



MEMORANDUM

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Julie Ilacqua
Managing Director of Federation Services

Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION, INC.

The 117th Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board took place in Belfast, Northern Ireland on 15th March 2003. The amendments to the Laws of the Game made at the meeting and the various instructions and directives are listed below.

AMENDMENTS TO THE LAWS OF THE GAME AND DECISIONS OF THE BOARD

LAW 4 – THE PLAYERS’ EQUIPMENT

Decisions of the International F.A. Board

Decision 1

- Players must not reveal undershirts which contain slogans or advertising. A player removing his jersey to reveal slogans or advertising will be sanctioned by the competition organizer.
- Jerseys must have sleeves.

The Board agreed to remove the bullet point which permitted advertising only on players’ jerseys.

USSF Advice to Referees: Referees are reminded that the issue of player jersey sleeves continues to be guided by the memorandum issued in 2002. No individual player or team should be kept from playing in a game because their jersey does not have sleeves. No action, beyond including relevant information in the match report, is to be taken by any referee in connection with player jersey sleeves unless a safety concern is involved or a local competition authority rule is to be enforced.

The Fourth Official

New text

Bullet point 1

The fourth official may be appointed under the competition rules and officiates if any of the three match officials is unable to continue. He assists the referee at all times.

Bullet point 7

He must indicate to the referee when the wrong player is cautioned because of mistaken identity or when a player is not sent off having been seen to be given a second caution or when violent conduct occurs out of the view of the referee and assistant referees. The referee, however, remains the authority to decide on all points connected with play.

Reason:

By stating in bullet point 7 that “the fourth official assists the referee at all times,” there is an inference that this could be in respect of matters of misconduct, the topic of the remainder of the paragraph. It is not expected or desired that the fourth official should be extending his role to include reporting cautionable offences and therefore for reasons of clarity and interpretation it is more appropriate to have the phrase in bullet point 1.

USSF Advice to Referees: This change is intended only to clarify that the assistance of the fourth official in all matters is subject to the decision of the referee.

Procedures to determine the winner of a match – Kicks from the Penalty Mark

New text

The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick.

Reason:

To give the team which wins the toss a fair chance and not to insist that they take the first kick, which can be perceived as an advantage to the team which loses the toss.

USSF Advice to Referees: In addition to the reason noted by the International F.A. Board, the change makes the decision at the coin toss for Kicks from the Penalty Mark more like the choice made by the team winning the toss prior to the start of play.

Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials

New Text

The Penalty Kick

It is an infringement to enter the penalty area before the kick has been taken. The goalkeeper also infringes the Laws if he moves from his goal-line before the ball has been kicked. Referees must ensure that when players infringe this Law appropriate action is taken.

Reason:

Law 14 was amended in 1997, taking away the necessity for referees to caution when player(s) entered the penalty area prior to the penalty kick being taken. The amendment also allowed the goalkeeper to move along his goal line. Nowadays, infringements often occur at a penalty kick, yet the referee seldom takes action.

USSF Advice to Referees: The reference to “enter the penalty area before the kick has been taken” includes players moving closer than ten yards to the ball (i.e., entering the penalty arc) and moving closer to the goal line than the ball (i.e., moving closer to the goal line than twelve yards). Referees must also ensure that the goalkeeper does not move off the goal line before the ball is in play. However, although the International Board emphasized the need for referees to take appropriate actions when players violate the requirements of Law 14, referees must continue to differentiate between those violations which clearly had an impact on subsequent play and those trifling violations which clearly had no impact.

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTIONS AND DIRECTIVES

Rules of the International Football Association Board

The Board shall meet bi-annually. The Annual General Meeting shall take place in the month of February or March, as agreed. The Annual Business Meeting shall take place in the month of September or October, as agreed.

TEMPORARY EXPULSIONS

The Board re-affirmed the decision taken at its last meeting that the temporary expulsion of players is not permitted at any level of football.

USSF Advice to Referees: This instruction was first discussed in Memorandum 2002 and emphasizes again the International Football Association Board's directive that "temporary expulsions" are not to be used at any level of competition. "Temporary expulsion" in this context refers to a rule purporting to require that a player leave the field temporarily under certain conditions (e.g., having received a caution – a so-called "cooling off" period) and does not include situations in which a player must correct illegal equipment or bleeding.

ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

The Board recognized the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas with climatic problems. It also recognized that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available.

The amendments to the Laws of the Game take effect as from 1st July 2003 and instructions and directives are introduced with immediate effect.