brevity, and pertinence, those sections involving misconduct require special attention, and reporting on acts of misconduct leading to a send off merit the highest concern.

The need for effective match reporting starts at the lowest competitive level and becomes ever more critical as the competitive level of the match increases. State Referee Administrators and State Directors of Instruction are strongly urged to ensure that effective match reporting is incorporated in their training of senior referees.

In order for Disciplinary Committees to evaluate serious misconduct, match reports must start with:

- The name of (and additional identifying information for) the player who was sent off
- The time of the send off
- The specific reason in the Laws of the Game for the send off (Law 12)

In addition, however, the referee must supply sufficient detail regarding the circumstances of the misconduct to aid in evaluating its level of seriousness. Among the factors that should be addressed, where relevant, are:

- Whether the action occurred during a challenge for the ball
- Whether the misconduct occurred at a stoppage of play or during play
- If anyone was injured as a consequence of the misconduct
- Whether there was any prior incident that may have led to the player's actions
- The demeanor of the player during the send off (including any difficulties in implementing the player's removal from the field)
- The location of the action in relation to the goal line and penalty area being attacked at the time
- The subsequent intrusion of any other players (teammates or opponents) during the time the referee is managing the send off
- The specific words or gestures which were determined to be insulting, offensive, or abusive
- The identity of the opponent or official toward whom the misconduct was directed
- A summary of the prior misconduct (or a reference to the section of the report which detailed the prior caution) preceding the second caution for which the player was sent off

- The identity of the assistant referee, fourth official, or reserve assistant referee who provided independently observed facts to the referee regarding the misconduct
- All other details of the action which materially shaped the decision to send the player off

Any other facts which a Disciplinary Committee might decide it needs as a result of its review of the match report can be supplied by the referee on request of the Committee, but the most useful information will come from a properly completed, accurate, detailed, and clear match report. Match reports provided independently by assistant referees, fourth officials, or reserve assistant referees should follow these guidelines as well.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors
National Referee Instructor Trainers

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Medical Alert Jewelry and Law 4

Date: October 29, 2001

Law 4, The Players' Equipment, states that "a player may not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry)." USSF guidance to referees has always been that jewelry or clothing that might otherwise be prohibited could nevertheless be worn if:

- it was clearly religious or medical in nature **and**
- the referee decided that it was not dangerous.

The following points of emphasis should be noted regarding common sense applications of these requirements to medical alert jewelry (primarily, bracelets or necklaces):

- In order to decide if a medical item is dangerous, it must be inspected by the referee. Each situation must be decided on its own merits. Referees must not automatically include or exclude any item as dangerous without performing an inspection.
- Referees are urged to consider carefully any decision that medical alert jewelry presents a danger which cannot be resolved by such measures as taping the necklace inside the jersey or taping over the bracelet (without covering the critical medical information it displays).
- Referees should explain to the player the specific reasons why an item of medical jewelry is dangerous so that the player can attempt to correct the problem short of taking the item off. While the final decision whether any such correction is successful must remain with the referee, virtually all ordinary medical alert jewelry is either not dangerous as is or can easily be made not dangerous.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
National Referees
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Misconduct and Display of Cards

Date: August 26, 2002

Questions have been raised recently regarding the use of yellow and red cards before, during, and after play and regarding misconduct committed by various people in or around the field. Although the answers to these questions can generally be obtained from the *Laws of the Game*, prior USSF Memoranda, and *Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game*, this memo is intended to summarize in a single place the correct referee action in these different situations. A substantially similar memorandum was issued on June 8, 2000.

Yellow and red cards, which are now mandatory indications of cautions and send-offs, may be shown only for misconduct committed by **players, named substitutes, or substituted players** during a match. "During a match" includes:

- any periods in which play is temporarily stopped,
- half time or similar breaks in play,
- required overtime periods,
- kicks from the penalty mark if this procedure is used in case a winner must be determined,
- *the period of time immediately prior to a match during which players and substitutes are physically on the field warming up, stretching, or otherwise preparing for the match, and*
- *the period of time immediately following a match during which the players and substitutes are physically on the field but in the process of exiting.*

The items above in italics are highlighted because they are recent additions to Advice 3.14 in the 2001 edition of *Advice to Referees*.

If misconduct occurs prior to the match but not on the field or in advance of players in uniform performing warm-up exercises, no card should be shown and the referee's action does not affect the accumulation of cautions during the match (it must still be included in the referee's report of match incidents).

"**Players, named substitutes, or substituted players**" means any person listed on a team's roster given to the referee prior to the start of play. If a roster is not normally provided or if it has not yet been given to the referee, it means any person in the vicinity of the field wearing an identifiable team uniform who is subject to being called to participate in the match. Named substitutes are included even if they are never called on to play. Players who have been substituted and, under Law 3, are not permitted to return to the field remain

under the authority of the referee as long as they stay in the vicinity of the field. It does **not** include anyone sent from the field for misconduct (red card) since the maximum penalty has already been applied.

Yellow and red cards are not normally displayed prior to a match or after the match is over. However, as noted above in the definition of "during a match," USSF guidance follows international practice in recognizing the need to enforce misconduct sanctions for certain periods of time **immediately prior to and after the match as though the misconduct had occurred during the match itself**. In other words, a player who is on the field warming up before the match may be cautioned and shown the yellow card for misconduct (e.g., dissent). If this player then receives another caution during the match, he must be sent off under Law 12 for the second caution. A player shown a red card and sent from the field for misconduct prior to the match may be replaced from the substitute list and the team can field eleven players, but the roster cannot otherwise be changed (i.e., no new substitute name may be added to the roster) and this replacement is not counted against the team's substitution limit under Law 3.

All misconduct must be included in the referee's report of the match, even if no card is shown. If misconduct is committed before or after a match, the referee must describe the incident in accordance with the language of Law 12 just as though the incident had occurred during the match. In particular, **referees in professional league games are expected to use the prescribed misconduct codes and point values**. This will assist the competition authority in determining the correct action to take.

Persons who are not players, named substitutes, or substituted players cannot commit misconduct within the meaning of Law 12 and therefore cannot be shown yellow or red cards nor will their behavior be described in match reports as misconduct. Law 5 is very clear that "team officials" (coaches, trainers, etc.) must behave responsibly and, if they fail to do so, the referee has two primary courses of action. First, the referee may warn the team official that the irresponsible behavior puts him or her at risk. Second, the referee may expel the team official from the field and its immediate area. It is not necessary for a warning to be given in cases of extreme provocation.

As with a player or named substitute who fails to depart the field if sent off, the referee has the power under Law 5 to suspend or terminate a match if an expelled team official refuses to leave. Disciplinary action against a team official must also be included in the referee's match report.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Misconduct Involving Language/Gestures

Date: March 14, 2003

Player language, including gestures and other forms of nonverbal communication, can take many forms:

- passing information along to teammates or urging special efforts during play – *this is completely acceptable*. Referee action: no action needed.
- momentary emotional outburst – *borderline acceptable, perhaps a trifling offense only*. Referee action: a stern look or verbal admonishment.
- dissent or unsporting behavior – *unacceptable misconduct*. Referee action: caution and display yellow card.
- offensive, insulting or abusive language – *more serious misconduct*. Referee action: send off and display red card.

The referee must intelligently apply common sense, **feel for the spirit of the game**, and knowledge of the way in which player language can affect management of the match in order to distinguish effectively among these forms.

Regardless of age or competitive level, players become excited as their personal or team fortunes rise or fall, and it is not uncommon for language to be used in the heat of the moment. Such outbursts, while possibly vivid, are typically brief, undirected, and often quickly regretted. The referee must understand the complex emotions of players in relation to the match and discount appropriately language which does no lasting harm to those who might have heard or seen the outburst. Of course, the player might well be warned in various ways (a brief word, direct eye contact, etc.) regarding his behavior.

When the words or gestures directly challenge the authority of the referee or assistant referees, actively dispute an official's decision, or are likely to be taken up by a widening circle of other players, the referee must determine if this dissent can be halted through the more formal action of cautioning the player and displaying the yellow card. The objective of the caution for dissent or unsporting behavior (in the case of language which is not dissent but which falls short of deserving a red card), is to protect the referee's ability to continue to manage the match.

Language or gestures can also be “offensive, insulting or abusive” with the result that the player involved is required to leave the field and is shown a red card. The **fundamental principle** in recognizing offensive, insulting, or abusive language is that the referee must protect the safety and enjoyment of the participants as well as the fairness of the play. Accordingly, language that is generally accepted by players, does not produce adverse or aggressive reactions, and is generally tolerated by them should less likely result in a red card being shown.

The referee might well choose to talk to, warn, admonish, or caution players whose undesirable language occurs in a short, emotional outburst and send off a player whose language is a sustained, calculated, and aggressive verbal assault.

The three **critical criteria** to be used in evaluating whether language needs to be handled as misconduct warranting a red card are:

- The specific words and/or gestures used. Some words are inherently more offensive than others and are more likely to provoke aggressive reactions. Words that focus on religious, ethnic, racial, or sexual characteristics generally fall in this category and often require a fast, strong response by the referee.
- The audibility or visibility of the language. Language which might call for a more limited response if said quietly and/or to a restricted audience might require a sendoff if performed more publicly.
- Specifically targeted language. Language that is clearly directed at specific persons (for example, opponents or officials) is more likely to spark a reprisal and will usually require a stronger response by the referee.

Referees must take care not to inject purely personal opinions as to the nature of the language when determining a course of action. The primary focus of the referee must be on the effective management of the match and the players in the context of the overall **feel for the spirit of the game**.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Misconduct by Attackers at a Free Kick

Date: November 22, 2002

At the taking of a free kick, referees often focus their attention on the defenders and are alert for misconduct which defenders might commit in these circumstances. Such misconduct usually involves failing to respect the required distance and actions designed to delay the restart of play. This attention is proper and should remain an important element in the referee's mechanics for handling free kick restarts.

If defenders form a wall at the proper distance and one or more attackers are involved in this formation, the referee must be alert for specific dangers and must adopt appropriate positioning in order to watch for possible misconduct by these attackers. Increasingly in recent years, some teams have adopted a strategy in which an attacker joins the wall (either at an end or inside) and, at the moment of taking the free kick, pulls or pushes a defender in the wall so as to open a space through which the ball might pass.

It is expected that referees will recognize the opportunity for a foul and/or misconduct to be committed by an attacker under these circumstances and will act appropriately to deal with it. What is of even greater importance, however, is the need to develop an approach to positioning at free kicks which will enable the referee to see such behavior (which frequently involves holding or locking arms behind the backs of the players). Experienced referees will also realize that proper positioning often serves to prevent actions of this sort from occurring in the first place.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Assessors
National Instructors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Instruction

Cc: National Referee Committee

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Misconduct -- Player Gesturing for a Card

Date: March 23, 2007

Major League Soccer (MLS) gave a presentation at the 2007 National Camp which included a request that referees pay particular attention to the practice of players gesturing in a manner traditionally interpreted as a request or demand that a card be given to an opponent for some action. The same topic has drawn attention recently in certain European competitions.

FIFA, the international body responsible for developing and implementing the Laws of the Game for all national associations, has consistently emphasized "Fair Play" and USSF supports this concern. Although there is **no automatic rule** that player gestures calling for a card must be cautioned, such actions can be considered cautionable if they are blatantly disruptive, for example, by indicating disagreement with an official's decision, aggressively aimed at a particular opponent or an official, or being part of a simulation (faking) to gain a favorable decision. The public nature of the action often makes the gesture too obvious to ignore and can spread to other players, who either agree or disagree, thus provoking further conflict.

