



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

From: U.S. Soccer Referee Education Resource Center

Subject: **An Unusual Approach to the Ball for a Penalty Kick**

Date: August 19, 2011

Recently, in an international friendly match between United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Lebanon (played on July 17, 2011), a penalty kick was called during which the kicker, upon hearing the referee's signal for the kick to be taken, performed an unusual run to the ball. Just before reaching the ball, the kicker turned and then backheeled the ball into the net.

This event caused considerable debate within the officiating community regarding the propriety of such a move. Was it legal or did it violate Law 14? Did the kicker commit misconduct? If so, what was the status of the apparent goal scored and what should be the proper restart?

Following a vigorous debate, FIFA sources informed us that the kicker had not violated any requirement of Law 14 and therefore the goal scored was valid. In particular, the kicker had not performed a "feint" after completing the run to the ball and the action of the kicker in backheeling the ball was not contrary to the Law because there is no restriction in the taking of a penalty kick regarding which part of the foot can be used to perform the kick.

It is presumed that the above decision and guideline would apply equally to a kick from the mark under the same circumstances.