



To: Referees Officiating in the Professional Level
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Instructors
National Assessors

cc: MLS
USL

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Subject: Impermissible Behavior by Team Officials in Professional Matches

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Although the behavior of substitutes, players, and substituted players is clearly controlled by the Laws of the Game, the standards for team officials are less clear. Law 5 (The Referee) provides that team officials must conduct themselves in a "responsible manner" and, if they do not, the referee may "expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds."

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. Officials should be mindful of the circumstances in which the irresponsible behavior occurred and should use the same criteria and concerns they would apply to similar behavior by players on the field (e.g., taking into account the emotion of the moment).

As of the 2006 playing season, MLS has modified its rules concerning who may be allowed in the team's technical area: 11 players in uniform, 7 substitutes in uniform, up to 3 coaches, up to 3 medical staff, 1 equipment manager, and up to 2 members of the team's administrative staff.

Accordingly, aside from players temporarily off the field, no more than 16 persons will be permitted in the technical area and only if they fall within these prescribed categories. **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.**