

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

From: Alfred Kleinaitis  
Manager of Referee Development and Education

**Re: No Replacement for Player Sent Off after the Game Has Started**

Date: May 14, 1999

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International Football Association Board (IFAB) Decision (3), on Law III, formerly stated: "A player who has been ordered off after play has started may not be replaced," containing this prohibition was omitted by the IFAB in the extensive revision of the Laws that took place in 1997. The rewrite was extensive and included both new language and revisions of existing language: numerous provisions in the 1996 edition of the Laws of the Game were removed and have not reappeared in subsequent revisions. Nevertheless, the provisions of IFAB Decision 3 on Law III (and numerous other decisions) remain valid to this day.

The intention of IFAB was to clarify and simplify concepts, to replace older terminology, to present concepts which are more easily translated into languages other than English and to shorten the Laws of the Game overall. The excised IFAB decisions should not be considered a rejection of the requirement but an affirmation that a separate, additional statement of the concept involved was unnecessary. In other words, the IFAB believed that the basic principle that a player sent off after the game has started may not be replaced was unnecessary. In other words, the IFAB believed that the basic principle that a player sent off after the game has started may not be replaced was so well understood by the entire soccer community that it did not need to be mentioned in the Laws.

In applying the rewritten Laws of the Game, affiliated leagues, associations, officials and competitions are accordingly reminded that, except as described in "Memorandum 1997" or in subsequent memorandum amendments of the Laws, there should be no

change in either the understanding of the Laws or in their substantive application to game situations. In other words, unless noted otherwise, the absence in subsequent versions of the Laws of the Game of any language from the 1996 version is not to be interpreted as an indication IFAB intended that matches would no longer be governed by that language.

Law 3 currently states that “A player who has been sent off before the kick-off may be replaced only by one of the named substitutes.” Implied in that statement is a reiteration of the former IFAB Decision 3 on Law III “A player who has been ordered off after play has started may not be replaced.”

AK/m

cc: State Association Presidents