Referees must be sensitive to any effort by affiliated leagues or tournaments to support the highest level of sporting behavior and should deal promptly with players who engage in misconduct.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: No Replacement for Player Sent Off after the Game Has Started

Date: November 22, 2002

International Football Association Board (IFAB) Decision 3, Law III, formerly stated: "A player who has been ordered off after play has started may not be replaced." The rewrite of the Laws of the Game in 1997 was extensive and included both new language and revisions of existing language: numerous provisions in the 1996 edition of the Laws of the Game, including this one, were also removed. Nevertheless, the provisions of IFAB Decision 3, Law III, remain valid to this day.

The intention of the IFAB was to clarify and simplify concepts, to replace older terminology, to present concepts which are more easily translated into languages other than English and to shorten the Laws of the Game overall. The removal of the IFAB decision should not be considered a rejection of the requirement but an affirmation that a separate, additional statement of the concept involved was unnecessary. In other words, the IFAB believed that the basic principle that a player sent off after the game has started may not be replaced was so well understood by the entire soccer community that it did not need to be mentioned in the Laws.

In applying the rewritten Laws of the Game, affiliated leagues, associations, officials and competitions are accordingly reminded that, except as described in "Memorandum 1997" or in subsequent memoranda regarding amendments to the Laws of the Game, there should be no change in either the understanding of the Laws or in their substantive application to game situations. Unless noted otherwise, the absence in later versions of the Laws of the Game of any language from the 1996 version is not to be interpreted as an indication IFAB intended that matches would no longer be governed by that language.

Law 3 currently states "A player who has been sent off before the kick-off may be replaced only by one of the named substitutes." Implied in that statement is a reiteration of the former IFAB Decision 3, Law III, that "A player who has been ordered off after play has started may not be replaced."

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Referee Candidates
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Directors of Referee Administration
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Objects on the Field

Date: April 3, 2008

Soccer matches are exciting events, attended by partisan fans who celebrate the successes and bemoan the reverses of their favorite team. They wave flags, blare trumpets, beat drums, swirl scarves, and, sometimes, they throw things onto the field. Usually, what is thrown onto the field (confetti and streamers) is inconsequential, at most a momentary distraction.

At times, however, what is thrown onto the field constitutes a serious interference in the match, either because of the specific nature of the object (e.g., bottles or lit fireworks) or because of the volume of the material covering the field and making the surface dangerously unstable. In such cases, the referee must suspend play, preferably at a stoppage called for some other reason but otherwise without delay if the issue is the safety of the players, the officials, or team personnel in the technical areas. Before play can be resumed, it is the responsibility of the home club (the organization sponsoring the match) to resolve the problem without undue delay. Under certain circumstances, the referee may consider removing players from the field for their safety during this time.

A more difficult case is presented when what is thrown onto the field is not intrinsically dangerous but carries the threat of interfering with play in some significant way. Referees are, of course, alert to such interference when a ball enters the field and comes close enough to play to be mistaken for the match ball. Another example that might be cited is an EPL match (Sheffield United v. Manchester City) in which, about 10 minutes into the first half, the ball was played into the attacking third of the field at a time when more than a dozen balloons were also in the area (it may be important to note that the balloons were generally similar to the match ball in size and color).

On a shot across the face of the goal, the ball hit a balloon, causing the former to be redirected slightly and the latter to be knocked toward the goal. Further play resulted in other balloons moving and bouncing in front of the goalkeeper. A goal was scored during what may have been a very confusing few seconds.

In these “gray area” situations, the referee must evaluate a number of factors in order to determine if and when play should be suspended until the problem is resolved.

- What is the likelihood that the foreign object(s) might interfere with the safe movement of the players?
- What is the likelihood that the foreign object(s) might confuse players and/or disrupt the flow of play?
- Is the problem with foreign object(s) primarily at one end of the field and therefore more likely to disadvantage one team over another?

Play should not be suspended for inconsequential reasons and the referee must remain vigilant to the possibilities of the match being disrupted by the sudden appearance of unwanted objects on the field. Match officials must be sensitive to things which interfere unduly with the beauty of the sport and make a mockery of skilled play.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referees
National Instructors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity Denied (The 4 Ds)

Date: September 16, 2002

Law 12 provides that a defender whose violation of the Law prevents a goal or denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity must be sent off and shown the red card. The "professional foul" which is taken in a cynical attempt to prevent opponents from scoring requires a quick, firm response by the referee. Such misconduct by the defender overshadows the severity of the foul itself.

In order for a player to be sent off for denying an "obvious goal-scoring opportunity," four elements **must** be present:

- Number of **Defenders** -- not more than one defender between the foul and the goal, not counting the defender who committed the foul
- **Distance** to goal -- the closer the foul is to the goal, the more likely it is an obvious goalscoring opportunity
- **Distance** to ball -- the attacker must have been close enough to the ball at the time of the foul to have continued playing the ball
- **Direction** of play -- the attacker must have been moving toward the goal at the time the foul was committed

If **any** element is missing, there can be no send off for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. Further, the presence of each of these elements must be "obvious" in order for the send off to be appropriate under this provision of Law 12.

However, the foul might, by itself, warrant a card -- a caution for unsporting behavior, for example, if the challenge was reckless or a send off if the challenge was violent. If the foul by the defender is both violent and qualifies as an obvious goal-scoring opportunity offense misconduct, the referee should include both facts in the game report but must only list one official reason for the red card.

Referees are reminded that offenses which deny a goal-scoring opportunity are not limited to those punishable by a direct free kick or penalty kick but may include technical fouls for which the restart is an indirect free kick.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: The Officiating Team-Increasing Communication Effectiveness

Date: February 21, 2007

With the approach of the 2007 season, it is critical that all officials consider carefully how to maximize the effectiveness of their communications as a team. Only then will we best be able to serve both the game and the players.

The effectiveness of the officiating team depends on all members understanding their respective responsibilities, tasks, and duties. Each official must rely upon the other members of the team to perform their duties in a timely, accurate, and responsible manner. Reviewing these responsibilities and clarifying how they are to be performed is one of the central purposes of the pregame conference (*Guide to Procedures*, “General Mechanics”).

Before The Referee Has Made A Decision

This is the stage at which input from the officiating team can be most effective because it can *prevent rather than correct* problems. There is less damage done to the overall authority of the officiating team if the referee is able to gather as much relevant detail as possible *before reaching a decision*.

The pre-game conference must develop an understanding by all members of the team regarding the importance of making eye contact before any significant decision is made or announced and the specific signals by which the assistant referees and fourth official can provide relevant information.

Among the issues for which the referee may need assistance is the possibility of

- a second caution,
- the occurrence of misconduct in addition to a foul,
- the level of severity of the misconduct, or
- the unnoticed involvement of other persons in the foul or misconduct.

After The Referee Has Made A Decision But Not Yet Restarted Play

The major responsibility here is to prevent a serious error from occurring. Because a decision has already been reached, announced, and perhaps even partially implemented, the officiating team will likely encounter resistance if something different eventually needs to be done. Accordingly, an assistant referee or fourth official should act only if he or she has seen some element of the events on the field which there is strong reason to believe **would have likely resulted in a different decision if it had been seen**. The objective is to “get it right” while there is still time to

correct matters. Among the potentially serious errors which the officiating team should prevent are:

- The failure to give a red card following the issuance of a second caution
- The display of a card to the wrong player
- The display of a wrong card to a player
- The failure to punish instigating behavior in addition to any retaliation
- An action which is contrary to the Laws of the Game or to local rules of competition
- An incorrect determination that a goal was scored or not
- Violent conduct has occurred which carries the threat of further serious misconduct

The pregame conference needs to include a discussion of increasingly noticeable and varied means of gaining the attention of the referee, of how other members of the team can assist in redirecting attention to the official who has relevant information, and how the needed information can be conveyed as quickly, unobtrusively, and efficiently as possible. The longer this process takes, the greater is the possibility of resistance and eroded authority.

After A Decision Has Been Taken and Play Restarted

The only decision which can be corrected at this point is the failure to show a red card following a second caution. However, any of the errors listed above should be brought to the attention of the referee at the earliest possible opportunity as the information may be used by the referee to recover some measure of authority through player management strategies. Because the most likely opportunity is the next stoppage, the pregame should include an emphasis again of making eye contact at any stoppage as well as the means that could be employed to gain the referee's attention if important information needs to be provided. The assistant referee or fourth official may decide that, under the circumstances, the better alternative might be to wait for the end of a period of play to discuss any of these matters with the referee.

Communications Procedures

When information must be conveyed, the first line of communication is the array of standard signals described in the *Guide to Procedures*. If these are inadequate and direct communication is needed, assistant referees and fourth officials must compose their message quickly and focus on the essential facts needed by the referee – e.g., card color, team, player name or number, and reason under the Law for the recommendation (further detail should be at the request of the referee).

If it is necessary for members of the officiating team to confer directly, they must remember that they are doing so in an atmosphere of high tensions, considerable interest in the substance of the conversation, and the possibility of further misconduct. Accordingly, their attention must continue to focus on the field and players. *These conversations must be private* – the desire of others to participate or be nearby must be strongly discouraged. Further, officials should not allow themselves to be drawn into any subsequent statements or explanations of what was said.

Fourth officials should first seek to communicate with the referee through the near assistant referee but, if necessary, direct contact with the referee may be needed in order to ensure that all relevant information has been made available.

The essence of the diagonal system of control is communication, including the sharing of relevant, accurate, and timely information. As a team, the officials must use all available techniques to make the right decision.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
Chair, State Referee Committee
National Referees, Assessors and Instructors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Law 11 – Offside - IFAB advice on the application of Law 11, Decision 2

Date: August 24, 2005

The International Football Association Board (IFAB) revised Law 11 (Offside) effective 1 July 2005 by, among other things, incorporating definitions of what it means to “interfere with play,” “interfere with an opponent,” and “gain an advantage by being in an offside position.” The **USSF Advice to Referees** section of Memorandum 2005 ended its discussion of the addition of these three definitions by noting:

Referees are reminded that the reference to “playing or touching the ball” does not mean that an offside infraction cannot be called until an attacker in an offside position actually touches the ball.

Because of recent developments which appear to focus on “touching the ball,” there has been some confusion about the above statement. **“Touching the ball” is not a requirement for calling an offside violation if the attacker is interfering with an opponent by making a movement or gesture which, in the opinion of the referee, deceives or distracts that opponent.** What the International Board has recently emphasized is that, in the unlikely event an attacker in an offside position is not challenged by any opponent, the attacker should not be ruled offside unless and until the attacker physically touches the ball.

This emphasis is both simple and easily implemented:

- An attacker in an offside position who is not challenged by any opponent and not competing for the ball with a teammate coming from an onside position who could, in the opinion of the officiating team, get to the ball first should not be ruled offside for interfering with play or gaining an advantage unless that attacker actually touches the ball. In a close race between an onside and an offside attacker, it would be necessary to see which player touches the ball before deciding if an offside offense has occurred.
- An attacker in an offside position whose gestures or movements, in the opinion of the officiating team, cause an opponent to challenge for the ball has interfered with an opponent and should be ruled offside whether the attacker touches the ball or not.

