



Rescinding a Displayed Card for Misconduct

After the completion of a senior SAASLA match played recently, the referee decided to cancel (rescind) a caution he had given during play for an act of misconduct. Questions have been raised regarding the correctness of this decision under the Laws of the Game. The following guidance is applicable to the general issue of whether a card for misconduct of any sort can be cancelled.

- A displayed red or yellow card can be cancelled by the referee if play has not restarted.
- If play has been restarted or if the match is over (including required periods of additional play and/or kicks from the penalty mark), a displayed red or yellow card **cannot** be cancelled by the referee for any reason.
- If the referee believes a card has been issued in error, regardless of the reason, the card must still be included in the match report and the referee must provide all details relevant to the mistake. In such cases, the determination of the validity of the card is left to the competition authority.
- The failure of the referee to include accurately and fully all cards displayed during play is a serious violation of the referee's responsibilities.

Player Gesturing for a Card

FIFA, the international body responsible for developing and implementing the Laws of the Game for all national associations, has consistently emphasized "Fair Play". Although there is **no automatic rule** that player gestures calling for a card must be cautioned, such actions can be considered cautionable if they are blatantly disruptive, for example, by indicating disagreement with an official's decision, aggressively aimed at a particular opponent or an official, or being part of a simulation (faking) to gain a favourable decision. The public nature of the action often makes the gesture too obvious to ignore and can spread to other players, who either agree or disagree, thus provoking further conflict.

Requirements for Injured Players

Law 5 establishes the basic principle that, if the referee stops play solely because a player had been judged to be seriously injured, that player is required to leave the field for treatment and may not return to the field (assuming the player is not substituted) until after play has been restarted and only with the permission of the referee. Guidance on this matter, based on interpretations provided by the International Board, establishes the following additional information:

- The goalkeeper is exempt from this requirement.
- A player who is injured may still be required to leave the field if the referee beckons medical assistance onto the field at a stoppage called for some other purpose.
- A player who leaves the field, with the permission of the referee, for treatment of an injury without having assistance beckoned on or for whose injury play has not been stopped, may return before play is restarted, provided the player receives the permission of the referee.

The goalkeeper exemption from the requirement to leave and not return until after play has resumed was extended to include any field player (from either team) who may have been injured with the goalkeeper in a common collision. This exemption was extended in 2010 to include any two (or more) players injured in a common collision if they are from the same team.

When the International Board stated the "common collision" exemptions, it was assuming (without stating it explicitly) that **all persons involved in the collision were seriously injured**. Unless there was a serious injury, there would have been no requirement to leave the field in the first place and thus there would not be any need for an exception.

The scenarios in the chart below are based on two persons only. Extending the chart to include collisions involving more than two would have complicated the chart unnecessarily because there is no fundamental difference in the proper action to take for collisions involving three or more players than for collisions involving just two players. **In all cases below, the referee has stopped play solely for at least one injury which has been deemed serious.**



Correct Actions To Take In Regard To Player Injuries

| Players Involved | Injury Status | Correct Action |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Goalkeeper & Field Player | Both, Seriously | Both permitted to receive treatment on the field and to remain on the field. |
| Goalkeeper & Field Player | Only Goalkeeper, Seriously | Goalkeeper permitted to receive treatment on the field and to remain on the field. Field player remains on the field. |
| Goalkeeper & Field Player | Only Field Player, Seriously | Field player required to leave the field to receive treatment, cannot return until after play resumes and only with the permission of the referee. |
| Two Field Players, Same Team | Both, Seriously | Both permitted to receive treatment on the field and to remain on the field. |
| Two Field Players, Same Team | Only One, Seriously | The seriously injured field player is required to leave the field to receive treatment, cannot return until after play resumes and only with the permission of the referee. The other field player not seriously injured remains on the field. |

NOTE 1: Any field player or goalkeeper who is not required to leave the field may still do so with the permission of the referee and is allowed to return prior to the restart of play with the permission of the referee.

NOTE 2: Any player whose injury is deemed "severe" may receive emergency treatment on the field, but it is expected that the severity of the injury would require the player eventually to leave the field with no likelihood of returning for the balance of the match.

NOTE 3: Any player other than a goalkeeper who has been seriously injured, whether required to leave the field or not as described above, will nevertheless be required to leave the field if bloodied and/or bleeding (regardless of whether the blood or bleeding is the result of an injury). Such a player may not return to the field until and unless an inspection of the condition is conducted by the referee at the next stoppage of play, or by another official designated by the referee, to determine that the situation has been corrected. If the blood or bleeding is not the result of a serious injury, the player may return to the field before play resumes; otherwise, the player must wait for play to resume and then request the permission of the referee to return. A seriously injured and bleeding goalkeeper may have both conditions treated on the field.

Procedure For Dealing With Injured Players

1. During play, referee makes a quick assessment of whether the player is "seriously injured"
2. Referee only stops play for serious injury. Otherwise, the referee waits until the ball is out of play to address the injured player
3. Once play has been stopped, the referee should question the individual player to see if the player requires assistance from medical staff.
4. If the player requires attention, the referee should authorize no more than two medical staff to enter the field to attend to the player. Concurrent with the entry and signal for the medical staff, the stretcher should also enter the field thereby facilitating the quick removal of the player
5. The medical staff shall assess and arrange for the player's safe and swift removal from the field – Players are not allowed to receive treatment on the field of play
6. No treatment on the field is permitted
 - Unless serious injury (e.g.: head/neck, concussion, swallowed tongue, broken leg, etc.)
 - Once the medical staff or attending personnel are beckoned/authorized onto the field by the referee, the injured player is required to swiftly leave the field of play either on the stretcher or on foot. Failure to leave the field will result in the player being cautioned for unsporting behaviour