

Oregon School Activities Association

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It rained and it rained. That's just the way it is with a fall sport in Oregon. I've had some questions about grass fields being playable or not playable. By rule, the host school's administration makes the determination about the playability of the field, up to the point that you start the game. Note that the host school doesn't always have control over whether a game can be played on a particular field, e.g. when they are using a public park. Once the game starts, it's then up to the referee (head referee in a dual) to determine if the field is still playable. I'm sure that many of us have been in the situation of doing a game on a grass field that is fine at the beginning of the game. But as the game goes on, players slide, cleats pound the grass and dirt and additional water may be descending on the field. If the condition of the field is making the game a travesty, then it's time to end the game. It is solely your judgment.

This week, we had a very interesting situation in a contentious boys' varsity game. Several cautions were given in the first half but play was still quite physical. The players just weren't getting the message. At half time, the referees were shown a video, taken by a parent, showing a player punching an opponent. Neither referee saw the punch at the time, however. 5.1.2 Situation A c tells us that the referees cannot use the video to penalize the player, either at the time of the action or at halftime. The referees did, however, decide that any contact they saw in the second half was going to be treated as a foul. Essentially, they lowered the dividing line between a foul and trifling contact to virtually zero to get things back under control. A while into the second half, and after complaints from the captains, they stopped play and asked the captains if they wanted to allow a bit more contact. They agreed and the rest of the game went reasonably well. In this case, the referees did a great job of getting a potentially explosive situation back under control. I would discourage routine use of video at halftime under normal circumstances but this was clearly a situation where an unseen foul was causing the game to approach the boiling point.

Another referee was walking up to the game site and saw a coach taping over ear rings on one of her players. The referee quite rightly said that the player couldn't play with the ear rings in, taped or not. They are not permitted by rule and they are a danger to both the player and the other players. Guess what she was told? You're right. "The referee last week let her play." Sorry, but that's not an excuse. Maybe the referee last week didn't see it but you can not knowingly allow illegal equipment to be worn. And I have seen a starter on the field for the kickoff with socks around their ankles and no shin guards, two games in a row. At least take a quick look. Most coaches will be happy that your preventive officiating kept them from getting a caution.

I am still getting reports of casual attitudes about referees doing sub-varsity games. We have to respect these games as high school contests, even if they aren't the highest level of the game. The players deserve, and you are being paid to provide, a full length game, including time stopping for all reasons time would stop in a varsity game. We are still required to be there 30 minutes before scheduled kickoff. And don't forget your cards, even for a JV2 girls game. Just in the last week, we have seen girls' games with multiple ejections and JV2 boys with multiple cards, of both colors. You can be as relaxed as the game needs to be, but not one inch more! Expect the unexpected. What is the motto of the US Coast Guard? Always prepared.

See you on the field.

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