



**Free Kick and Restart Management**  
2009 Referee Program Directives  
February 10, 2009

## **Basic Requirements for Managing Free Kicks**

If at all possible, the referee should know the tendencies of the teams and the individual players before the game so he can facilitate their style.

There are two types of free kicks with separate methods for managing each: Quick Free Kicks (QFK) and Ceremonial Free Kicks (CFK).

### **Quick Free Kicks (QFK)**

*Definition:*

The attacking team takes the kick as soon as the ball is properly placed, with no separate signal needed by the referee. The attacking team does not ask for (verbally or visually) the minimum distance to be enforced.

- Should be the method encouraged by the referee except where a specific reason exists requiring a CFK.

### **Ceremonial Free Kicks (CFK)**

*Definition:*

The kick cannot be taken by the attacking team until the referee gives a separate signal – the whistle under the following circumstances:

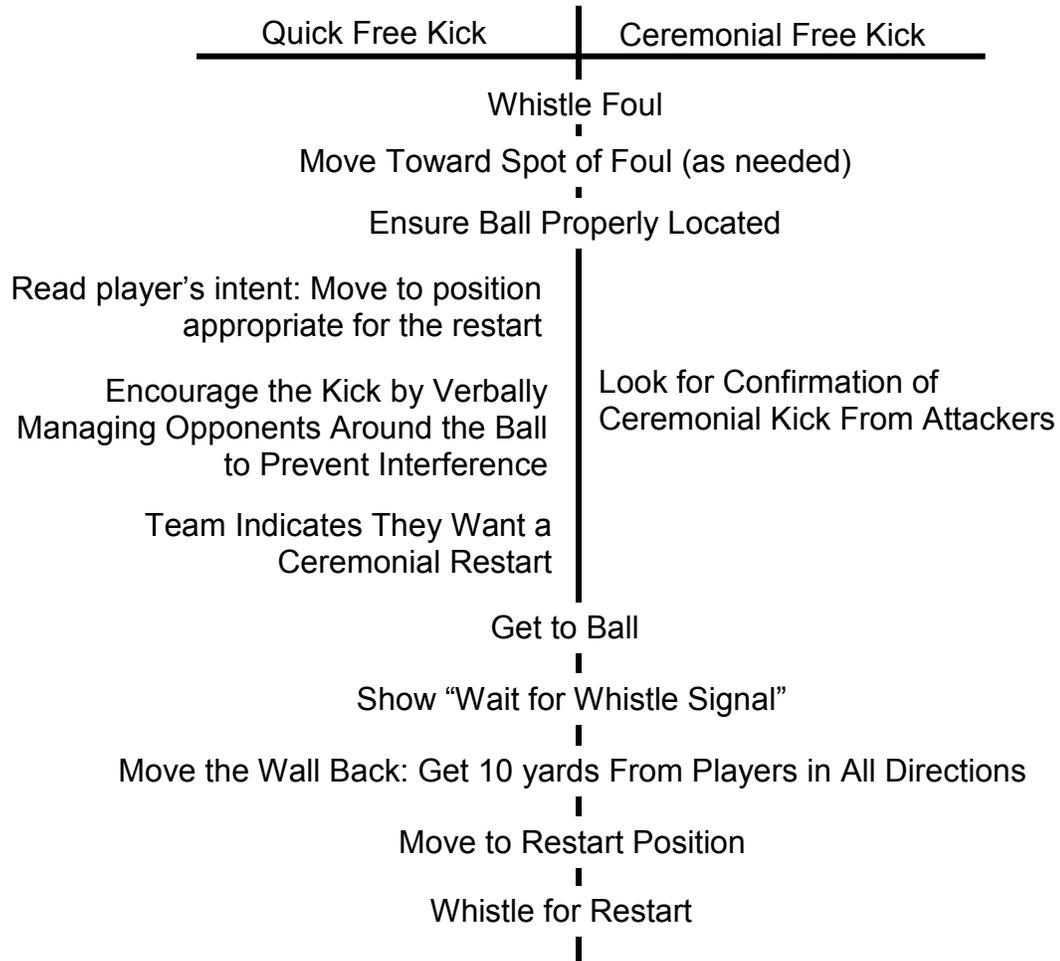
1. The attacking team requests a CFK by asking the referee (verbally or visually) for the minimum distance to be enforced or “to move the wall back.”
2. The referee or assistant referee (AR), with the referee’s acknowledgment, chooses to enforce the distance for game management purposes.

