



To: National Referees
National Assessors
National Instructors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Instruction
Cc: National Referee Committee

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
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Subject: Misconduct -- Player Gesturing for a Card

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Major League Soccer (MLS) gave a presentation at the 2007 National Camp which included a request that referees pay particular attention to the practice of players gesturing in a manner traditionally interpreted as a request or demand that a card be given to an opponent for some action. The same topic has drawn attention recently in certain European competitions.

FIFA, the international body responsible for developing and implementing the Laws of the Game for all national associations, has consistently emphasized 'Fair Play' and USSF supports this concern. Although there is **no automatic rule** that player gestures calling for a card must be cautioned, such actions can be considered cautionable if they are blatantly disruptive, for example, by indicating disagreement with an official's decision, aggressively aimed at a particular opponent or an official, or being part of a simulation (faking) to gain a favorable decision. The public nature of the action often makes the gesture too obvious to ignore and can spread to other players, who either agree or disagree, thus provoking further conflict.

Referees must be sensitive to any effort by affiliated leagues or tournaments to support the highest level of sporting behavior and should deal promptly with players who engage in misconduct.