

# Oregon School Activities Association

## Soccer Bulletin #4

2017

Many teams have now begun their regular league season or they will do so next week. Now the games “mean something.” We should expect that tensions will be a little higher and players, coaches and spectators quicker to be concerned about what they see as incorrect decisions against their team.

I have been impressed with the improvements I’ve seen in the general level of referee performance since the beginning of the season. That doesn’t mean we’ve all been perfect but referees are clearly confronting misconduct when it occurs and they are dealing more with the technical requirements, like goals being secured, proper uniforms, etc.

However, one issue that has been raised by athletic directors and coaches multiple times is clock management. I think we all know that it’s 40 minute halves and no overtime. However, NFHS rules REQUIRE that the clock be stopped “for an injury, for a penalty kick, for cautioning (yellow card), for disqualifications (red card), following the scoring of a goal and when a referee orders the clock be stopped.” 7.4.1. This rule applies in all games, varsity, JV, JV2/freshman. It applies whether a stadium clock is in use or the referee is keeping the time because there is no stadium clock. Do not deprive the players of their opportunity to play the game! The use of “time added on” is not appropriate in high school soccer, even if that’s what you are used to doing in USSF affiliated games. Please also note that high school rules about stopping the clock are different than the reasons that IFAB gives for adding time. I have heard that referees have justified not stopping the clock as required by the rules as being necessary so they can get to their next game in time. That is not an acceptable reason to not follow the rules. If there is not enough time between your assignments, you need to discuss that problem with your assignor, rather than cheating the players in the first game.

We had a small issue with a possible concussion situation. As you know, when a referee believes that a player is showing the signs or symptoms of a possible concussion, we send them to the bench. On rare occasions, a coach will want to return that player to the game later in the match. The coach is responsible to see that the player has been cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional. Referees do not have a role in determining if that has happened. However, if the player is still showing possible signs of a concussion, referees are still responsible to again send them back to the bench. And, of course, everything that happens around a possible concussion situation must be included in your game report.

Probably the most routinely controversial decision that we make as referees is determining whether there was contact between the ball and a player’s arm/hand and whether that contact was deliberate. 12.2. Soccer is a worldwide game and that means that people of many different cultures play the game. In some cultures, it is expected that any contact between hand and ball is to be treated as deliberate and should be penalized by a direct free kick or penalty kick. Please note that I’m not

saying “they’re wrong about that interpretation.” In the United States, especially for high school soccer, that is not the interpretation you should use. Handling has to be deliberate, hand/arm to ball or hands/arms held in an unnatural position where the ball hits the hand/arm. If the ball comes from a direction where the player couldn’t have seen the ball coming, that simply can’t be deliberate handling. Handling can’t be accidentally deliberate! I have heard that some referees are trying to ‘split the difference’ by giving an indirect free kick in that situation. Sorry. It’s either a direct free kick or nothing.

Ideally, we would check the rosters to see that a carded player’s number is on the roster, either at halftime or before leaving the field at the end of the game. If that doesn’t happen and you realize after you’ve left that #14 isn’t listed on the roster, be sure to note that in your game report and give full particulars of the incident anyway. You may remember someone using the carded player’s name. There may be someone from the JV game with that number who may have been pulled up for the varsity game. Don’t guess but you can instead report who you think it was and why you think it was them. Nobody likes being in this situation but it is more on the coach than on you.

As passions build over the season and during individual games, sometimes players engage in behavior that they shouldn’t do. If you have cautioned a player for incidental use of vulgar or profane language (12.8.1.d) or disqualified a player for offensive, insulting or abusive language (12.8.2.f), please include in your game report the exact words, as best you remember them, that the player used. Please do not just say “he swore” or “he dropped an f-bomb.” The exact words are important to the school when they deal with the player, so they don’t try to wiggle off the hook, e.g. by saying “I just say fricking!”

Along the same lines, in high school taunting is a red card. I know that in many other venues, it may be a yellow card for unsporting behavior, but in high school it is red. That applies to such language or behavior (e.g. facing the opposing spectators with a big smile and pointing to their school’s name on their shirt) whether directed to opposing players, coaching staff or spectators. There’s no place for that kind of thing in high school sports and it must be dealt with. The schools don’t want their student-athletes doing it.

Patrick Duffy

OSAA State Rules Interpreter