



Memorandum

To: Managers, Professional Leagues
National Referee Instructors and Trainers
National Assessors
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: FIFA Circular 917
Interpretation of "*Other Matches*" in Law 3

Date: July 20, 2004

The International Football Association Board (IFAB) issued Circular 917 (July 16, 2004) to clarify an amendment announced earlier this year to Law 3 (The Number of Players). The amendment was as follows: "In other matches up to six substitutes may be used."

A question has arisen regarding the meaning of the term "other matches" and the unanimous decision of FIFA and the four British members of IFAB was that it referred to friendly matches played by national teams. The amendment does not therefore affect pre-season friendly matches played by clubs.

Accordingly, up to three substitutes may be used in "official competitions" organized by FIFA, the confederations, or the national associations. Up to six substitutes may be used in international friendly competitions played between national teams (e.g., United States versus Poland). However, when pre-season friendly matches are played by clubs, the number of substitutes used will be determined by the competition authority (or by agreement between the teams themselves) and may be any number. As usual, referees must be aware in advance of the commencement of the match what number of substitutes is permitted.

This topic will be discussed again at the meeting of the IFAB Annual Business Meeting in September 2004.