

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #3

2025

Most teams have played at least two games already, with the possible exception of some JV2/freshman teams. To my knowledge, we have not had any mass confrontations yet, but most of the games at this point have been pre-league season. Keep your eyes on what the match up is for your games. When the league season starts, teams tend to get more focused on winning. Although the team records so far are usually pretty incomplete, your antenna should be up for games between two undefeated teams or an undefeated team and a team with maybe one win, maybe none. Those games will go down differently. You should check the teams records on the OSAA website before you go to the game. <https://www.osaa.org>.

A while back, many referees will remember that drop balls were contested between one player from each team. That rule changed several years ago now. Rule 9.2.3 now says that the referee drops the ball to one player from the team which last “possessed” the ball before play was stopped. Note that this is different from IFAB rules, which did change for this year. If nobody possessed the ball at the point when play was stopped, usually for an injury or when we referees get hit by the ball, at some point before that one team had possession. Also remember that 9.2.3 specifies that the ball is dropped from waist level to the ground. Do not throw the ball down.

Some associations have asked their officials to tell the head coaches before the game that there should only be ‘one voice’ coming from the team area. This may be a request but it is not required by NFHS rules or OSAA adoption. 12.5.1.f NOTE specifically allows coaches “to engage in verbal communication with the team during play.” Head coaches are still responsible for the way that they and/or other people in the team area address the officials. If you can’t identify who in the team area said it the head coach gets the card.

From the reports that I have seen so far, we are doing a very good job of holding players and coaches responsible for their language. As you know, incidental vulgar or profane language is a caution. Offensive, abusive or insulting language, which includes taunting and certainly includes any offensive, derogatory, or vulgar language around race, ethnicity, gender, religion or orientation, is red. First time. No warning. They’ve already had their warning from OSAA and the NFHS rule book.

A hardy problem is shin guards. Players must wear shin guards which meet the NOCSAE standard. If they meet that standard, the NOCSAE emblem is on the top front of the shin guard. The emblem is shown on page 26 of the rule book. Shin guards are also designed for a certain height range. If the shin guards look real low, they probably are not legal! If you think they might not be legal for a player of that size, ask them to show you their shin guard. You don’t

have to squat down to see it. They can just pull one out of their sock and hold it up for you. Let me suggest that you walk around/look around the players while they are warming up, looking for who has no shin guards or obviously too small ones. When you ask the coach if their players will be legally and properly equipped at game time, you might tell them which players appear to have no shin guards or too small ones. Another suggestion is that, if the players are going to walk out for introductions, each AR can go down the line before they walk out and ask to see the shin guards of players with no shin guards or ones that are too small. This is a safety issue and we are responsible, by rule, for protecting the players from their own foolish actions.

Likewise, I am seeing a lot of players this year with tape on their wrists or forearms. They are playing us. 4.2.4 says that "sweatbands and/or hair-control devices may be worn on the head or wrist if made of soft material and do not pose risk to injury." That precludes tape, which is obviously not a sweatband. If you can see any bulge or the like under the tape, you know that they are wearing something which is not legal. Tape does not make them legal. 4.3.2.a says that, a religious medal or other religious items may be worn but they must be taped to the body and worn under the uniform. So 'religious' ear rings, for example, are not being worn under the uniform. Medic alert bracelets are, of course, permitted but they must be taped with the medal visible.

I know, I know. Policing shin guards and jewelry are not why we chose to referee. But this is for the protection of the players and that's why we are out there.

Be safe out there.

Patrick Duffy
OSAA Soccer State Rules Interpreter