

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #4

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We have seen some very contentious games already. League games are just around the corner, if not here now. As the weaker teams try to turn their season around and the stronger teams seek to assert their dominance, we can expect that there will be more people loudly upset by our decisions. It comes with the territory.

There have been a few equipment related issues raised in the last week. Just a quick review:

- Captains may wear a band that indicates their position. (Rule 4.1.2) “It is recommended that team captains wear an upper arm band of a contrasting color.” Note that this is recommended. It is not required. If the arm band is worn on the leg instead or it is not of a “contrasting” color, don’t worry about it.
- At least one school has an advertising sign on their nets. This is not permitted, by rule. (Rule 4.4.2) “...No advertising, other than a single manufacturer’s identification/logo, may appear on the net.” Please have the school remove the advertising before you start the game. Advertising on adjacent fences, signs boards that are at least 10 feet off the field, etc. are all permitted.

A number of referees have reported that a particular field where they have worked is, in their opinion, dangerous. If you feel that the field is dangerous in some way, you must bring this to the attention of the home school before the game, so they can correct the problem. We do NOT have the authority, however, to determine whether the field is safe enough for the game to start or continue, unless there is some material change during the game e.g. a heavy downpour during the game has created a lake where the field should be. (Rule 1.7)

A number of you have asked about a particular question on the referee written test. This is the question in which a player who has just scored in a tense game stands facing the opposing team’s fans and gestures to the name of the school on his shirt. Since I wrote the question, I feel the need to explain the answer. The question was whether this behavior deserves a card and, if so, which color. The correct answer is red card for taunting. How is that different from “excessive goal celebration?” Players are certainly allowed to celebrate scoring a goal.

However, we still have a game to play. If the celebration goes on for an unreasonable amount of time or involves some orchestrated routine (I’m thinking, for example, of the World Cup players who formed a human caterpillar on the ground, or the high school player who went to the corner flag and pretended that he was a dog), then you should treat that as excessive goal celebration (or incidental non-verbal vulgar language.) Normally, that would be a caution to the player who started it, not every single player out there. If, however, the celebration is directed at the opponents and/or their

supporters, then it crosses over into taunting. 'We got you!' OSAA and the schools do not want to see the players doing that sort of thing, which could be pretty close to inciting to riot in some cases, the cases where it is most likely to appear. Red card.

This brings us to language. NFHS rules make a distinction between "any incidental use of vulgar or profane language" and "using insulting, offensive or abusive language or gesture." I am seeing a number of referees report language directed to them by coaches or players which is clearly insulting, but only a caution is given. Typically, incidental vulgar language is used to express a player's disgust with their own play, e.g. an easy shot that goes high. But when it is directed at a referee, opposing player, coach or spectator, then it should be red. I know that some referees have thought 'Oh, I'm not offended by f-bombs. I might have even used those words myself at some time.' If you are not offended, you have still been insulted and, to the general community, it is still offensive. Remember that high school sports are an extension of the classroom. That language is not acceptable in the classroom and it is not acceptable on the soccer field.

And it is not acceptable in the stands, either. If you hear spectators directing such language to you or the opponents, you must deal with it. It will not go away by itself. It can create a very bad atmosphere at a game and can lead to the event getting completely out of control. At a stoppage, get the game manager involved. If there is no separate game manager, then you will have to get the home team's head coach to deal with it. Give them time to take care of it. In particular prejudicial racist, ethnic, sexist, religious or sexual preference taunts cannot be tolerated! Stop the game and do not restart until the situation is dealt with. We do not order spectators to leave, shut up, etc. That's the job of the home school staff. If they are unable or unwilling to handle the situation, however, it may be necessary to terminate the game because the situation is both wrong and unsafe. (5.3.2.b and Play Ruling Situation B) This sort of thing is rare, but when it does happen, we have to step up and take care of business.

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