

USSF Position Papers and Memoranda





2007

Instructions for Referees and Resolutions Affecting Team Coaches and Players

Regional and National Cup Competitions and Tournaments

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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 an 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 a 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 player is covering 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 goalscoring 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 to 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.



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

cc: State Presidents
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.



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

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Re: Dealing with Severe 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.



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 goalscoring opportunity situations. Two situations are described: 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 descriptions 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 goalscoring 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 goalscoring 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 goalscoring 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.

In the Chivas-Revolution situation, Twellman (Revolution #20) was fouled by Llamosa (Chivas #11) at the 39th minute. The referee applied advantage (though this is not evident from his actions). Several seconds later, the referee judged that the advantage had been lost (the foul slowed Twellman sufficiently that an opponent was able to catch up to and challenge him). The referee stopped play for the original foul and, prior to the restart, cautioned Llamosa. If the original foul had been considered an interference with an obvious goalscoring opportunity (all elements for this misconduct – the “4 Ds” – were present), the correct referee action would have been to send off Llamosa for “denied goal by foul” (DGF).

In the Arsenal-Barcelona situation, the referee stopped play after the Arsenal goalkeeper, Lehmann, fouled Barcelona's Eto'o at the 18th minute at the top of the Arsenal penalty area. Just after the whistle was blown, Barcelona teammate Giuly came streaking in from the right and struck the ball into the net. The goal was canceled and Lehmann was sent off. If the referee had allowed the advantage to develop, the offended team would have scored and, prior to the kick-off, Lehmann should have been cautioned. The goal, regrettably, was not valid because the referee decided the advantage had not continued and stopped play before the ball was struck into the net. Under these circumstances, the referee had no choice but to return to the original decision that a goal-scoring opportunity had been denied – Lehmann was sent off and shown the red card.



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.



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: **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 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.



To: National Referees
National Instructors
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From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Contact with Game Officials

Date: August 10, 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).



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 21, 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.



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.



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 pre-game 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.



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.



To: National Referees
National Instructors
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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.