



To: Chair, State Referee Committee, State Referee Administrators , State Youth Referee Administrators, State Directors of Instruction, State Directors of Assessment, National Referees, National Instructors, National Assessors

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The sport of soccer evolves through innovations in team strategies and tactics and advancements in player skills. This occurs at all levels but often starts at the most competitive matches and gradually filters downward, eventually reaching youth and recreational play. The skills, capabilities, mechanics, and procedures used by referees must evolve as well. This is why deliberate experiments as well as gradual trends in referee mechanics are monitored closely to identify modifications that have proved successful.

US Soccer's *Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials* is the official source of advice on the proper standard mechanics to use in matches conducted in this country under the Laws of the Game. Based on developing trends in high level national and international matches, the following change in procedure should be given immediate consideration.

- The referee retains primary responsibility for announcing decisions regarding the throw-in, goal kick, and corner kick restarts when the ball leaves the field across the portion of the touchline (throw-in) or goal line (goal kick or corner kick) not given to the assistant referee (what is commonly termed the referee's end of the touchline or the referee's side of the goal line).
- However, hereafter, the assistant referee should also provide a confirming flag signal after the referee has clearly signaled the restart decision.
- Nothing in this modified procedure alters the need for the assistant referee to provide a signal (if possible) when the referee makes eye contact to ask for assistance. Similarly, nothing has changed regarding the assistant referee signaling when the ball has entirely left the field but returned and is still being played (flag straight up, changing to the appropriate signal once eye contact is made with the referee).

The purpose of this change is, among other things, to provide an additional emphasis and visual confirmation for the restart which might be more easily seen by players, team officials, and spectators. The next published version of the *Guide* will reflect this change.