CFK must only be used when:

1. A red or yellow card is to be given for misconduct occurring prior to the restart.
2. A serious injury occurred requiring the trainer to enter the field to attend to but not treat the player (or on the field treatment of an injured goalkeeper)
3. The attacking team requests that the minimum distance requirement be enforced against the opponents.
4. The referee decides to slow down the tempo of the match for game control purposes (for example, to have an extended/formal conversation with a player).

It is critical to set the tone early on all free kick restarts. Set your standards and then hold the players accountable – set the precedent. Failing to deal with encroachment and interference early, makes it more difficult to get distance in the critical areas of the field as the game develops. Where encroachment or interference is blatant and obvious, your control is being tested and it is particularly important that you act firmly. Where it is less obvious, use discretion.

<b>Sequence of Actions to Manage Free Kicks</b>
---



1. Danger Zone Free Kicks

"Danger zone" refers to the area approximately 18-35 yards from goal in which goals can be scored directly off the restart

- Ball at proper location
- Referee close but not interfering with a "quick free kick:" is the attacker looking to put the ball into play (body language)?
- Ask the attacking team if they want the wall moved

- If the attacking team indicates they want a *ceremonial free kick*, the referee must move quickly to the ball
- Clearly indicate “wait for the whistle” signal by visually pointing to the whistle no higher than face level and, as appropriate, verbally advising the attacking players in the vicinity to wait for the whistle: this will make it easier for the defenders to move into the proper position
- Move wall back: defending players 10 yards away from the ball in all directions
- Whistle the restart

## 2. Prevention: Dealing with the “Statue”

The player(s) who immediately stands in front of the ball to prevent the kick from being taken thereby forcing the referee to intervene.

- Proactive verbally: as you see the player take position in front of the ball, verbally ask them to retreat
- As you move to the restart position, attempt to encourage the statue to move with you / back-up with you
- If you see this as a trend to delay the restart, move to the spot of the foul quicker and manage more with your presence
- Consider: did the player run-in to form the statue or was he there immediately following the foul?
- Presence is critical to prevent the statue from kicking or throwing the ball away

## **Prevention: How to Prevent Interference**

- Presence
- Awareness of team and player tactics: before the game and as the game develops
- Verbal and visual communication
- Be proactive. Speak to the player during the game and communicate your restart requirements. Encourage them to participate
- ARs assistance:
  - Needs to be clearly established in the pregame (when and how)
  - If used, the referee must wait until the AR is back in position before signaling for the restart

## **Cautions and Retakes**

Referees are responsible for ensuring that free kicks are taken without encumbrances unless a team decides to take a *quick free kick*. The following guidelines must be followed as they relate to the taking of a free kick.

Note the following contained in the 2008/2009 version of FIFA’s “Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees:”

“If a player decides to take a free kick and an opponent who is less than 10 yards from the ball intercepts it, the referee must allow play to continue.”

and

“If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent who is near the ball *deliberately prevents* him from taking the kick, the referee must caution the player for delaying the restart of play.”

The key phrase here is “*deliberately prevents.*” This means that the player impedes in a manner that the kicker is unable to take the free kick quickly. If the kick is taken, it has not been prevented from being taken and play must be allowed to continue.

#### **KEYS:**

- **The taking of the free kick is a decision of the attacker and, therefore, the attacker must assume responsibility for the consequences.**
- **A key term in “deliberately prevents” is moving / *lunging* / *advancing toward the ball.***