The International Board issued a Circular on August 17, 2005, which reaffirmed the above approach. As the Board stated (emphasis added): “A player in an offside position may be penalized before playing or touching the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, no other teammate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball.” Further, “If an opponent becomes involved in the play and if, in the opinion of the referee, there is potential for physical contact, the player in the offside position shall be penalized for interfering with an opponent.” Finally, the Board confirmed the requirement that the indirect free kick restart for an offside offense is taken “from the initial place where the player was adjudged to be in an offside position.”

All referees, instructors, and assessors should review these guidelines carefully. It is important that officials understand and handle the offside offense in a correct, consistent, and realistic manner. Personal Interpretations which differ from the approach outlined here can only cause confusion and hard feelings on the part of players, team officials, and spectators.

USSF will shortly distribute to the state associations and place on its website a PowerPoint presentation incorporating this clarification.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
Chair, State Referee Committee
National Referees, Assessors and Instructors

cc: State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Law 11 – Offside - Interfering with Play and Interfering with an Opponent

Date: August 24, 2006

The proper interpretation and application of Law 11 have been evolving in recent years. To this end, the International Board has provided detailed definitions of the ways in which a player may become involved in active play (Law 11, International Board Decision 2). On August 17, 2005, a Circular from the FIFA further clarified some of the confusion regarding whether "touching the ball" was a requirement for "interfering with play" (emphasis added):

- A player in an offside position may be penalized before playing or touching the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, no other teammate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball.
- If an opponent becomes involved in the play and if, in the opinion of the referee, there is potential for physical contact, the player in the offside position shall be penalized for interfering with an opponent.

To "interfere with play" means that the attacker must touch the ball or make a play for the ball. While "touching the ball" is obvious, an attacker has not made a play for the ball if, in fact, he does not move toward the ball or does not move any part of his body in an attempt to touch a ball played toward him. It is not correct to consider "in the area of active play" to be the same as "involved in active play" -- merely being near the ball is not enough to judge that the attacker is involved in active play. The attacker must act to play the ball, though the "action" does not have to include touching the ball. To "interfere with an opponent" means that an opponent must actually be prevented from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly blocking the opponent's line of vision or direction of movement or by "making a gesture or movement which, in the opinion of the referee, deceives or distracts an opponent." To be deceived or distracted, however, the opponent must be within some reasonable distance of the play. There is no hard and fast test of "nearness" beyond the opinion of the referee but the interference with an opponent must be clear (not just hypothetical or theoretically possible) before deciding that an offside violation has occurred.

Example: Miami player Romario is in an obvious offside position when the ball is last touched by his teammate, Gil, and Gil then plays the ball forward almost directly toward Romario. However, Romario neither touches nor makes any play for the ball. Furthermore, there is no opponent close enough to be reasonably obstructed or impeded in any way nor does Romario make any gesture or movement which could reasonably be considered deceptive or distracting. Gil proceeds to run forward, takes control of his

own pass, moves farther downfield from Romario, and then passes the ball back to Romario who ultimately scores a goal. **The goal was valid and, in particular, there was no offside offense during any part of this sequence of play.**

In a situation such as this, neither the referee nor the lead assistant referee should assume that Romario will play the ball simply because it was sent in his direction. They must wait to see if Romario touches the ball, makes a play toward the ball, or moves in such a way as to obstruct, impede, deceive, or distract an opponent who is close enough that the opponent is prevented from participating in the play.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

cc: State Directors of Coaching
Referee Committee

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Offside and Interfering with Play

Date: July 26, 2007

The attached clip displays an offside decision in a match between the U.S. Women's national team and Brazil played on June 23 at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford NJ. Early in the match, the U.S. team (Lopez) took a corner kick which was played into the top of Brazil's goal area. A Brazilian player headed the ball out but it was returned by Lori Chalupny toward her teammate, Cat Whitehill (#4).

Whitehill, while on the run, neatly flipped the ball above an opponent and ran forward, in effect passing the ball to herself as she then retook control of the ball past the second to last Brazilian opponent, with only the goalkeeper to beat. When Whitehill flipped the ball up, a teammate (Heather O'Reilly) was arguably in an offside position (the camera angle makes an independent decision unclear).

However, O'Reilly was flagged for an offside violation even though she did not touch the ball and her teammate, Whitehill, was running hard from an onside position to retake control of the ball. The only action O'Reilly took was to wait for her teammate to control the ball and then to run alongside her as Whitehill dribbled to the goal, kicked, and put the ball into the net.

The assistant referee should have withheld the flag until it was clear which of the two attackers, one (O'Reilly) in an offside position and one (Whitehill) running hard from an onside position to collect her own pass, would get to the ball first. O'Reilly neither interfered with play nor with an opponent.

The goal should have been allowed.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: A Classic Offside Scenario

Date: May 4, 2007

Offside is often the subject of spirited debates among players, team officials, referees, and spectators. This has been particularly the case in the last few years following the publication of several definitions from FIFA clarifying what it means to be interfering with play, interfering with an opponent, and gaining an advantage in violation of Law 11 (Offside). In support of these definitions, USSF has distributed several detailed memoranda (August 24, 2005, and April 18, 2007).

In a match played in Los Angeles on April 28, 2007, between the LA Galaxy and Chivas USA, an incident took place which is a classic example of one of the most contentious issues in the offside decision – two attackers pursuing the ball, one coming from an offside position and one coming from an onside position. The incident also emphasizes the vital need for officials to avoid hasty decisions and to wait to see how the play develops.

In the 86th minute, Galaxy #24 (Sturgis) played the ball forward into space. At the time, Galaxy #11 (Jaqua) was in an offside position near the center of the field and his teammate, Galaxy #10 (Donovan), was onside well behind the second to last defender to Jaqua's right. Both attackers reacted almost immediately and began sprinting hard to the ball. Although Donovan started about three yards behind his teammate, he had pulled level with him within the next few strides. There is no indication that Jaqua interfered with any opponent.

In situations where an attacker is coming from an onside position and another attacker coming from an offside position, each with an equally credible chance of getting to the ball, it is imperative that officials withhold a decision until either it becomes clear which attacker will get to the ball first (even if this means having to wait until one or the other player actually touches the ball) or the action of the attacker coming from the offside position causes one or more opponents to be deceived or distracted.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

cc: State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

**Subject: An Offside Issue – Is Touching the Ball a Requirement?
New York Red Bulls vs FC Dallas (April 15, 2007)**

Date: April 18, 2007

In a match on April 15, 2007, between the New York Red Bulls and FC Dallas (clip attached), Red Bulls player #19 (Richards) shoots on goal. The ball is stopped and deflected by Dallas goalkeeper #1 (Hislop) but it goes to Red Bulls player #11 (van den Bergh) who takes another shot on goal.

When van den Bergh strikes the ball, his teammate, Mathis (#13) is in an offside position – indeed, Mathis is just barely above the goal line on the right hand side of the goal – and the ball is moving directly toward him. Mathis jumps up and the ball passes under him into the net for a score.

The following issues and concerns are raised by this scenario:

- The only action Mathis took was to avoid contact with the ball.
- In so doing, he did not block an opponent's movement or vision or deceive or distract an opponent.
- Mathis did not commit an offside violation because he was not actively involved in play by interfering with play, interfering with an opponent, or gaining an advantage.

On August 24, 2006, USSF issued a memorandum based on the developing interpretation and application of Law 11 which specifically laid out the proposition that “interfering with play” requires either touching the ball or making a credible move to play the ball. Acting to avoid contact (if successful) does not meet either of these criteria. An attacker in an offside position must act (touch the ball, move to the ball, interfere with an opponent, block an opponent, distract or deceive an opponent) to be declared offside. Action to avoid involvement (if successful) must be excluded.

Referees should remember that a scenario such as this one, *which might have been called differently in years past*, must now meet more stringent standards for an offside violation. Although the basic requirements for an offside violation under Law 11 remain the same, our understanding of how to implement these requirements has been evolving to match the modern game.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referees, National Assessors
National Instructors

cc: State Directors of Coaching
CoachesNet
"A" Licensed Coaches
Nike Club Coaches

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Offside Issues

Date: October 16, 2007

During a match between FC Dallas and the Columbus Crew on October 6, 2007, a sequence of play occurred which resulted in the scoring of a goal by Columbus player #12 (Eddie Gaven). At the time, Columbus player #26 (Andy Herron) was indisputably in an offside position and some analysts of the play have suggested that the goal should have been canceled because Herron had committed an offside infraction.

Being in an offside position is not an offense. A player in an offside position is only penalized if he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play, or
- Interfering with an opponent, or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position.

Below, using the guidance provided by FIFA, we examine whether Herron should have been penalized for being in an offside position.

Although Herron is seen sticking his leg out as the ball passes him, there is no contact with the ball and therefore Herron cannot be considered *to have interfered with play*. This is a fact.

The camera angles on the several replays of the event on the attached clip do not provide us with a clear line of sight from the perspective of the Dallas goalkeeper #30 (Ray Burse) so we must draw our conclusions from what can be seen. First, Herron is about 12 yards from the Dallas goalkeeper when the play was initiated by Columbus. Accordingly, Herron occupied only a small portion of the goalkeeper's field of view and it is therefore inconclusive that Herron interfered with the goalkeeper by blocking Burse's view of the path of the ball. Second, there is no video evidence that Herron's actions deceived or distracted the goalkeeper (much less any other defender). The goalkeeper's position to defend against this shot on goal appears to be set by the trajectory of the ball as it left Gaven's foot, not by any action taken by Herron. The evidence thus supports a decision that Herron *did not interfere with an opponent*.

Gaining an advantage while in an offside position is not an issue here since there was no deflection from the goalposts, crossbar, or a defender. This also is a fact.

As a consequence, none of the elements of involvement in active play while in an offside position were present and the referee's decision not to penalize Herron for his position must be supported.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referees, National Assessors
National Instructors

cc: State Directors of Coaching
"A" License Coaches
Nike Club Coaches
CoachesNet

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Offside Myths

Date: October 17, 2007

In response to the suggestion that there is “widespread confusion” regarding Law 11 (Offside), the allegation that referees are being inconsistent in applying the requirements of this Law, and the increasing use of phrases like “passive offside,” we would like to offer the following brief explanation to assist in understanding the meaning and application of Law 11.

There is no such thing as “active offside” or “passive offside” despite the common use of these terms, particularly by commentators. They are, at best, merely shorthand phrases coined for easy reference to the two central concepts in Law 11. Unfortunately, as with so many shorthand phrases, they often confuse rather than clarify what needs to be understood. In general, “passive offside” is used to identify an attacker who is in an offside position but not involved in active play, whereas “active offside” is intended to identify an attacker who has become actively involved in play while in an offside position.

Law 11 has two core threads- these are position and offence. The *offside position*, has a well-established meaning and its concept is clear:

- A player is in an offside position if he is nearer his opponent’s goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent
- A player is not in an offside position if:
 - He is in his own half of the field of play.
 - He is level with the second last opponent.
 - He is level with the last two opponents
- The judgment as to the offside position is determined at the moment the ball is played by a member of the player’s team.

Offside position is factual based on the relative positions of an attacker, the ball, the halfway line, and the second last opponent.

