



To: State Referee Administrators  
Chair, State Referee Committee  
State Youth Referee Administrators  
State Directors of Instruction  
State Directors of Assessment  
National Referees  
National Instructors

cc: State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis  
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Subject: Regarding Law 15 (Throw-In)  
Enforcing the Minimum Distance

Date: January 18, 2006

In 2005, the International Board approved a change in Law 15 (The Throw-In) to impose a minimum distance requirement for opponents. The Board noted that, with this modification, all restarts conducted by players now mandate that opponents be some minimum distance away so as not to interfere with the taking of the restart.

In the case of a throw-in, the Board specified that opponents must be at least two meters from the thrower. USSF has indicated that two yards is an acceptable alternative to two meters.

Since the appearance of this requirement, referees have raised questions about the correct method of enforcing it. *The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on managing the minimum distance requirement at a throw-in.*

- First and foremost, **all** procedures, including those described below, must be discussed in the pregame meeting, particularly the division of responsibilities between the referee and the nearest assistant referee.
- Second, USSF recommends that the minimum distance requirement be enforced based on the same principles and guidelines used in connection with the ten yard minimum distance requirement in Law 13 (The Free Kick).

The following points briefly summarize these principles and guidelines.

Quick throw-ins are preferable

The referee should interfere with the throw-in restart as little and as seldom as possible

If the thrower requests assistance in enforcing the minimum distance, the referee should:

Clearly announce that the throw-in cannot be taken except by a signal from the referee (ceremonial restart) and

Establish the minimum distance quickly and fairly

Blatant and obvious violations of the minimum distance which interfere with the thrower can be considered misconduct and should be dealt with appropriately

Several issues are specific to the throw-in.

- The minimum distance is measured from the touchline. The fact that a player may perform the throw-in from as much as a yard back from the touchline does not permit an opponent to be closer than two yards from the touchline.
- The minimum distance from the touchline is measured from the point where the ball will actually enter the field. The fact that the thrower may take the throw-in from as much as a yard up or down the touchline from where the ball left the field does not permit an opponent to be closer than two yards from this point.
- An opponent is not permitted to jump about and wave his or her arms if, in the opinion of the referee, this action unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower even if the opponent is more than two yards from the thrower. Referees are strongly encouraged to prevent such behavior from occurring or interfering with the restart.