



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
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: **Rescinding a Card**

Date: June 26, 2008

A EURO 2008 quarterfinal match between Russia and The Netherlands (June 21, 2008) was the occasion for a referee action which many misunderstood. In the 91st minute (added time), the referee apparently whistled play stopped for a challenge by Russian player #8 (Kolodin) against Netherlands player #10 (Sneijder). Kolodin was cautioned and then, because he had been cautioned already earlier in the match, Kolodin was shown a red card .

Before the restart for the apparent foul, however, and following an exchange of information between the referee and the lead assistant referee, the second caution and the accompanying red card were rescinded and play was restarted with a goal kick. The issue was widely debated as to whether the referee could take this action in view of the fact that both cards had been displayed.

The referee's actions were within the Law. Based on information provided by the assistant referee whose position provided a better angle of view, the referee accepted two facts:

- The challenge by Kolodin to which the referee reacted occurred after the ball had left the field of play.
- The tackle by Kolodin actually occurred several feet away from the Netherlands attacker, who then tumbled over the defender's body.

From this information, the referee therefore correctly concluded that:

- the challenge (regardless of its nature) occurred when the ball was out of play and therefore the restart had to be a goal kick, and
- the challenge itself was either entirely fair or at least did not rise to the level of misconduct so the yellow card was not justified (with the consequence that the red card also was not justified).

Prior to play restarting following the display of a card, the referee can revise his decision about what he observed on the field, re-evaluate the significance of the player action, or receive additional relevant information from another official (either or both assistant referees or the fourth official). As a result of this further reflection or assistance from other members of the officiating team, the referee can:

- rescind the card entirely,
- decide that the card should be given to a different player,
- display a card to additional players,
- or display a different color card in place of the one originally shown.

As a practical matter, it must be emphasized that the occasion for such an action should be infrequent, that the need to rescind a card is reduced by having as much information as possible before displaying a card, and that referees should not be seen as acting in response to player appeals. If play has been properly restarted, any cards shown must be reported.