The *offside offence* is, by contrast, a matter of interpretation by the officiating team and, while the concepts are equally clear, some clarification as to how the officials reach their decision is offered:

- Being in an offside position is not an offence in itself.
- A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball is played or touched by a teammate, he is involved in the active play *by interfering with the play, interfering with an opponent or gaining an advantage by being in that position.*
- A player who receives the ball directly from a goal kick, throw in or a corner kick has not committed an offside offence.
- A player's offside or onside position at the time the ball is touched or played by a teammate cannot be changed by any subsequent movement of the player, the opponents or the ball, so long as there has been no intervening play of the ball by an opponent. An offside or onside position is based on *where the player is when the player's teammate touches or plays the ball, not where the player becomes actively involved in play.*

There must be a clear understanding that an offside position is decided based on a moment in time – when the ball is touched or played by a teammate – whereas the offside offence is judged from that moment onward. In other words, having in effect taken a snapshot of player positions and frozen their onside or offside positions at that moment, the officials must then judge whether players in offside positions become involved in active play. This involves weighing the direction and speed of the ball, the direction and speed of the player in an offside position, the direction and speed of any teammates coming from onside positions and the position and movement of any opponents relative to players in offside positions.

Although this sounds very complex and perhaps beyond the abilities of mortal men and women, in reality the decision-making process of a properly trained official is smooth and calculated to reach a correct interpretation of each situation. What is important to remember is that match officials take into consideration the whole playing scenario across the entire field from where the play started, factoring in the elapsed time, whereas many observers often only focus on a few players, over a short period of time, based on the direction of play and where it ends up.

How is the determination of “active involvement” made leading to a decision to penalize for offside?

“Interfering with play” means touching or playing the ball last touched or played by a teammate. In this context, touching and playing the ball are considered equivalent actions by the player. At a meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) on 11 August 2005, this point was clarified as follows: “A player in an offside position may be penalized **before** playing or touching the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, no other teammate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball.” This clarification means that the player could be penalized immediately rather than having to wait for a physical touch of the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, there was no teammate in an onside position who could compete for the ball. It follows that, if there were a teammate coming from an onside position who could play the ball legally, it would be necessary to wait to see which player actually got to the ball first.

“Interfering with an opponent” means **preventing** an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or movement, or by a gesture or movement which ***in the opinion of the referee deceives or distracts an opponent.*** We also have to remember that:

- Attackers clearly behind a defender do not interfere with them.
- Merely knowing that an opponent is in offside position does not justify a defender claiming that he was interfered with.
- An attacker raising his hand to signify no involvement does not, by itself, constitute an action which “deceives or distracts.” Indeed, in this context, there is no need for an attacker to signal “no involvement” as his involvement can be objectively determined by what he does, not by what he fails to do.

“Gaining an advantage by being in that position” means **playing a ball** that rebounds to him off a goalpost, crossbar, or an opponent, having been in an offside position when that phase of play began. In effect, this particular element is an extension of interfering with play, compounded by the rebound of the ball. In cases where this aspect of law is invoked, confusion sometimes arises from the fact that the attacker in an offside

position would not have been penalized for offside if the ball had not rebound to him or her in this passage of play.

The approach taken by most match officials is to wait and see. In these circumstances it may appear that the official is late or slow in signaling the offence, but in reality he or she has taken all the evidence presented to him or her, applied the knowledge and understanding of the criteria and come to a *balanced* decision. This may have included the fact that the player was not initially involved in active play and therefore no signal was given. It is almost universally accepted that, if there is any doubt, then the balance of doubt is given to the attacker.

We have addressed the specific instances in separate correspondence. The purpose of this communication is solely to provide an extended discussion of the elements from Law 11 that we have applied in responding to requests for “rulings” regarding specific offside incidents. We also hope that you actively (rather than “passively”) discourage the use of the phrases “passive offside” and “active offside” as they are not part of the Law and only lead to confusion. If you have any points or queries you wish to raise on this paper, please do not hesitate to contact us.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Offside Offense on a Corner Kick

Date: April 24, 2008

Officials must remain focused and vigilant in order to make correct offside decision, particularly in situations where an offside violation is not expected. Such was the case last Sunday, April 20, in the match between Kansas City at Chicago when corner kicks were called in favor of Chicago.

Twice, in a set play often referred to as a “short corner,” Chicago players (#21, Mapp, and #10, Blanco) committed offside violations which were not detected by the officiating team. Referees must remember that Law 11 states there is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a corner kick. However, once the corner kick has been taken (i.e., after the ball is kicked and moved), all play occurring afterward must be closely monitored for a possible offside offense and all the usual requirements of Law 11 must be applied.

The accompanying video clip highlights how a corner kick can develop almost immediately into the sort of play where an offside offense can occur. The referee and assistant referee should have been alerted to this challenge by the presence of two attackers close to each other at the corner, a team tactic which has become more common in recent years. The corner kick taker plays the ball to this nearby teammate. The teammate stops the ball to allow the kicker to play the ball again or may even play the ball back to the corner kick taker. However, the moment the teammate makes contact with the ball, the assistant referee must quickly determine if the basic conditions of an offside position exist regarding any attacker but most particularly regarding the corner kick taker.

If at least two defenders had been standing on the goal line at the moment the Chicago attacker stopped the ball which he had received from the corner kick, there would have been no offside position and therefore no offside violation in either situation.

This is a difficult play to observe and the purpose of this paper is to raise awareness as to its challenges for the officiating team. Referees and assistant referees should also be prepared for actions by the opposing team to counter the “short corner” tactic, including an increased likelihood of an encroachment violation as opponents attempt to move in closer to mark both attackers.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: The Opinion of the Referee and Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunities

Date: September 25, 2007

Attached is a clip from a match played September 16 between Chivas USA and Colorado Rapids (at Colorado). The clip presents a series of issues which, among other things, focuses our attention on the critical role of the referee's judgment in grey areas and on staying current as to interpretations of the Laws of the Game.

The simple facts are that Chivas player # 10 (Merlin) was attacking the Colorado goal and was fouled in the 11th minute by Colorado # 3 (Erpen). As a result, Erpen was given a red card and Chivas were given a penalty kick.

The first core issue is where the foul by Erpen happened. Fouls are complex events and require both time and space to occur. They cannot be easily pinpointed at a given spot on the field and a given second on the clock. Recognizing this, FIFA made it clear last year that a foul may begin outside the penalty area and conclude inside the penalty area – in which case, the referee should award a penalty kick.

That was clearly the case here. Initial contact with Merlin was outside the Colorado penalty area but the nature and consequences of that contact did not become evident for several more steps and seconds of play, by which time the event itself had continued into the penalty area. The penalty kick was a correct decision.

The second core issue is whether the offense met the requirements of an obvious goal scoring opportunity (the "4 Ds"). Here, the clip is less revealing. Each of the requirements involves judgment, some more than others, but three of the "Ds" would appear to be present based on the evidence – distance to goal, distance to the ball, and direction of play.

At the time of the foul (measured by when the referee decided the foul had occurred), Colorado player #29 (Sanneh) was definitely in the area of the offense. Based on the referee's distance and angle, Sanneh could have been judged either not between the foul and the opposing goal (making the Colorado goalkeeper Coundoul the only defender) or not able to add materially to Colorado's defense had Merlin not been fouled. Either decision would result in the 4th D (number of defenders) also being met.

This latter element confirms once again that, even with an apparently objective and factual issue such as "number of defenders," there remain critical decisions which are and always will be based on "in the opinion of the referee."

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Padded Goal Structures

Date: March 14, 2008

An issue has recently arisen regarding whether, under the Laws of the Game, the goalposts and/or the crossbar may be padded. The suggestion has been made that this could be considered a safety issue, that such padding is commercially available, and that it could be applied in such a way that the dimensions of the goal structure remain within the requirements of Law 1.

Despite these understandable concerns and good intentions, U.S. Soccer cannot approve the use of padding on goalposts or crossbars in affiliated matches for the following reasons:

- The Laws of the Game do not include padding of the goalposts and/or the crossbar as part of the equipment used on a field.
- The Laws of the Game already provide for the referee's obligation to not permit a game to be played if, in the opinion of the referee, the goal is dangerous in any way.
- An unpadded goal structure is not inherently dangerous.
- Padding could hide defects or dangerous goal conditions and interfere with the referee's evaluation of the safety of the goal.
- Padding on the goal structure could interfere in unpredictable ways with the play of the ball.

U.S. Soccer takes note of the fact that some matches might be played on fields controlled by public authorities which themselves require the padding of goal structures as a condition for using their facilities.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: The "Pass Back" Violation

Date: May 21, 2008

The attached clip from a match played by Columbus at Toronto last Saturday, May 17, involves an often misunderstood offense commonly referred to as the "pass back" violation. Unfortunately, the phrase "pass back" itself can be a source of confusion.

This rarely seen infraction came into the Laws of the Game in 1992 as part of the general effort to restrict opportunities for goalkeepers to waste time by unfairly withholding the ball from active challenge by taking possession of the ball with the hands. Other measures along the same lines include the 6 second limit on goalkeeper possession, the second possession restriction, and the throw-in to the goalkeeper by a teammate.

The offense rests on three events occurring in the following sequence:

- The ball is kicked (played with the foot) by a teammate of the goalkeeper,
- This action is deemed to be deliberate rather than a deflection, and
- The goalkeeper handles the ball directly (no intervening touch of play of the ball by anyone else)

When, in the opinion of the referee, these three conditions are met, the violation has occurred. It is not necessary for the ball to be "passed," it is not necessary for the ball to go "back," and it is not necessary for the deliberate play by the teammate to be "to" the goalkeeper.

In the incident clip, Toronto and Columbus are tied and the match has entered the second minute of a total of two minutes of added time. The Columbus goalkeeper punts the ball well past midfield. After a brief but vigorous competition for possession, a Toronto player passes the ball apparently in the direction of his fullback but the ball actually enters space where a Columbus attacker actively pressures for control and the ball, chased by this attacker and defender, continues onward to the Toronto goalkeeper who picks it up with the onrushing attacker only a few steps away.

The offense must be properly understood in the following terms:

- The ball was clearly **kicked** by a Toronto defender
- The ball was neither deflected nor accidentally misdirected -- that is, the pass was **deliberate**
- It is irrelevant that the pass was arguably not to the goalkeeper

- The goalkeeper clearly **handled** the ball directly from the kick by his teammate
- Instead of playing the ball in some other way, the goalkeeper chose to handle it, thus removing the ball from active challenge by the Columbus attacker

Referees must be alert to the possibility of even uncommon offenses such as this. The requirements of the "iron triangle" (played by the teammate's foot, deliberate action, goalkeeper directly handling) were met and the violation should have been called.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
 State Youth Referee Administrators
 State Directors of Referee Instruction and Assessment
 Referee Committee
 National Referees, National Instructors and National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
 Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Penalty Kicks and the 2005-2006 Law Changes

Date: June 13, 2005

Some questions have been raised regarding the impact of the 2005-2006 changes in the Laws of the Game on Law 14 (Penalty Kicks). Except for the two specific bullet points which were modified by the International Board (IFAB), neither Law 14 nor the manner in which it is administered has changed.

Law 14 has three distinct parts. The first part identifies the infringements which will result in a penalty kick restart. The second part outlines the steps the referee must take to manage the penalty kick restart. No element in either of these parts was affected by the 2005-2006 Law changes.

The third part discusses the action the referee must take if a player infringes Law 14 itself – in other words, an infraction involving the penalty kick. As in the past, the referee had to consider who infringed Law 14 and what was the outcome of the kick. This approach remains the same.

