

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #5

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Most of the teams are in league play now. Since only the top teams in the leagues advance to the playoffs this year, wins and losses take on extra significance from this point on. While the teams that are at the top “expect” to win, and are extremely disappointed when they lose, the teams in the middle can be the most difficult. For them, the difference between making the playoffs and not going can end up being one goal scored or allowed. Let’s be sharp out there!

We seem to have more problems with coaches this year than in the past. Being professional and friendly with coaches before the game is important. Remember that we, the referees and the coaches, are the adults out there. It’s our job to see that the student-athletes get the chance to play, to use their skills and to represent their school. And, like the investment firms always remind us, past performance is no guarantee of future returns. In other words, we don’t carry over issues with coaches from the last time, whether the last time we encountered them was in a high school game or elsewhere.

But, while we understand coaches can be frustrated or not see the same thing we saw, we cannot allow public dissent. It brings the whole game into disrepute. Yes, we’re going to let a short emotional outburst go. But when they start having repeated outbursts, or the outburst is prolonged, then we need to step in and deal with it. At that point, you know it is not going to get better by itself. For high school, we need to use the ‘ask, caution, disqualify’ approach. Any coach who uses offensive, insulting or abusive language has earned their red card. If you are not sure about the difference between “incidental use of vulgar or profane language” and “offensive, insulting or abusive language,” please contact me. Your best judgment is required when determining which card to give. If nothing else, when the coach or player says, “Ref, you are a piece of” they should be red carded.

A number of mentors/assessors have mentioned that they are not seeing referees who give cards go over and inform the benches of the reason for the card. I know this is easy to forget, especially since it is only required in high school. It does not have to be any elaborate explanation. You should use the official reasons for cards in the NFHS rule book. For example, you can say, “White, number six, caution, unsporting behavior” to both benches at the same time. Wave on the sub and get out of there to restart the game. While this is required by rule, we want to keep everyone’s focus on playing the game and not the standing around stuff.

But there is some required ‘standing around’ time. None of us like to see players injured. When players are down or otherwise appear to have possibly been injured, we need to go check with them. “How are you doing, blue?” Sometimes, they just need a few seconds. In that case, we don’t need to stop the clock or make them leave the field. But, when they are hurt, we stop the clock and call on the

coach/trainer. Then we get away. There is no reason to stand hovering over a player who is down. Go to your dual partner or AR on the far side of the field. Never urge the coach/trainer to get them off the field so the game can resume.

When there are injuries that require a player to leave the game, that information should be noted. The school and/or insurance company may want that information. It looks like you weren't even at the game if you put down "no injuries" and the school reports that an ambulance was called and the administrators want to know what happened. If the injury is serious enough that the player does not return to the game, that injury needs to be reported.

Finally, let me be very, very clear about this. Play Ruling 1.4.1 Situation B reads, "While inspecting the field prior to the game, the head referee detects that the portable goals in use are not securely anchored to the ground. RULING: The game will not start until the goals are properly secured." Plain and simple: YOU MAY NOT START THE GAME IF THE GOALS ARE NOT SECURED!!! A bag of balls or a player's bag on the back bar does not adequately secure the goal to the ground. If you can pick up the back bar, it is not secure. If the cross bar can tip forward, it is not secure. This rule must be enforced, to the letter, in every game, varsity, JV or JV2/freshman. It is a player safety issue and cannot be compromised. That could mean that you are unable to start a game on that field that day. Look for other options, of course. But please do not put student lives at risk because you don't want to be the 'bad guy' who had to tell them that they couldn't play. It goes with the territory.

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