



Oregon School Activities Association

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The first games of the new season start next week! There are going to be a ton of games and, apparently, fewer referees than last year. (Your association's mileage on that may vary.) If you are not completely eligible already, please, please, please get on it today. Don't wait for this weekend. You must be eligible for at least sub-varsity games for your assignor to put you on games. If you don't know whether you are eligible, please go to <https://app.arbitersports.com/eligibility/official>. Don't worry about playoff eligibility, since the training for that qualification level will not be available until October.

There are only minor changes to the NFHS rules for this year. However, it is important to remember that OSAA modifies the NFHS rules in some ways. If you officiated in Oregon last year, at least some of these should sound familiar.

Referees do NOT interpret OSAA rules for players, coaches, AD's or spectators, even if we know what the rule is. So, for an example not chosen at random, if you give a player a red card and the coach asks you, "That's one game, right, ref?" We don't say 'yes' and we don't say 'no.' Perhaps your reply could be "That's above my pay grade, coach."

If you haven't already, you will be taking a refresher on the signs and symptoms of concussions. If you think that a player may have suffered a concussion, call on the coach to help them off the field. No, we're not doctors, but we are, now, trained lay people. Players may not return to play until they are cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional. If you have a possible concussion, report all of the circumstances in your game report. In the very rare situation that someone returns to the game after a possible concussion, also report the details of that. We do not need proof of clearance and we do not check the credentials of who checked the player's condition.

The 'blow out' rule is still a goal differential of eight or more at half time or any time after that. Remember that it isn't just eight goals being scored. It's a difference of eight in the score. At that point, the game is simply over. If they want to continue to play, we do not stay. And, regardless of the score, at the end of the game, we leave immediately. No handshakes, no review of our performance by the losing coach, etc. "Ref and run!" And the crew leaves as a team, escorted by the game administrator if the referee team deems it a good idea.

The new video this year on discriminatory acts is very important. We have had a few very ugly incidents in the past and we need to act in order to prevent any further problems. If a player or coach reports to you that they or one of their players was called a name or there was other offensive, insulting or abusive language, we stop the clock and we stop the game. We talk to both coaches about what was reported to us. We then give them a minute or two to meet with their players and let them know that this is unacceptable. If a coach tells you that you have to take care of this, please remind them that their OSAA training on this subject gives them the responsibility. Do NOT restart the game until the coaches have addressed their teams. And, of course, you must report any such stoppage in your game report.

At the start of the season, some players may not be ready to play. We're talking referees being the "fashion police." If we take care of this from the beginning, we won't have to still be dealing with it in October. We're talking shin guards, shin guards worn properly (no more than two inches above their ankle), no ear rings even if they are taped, no necklaces (with the exception of religious or medic alert bracelets, as outlined in rule 4), etc. Just wander around the players before the game, looking for potential problems. If you find one or more, tell the coach. They (almost) always appreciate hearing about it from you before the game starts, so they don't have to hear about it during the game.

Remember that the coaches and the referees are the adults out there. It's our job to give these players the chance to play the game, show their skills, represent their school and learn the life lessons that come from being on a high school team, the same way that many of us did. And the schools do not want their student-athletes and/or coaches to be an embarrassment to the school. Let's work together for the good of the game.

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