

# Oregon School Activities Association

## Soccer Bulletin #1

**2014**

The new season is almost upon us. I hope that you have registered and taken the NFHS rules test. If not, please do so immediately. You need a 75 on the test in order to do varsity games. You need a 90 on the test in order to do any playoff game. This is an open book, "open friend" test, with no time limit, so there is really no excuse for getting a poor score. The point of the test is really for you to be competent, confident and comfortable with the rules when you are out on the field.

I don't know of any referees that enjoy enforcing the uniform and equipment rules. If you do, you are probably not someone with the right attitude! But it is particularly important that we get these issues identified and resolved at the start of the new season. Fortunately, many of them do not require that you keep someone from playing. The schools and your commissioner, however, need to hear about problems you are finding. Safety is our highest priority.

Particularly at sub-varsity games, there are good chances that the field will not be perfect. That's just the way the sub-varsity fields are, especially when they are off the school's property. For most issues, we play the game and report problems in our game report, as well as to the home school administrator at the site (usually the coach at sub-varsity games). There are some, however, which have to be fixed. At the top of the list are goals that are not anchored down. **DO NOT START THE GAME IF THE GOALS ARE NOT ADEQUATELY SECURED!** You are not being too picky. Yes, this might mean that the game cannot be played today. This is a player safety issue and the consequences of not dealing with it are potentially fatal. The other "no go" area is elevated sprinkler heads, ankle breaker holes, etc. which are a clear hazard for the players (and referees!) Work with the home school to get problems fixed, if at all possible.

Another early season area of concern is uniforms and player equipment. The home team must wear all white shirts and socks (allowing, of course, for manufacturers logos, numbers, school name, etc.) The visiting team must wear shirts and socks that are dark enough to contrast with the home team's shirts and socks. There is no restriction on the color of the shorts and they do not have to contrast. All of the jerseys, including the goalkeepers', need numbers on the front and back. (The front number can be on the shorts, but you will rarely see that.)

Shin guards must be worn, of course. They cannot be worn more than two inches above the ankle. Now nobody is expecting you to go around with a ruler to measure them. But you are expected to get them adjusted when they are clearly more than two inches above the ankle. This is for their protection, even if they don't appreciate that. Too many players get taken out by a hard challenge "for the ball" that ends up going into the ankles.

No jewelry is allowed, period, not even taped ear rings under that flesh colored band-aid. Medic alert bracelets and religious medals are not considered jewelry. They do have to be taped to the body, however, and religious medals must be worn under the uniform. Remember that you need to at least take a look at the players during warm ups, so problems can be fixed, through the coach, before the players get onto the field. Of course, we also still have to get the coach of each team to tell you before the game that their players will be legally and properly equipped. If they are in the game, anyway, with jewelry, the coach gets the caution for the first such problem with their team. The player gets the caution for the second and following violations. If they are improperly equipped (e.g. shin guards are taped just below the knee caps), then neither the player nor the coach gets a caution. In all cases, however, the player has to exit the field and cannot be replaced by a sub until the next legal sub opportunity for that team.

Finally, there is a good chance that you will see a player possibly suffer a concussion this season. One statistic says that over 20% of all high school soccer injuries are concussions. You are not a medical doctor (except for the few of you who really are). But you are a trained, informed lay person. You have a professional responsibility, therefore, to the schools, the teams, the coaches and, particularly, to the players, to be sure the coach knows that you suspect their player may have suffered a concussion. So tell them! No, it is not up to us, or the coach, to actually diagnose concussions. It is up to us to know when to think that the player may have suffered a concussion. This is a matter of Oregon law and the NFHS rules. Please do not try to sidestep your responsibility in this area.

It is up to the coach/trainer to see that the player is properly cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional before they return to playing soccer. That is not up to the referees. It is now a matter of state law and OSAA policy that a player from a private school who may have suffered a concussion cannot return to play in that game, even if they are cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional. You are responsible for seeing that they do not re-enter, even if the coach says that they are fine. Last year, there were fewer than five times during the high school season that a player was returned to the same game after possibly suffering a concussion, so you will probably not have to deal with that situation. We just have to get it right when it does happen. And, of course, all possible concussions must be included in your game report.

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