The only change in Law 14 for 2005-2006 is that an indirect free kick is now specified as the restart if an attacker infringes Law 14 and the ball does not go into the net. The chart below summarizes this third part of Law 14:

Consequences of an Infringement of Law 14

<i>Who infringed Law 14?</i>	<i>What was the outcome of the kick?</i>	
	Ball goes into the goal	Ball does NOT go into goal
Attacker (including the kicker)	RETAKE PENALTY KICK	INDIRECT FREE KICK*
Defender (including the goalkeeper)	GOAL (KICK-OFF)	RETAKE PENALTY KICK
Both attacker and defender	RETAKE PENALTY KICK	RETAKE PENALTY KICK

* From where the infringement occurred

The shaded area represents the only change in Law 14 announced this year. Prior to 2005, the referee action when an attacker infringed Law 14 and the ball did not go into the net was to let play continue, except for the specific case where the ball rebounded from the goal post, crossbar, or goalkeeper back to the attacker who had encroached (indirect free kick). The IFAB simply extended this restart beyond the special case to include all infringements by attackers when the ball does not enter the goal.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Player Dress

Date: November 22, 2002

According to Law 4, The Players' Equipment, a player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player. The basic compulsory equipment of a player is a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings, shinguards, and footwear. There is no provision for a player to wear a skirt or similar clothing.

However, in an analogous situation, in respect of certain religions that require members to wear head coverings, the Secretary General of the United States Soccer Federation has given permission to those bound by religious law to wear such headcoverings, usually a turban or yarmulke, provided the referee finds that the headgear does not pose a danger to the player wearing it or to the other players. This principle could be extended to other clothing required of members by their religion.

Since the referee may not know all the various religious rules, players must request the variance well enough ahead of game time by notifying the league. The league will notify the state association, which will pass the information on to the state referee committee. The state referee committee will make sure that the referees working that league's matches are informed.

The referee is still bound by the requirements of Law 4 -- the player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player, or use this equipment or clothing to circumvent the Laws of the Game. An example would be the use of equipment or garments to trap the ball or to distract an opponent.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators Affiliated Members
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Assessors
National Instructors
National Referees

From: Julie Ilacqua
Managing Director of Federation Services

Re: Player's Equipment

Date: March 7, 2003

USSF has received a number of inquiries recently about how officials should handle situations where players wish to wear equipment that is not included in the list of basic compulsory equipment in FIFA *Laws of the Game*. Referees are facing increased requests from players for permission to wear kneepads, elbowpads, headbands, soft casts, goggles, etc.

The only concrete guidance in the Laws of the Game is found in Law 4:

“A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player.”

This is followed by a list of required uniform items – jersey, shorts, socks, shoes, and shinguards. Obviously, this language is quite general. USSF suggests the following approach to issues involving player equipment and uniforms:

1. Look to the applicable rules of the competition authority.

Some leagues, tournaments, and soccer organizations have specific local rules covering player uniforms and what other items may or may not be worn on the field during play. Referees who accept match assignments governed by these rules are obligated to enforce them. Note, however, that local rules cannot restrict the referee’s fundamental duty to ensure the safety of players.

2. Inspect the equipment.

All items of player equipment and uniforms must be inspected. However, anything outside the basic compulsory items must draw the particular attention of the referee and be inspected with special regard to safety. USSF does not “pre-approve” any item of player equipment by type or brand – each item must be evaluated individually.

3. Focus on the equipment itself – not how it might be improperly used, or whether it actually protects the player.

Generally, the referee’s safety inspection should focus on whether the equipment has such dangerous characteristics as: sharp edges, hard surfaces, pointed corners, dangling straps or loops, or dangerous protrusions. The referee should determine whether the equipment, by its nature, presents a safety risk to the player wearing it or to other players. If the equipment does not present such a safety risk, the referee should permit the player to wear it.

The referee should not forbid the equipment simply because it creates a possibility that a player could use it to foul another player or otherwise violate the Laws of the Game. However, as the game progresses, an item that the referee allowed may become dangerous, depending on changes in its condition (wear and tear) or on how the player uses it. Referees must be particularly sensitive to unfair or dangerous uses of player equipment and must be prepared to order a correction of the problem whenever they become aware of it.

The referee also should not forbid the equipment because of doubts about whether it actually protects the player. There are many new types of equipment on the market that claim to protect players. A referee's decision to allow a player to use equipment is not an endorsement of the equipment and does not signify that the referee believes the player will be safer while wearing the equipment.

4. Remember that the referee is the final word on whether equipment is dangerous.

Players, coaches, and others may argue that certain equipment is safe. They may contend that the equipment has been permitted in previous matches, or that the equipment actually increases the player's safety. These arguments may be accompanied by manufacturer's information, doctor's notes, etc. However, as with all referee decisions, determining what players may wear within the framework of the *Laws of the Game* and applicable local rules depends on the judgment of the referee. The referee must strive to be fair, objective, and consistent – but the final decision belongs to the referee.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
National Instructors
National Assessors
National Referees
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Player-Coaches

Date: November 11, 2008

Nothing in the Laws of the Game prevents a player from coaching or a coach from playing. Indeed, this combination of roles is not uncommon in teams below the national professional competitive level (both in this country and elsewhere) and particularly in senior amateur play. For purposes of these guidelines, the term “coach” will include any team official (coach, assistant coach or trainer, for example). The term “player” includes being a substitute or substituted player.

The most important requirement for this arrangement is that all members of the officiating team must be aware of it. Merely mentioning it to the referee is not sufficient. As a player, the name of the player-coach must be shown on the team roster in the section used to list players. As a coach, the name of the player-coach must also be shown on the team roster in the section used to list team officials. If the roster has no separate section for team officials, the name of the player-coach must include a separate written designation as “coach” (or “assistant coach” or “trainer”) next to the player’s name. Players not clearly designated as a team official may not act at any time as a team official.

The following guidelines apply to the referee’s authority as regards a designated player-coach:

- When off the field and intending to act as a team official, a player-coach must change out of or wear something which covers the team jersey. Continuing to wear and have visible other parts of the player uniform (e.g., socks, cleated shoes, shorts) is permissible. A player-coach may not act as a team official while visibly wearing a team jersey.
- At all times, whether playing, off the field as a substitute or substituted player, or acting as a team official, the player-coach is under the authority of the referee and may be cautioned or sent off (and the appropriate color card displayed) for misconduct in accordance with the Laws of the Game. As a practical example of this, a caution given to a player-coach while acting as a player which is followed by a caution given to the same player-coach who is now acting as a team official must be followed by a red card for having received two cautions in the same match, as prescribed in Law 12.
- While acting as a team official, the player-coach has the additional requirement to act in a responsible manner. However, actual dismissal from the field (if warranted) must be in accordance with Law 12 – a red card must be shown and the correct reason for the send-off must be given in the match report (with all necessary supporting details).

- If a player-coach is sent off the field for any reason, whether while acting as a coach or as a player, the required automatic mandatory one game suspension applies to both roles. In other words, a player-coach who has been red carded cannot be present at the team's next match in either a player or **any** team official capacity.
- The competition authority may extend the length of the suspension based on its review of the match reports and other evidence of the misconduct and may, at its discretion, apply additional penalties to either or both of the player or team official capacities.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Player Jerseys

Date: October 21, 2008

According to Law 4 (*Laws of the Game*, 2008/2009), teams must wear jersey colors which distinguish them from each other and from the officials. Any other requirement regarding jerseys (e.g., player names and/or numbers) must either be found in the local rules of competition or, if they are silent on some issue, must be subject to the decision of the referee. If the decision falls to the referee, it must be based on such traditional concerns as safety, fairness, and enjoyment.

In a recent professional match, a player's jersey became bloodied and could not be cleaned sufficiently to permit it to be worn. This falls squarely in the authority of the referee to make such a determination. Unfortunately, the player did not have another exactly matching jersey to wear in its place and the issue became one of determining which of several options would be acceptable.

Given that the player's team was playing short while the issue was being addressed, there is an obvious need for some guidelines for resolving the matter as quickly as possible:

- Every effort should be made to find a solution which permits the player to return to the field.
- The solution should not give the player or the team an unfair advantage or cause confusion for the opposing team or the officials.
- The requirements of Law 4 and any pertinent local rules of competition must be met. The referee has the final decision on any replacement jersey that otherwise meets the

requirements of the Law and the local rules of competition. Taping or masking information on an alternate jersey is a less desirable practice. If masking a name and number is used and the material becomes detached, the referee must consider this a violation of Law 4 and require the player to leave the field again until the masking is repaired.

Any of the following options should be considered to the extent that they are consistent with the above guidelines:

- A jersey of the same or substantially similar color and style may be used.
- The most desirable option is for the replacement jersey to have no other player's name or number on it. The wearing of an unnumbered jersey under these circumstances is permitted.
- A player should not wear a jersey with another person's name on it. Name information must be taped or masked.
- An alternate jersey with another person's player number may be worn only under the following circumstances:
 1. The number is taped or masked if the person is a substituted player.
 2. The number is allowed if the person is a substitute whose name will be removed from the team roster (the roster must also be adjusted to show the replacement jersey number for the player now wearing it).

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Players Wearing Non-Compulsory Equipment

Date: September 3, 2003

On August 25, 2003, FIFA issued Circular #863, regarding the legality of players wearing non-compulsory equipment.

FIFA notes that, under the "Powers and Duties" of the referee in Law 5 -- The Referee, he or she has the authority to ensure that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4, which states that a player must not wear anything that is dangerous.

Modern protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks, knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight, padded material are not considered dangerous and are therefore permitted.

FIFA also wishes to strongly endorse the statement on the use of sports spectacles made by the International F.A. Board on March 10, 2001, and subsequently in FIFA Circular #750, dated April 10, 2001. New technology has made sports spectacles much safer, both for the player himself or herself and for other players. This applies particularly to younger players.

Referees are expected to take full account of this fact and it would be considered extremely unusual for a referee to prevent a player taking part in a match because he or she was wearing modern sports spectacles. Referees are reminded of the following points which can assist in guiding their decisions on this matter:

- **Look to the applicable rules of the competition authority.**
- **Inspect the equipment.**
- **Focus on the equipment itself – not how it might be improperly used, or whether it actually protects the player.**
- **Remember that the referee is the final word on whether equipment is dangerous.**

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Positioning at Free Kick Restarts

Date: November 22, 2002

In accordance with current instructional guidance from FIFA and CONCACAF, the United States Soccer Federation adopts the following advice to referees regarding positioning for a free kick restart taken close enough to the opponent's goal that a score might result.

When a free kick restart has been awarded within scoring distance of the opponent's goal, the officiating team has three important areas of concern at the taking of the free kick:

- Fouls and misconduct committed in the "wall"
- Offside infringement
- Whether a goal is scored

It is important that these areas of concern be specifically and thoroughly discussed during the pregame meeting of the referee and assistant referees. The referee and lead assistant referee must be able to take their respective positions with a minimum of hesitation based on their pre-game discussion and their assessment of the circumstances of the free kick.

The referee must select the area of concern which has the **highest priority under the particular circumstances** of the restart based on location, observation of prior free kicks, the nature of the foul or misconduct which produced the restart, and other factors. This will normally mean that the referee takes responsibility for monitoring the behavior of players defending against the free kick and of any attackers attempting to include themselves in the "wall" (see USSF Memorandum on "Misconduct by Attackers at a Free Kick," January 26, 1999). The lead assistant referee would therefore take a position appropriate for judging if a goal is scored.

