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State Directors of Instruction
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State Directors of Coaching

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Subject: **Player Jerseys**

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According to Law 4 (*Laws of the Game*, 2008/2009), teams must wear jersey colors which distinguish them from each other and from the officials. Any other requirement regarding jerseys (e.g., player names and/or numbers) must either be found in the local rules of competition or, if they are silent on some issue, must be subject to the decision of the referee. If the decision falls to the referee, it must be based on such traditional concerns as safety, fairness, and enjoyment.

In a recent professional match, a player's jersey became bloodied and could not be cleaned sufficiently to permit it to be worn. This falls squarely in the authority of the referee to make such a determination. Unfortunately, the player did not have another exactly matching jersey to wear in its place and the issue became one of determining which of several options would be acceptable.

Given that the player's team was playing short while the issue was being addressed, there is an obvious need for some guidelines for resolving the matter as quickly as possible:

- Every effort should be made to find a solution which permits the player to return to the field.
- The solution should not give the player or the team an unfair advantage or cause confusion for the opposing team or the officials.
- The requirements of Law 4 and any pertinent local rules of competition must be met.
- The referee has the final decision on any replacement jersey that otherwise meets the requirements of the Law and the local rules of competition.
- Taping or masking information on an alternate jersey is a less desirable practice. If masking a name and number is used and the material becomes

detached, the referee must consider this a violation of Law 4 and require the player to leave the field again until the masking is repaired.

Any of the following options should be considered to the extent that they are consistent with the above guidelines:

- A jersey of the same or substantially similar color and style may be used.
- The most desirable option is for the replacement jersey to have no other player's name or number on it. The wearing of an unnumbered jersey under these circumstances is permitted.
- A player should not wear a jersey with another person's name on it. Name information must be taped or masked.
- An alternate jersey with another person's player number may be worn only under the following circumstances:
 - The number is taped or masked if the person is a substituted player.
 - The number is allowed if the person is a substitute whose name will be removed from the team roster (the roster must also be adjusted to show the replacement jersey number for the player now wearing it).