

# Oregon School Activities Association

## Soccer Bulletin #4

2015

We are now halfway into the regular season, as hard as that may be to believe. As you may know, October is breast cancer awareness month. Many teams in the past have sought to participate in this observance by wearing pink. It is OSAA's policy that uniforms are not to be modified for causes, no matter how meritorious. For referees, that means that the home team must still wear all white shirts and socks. The visiting team must wear a contrasting color of shirts and socks. There is no problem with pink shoes, pink head or wrist sweat bands, pink ribbons worn for hair control (and not for "adornment"), etc. Player shorts can also be any color, whether home or away, and they do not have to contrast with the opponent's shorts, so, yes, both teams could wear pink shorts. Teams do have a color of shirts and socks other than pink to wear, since they have been compliant with NFHS rules in September.

A number of referees have reported that the field where the game was played was "dangerous," for a variety of reasons, like exposed rock, gopher holes, raised sprinkler heads, etc. These are all valid reasons to believe that the field is unsafe. In high school soccer, however, decisions about the condition of the field are made by the home school. (Rule 1.7) After the game starts, those decisions are made by the head referee. If you believe that the field is dangerous to the players (and you!), you must report what you see to the home school administrator before the game begins. If they determine that the field is, in their opinion, safe, then play the game and put what you saw in your game report. Your commissioner should then pass this on to the school's athletic director. Please do not 'get cute' and do something like play two seconds and then decide that the field is now unsafe. The provision about the referee making the decision after the game has started is intended only to apply in cases where there has been some material change in conditions since the game started, such as a torrential downpour flooding the field, lightning, etc.

Speaking of game reports, most referees are doing a great job of describing what happened. Remember that your description of why you gave a card should make clear what happened, what card you gave and what happened then (e.g. "the player left the field, was replaced and the game was restarted with a direct free kick.") Just saying "unsporting behavior" simply does not give enough information. What was unsporting about their behavior? E.g. "A reckless tripping foul" Remember that "careless" is used for an ordinary foul, "reckless" for a foul that is also unsporting (yellow card), "excessive force" for a foul that constitutes serious foul play (red card.)

I am seeing far too many cases where the referee reports giving a yellow card for offensive, insulting or abusive language. Sometimes, the referee even says something like "The coach insulted me, so I gave him a yellow card." If it is truly insulting, it's a disqualification (red card), whether it comes from a player, substitute or coach. We do not want to have language like that used in high school

sports. You don't hear it used in other high school sports because those players and coaches know that it will not be tolerated. We should not tolerate it either. Now, yes, there is a difference between language that is directed to another person and a general, undirected bad word. (Like when a player misses a wide open goal and uses a certain word to express their frustration.) The general, undirected bad language would fall into the "incidental use of vulgar or profane language" category. In either case, your game report should report the exact words used by the player, substitute or coach, as best you heard them. Do not use vague terms, such as "He used bad language."

When you show a card, whether for language, unsporting behavior or something else, you do that because you want to change their behavior and send the message to everyone else that their behavior won't be tolerated in anyone else, either. Frequently, instructors will tell referees that they need to "get something" for a card. If the behavior happens again in the game, it is apparent that you did not get something for the first card. If you need to get more for a card, make a bigger production out of giving it. Take your time recording the information. Talk to the player and make it clear that you don't want him to do that again. If he still wants to argue, that's a pretty good sign that he needs more attention to avoid problems later. Be sure to go tell both of the coaches why the player got a card, as well.

Unfortunately, we had a game last week in which a player went down hard, near the penalty area. The referee, correctly, went to her and checked her out. Her answers apparently convinced him that she was okay and the game was restarted. However, the video clip I was sent clearly showed her holding her head and, not staggering, but walking around apparently confused, for quite a while after the restart. Basic fact: Players want to stay in the game. Reality: Sometimes they shouldn't. If you have been convinced that they are okay after hitting their head, do a little visual check on them a few seconds later, just to see if they really are alright. It's far better that we send someone to the bench to be checked out than we let someone continue to play who has in fact suffered a possible concussion. "When in doubt, sit 'em out."

And, speaking of injuries, remember that, in high school, any time you stop the clock for an apparent injury, even if you then decide that they're okay, they still must leave the field. If you aren't sure whether they are injured, it isn't "apparent" (yet), so don't stop the clock until you decide that they apparently are injured. The trainer, of course, makes the final decision about injuries, but we also know, from our lay person's experience, that some players clearly are injured and cannot continue playing, at least for a while.

Be careful out there.

Patrick Duffy

OSAA State Rules Interpreter