

Major League Soccer
League Office
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Memorandum



TO: MLS General Managers
MLS Coaches

CC: MLS Team Administrators
MLS Equipment Managers

FROM: MLS Disciplinary Committee

DATE: September 20, 2005

SUBJECT: Bench Behavior and Decorum

As MLS approaches the conclusion of its tenth regular season and the intensity of our game atmosphere intensifies, the behavior of coaching, playing and other staff on and around our bench areas has unfortunately deteriorated.

In recent games, coaches, players, other bench personnel, and even front office staff have questioned multiple calls using profanity, banged on and jumped on field boards, run down the touchline to dispute an Assistant Referee's decision and verbally assaulted even each other. The issue of profanity has previously been addressed in a memorandum to you dated 5/27/05.

With close games being decided, in some instances, by crucial officiating decisions such as those between send off or caution, offside or not offside, penalty kick or dive, officials must be able make key decisions in an environment free from undue pressure from the benches. It is imperative that our General Managers and coaching staffs take a leadership position with respect to this behavioral issue and make it clear that excessive and demonstrative appeals and dissent are inappropriate, even in a highly charged game environment. Unfortunately, in an increasing number of instances, there has been unprofessional behavior from the very personnel who are looked to by players and fans as an example.

Teams should make every effort to refrain from such behavior at this important time of the season. Permitted coaching behavior and technical area decorum guidelines may be found on page 38 of the 2004-2005 Laws of the Game (page 58 of the online edition on fifa.com). Game Officials are within their right under the Laws of the Game to dismiss bench personnel for failure to act within those guidelines.

In addition, future unprofessional behavior may subject bench personnel to MLS Disciplinary Committee action such as fine, suspension or both.

Set forth below is a copy of the memorandum dated 5/27/05.

TO: MLS Coaches

CC: MLS General Managers
MLS Team Administrators
MLS Disciplinary Committee

FROM: Joseph A. Machnik

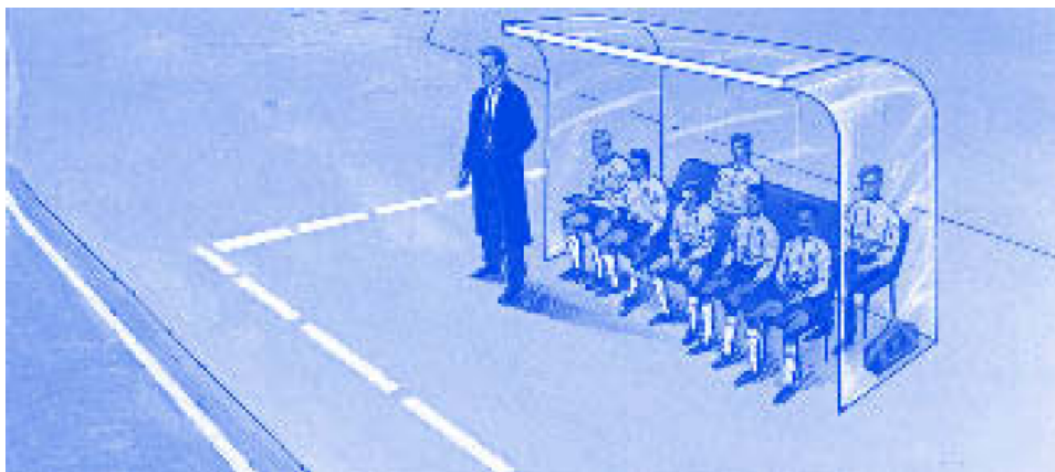
SUBJECT: Bench Decorum (Language)

Recent television broadcasts of MLS games have been enhanced by the placement of microphones near the bench areas. There is concern at the team and league office levels with the amount of foul, vulgar and often abusive language being transmitted over the air to our viewers at home.

All coaches and bench personnel are advised to refrain from such language for the good of the game and MLS' viewing audience.

Failure to avoid instances of repeated disregard for this appeal may subject bench personnel to MLS Disciplinary Committee action through fine and/or suspension in addition to the embarrassment such recorded behavior may bring upon the individual. In addition, please be aware that game officials are within their right under the Laws of the Game to dismiss bench personnel for foul and abusive language.

THE TECHNICAL AREA



The technical area described in Law 3, International F.A. Board Decision no. 2, relates particularly to matches played in stadia with a designated seated area for technical staff and substitutes as shown below.

Technical areas may vary between stadia, for example in size or location, and the following notes are issued for general guidance.

- The technical area extends 1 m (1 yd) on either side of the designated seated area and extends forward up to a distance of 1 m (1 yd) from the touch line
- It is recommended that markings are used to define this area
- The number of persons permitted to occupy the technical area is defined by the competition rules
- The occupants of the technical area are identified before the beginning of the match in accordance with the competition rules
- Only one person at a time is authorised to convey tactical instructions and he must return to his position after giving these instructions
- The coach and other officials must remain within the confines of the technical area except in special circumstances, for example, a physiotherapist or doctor entering the field of play, with the referee's permission, to assess an injured player
- The coach and other occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner