

# Oregon School Activities Association

## Soccer Bulletin #6

2014

We have had a number of incidents of poor sportsmanship reported by referees already. Warm weather seems to bring out bad behavior. Not that I'm looking forward to bad weather. League play is well under way now and there have been a number of upsets, which tend to produce upset coaches, parents and players. We have even had a case of a player taunting an opposing coach!

I can't say it enough. High school sports are an extension of the classroom. We have an important role in that. But we are also not "the show." We are not as important as the play of the game itself. The referees work with the coaches to allow the student-athletes to use their skills, in a safe and fair environment, to represent their school. We are the adults out there. We still need to be the adults when coaches forget that.

Sometimes during the season, there are scheduling glitches that arise. A JV football game goes too long on a Thursday night and the varsity soccer game is delayed. The visiting team's bus is late leaving or gets stuck in traffic, so the start of the game is delayed. Or, even worse, both teams think they are playing at home and the visiting team doesn't show up at the game site. These things happen. Getting upset and issuing orders to the teams/coaches/schools is not going to help anything. You can be sure that the coaches and players are all just as frustrated as you are and probably more. None of them can change what happened. So, as mature adults, we work with them to fix the things we can change and don't worry about the things we can't change. Just remember that the coach didn't schedule the game and the coach didn't drive the bus. We're in this together, not as opponents.

Unfortunately, one of the lessons we sometimes have to help teach is that there are certain words that you simply do not use, certainly not in the classroom or when representing your school on the field. There have been far too many referees this year who have ignored language that shouldn't be used or who have given yellow cards for what should have been a red card. When a player tells you "F... you, ref," they have earned a red card for offensive, insulting or abusive language, not a yellow for dissent.

Let's review. Any time a player or coach directs offensive, insulting or abusive language to you, a fellow referee, another player or coach, they **MUST** be shown a red card. F-bombs are offensive and insulting language! If you don't think so, I simply don't know what you would consider to be offensive or insulting. Clearly, the rules are written on the assumption that some language is offensive, insulting and/or abusive and it has no place in the high school game.

At the same time, when a player throws out a bad word or two that isn't directed at anyone in particular, other than, perhaps, themselves, then we have "incidental use of vulgar or profane language." In that situation, we issue a caution. This might, for example, happen when they miss a wide open goal and express their frustration verbally, loud enough that people off the field may hear it. It may even be a very bad word but, if it isn't directed at anyone other than themselves, it is incidental vulgar or profane language.

Similarly, if a coach or player is using language or actions to demonstrate their disagreement with the referee's decisions, but they do so without using offensive, insulting or abusive language, that is still unacceptable behavior. Coaches kicking or throwing things, for example, should be red carded, with no previous warning required. Sometimes, even the normally best behaved coaches will have a short, emotional outburst. As long as the language isn't insulting, offensive or abusive, and the comments are short (one or two sentences), we're probably best to ignore it. When the coach begins to have repeated outbursts, then we need to treat what they are doing as dissent. Ask, caution, disqualify.

Please, do not get stuck repeatedly asking the coach to keep his comments to himself. Way too many referees are reporting that the coach was continually complaining/challenging decisions, "the whole game," and the referee does not report that the coach received a caution, much less a disqualification. Giving the coach a caution will end the dissent, 98% of the time, because the coach does not want to get sent off. In most of the rest of the cases, the coach can't help himself because he's so wound up. That means that the referee didn't deal with his dissent early enough. Please deal with it, then, before it becomes a huge problem and sours the game for everyone out there. And, of course, we know that sometimes the coach isn't arguing. He just wants to know what the decision was. So tell him, briefly. The coach's tone and your experience will tell you whether it's dissent or just a question.

There have been quite a few cases this year of post game problems for the referee. A coach, a player and/or a spectator decides to offer their opinion of your referee skills, your intelligence or your parents' marital status. By OSAA rule, the home school is required to provide a game manager (other than their head coach) for varsity games in all sports, including soccer. If no one introduces themselves before the game, ask the coach if there is a game manager present. Try to make contact with the game manager before the game. Part of their role is to take care of problems like spectators, so you don't have to do it. The rule requires that they offer you a post-game escort to your car. You don't have to accept.

In virtually every case of post-game problems, the home school did not provide a game manager. If there is no game manager, you should report that to your commissioner in your game report. Further, in almost every case, it has been clear that the referee crew did not leave the field immediately at the end of the game. You should position your bag, water bottle, etc. at a place that will afford you the best chance to leave the field without a post-game confrontation. While every school's layout is different, that will frequently be behind the goal that is closest to the parking lot. At the end of the game, get to your bag and prepare to leave quickly. That doesn't mean that you refuse to shake a proffered hand of a player who happens to be near you at the end of the game. If you are at your bags for 60 seconds, you are there too long. Do not wait to observe the teams shake hands. Do not wait for

the losing coach to come tell you what an incredible job you've done. Get going, especially if you see someone headed your way. At the same time, sometimes a player or coach will insist on receiving a card by the way they act towards you after the game. If it happens on the field or in the immediate surrounds, you still have the authority to give a card of either color. Just try to not give them the opportunity to do something that will require it.

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