



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

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Subject: Cardable Offenses and the Restart of Play

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A situation in a recent U.S. Professional Division match presented a difficult decision involving a cardable offense and a quick restart of play. The referee must balance two competing objectives – effective management of misconduct and a team’s right to a quick free kick restart.

- A card for misconduct (caution or send-off) must be given at the next stoppage of play or the opportunity is lost. If the opportunity passes without the card being shown, the referee must nevertheless include all details in the match report.
- The referee may decide that a quick restart is significantly beneficial for a team and outweighs the particular value of preventing the restart in order to display the card.
- However, if the referee has decided that the red or yellow card **must** be given, **despite the benefit of play being restarted quickly**, the referee must act to prevent the restart and, should the restart occur before this decision can be announced, the referee can call the ball back so that the misconduct can be properly handled. The restart can now occur only by the express signal of the referee.