

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #1

2016

The new season is about to start! The teams have done try outs and practice session after practice session with their coaches, all getting ready. I hope that you are also ready. Could you go out and do a game this afternoon?

There have been some questions about the shirts that high school officials should wear this year. As you may recall, the NFHS rule is that officials wear a state approved shirt. (Rule 5.1.3 a) The OSAA adoption is that high school referees in Oregon will wear the USSF referee shirt. USSF has adopted a slightly new shirt design this year. However, very few referees have actually ordered and received a full set of the new shirts. USSF has approved wearing the 'old style' shirts through 2018. For Oregon high school games, it is perfectly acceptable to "mix and match" new and old style shirts on the same crew. The crew does have to match colors, however.

Besides our own uniforms, we also have to inspect player uniforms and equipment before the game. This is just preventive officiating. Your inspection should be informal. No lining them up and checking them off against the roster. Please be diligent about uniform inspections from the start of the season. We are most likely to see oddball stuff, uniforms and equipment that do not meet NFHS rules, at the beginning of the season. Be sure players are wearing shin guards and are wearing them properly. We simply don't want players losing the chance to play the whole season after someone rips up their leg with their cleats, intentionally or otherwise.

Work through the coach to deal with uniform problems. It is possible to be friendly, polite and professional about this and still get them legally and properly equipped before the game starts. Remember that we must ask the head coach for both teams before the game if their players are or will be before game time, legally and properly equipped. If a whole team's uniforms do not comply with rule 4, please discuss this with their coach. We want to give the players the chance to play and represent their school. Any variations from NFHS uniform rules that you allow so the game can be played should be included in your game report.

There is at least one high school player this year who will be wearing an Islamic head covering. This is not a "bandana." (See Play Ruling 4.2.2 Situation A.) As long as the scarf is not knotted, it is legal. If you have safety concerns about this, please work with their coach to make the head covering safe and legal. Your opinion about their faith should not influence your decision on this, one way or the other.

Likewise, particularly early in the season, you may encounter facilities that are not correct. Your number one priority in this area is player (and referee!) safety. There can be no compromise about

safety. If the field and equipment are safe, then try to see that it is also in conformity with Rule 1. Remember that team areas do not have to be marked, even though schools are encouraged to do so. Both teams have to be on the same side of the field in Oregon. Work with the home school's representative to correct any issues. Any problems that can't be fixed and which don't affect safety or fairness of the game should be reported to your commissioner through your game report. Just marking field conditions as "terrible" is not sufficient. The commissioner is going to need details in order to approach the school.

Those of you who are also USSF referees know that the International Football Association Board (IFAB) made some significant changes to the Laws of the Game earlier this year. Those changes will go into effect in Oregon as of September 1 for games played under OYSA or OASA. You may have seen some of these changes already, through one source or another. However, those changes are NOT in effect in high school games. Please do not use the IFAB Laws in high school games. If NFHS adopts some or all of them, they will not go into effect in Oregon until next year.

We, the coaches and the referees, are the adults out there, giving the high school players the chance to be part of a team, play the game and represent their school. We are there to bring justice to the game. When player behavior begins to approach the line or crosses it, we need to let them know that. There will always be some players who do things they shouldn't do. Our goal is to get them back under control so they and everybody else out there can play the game. Work with their coaches and even their teammates to make this happen. There is no reason to start with an adversarial approach and it is very, very rare that approach becomes necessary during the game. Less than 00.02% of the coaches were sent off last year during high school games in our state, but the number isn't zero. None of us, coaches or referees, are perfect, but we can almost always work together for the good of the players, their schools and the game.

The Oregon Athletic Officials Association (OAOA), to which you belong, each year tries to recognize outstanding sportsmanship by coaches. You may do a game this year where there is an act of great sportsmanship. Or you may work with a coach who has displayed a high level of sportsmanship over the years. Please let me or Jack Folliard at OAOA know about such fine behavior. We want to publicly recognize it, if only to emphasize its importance to players and other coaches.

Good luck with your season. Feel free to contact me with any questions or issues you have seen.

Patrick Duffy

OSAA State Rules Interpreter