



## Memorandum

To: State Referee Administrators  
State Youth Referee Administrators  
State Directors of Referee Instruction  
State Directors of Referee Assessment  
National Referee Instructors and Trainers  
National Assessors  
National Referees

From: Alfred Kleinaitis  
Manager of Referee Development and Education

**Subject:** *Ceremonial Restarts After Misconduct*

Date: November 22, 2002

After stopping play for a foul, the referee must remember the other team's right to restart play as quickly as it may wish. The referee should not interfere with this right except under certain exceptional circumstances (see *Advice to Referees* 12.27, 13.3, and 13.5). The decision to caution or send off a player is one of those few exceptions.

If misconduct has been committed (standing alone or in conjunction with a foul) and if the referee has decided that a card will be displayed at the next stoppage of play, the very first action the referee must take when that stoppage occurs is to inform all players that the restart may not occur except by a signal from the referee, i.e., a "ceremonial" restart. This applies whether the referee has stopped play immediately for the infringement or has applied advantage and is waiting for the next stoppage of play.

The referee's first responsibility is to make it clear to both teams that the free kick must be delayed until a signal is given. This can be done verbally, by holding an arm outward toward the attackers and showing the palm (the classic "stop" gesture), or by other means, but the referee should also move as quickly as possible to give the caution which is causing the delayed restart. The practice of raising the whistle and pointing toward it should be used as a last resort when the referee is not certain the players understand the situation (due to crowd noise, language barriers, etc.). Standing in front of the ball is neither approved nor recommended as it invites dissent and other attempts to engage the referee in discussions about the decision.

Referees are reminded that "ceremonial" restarts are the exception to the general principle that teams have a right to a quick resumption of play at their option.

In the case of a ceremonial restart, the referee should proceed deliberately and in accordance with standard mechanics to book the misconduct and display the appropriate card. It is important to remember that players will be focused intently on listening for the whistle to restart play and therefore the whistle should not be used for other purposes (e.g., gaining the attention of defenders in the process of enforcing the minimum distance).