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Cc: State Directors of Coaching

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Subject: **Quick Free Kicks versus Ceremonial Restarts**

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In a professional match last weekend (DC United at Colorado Rapids, April 7, 2007), a foul was committed by Colorado player #12 (Petke) against DC United #10 (Gomez). The referee stopped play and, although clearly holding a yellow card in his hand to display to Petke for what was obviously a reckless tackle, he nevertheless allowed play to restart without actually recording the misconduct or displaying the card.

This is contrary to consistent guidelines from FIFA and USSF, publicized as long ago as a 2002 USSF memorandum “Ceremonial Restarts After Misconduct” (November 22) and emphasized as recently as the 2006 Advice to Referees 12.26 and 13.3. Once the referee has decided to issue a card, whether to caution or send off a player from either team, the restart must be delayed to give the card. This is particularly necessary when, as in this incident, the referee has made the card visible and created an expectation that the restart will not occur until allowed by the referee.

In such a situation, the referee’s first action must be to announce clearly, by voice and, if necessary, by the commonly understood action of holding the whistle up in the air and pointing to it, that play may not restart until another signal is given. If such an indication is not immediately given and play restarts quickly or if the referee signals appropriately to hold up play but the ball is kicked anyway, the referee must call the play back so that the proper procedure is followed.

[Click for referenced video](#)

(MLS 7 4-7-07 CEREMONIALvs Quick Free Kick DC-COL.WMV)