

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #6

Teams are now in the heart of the season, sometimes the heat of the season, at least emotionally. For some varsity teams, losing one critical game can make the difference between making the playoffs and not making it. We have to be prepared for emotional outbursts, which never announce themselves in advance.

We deal with two forms of serious misconduct, serious foul play and violent conduct. Both, of course, are penalized with a red card. However, it is still important that we report the correct reason for the red card. Serious foul play includes;

1. A direct free kick or penalty kick level offense using disproportionate and unnecessary force against an opponent while playing for the ball.
2. A tackle or challenge that endangers the safety of an opponent or uses excessive force or brutality
3. Lurching at an opponent for the ball, from any direction, using one or both legs, with excessive force or endangering the safety of the opponent.

Violent conduct covers

1. Using or attempting to use excessive force or brutality against an opponent when **not** challenging for the ball
2. When anyone on the roster (i.e. including subs on the bench or others in the team area, such as coaches) commit a violent act against **anyone** (not just opposing players) regardless of where it is done or whether the ball is in play or not
3. When not challenging for the ball, the player **deliberately** strikes anyone on the head or face with the hand or arm, **unless** the force used was negligible.

There's no VAR, no instant replay on our games.

When we are dealing with any possible such act, we have, of course, stopped play for the foul and/or the misconduct. You should first stop the clock. Then go to your dual partner or assistant referee and consult with them about what they saw, if anything. Back step, if necessary to get to them, keeping the players in view. Otherwise, this is a time when mass confrontations can start. Give the red card, when the conduct meets either description and inform the coaches of the official reason, either serious foul play or violent conduct. When you file your game report, it is very important that you describe what actually happened and use the correct reason. The official reason you give may affect OSAA and/or the school's penalties for this behavior.

In the last week or so, we have seen a drop off in red cards for serious foul play and violent conduct, although there have still been some. The two biggest reasons lately have been DOGSO and language. From what I have read of your descriptions of what happened, we're doing a strong job of dealing with DOGSO. Remember that all of the factors must be present. There's no DOGSO if the goal was scored anyway. The opportunity to score must be obvious,

not possible. If it was a good attack with a possibility to score, it would fall under stopping a promising attack, which is a caution. It can still be DOGSO, however, even if the foul occurs outside the penalty area.

Language is still a problem in our games. OSAA and the schools do not want student athletes using inappropriate language at their games. Offensive, insulting or abusive language, whether verbal or physical (or both) is a red card offense. Such language normally is directed at an opponent. Non-directed language, such as words used by an attacker who has just kicked the ball well over the goal, is a caution for incidental use of vulgar or profane language. The F word by itself is probably incidental. The F word followed by "you" is insulting and a red card. It is important that we not react emotionally about language.

But what if you hear that language from someone on the bench and you don't know who said it? We cannot just let that language go. Unpunished, that kind of language fires up the atmosphere at the game to levels that will produce greater bad behavior. I would recommend that, in this situation, you approach the head coach in as professional, courteous manner as you can, and ask them who said it. Then red card the player or coach that the head coach identifies. If the head coach stonewalls you, then, by rule, the head coach gets the red card. And, if there is no adult to take their place, then the game is over.

Please think about this question: If a player uses the 'shush' gesture to an opponent, is that taunting? E.g. a player scores and then makes that gesture to the opposing goalkeeper. Yes, the circumstances and temperature of the game may affect your decision but it would be a good idea to think through this question before it happens in your game. And is your opinion the same if they do that to opposing spectators?

Be safe out there.

Patrick Duffy
OSAA Soccer State Rules Interpreter