

Oregon Schools Activities Association

Soccer SRI Bulletin #4

2021-2022

We are now late in the season. Some schools are down to their last few games of the regular season. (So please be understanding when it is 'senior night' at your game.) We can expect to see more physical play and hear more dissent. The top teams are trying to get in position for the playoffs. The lower teams are trying to save some self respect by beating one team above them in the standings. I would encourage you to research the standings on the OSAA website (upper left on the home page, soccer boys or soccer girls) so you know what's at stake for each team. You may find that the teams have played each other already this season which is also a good thing to know before the game.

That more physical play may come in a variety of forms. More slide tackles. We have to watch them very carefully. Did the player get the ball? Did they do so fairly? You can't just smash into the opponent, knocking them over and, oh, they also got a little part of the ball as well. Did the player come in from behind? It is possible that this could be a fair challenge but it is much more likely, especially at the high school level, that it's going to be a foul and quite possibly a card. Was there any way that they could have even reached the ball? Did the player have their studs/shoe up, perhaps making contact higher than where the ball was? This should earn at least a caution, depending on whether, in your opinion, it was reckless or involved excessive force. Not every slide tackle is going to earn a card or even be a foul, but you can be sure the other team will think it's at least a red.

There have been a few other fouls for which we need to be on the lookout. Frequently, there is a defender behind an opponent who is clearly about to receive the ball, either at their feet, chest or head height. Defenders all too often will bump or push the opponent just as the ball arrives. Yes, this may be trifling or an advantage situation but frequently it is not. Try to see these situations from the side. It may take a little more running by you but it will significantly reduce the number of times you have to guess whether it was really a foul. Particularly in girls' games, hands may be used rather than a body bump in these situations. Certainly, if a defender ends up with their arms fully extended in front of them, it's a push. Some pushes are a little more subtle than that. But we also have to judge whether the attacker was backing into the defender, trying to make space.

There has also been an increase in the number of attempted bicycle kicks or other situations involving high kicks. If a player's foot, from a standing position, makes contact with an opponent's face, that's always a foul and, almost certainly, should be at least a caution. Yes, I can envision a situation where that may not be the right answer, but they will be few and far between, especially in high school. Still, if the player with their foot up very high has no one around them, play on. No foul has been committed. But any time a foot is above the opponent's waist, it probably a foul.

Please submit your game reports the same evening, if possible. If there has been a red card, this is essential! The schedule is getting pretty compact at this point in the season and your commissioner and the school need time to process red cards and the resulting suspensions. (Remember that we do not know the answer to questions about how long suspensions are, etc. That's above our pay grade.) Depending on your instructions from your commissioner, they may want you to call them that night for

red cards, and perhaps for cautions to coaches, besides doing your report electronically. They want to hear it from you before they hear from the Athletic Director.

It is very important that you report all cards of both colors, in full. We have already had a yellow card protested this year because it was a second caution. What you report for each card should be enough information that anyone who was not at the game will be able to understand why you gave that card. Please do not just say “unsporting behavior” when explaining why you gave the card. We need something more like “In the 24th minute, John Jones, #4 for Washington High School, make a reckless slide tackle that knocked down his opponent and did not touch the ball. I cautioned Mr. Jones for unsporting behavior and showed him the yellow card. He subbed out of the game at that point and I informed both coaches of the reason for the card. There were no further problems with Mr. Jones.”

Again, with players getting more excited, more pumped up for these late season games, it is important that you use cards to calm down the situation that caused them. That’s sometimes called ‘getting something for your card.’ Take your time. The clock is supposed to be stopped. (Another member of your crew should be verifying that the clock actually did stop.) Make a big deal of the card. Display the card but also tell the player what they did to deserve it. Some of them truly don’t know what they did and/or why it was deserving of a card. Go to both benches to inform them, at no more than a jog. Use time with play stopped as your ally in slowing down the attitude. In effect, we’re saying “You want to play more physical? You can’t handle more physical!” I’m seeing a lot of players and a few coaches who think that they can dissent or use bad language after there is a card for unsporting behavior, etc. They are wrong.

The playoffs are coming soon. I know that many commissioners have fewer options for games in November this year. They won’t know which games or how many games they will have on any particular date until a day or two beforehand. Please be as available as you can.

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