This leaves the issue of an offside infringement to be covered. Since any attacker in an offside position at the taking of a free kick would have to be somewhere between a defensive "wall" and the goal line, either the referee or the lead assistant referee could assume responsibility for this area of concern. Which official will do so must be addressed in the pre-game, along with a

mutual understanding of any signal used by the referee to indicate his decision on the matter. Among the factors to be taken into account in deciding which official will cover offside infringements arising from a free kick within scoring distance of the opponent's goal are:

- Whether one or more attackers are part of the defensive "wall" (particularly if there has been prior evidence of problems)
- How close a potentially offside position attacker is to either the "wall" or the goal line
- How likely is the scoring of a goal as a result of the free kick

Normally, if there is a possibility of both misconduct in the "wall" and an offside infringement, the referee should focus on the former and direct the lead assistant referee to take a position to judge offside. Under these circumstances, the lead assistant referee must be prepared to move quickly downfield to judge the validity of a goal.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Assessors
National Instructors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

Cc: Referee Committee
State Presidents

From: Julie Ilacqua
Managing Director of Referee Programs
(Alfred Kleinaitis is on vacation.)

Date: June 22, 2007

Subject: Quick Kick

In the accompanying video clip of the June 16, 2007 MLS game between Columbus and New England, Columbus player #6, Marcos Gonzalez, is fouled in the 13th minute of the game and chooses to take a "quick kick." New England player, #27, Wells Thompson, is only 2 yards off the ball when the quick kick is taken. Thompson raises his leg to the ball and blocks the kick. The ball goes off his foot directly to teammate, #7, Adam Cristman, who breaks to goal and scores.

Referees are advised in the most current edition of Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game, under Law 13 in Section 13.3, of the following:

"An attacking team which chooses to take a free kick with an opponent closer than the minimum distance may not thereafter claim infringement of the distance requirement, even when the ball is kicked to the infringing opponent, who thereby is able to control the ball without moving toward it. In such a case, the referee cannot caution the opponent who has not remained at the required distance from the ball."

The key phrase to remember when viewing the attached clip is, **"able to control the ball without moving toward it."**

It is the consensus of the U.S. Soccer technical staff, that in this particular clip, New England's Wells Thompson did move toward the ball by thrusting his leg forward to block the kick. The free kick should have been retaken and set up as a ceremonial free kick with the required distance from the ball attained.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

cc: State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Quick Free Kicks versus Ceremonial Restarts

Date: April 10, 2007

In a professional match last weekend (DC United at Colorado Rapids, April 7, 2007), a foul was committed by Colorado player #12 (Petke) against DC United #10 (Gomez). The referee stopped play and, although clearly holding a yellow card in his hand to display to Petke for what was obviously a reckless tackle, he nevertheless allowed play to restart without actually recording the misconduct or displaying the card.

This is contrary to consistent guidelines from FIFA and USSF, publicized as long ago as a 2002 USSF memorandum "Ceremonial Restarts After Misconduct" (November 22) and emphasized as recently as the 2006 Advice to Referees 12.26 and 13.3. Once the referee has decided to issue a card, whether to caution or send off a player from either team, the restart must be delayed to give the card. This is particularly necessary when, as in this incident, the referee has made the card visible and created an expectation that the restart will not occur until allowed by the referee.

In such a situation, the referee's first action must be to announce clearly, by voice and, if necessary, by the commonly understood action of holding the whistle up in the air and pointing to it, that play may not restart until another signal is given. If such an indication is not immediately given and play restarts quickly or if the referee signals appropriately to hold up play but the ball is kicked anyway, the referee must call the play back so that the proper procedure is followed.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Rescinding a Displayed Card for Misconduct

Date: January 6, 2003

After the completion of a top professional league match recently played in Europe, the referee decided to cancel (rescind) a caution he had given during play for an act of misconduct. Questions have been raised regarding the correctness of this decision under the Laws of the Game. The following guidance is applicable to the general issue of whether a card for misconduct of any sort can be canceled.

- A displayed red or yellow card can be canceled by the referee if play has not restarted.
- If play has been restarted or if the match is over (including required periods of additional play and/or kicks from the penalty mark), a displayed red or yellow card **cannot** be canceled by the referee for any reason.
- If the referee believes a card has been issued in error, regardless of the reason, the card must still be included in the match report and the referee must provide all details relevant to the mistake. In such cases, the determination of the validity of the card is left to the competition authority.
- The failure of the referee to include accurately and fully all cards displayed during play is a serious violation of the referee's responsibilities.

Referees should note Question #9 under Law 12 in FIFA's *Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game* where it is specifically noted that the referee may not decide to rescind a caution if the player who has already been charged with misconduct apologizes.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Rescinding a Card

Date: June 26, 2008

A EURO 2008 quarterfinal match between Russia and The Netherlands (June 21, 2008) was the occasion for a referee action which many misunderstood. In the 91st minute (added time), the referee apparently whistled play stopped for a challenge by Russian player #8 (Kolodin) against Netherlands player #10 (Sneijder). Kolodin was cautioned and then, because he had been cautioned already earlier in the match, Kolodin was shown a red card .

Before the restart for the apparent foul, however, and following an exchange of information between the referee and the lead assistant referee, the second caution and the accompanying red card were rescinded and play was restarted with a goal kick. The issue was widely debated as to whether the referee could take this action in view of the fact that both cards had been displayed.

The referee's actions were within the Law. Based on information provided by the assistant referee whose position provided a better angle of view, the referee accepted two facts:

- The challenge by Kolodin to which the referee reacted occurred after the ball had left the field of play.
- The tackle by Kolodin actually occurred several feet away from the Netherlands attacker, who then tumbled over the defender's body.

From this information, the referee therefore correctly concluded that:

- the challenge (regardless of its nature) occurred when the ball was out of play and therefore the restart had to be a goal kick, and
- the challenge itself was either entirely fair or at least did not rise to the level of misconduct so the yellow card was not justified (with the consequence that the red card also was not justified).

Prior to play restarting following the display of a card, the referee can revise his decision about what he observed on the field, re-evaluate the significance of the player action, or receive additional relevant information from another official (either or both assistant referees or the fourth official). As a result of this further reflection or assistance from other members of the officiating team, the referee can:

- rescind the card entirely,
- decide that the card should be given to a different player,

- display a card to additional players,
- or display a different color card in place of the one originally shown.

As a practical matter, it must be emphasized that the occasion for such an action should be infrequent, that the need to rescind a card is reduced by having as much information as possible before displaying a card, and that referees should not be seen as acting in response to player appeals. If play has been properly restarted, any cards shown must be reported.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Restarts after Striking, Throwing or Spitting

Date: 2001

Restarts for stoppages of play due to fouls and/or misconduct are normally placed where the foul or misconduct occurred. Penalty kick restarts and restarts inside the goal area are common exceptions to this principle. Determining where the foul/misconduct occurred is relatively easy when direct player-to-player contact (e. g., tripping, pushing, charging) or player-to-ball contact (deliberate handling) is involved. It is the point of contact which determines the location of the infringement and therefore the correct restart. The location of the rest of the infringing player is irrelevant.

Problems can arise, however, when the foul/misconduct does not involve direct contact. Law 12, for example, includes as penal fouls attempting to trip, kick, or strike. Spitting is also a penal foul which does not require direct contact at all (both attempts and successful acts are punished). Finally, striking can include the use of thrown objects which, like spitting, may or may not be successful in actually making contact with the victim.

The International Football Association Board (IFAB) has recently provided a new interpretation of where a foul has occurred when there has been no direct contact or when the contact has occurred off the field of play. Prior to now, for example, striking using a thrown object was punished where the action originated (see *USSF Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game* 12.6, which will be updated in 2001). The IFAB now instructs that all such infringements are to be punished where the contact occurs or would have occurred if the action had been successful, provided this location is on the field of play. The July 2000 version of FIFA's *Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game* incorporates this new interpretation and referees in the United States should begin to implement this guidance immediately.

The following six cases illustrate the International Board's interpretation on restarts for striking, whether done with the hand or with an object. When reading these cases, please remember that:

- a. "objects" can be the ball, shoes, stones, dirt clods, etc.;
- b. in all the cases covered in this memorandum, spitting should be treated as striking, except that the referee's match report must say that the player was sent off for spitting at an opponent, not violent conduct;
- c. if the ball was not in play when the striking took place, when the ball or an object was thrown, or when a participant spat at an opponent or any other person, the restart can be only for the reason that the ball was out of play.

The misconduct will be punished as indicated.

Case 1 (Q&A 12.18): Striking an opponent or throwing a ball or object from within the player's own penalty area (or spitting at an opponent)

- 1a. The goalkeeper, standing within his own penalty area, strikes or throws the ball or an object violently at an opponent standing outside the penalty area. The goalkeeper must be sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card. Whether the blow or the ball/object strikes the opponent or not, the restart is a direct free kick from the place where the opponent was when the blow, ball or object was thrown at him. (If the opponent was within the penalty area at the moment the goalkeeper threw the ball or object, the restart is a penalty kick.)
- 1b. The punishment and restart are the same as above if another player strikes or throws an object from within his own penalty area at an opponent standing outside the penalty area. (If the opponent was within the penalty area at the moment the player threw the ball or object, the restart is a penalty kick.)
- 1c. A player other than the goalkeeper throws the ball from within his own penalty area at an opponent standing outside the penalty area. The player is sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card, but the restart is a penalty kick, because the player deliberately handled the ball within his own penalty area before throwing it at the opponent.

Case 2 (Q&A 12.18): Striking an opponent or throwing an object into the penalty area

- 2a. While the ball is in play, a player throws an object (shoe, dirt clod, etc.) at the opposing goalkeeper who is standing inside his own penalty area. Whether the object hit the goalkeeper or not, the restart is a direct free kick where the goalkeeper was standing (not from where the throw was initiated).
- 2b. While the ball is in play, a fullback standing outside his own penalty area throws an object at an opponent who is inside the fullback's penalty area. The restart is a penalty kick.
- 2c. While the ball is in play, a player outside his penalty area picks up the ball and throws it at an opponent. Regardless of where the opponent is standing, the restart is a direct free for the deliberate handling. In all three situations under Case 2, the thrower is sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card.

Case 3 (Q&A 12.19): Player on field strikes or throws the ball or an object at an opponent or other person off the field of play

- 3a. With the ball in play, a player on the field strikes or throws an object at an opponent or other person off the field of play. The restart is an indirect free kick for the opponent's team from the place where the striking was initiated because play was stopped for the violent conduct (misconduct).
- 3b. A player on the field picks up the ball and throws it at an opponent or other person off the field of play. The restart is a direct free kick from the place where the ball was deliberately handled. In both cases, the thrower is sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card.

Case 4 (Q&A 12.20): A player or substitute off the field strikes or throws an object at an opponent on the field while the ball is in play. The player or substitute must be ordered off for violent conduct and shown the red card. The restart is a dropped ball at the place where the ball was when the blow or object was thrown. (The misconduct was not committed by a player on the field and so stopping for this misconduct requires a dropped ball).

Case 5 (Q&A 3.13): A substitute of Team A enters the field of play without permission and is struck by an opponent (Team B) while the ball is in play. The opponent (Team B) is sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card. The substitute (Team A) is cautioned for illegally entering the field. The game is restarted with an indirect free kick for Team A from the place where the contact occurred. No foul was committed in this case and so the stoppage was for misconduct committed by a player on the field.