#### 1. Ceremonial Free Kick

- Wall is set
- Referee whistles for kick to be taken
- Player fails to respect the distance (within 10 yards)
  - (a) Ball strikes player encroaching from wall: **caution** and **retake**
  - (b) Player moves within 10 yards at taking of the kick but no contact with the ball (referee judges encroachment to have interfered with the kick): referee has discretion but the recommended action is a **caution** and **retake**
  - (c) Player moves within 10 yards at taking of the kick but no contact with the ball (referee judges encroachment did not interfere with the taking of the kick): continue play
  - (d) Player moves within 10 yards prior to the taking of the kick (the referee must use every effort to intervene before allowing the kick to be taken):
    - First time of failing to respect the distance on the free kick: the referee is to issue a warning to the player/team as long as the ball has not been put into play
    - Second time: **caution**
    - Note: this does not prohibit the referee from cautioning on the first encroachment depending upon situation and the “big picture” of the game

## 2. Attacking Team Takes Ceremonial Free Kick Prior to Whistle

- Attackers asked for and were granted 10 yards
- Referee gives “wait for the whistle” signal
- Attackers take the free kick prior to the referee’s whistle to restart play

In all instances in which the kicker takes the free kick prior to the whistle, the referee *must* retake the kick as the ball was not put into play in accordance with the Laws of the Game that require a whistle prior to a restart on a CFK (when the referee is moving the wall back the appropriate distance). This includes situations like:

- (a) The ball goes out of play directly from the free kick.
- (b) The ball stays in play.
- (c) The ball goes directly into goal from the free kick.

Regardless of the result of the restart, the free kick must be retaken.

If the referee believes the player intentionally played the ball prior to the whistle in order to cheat, deceive, or gain an unfair advantage, then the referee may **caution** the player for unsporting behavior and retake the free kick. If the referee believes that the early restart was merely a mistake/misunderstanding by the player, then the referee may merely award a retake of the free kick without cautioning.

## 3. Quick Free Kick – Attacking Team Deliberately Kicks the Ball Into the Opponent

- Regardless of the position of the defending team, the attacking teams intentionally kicks/plays the ball directly into the opponent who is less than the required minimum distance from the ball – the defender does not advance or lunge directly toward the ball with his foot/leg to prevent the kick: **continue with play**

## 4. Quick Free Kick – Deliberately Preventing the Free Kick from Being Taken

- Defending player, less than the minimum required distance, deliberately prevents the attacking team from putting the ball into play: **caution and retake**
  - The defender moves, lunges or advances directly toward the ball to interfere or prevent. This includes the player who runs from behind the ball, advances toward the ball and makes contact as it is put into play.
  - Remember, the attacking team basically “assumes the risk” when they put the ball in play despite the defender not being 10 yards from the ball.
  - Seeing that a defender is less than the required distance and that the defender may interfere with the taking of the QFK, the referee should attempt to prevent the interference with presence and encouraging the defender to retire the proper distance.

- **Intercepts** the QFK after the kick is taken: The referee may exercise discretion depending upon whether he/she felt the defender deliberately prevented the ball from being put into play. The referee must take into consideration whether the attacking team had the opportunity to play the ball and whether the attacker knew the position of the defender at the time the QFK was taken.
  - If the attacker knew where the defender was at the time the QFK was taken, then the likelihood that the defender prevented the free kick from taken is minimal. In this case, it can be assumed that the attacker “assumed the risk.”
    - A player who runs from behind the ball at the taking of a free kick should be dealt with by the referee depending upon whether he/she contacts the ball or not. Contact with the ball requires a caution. Discretion can be used in determining the referee’s action if contact is not made with the ball.
  - The defender DOES NOT move, lunge or advance directly toward the ball to intercept or prevent – the leg/foot is to the side and the player is stationary or moving back.

#### 5. Delaying A Restart

- A player on the defending team deliberately kicks the ball away, carries it away, tosses it away, withholds the ball from the opponent, etc. in order to delay the opponent from taking the free kick
  - (a) The referee may use discretion depending upon the “big picture” (time of the match, the number of similar incidents, the atmosphere of the game, etc.) in handling occurrences of delaying the restart. After considering the “big picture” the referee may decide that a stern word or an official admonishment may suffice with further disciplinary action to follow if similar actions persist. This does not, however, restrict the referee from cautioning a player on the first occurrence.
  - (b) Instances of delaying the restart often result in game disrepute and mass confrontation as they provoke opponents and lead to physical contact. This is especially true when players hold the ball forcing the opponent to grab for it to gain possession. Referees must be cognizant of the potential for game disrepute or mass confrontation and should take preventative measures.