

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #1

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This is the best time of the season. Everyone is undefeated, no one has been carded and there hasn't been a single bad referee decision anywhere! But the actual season starts on Thursday.

I have been meeting with the coaches and athletic directors from a number of schools. I have emphasized to all of them and now to you that we, the coaches and the referees, are the adults out there. Our job is to work together so the student-athletes can show their skills, represent their school and learn the life lessons that we learned by being on a high school sports team. Last year, we had about 4,500 high school soccer games in Oregon with at least two coaches at every one of those games. There were only 15 red cards given to coaches last year. That is a fantastic record which demonstrates great cooperation between the coaches and the referees, even though, naturally, we aren't always going to agree on what happened and/or what the appropriate penalty should be.

I believe that we only had a handful of incidents last year related to derogatory language reported to the referee but which the referee had not heard. That says that use of that kind of language is not routine, not 'just the way it is out there,' and not something that we can just let it go. If any player or coach reports to you that they have heard inappropriate language used by a player or coach, from either team, you must act, without hesitation. Stop play, stop the clock, and inform both coaches what has been reported to you. Then give them a minute or two to bring their team's players together, so they can remind them of the expectations of OSAA, their school and their coaches about discriminatory language. You don't need to hurry this up. The adults handling this calmly and slowly is part of the message that we are sending to the student-athletes.

If you hear similar language or see other disruptive behavior from spectators, you should stop the game, stop the clock and ask the game administrator to deal with what you heard or saw. By OSAA rule, the host school is required to have a game administrator at all varsity games, even if the game is not on campus. If there is no game administrator at a varsity game or it is a sub varsity game, the home team's head coach is the party responsible for dealing with this behavior. Do not restart the game until the game administrator or coach has had an opportunity to deal with the problem. And when they have done that, thank the administrator or coach for doing so.

It is always possible that air quality problems may interfere with some games this fall. As provided in rule 1.7.1, the host school determines whether the game can be played up until the game begins. During the game, if they advise you that the air quality index has risen into the danger zone, terminate the game. If that happens, OSAA policies about interrupted contests will apply. Coaches should address their questions to their athletic director. The officials should report in their game report the time remaining in the game and the score at the point where the game was terminated.

If you have given a red card to a player or coach, or there has been a serious disruption to the game (e.g. ambulance called, administrator having to deal with spectator misconduct, lightning, police called, etc.) that, of course, goes in your game report. But you should also call your commissioner (assignor) right after the game. They will want to hear it from you before they get the inevitable call from the athletic director.

Finally, at the end of the game, LEAVE! OSAA asks that you do not shag balls, watch handshakes/fist bumps between the players, change your shoes, eat a sandwich, etc. Pick up your bag and go directly to your car. Do not engage with any spectator, coach or player as you are leaving, no matter what they are saying. The game administrator for varsity games should offer you an escort to your car. If they do not or there is no game administrator, please put that in your game report.

Some of this may sound like it's a jungle out there but it's not. But if you are prepared to deal with those unusual or tense situations, you will be less likely to encounter them. Good luck with your season and go team yellow!

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