



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
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Subject: Misconduct by Attackers at a Free Kick

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At the taking of a free kick, referees often focus their attention on the defenders and are alert for misconduct which defenders might commit in these circumstances. Such misconduct usually involves failing to respect the required distance and actions designed to delay the restart of play. This attention is proper and should remain an important element in the referee's mechanics for handling free kick restarts.

If defenders form a wall at the proper distance and one or more attackers are involved in this formation, the referee must be alert for specific dangers and must adopt appropriate positioning in order to watch for possible misconduct by these attackers. Increasingly in recent years, some teams have adopted a strategy in which an attacker joins the wall (either at an end or inside) and, at the moment of taking the free kick, pulls or pushes a defender in the wall so as to open a space through which the ball might pass.

It is expected that referees will recognize the opportunity for a foul and/or misconduct to be committed by an attacker under these circumstances and will act appropriately to deal with it. What is of even greater importance, however, is the need to develop an approach to positioning at free kicks which will enable the referee to see such behavior (which frequently involves holding or locking arms behind the backs of the players). Experienced referees will also realize that proper positioning often serves to prevent actions of this sort from occurring in the first place.