In this situation, if the referee had already decided to stop play for the illegal entry before the opponent struck the substitute, the restart would be a dropped ball at the place where the ball was when the referee decided to stop play.

Case 6 (Q&A 15.3): Throwing the ball at an opponent at a throw-in

- 6a. If a legal throw-in was not thrown carelessly, recklessly or with excessive force and had no effect on the player who was struck, there is no infringement of the Law.
- 6b. If a legal throw-in was thrown at an opponent carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force, the referee should call the foul and/or the misconduct. If there was misconduct, the thrower should either be cautioned for unsporting behavior and shown the yellow card (if the action was reckless) or sent off for violent conduct and shown the red card (if the action involved excessive force). In both cases, the restart would be a direct free kick from the place where contact (would have) occurred.
- 6c. In the case of an illegal throw-in, one not taken in accordance with the requirements of Law 15, the thrower may still be punished as in 6b. The restart would be a throw-in by the opposing team because the throw-in was not taken in accordance with Law 15 and therefore the misconduct occurred during a stoppage of play.

NOTE: For all direct and indirect free kick or dropped ball restarts noted in this memorandum the referee must remember the special circumstances of Law 8 (restarts within the goal area).

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Revised Procedures and Signals

Date: May 14, 2008

Senior referees, instructors, and assessors are continuously consulted regarding the effectiveness of the standard mechanics, procedures, and signals which are expected to be used by officials in this country. These officials are on the front line in developing methods for handling new situations. Such methods are tried, revised, discussed, and gradually fine-tuned before they are ready to be declared a "standard" procedure for use by all referees.

As a result of this process, two relatively minor changes are being introduced in 2008 in accepted mechanics, effective as of this memorandum. They will be incorporated into the 2008 version of the **Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials**, soon to be available from USSF. These revisions should be incorporated into your referee training programs as soon as possible.

First, when the referee has signaled a foul and makes obvious eye contact with the assistant referee for advice on whether the offense occurred inside the penalty area, the assistant referee's signal to indicate that the offense was inside the penalty area has been modified (the signal that the offense was outside the penalty area is unchanged). Instead of the flag being held straight down in front of the body, the assistant referee should display the flag across the lower body as shown in the figure below.

Second, the responsibilities of the lead assistant referee for the taking of a penalty kick (as well as for kicks from the penalty mark to break a tie) will now clearly include assisting the referee in determining if a goal has been scored and for indicating if the goalkeeper has moved illegally and, as a result, a goal was not scored. The signal to indicate this is the same as the signal described in the previous paragraph and is shown in the figure below. Referees must be sure to discuss these changes regarding penalty kick and kicks from the mark situations in their pregame and to be very clear about the circumstances in which the signal for goalkeeper movement should be given.



New Assistant Referee Signal for:
Offense whistled by referee occurred inside penalty area
Illegal goalkeeper movement in penalty kick and kicks from the mark situations

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Send-Offs for Receiving a Second Caution

Date: October 12, 2004

Recent incidents in several professional matches suggest that referees are hesitating to caution a player who has already been cautioned in the match as this would then require that the player be sent off and shown the red card. Referees must remember, however, that the purpose of this action is to remove from the field a player who has previously been officially notified through the first caution that the player's behavior is unacceptable and that, upon repetition, the player will not be permitted to take any further part in the game.

The "second caution send-off" does not distinguish among the various reasons for either the original caution or the second one. In other words, there is no requirement that the misconduct must be more "serious" or of the same type as that which caused the first caution.

Although no caution should be given lightly, a second caution carries the same result as the most serious conduct for which a player would earn a red card. Accordingly, referees should take care that the pattern of misconduct represented by the two cautions reflects behavior that truly is worthy of the player being sent from the field. In cases where the player's conduct on its own would warrant a caution regardless of the player's prior behavior, the referee must consider whether, **in addition and looking at the total pattern of behavior within the spirit and feel for the game**, the second instance of misconduct rises to the level of a send-off.

Where it does, the referee must not hesitate to take the necessary action. Where it does not, the referee should consider other means of encouraging proper behavior by the player, including increasingly assertive demonstrations of dissatisfaction with the player's conduct or increasingly severe verbal admonishments. In any event, full details of all misconduct, whether resulting in a card or not, must be included in the match report.

MEMORANDUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Sequential Infringements of the Law

Date: November 22, 2002

Recent matches in the professional division have highlighted a basic principle of the Laws of the Game -- that a foul cannot be committed when the ball is not in play. Reduced to its most simple elements, this principle assists the referee in deciding what action to take if an infringement of the Law occurs after play is stopped. Because such action cannot be a foul, the referee must deal with it as misconduct and remember that the restart has already been determined based on what stopped play in the first place.

This concept, however, depends on understanding when and under what circumstances the ball is not in play and the role of the assistant referee.

- Law 9 states that the ball is out of play when it leaves the field, across the touch line or goal line, or when the referee stops play
- *USSF Advice to Referees* (9.1) explains that the referee has stopped play at the moment the decision is made, not when it is announced by some signal (e.g., a whistle)

Accordingly, the decision to stop play marks the beginning of the stoppage and the time between the decision to stop play and the announcement of this decision is included in the period of stoppage. Any infringement during this period is therefore misconduct and plays no part in determining the correct restart.

Particularly with infringements of Law 11 (Offside), however, it is the assistant referee who is most likely to have given the initial signal that a violation may have occurred. Under the Laws of the Game, this information is subject to the decision of the referee. If the referee accepts the information, then the offside has been called and is considered to have occurred when the assistant referee gave the original signal. Anything happening after the assistant referee's signal must be dealt with as misconduct.

This is exemplified by a situation in which the original flag signal for offside by the assistant referee is not initially seen but a subsequent apparent foul is whistled by the referee. If the referee becomes aware of the assistant referee signal prior to restarting play and if the original signal is confirmed by the referee, the subsequent apparent foul must be handled as misconduct

rather than as a foul and the restart would be an indirect free kick for the defense (for the offside violation) no matter what action the referee has taken regarding the misconduct (caution or sending off).

Of course, these matters need to be included in the pregame briefing of the officials. Further, keeping the assistant referees in better view during play will reduce the likelihood of embarrassingly extended delays in becoming aware of their signals.

MEMORADUM

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and National Referee Instructor Trainers

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Shinguards

Date: March 20, 2001

Law 4 requires all players to wear shinguards which

- are covered entirely by the stockings,
- are made of a suitable material, and
- provide a reasonable degree of protection.

These rather simple and direct statements seldom need further interpretation. Being "covered entirely by the stockings" means that the shinguards must be worn under the socks. Having the shinguards worn on top of the socks, even if the tops are rolled down over the shinguards, does not meet this requirement.

The "suitable material" is not specified but is presumed to be material which performs the cushioning and impact spreading function of shinguards. A "reasonable degree of protection" means that the material is suitable for the purpose and that the size of the shinguard is appropriate for the age and size of the player.

Additionally, of course, as an article of player equipment, the shinguards must meet the general requirement of Law 4 that they not be dangerous to the wearer or to any other player.

In most cases, these requirements are adequately met by commercially manufactured shinguards and referees rarely need to perform any closer inspection. In any event, determining the legality of any article of player equipment under Law 4 is solely within the referee's judgment in accordance with these guidelines.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: The Status of Players Who Are Sent Off

Date: July 6, 2006

In a recent World Cup match, several players who had been sent off were seen to be still within the stadium walls and arguably within the area of the field. This has raised questions as to the practical result of being “sent from the field.”

The Laws of the Game provide that players, substitutes and substituted players who are sent off for misconduct are required to leave the field. There is no further indication of what this means, what someone who has been sent off may or may not do thereafter, or what authority the referee has regarding this person. Except as may be otherwise noted, the term “player” hereafter is intended to include substitutes and substituted players.

Referees must keep in mind the following four basic principles:

- The purpose of “sending off” a player is to ensure that this person no longer takes any further part in the match (sometimes referred to as being “out of sight, out of sound”).
 - “Leaving the field” is generally interpreted as meaning “the area of the field” and is therefore not limited to its formal boundaries (touch lines and goal lines). Accordingly, technical areas and team benches are to be considered within the area of the field.
- With the exception of youth players where continued adult supervision might be needed, players sent off are expected to have no further contact or involvement with their team.
- The *rules of competition* may define, for any given facility or match location, where players who are sent off are required to go. To the extent such rules are not inconsistent with these principles, they should be followed.

Based on the above principles, referees should note the following guidelines for specific situations that may arise:

- In the absence of more restrictive *rules of competition*, the referee has the authority to define “the area of the field” and to require players who have been sent off to exit this area. The referee is encouraged to use existing features which clearly demarcate the area of the field (e.g., fences, walls, ropes).
- A player who has left the area of the field but who remains in or returns to the facility (e.g., sits in the stands or spectator area) should not continue to wear the team’s uniform.

- The referee, with the assistance of the fourth official and the assistant referees, is encouraged to enlist the aid of competition authority officials, facility managers, and on-site security staff to enforce these requirements.
- A youth player who is being allowed to remain with the team or any player who is out of the area of the field but still within the general facility cannot continue to commit misconduct since the most serious penalty allowed by the Law (send off) has already occurred.
- Further inappropriate conduct by a player under these circumstances may, depending on the severity of the behavior, result in the referee suspending or terminating the match. Under all circumstances, full details must be included in the match report.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Throw-In to Keeper by Teammate

Date: January 1, 2000

As of the 1997-98 Laws of the Game, Law 12 prevents the goalkeeper from handling the ball directly from a throw-in by a teammate. An indirect free kick must be given from the place where the handling occurred (subject to the usual special circumstances within the goal area). As with the restriction on handling if the ball is received from a teammate's kick, questions have arisen regarding the proper action to take under several scenarios.

- A thrown ball is apparently going toward goal and the keeper reaches out to parry or punch the ball away. A violation of Law 12 has clearly occurred but, since a goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in, there is no misconduct. Only the technical foul is punished with an indirect free kick.
- Starting with the same scenario as above, suppose the handling by the goalkeeper is unsuccessful and the ball continues directly into the goal. First, a violation of Law 12 has occurred but, as with any other violation of Law 12, the referee would apply advantage and allow play to continue. Second, the goal would count since it was not scored directly from the throw-in.
- Suppose another teammate (not the goalkeeper) reaches up and touches the ball. If the handling is successful, the player has violated Law 12 (penal foul) and a penalty kick restart must be awarded if the handling occurred within the penalty area (otherwise, a direct free kick). This foul has not prevented a goal (a sending-off misconduct) since a goal could not be scored directly from the throw-in. Likewise, if the handling had been unsuccessful and the ball went into the net, the goal would be counted as the referee would apply advantage to the offense (a caution might be considered for unsporting behavior, bringing the game into disrepute).

Referees must carefully study these situations and their expected outcomes so that decisions are rendered quickly, authoritatively, and accurately in the fast paced environment of a match.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Use of the Elbow

Date: January 15, 2007

The International Football Association Board (IFAB) has urged referees to be more aware of and to deal properly with the use of the elbow during challenges. Increasingly, the Board has noted, elbows are being used to gain an unfair advantage and, often, to injure opponents.

