



To: MLS Referees  
From: Alfred Kleinaitis  
Manager of Referee Development and Education  
Re: **Inappropriate Behavior Following a Goal**  
Date: April 28, 2006

A goal is an occasion for celebration. When the ball has been put into the opponent's net as a result of individual and team skills, both the team and in particular the player who scored has an understandable right to express their joy.

That celebration, however, has limits. The most important restriction on post-goal celebrations is that they may not, in the opinion of the referee, excessively delay the restart of play. The Laws of the Game do not provide any more specific guidance than this (apart from International Board Decision 6 in Law 12 regarding the removal of the jersey).

In general, celebrations are acceptable if they:

- are brief;
- are spontaneous demonstrations of excitement;
- do not involve players attempting to cross over the boundaries which separate spectators from the field; and
- do not include actions which demean, insult, or provoke opponents or supporters of the opposing team.

Match officials must encourage players to return as quickly as possible to their positions on the field for the kick-off and must be prepared to deal **firmly and sensibly** with demonstrations which go beyond these guidelines.

It is very important that referees be alert to evidence that the actions of the celebrating players were planned in advance and/or involve behavior that bears no reasonable relationship to the scoring of the goal itself. **Referees are expected to act in a preventative mode and to exercise common sense in dealing with goal celebrations.**