

*From the U.S. Soccer Communications Center -- Jan. 6, 2003*

**Memorandum**

To: State Referee Administrators CC: All Professional Leagues  
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  
Manager of Referee Development and Education

**Subject: Rescinding a Displayed Card for Misconduct**

Date: January 6, 2003

After the completion of a top professional league match recently played in Europe, the referee decided to cancel (rescind) a caution he had given during play for an act of misconduct. Questions have been raised regarding the correctness of this decision under the Laws of the Game. The following guidance is applicable to the general issue of whether a card for misconduct of any sort can be canceled.

- A displayed red or yellow card can be canceled by the referee if play has not restarted.
- If play has been restarted or if the match is over (including required periods of additional play and/or kicks from the penalty mark), a displayed red or yellow card **cannot** be canceled by the referee for any reason.
- If the referee believes a card has been issued in error, regardless of the reason, the card must still be included in the match report and the referee must provide all details relevant to the mistake. In such cases, the determination of the validity of the card is left to the competition authority.
- The failure of the referee to include accurately and fully all cards displayed during play is a serious violation of the referee's responsibilities.

Referees should note Question #9 under Law 12 in FIFA's *Questions and Answers to the Laws of the Game* where it is specifically noted that the referee may not decide to rescind a caution if the player who has already been charged with misconduct apologizes.