USSF shares this concern and notes a growing number of such incidents in professional matches:

- Clip 1 (KC Wizards - Columbus Crew, 7/23/2005), #3 Garcia cynically and with excessive force targets #29 Cameron's head. A red card was clearly warranted.
- Clip 2 (NY MetroStars – Columbus Crew, 5/31/2003), Wolyniec retaliates against #5 McCarty for an earlier foul and uses excessive force to the opponent's head. Another definite red card.
- Clip 3 (FC Dallas – NE Revolution, 7/16/2005), #22 Leonard is closely behind #9 Mina and Mina uses his elbow or upper arm to strike backwards. The action was reckless but not performed with excessive force (the arm was moving naturally as both players were at a full run). A caution was warranted.
- Clip 4 (Chicago Fire – LA Galaxy, 8/13/2005), #29 Thiago is closely marked (considerable contact and some holding) by #8 Vagenas and Thiago, in recklessly swinging his arm backward to ward off further contact, strikes Vagenas in the face. A caution was appropriate.
- Clip 5 (NY Metrostars – CD Chivas USA, 8/20/2005), #11 Ibrahim jumps up to challenge and, while doing so, rakes a straight arm along the face of #7 Ramirez. While arguably a foul, it does not appear to have involved misconduct (contact with the elbow was incidental to contact with the entire arm).
- Clip 6 (NE Revolution – Colorado Rapids, 8/17/2005), #2 Dempsey is jumping up to challenge, leads with an arm extended and bent, and connects with #3 Kotschau. The decision as to whether such foul is seen as reckless or committed with excessive force depends, of course, on the referee's angle and information he may receive from his assistants and fourth official. In all cases the safety of players must be a primary concern and the inherent danger of blows to the head recognized.

Taking these and other clips together, certain generalizations are possible regarding criteria on which officials should focus when evaluating situations involving the use of an elbow (the guidelines below assume that the action occurs during play, on the field, and against an opponent):

When an elbow is used, the potential offense is **striking** and therefore the action must be assessed in the context of Law 12 (careless, reckless, or excessive force).

- Any form of striking, including the use of an elbow, also carries the high likelihood of being misconduct – if the action is reckless, the player must be cautioned for unsporting behavior but, if excessive force is used, the player must be sent off and shown a red card for violent conduct or, if competing for the ball, serious foul play.
- Given the impact and likelihood of injury, a player who appears to be targeting the head (based, for example, on the direction of the player's view) must be dealt with firmly and promptly.
- Jumping toward an opponent with the arm bent and held above shoulder level must be considered particularly serious since the force is increased by the weight and momentum of the body. If contact is made with the elbow or forearm, the foul must be called and the offending player's misconduct dealt with accordingly. In such cases, the referee should **not** consider applying advantage except under the most unusual circumstances.
- Although it is possible for a player to contact an opponent with an elbow or forearm entirely accidentally, this is rare and referees must be prepared to suspect that a foul has occurred unless concretely convinced otherwise. Instances where the offending player is looking at the opponent or where the opportunity to avoid contact was ignored should draw the referee's attention and concern. The natural movement and placement of an arm while running should be taken into account in deciding if contact is reckless or merely careless.
- The angle of view is critical and referees must expend an extra effort to achieve a position to see the event clearly when their reading of the play and the players suggests that elbow or forearm contact is possible. Where a poor angle is suspected, the referee must quickly determine if an assistant referee can provide relevant information before making the decision.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, State Referee Committee
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: USSF and AYSO

Date: June 2002

USFF referees are not to officiate AYSO games or tournaments and that AYSO referees are not to officiate USSF games. AYSO referees need to cross register if interested in doing USSF games.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: When Fouls Continue!

Date: April 30, 2007

Prompted by several recent situations in professional league play, a discussion has developed regarding the proper action to take when a foul continues over a distance on the field. Many fouls occur with the participants in motion, both the player committing the foul and the opponent being fouled, and it is not unusual for the offense to end far away from where the initial contact occurred.

Usually, the only problem this creates for the referee is the need to decide the proper location for the restart. Occasionally, however, an additional issue is created when the distance covered results in an entirely different area of the field becoming involved. A foul which starts outside the penalty area, for example, might continue into and finally end inside the offending player's penalty area. Or a foul might start inside the field but, due to momentum, end off the field. In these cases, the decision about where the foul occurred also affects what the correct restart must be.

In general, the referee should determine the location of the foul based on what gives the greater benefit to the player who was fouled. FIFA has specifically endorsed this principle in one of its "Questions and Answers on the Laws of the Game" (12.31) which states that a penalty kick is the correct restart if a player begins holding an opponent outside the player's penalty area and continues this action inside his penalty area.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

cc: State Directors of Coaching
Referee Committee

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Violations of Law 14 (The Penalty Kick)

Date: August 1, 2007

A series of incidents over the last three years, most recently on July 27 in a match during the National Championship Series U.S. Youth Soccer (Frisco, TX), indicate that some referees remain confused about the correct way to handle violations of Law 14 (The Penalty Kick). Players are restricted in where they can be and what they can do during the taking of a penalty kick. If there are violations of these restrictions, the referee must decide what to do.

Law 14 was modified in 2005 -- an indirect free kick is now the required restart when the kicker or a teammate of the kicker infringes Law 14 and the ball does not go into the net. In 2006, the location of the indirect free kick was confirmed to be where the offense occurred.

Consequences of an Infringement of Law 14

<i>Who infringed Law 14?</i>	<i>What was the outcome of the kick?</i>	
	<i>Ball goes into goal</i>	<i>Ball does not go into goal</i>
<i>Attacker (including the kicker)</i>	RETAKE PENALTY KICK	INDIRECT FREE KICK*
<i>Defender (including the goalkeeper)</i>	GOAL (KICK-OFF)	RETAKE PENALTY KICK
<i>Both attacker and defender</i>	RETAKE PENALTY KICK	RETAKE PENALTY KICK

*From where the infringement occurred

The following points must be kept in mind when applying the above decisions:

- “Ball does **not** go into goal” includes any result of the penalty kick other than the ball being kicked into the net (e. g. that is the ball deflected over the goal-line by the keeper or ball kicked over the cross bar).
- The violations at issue include: the goalkeeper moving off the goal line; the kicker engaging in unfair tactics while taking the kick; and any player other than the goalkeeper and the kicker entering the penalty area, entering the penalty arc, or moving closer (i. e. failing to remain at least 12 yds. from the goal-line.).
- It is not required for the same player to retake the PK the referee has ordered to be retaken.

The exceptions to the above chart of decisions are:

- If an attacker other than the identified kicker takes the penalty kick, play is restarted with an indirect free kick for the opposing team where the attacker illegally entered the penalty arc or penalty area regardless of the outcome of the kick that may have been performed by this attacker.
- If the kicker plays the ball backward (any direction other than forward), play is restarted with an indirect free kick for the opposing team at the penalty mark, regardless of any further play that may result from the kicker’s actions.

Referees must take care to identify who violated Law 14 and the outcome of the kick. The chart above summarizes the correct restart based on these two factors. Given the importance of PK situations, the referee must take particular care to get these decisions right.

MEMORANDUM

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: 7 + 7 Cautioning and Sending-OFF Offenses

Date: 2008

7

CAUTIONABLE OFFENSES

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card for committing any of the following seven offenses (actions of special concern to FIFA are displayed in bold print):

1. Is guilty of unsporting behavior (**UB**)

(The following actions are examples only and are not a complete list.)

- a. Commits a direct free kick foul in a reckless manner (for example, charging, pushing, tripping)
- b. Commits a direct free kick foul in a reckless manner while tackling for the ball from any direction
- c. **Commits a tactical foul designed to interfere with or impede an opposing team's attacking play (e.g., pushing an opponent, blatantly holding an opponent or an opponent's uniform, handling the ball deliberately)**
- d. Handles the ball deliberately to score a goal
- e. Commits an act which, in the opinion of the referee, shows a lack of respect for the game (e.g., aggressive attitude, inflammatory behavior, or taunting)
- f. **Fakes an injury or exaggerates the seriousness of an injury**
- g. **Fakes a foul (dives) or exaggerates the severity of a foul**
- h. Interferes with or prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands into play
- i. Verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart
- j. **Unfairly distracts or impedes an opponent performing a throw-in**
- k. Changes jerseys with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission (both players must be cautioned)
- l. Engages in trickery to circumvent the goalkeeper's limitation on handling the ball played from a teammate's foot (the defender who initiates the "trickery" is cautioned, the decision does not require that the goalkeeper actually handles the ball, and the misconduct can occur during dynamic play or at a restart)
- m. Makes unauthorized marks on the field
- n. **Removes the jersey or covers the face with a mask or similar device after scoring a goal**
- o. Uses an artificial aid to unfairly assist play (for example, leaning on the shoulders of a teammate, using an article of clothing to avoid direct contact with the ball, moving or removing a corner flag on a corner kick, hanging on a crossbar)

- p. Uses tobacco or tobacco products in any form in the area of the field
2. Shows dissent by word or action (**DT**)
 - a. Verbally or through action disputes or shows contempt for an official's decision
 - b. If playing as a goalkeeper, leaves the penalty area (not beckoned by the referee) to engage an official in debate regarding a decision
 3. Persistently infringes the Laws of the Game (**PI**)
 - a. Repeatedly fouls or participates in a pattern of fouls directed at an opponent
 - b. Violates Law 14 again, having previously been warned
 - c. If playing as goalkeeper, wastes time, having previously been warned or penalized for this behavior
 4. Delays the restart of play (**DR**)
 - a. Kicks or throws the ball away or holds the ball to prevent a free kick restart by an opponent
 - b. Kicks or throws the ball away or holds the ball to prevent a throw-in or corner kick by an opponent
 - c. Fails to restart play after being instructed to do so by the referee or hinders the restart of play
 - d. Excessively celebrates a goal
 - e. Fails to return to the field upon conclusion of the midgame break, fails to perform a kick-off when signaled to do so by the referee, or fails to be in a correct position for a kick-off
 - f. **Provokes a confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has stopped play**
 5. Fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in (**FRD**)
 - a. Does not retire at least ten yards away from an opponent's free kick
 - b. Does not retire at least ten yards away from an opponent's corner kick
 - c. Does not retire at least two yards away from an opponent's throw-in
 6. Enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission (**E**)
 - a. After having previously been instructed to leave the field to correct equipment
 - b. After having previously been given permission by the referee to leave the field due to an injury
 - c. After having previously been instructed to leave the field due to bleeding or blood on the uniform
 7. Deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission (**L**)
 - a. To place an opponent in an apparent offside position
 - b. Other than through the normal course of play

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following three offenses:

1. **is guilty of unsporting behavior**
2. **shows dissent by word or action**
3. **delays the restart of play**

If a substitute who enters the field of play without the permission of the referee is to be cautioned, the official reason given must be “unsporting behavior” – this applies as well to previously substituted players except where the rules of competition allow unlimited re-entry with the permission of the referee.

SENDING-OFF OFFENSES

A player, substitute or substituted player is sent off and shown the red card for committing any of the following seven offenses:

1. is guilty of serious foul play (**SFP**)
2. is guilty of violent conduct (**VC**)
3. spits at an opponent or any other person (**S**)
4. denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to the goalkeeper within his or her own penalty area) (**DGH**)
5. denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player’s goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick (**DGF**)
6. uses offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures (**AL**)
7. receives a second caution in the same match (**2CT**)

A substitute or substituted player who commits any violent act should be sent off and shown the red card for Violent Conduct.