

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #4

2026

For the most part, teams are still in the non-league part of their schedule. Games are not as intense as they will get when league rivals begin to play each other. Referees have to be prepared to deal with the unusual events or the sudden eruption of an angry player or coach, out of the whole tenor of the game up to that point. There is a reaction sometimes that 'that's not so bad so I'll let it go.' No, it is important that we deal appropriately with what's outside the rules every time. What coaches and players always ask from referees is consistency. We all have to be on the same page and that page is the NFHS rules and the OSAA adoptions.

I am seeing referee game reports that say that a coach was cautioned for dissent after they were 'repeatedly' asked to not dissent but continued to do so anyway. Depending on the feel of the game, a warning may be appropriate for the first incident, particularly if it wasn't loud enough to be heard two blocks away. If you have warned the coach(es), the second dissent must receive a caution. If you don't caution at that point, the coaches will assume that you are going to just beg them to not say those things every time they say them.

All of that assumes that what the coaches said was not offensive, insulting or abusive. Please note the key word there, "or." The language doesn't have to be offensive, insulting and abusive. If it is any of those three words, it must result in an ejection, first time, no warning. OSAA and the school administrations do not want their coaches or student athletes using that language while representing their school. Referees still have to decide whether what was said truly was offensive, insulting or abusive, or was 'vulgar or profane language.' Vulgar or profane language, of course, is a caution. Language like this, in either category, tends to heat up the game when it happens, to a level that high school players can't handle.

There are a number of times that the restart is to be a drop ball. Frequently, the clock is stopped because it was stopped for an injury that was not a foul. There is no reason to hurry. "The ball is dropped by an official from waist level to the ground. The referee drops the ball to one player of the team that last possessed the ball...." 9.2.3 We do not do contested drop balls anymore. Opponents are to be a least four yards from the ball when it is dropped. Please do not just throw the ball or roll the ball to the player. The name says it all. Drop ball.

When you have contact between an attacker and one or more defenders in the penalty area, it can be a high pressure moment for the referee. Penalty kick? Free kick for the

defense? Foul with a caution? Foul with an ejection? Trifling, and therefore no foul? The pressure is on us. Our first priority is to watch the play intensely. Hold back from making a fast decision. For one thing, there might be advantage or even a slow rolling ball going into the goal while everybody else is down. If you have any doubt, when you stop play, go talk to the assistant referee about what they saw.

The big one here is “Denying Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity” also known as DOGSO. If you are awarding a penalty kick, you must decide which foul was committed. If the foul that denied the goal scoring opportunity was an attempt to play the ball, then it is a penalty kick and a caution to the defender. DOGSO in the penalty area is not always a caution and it is not always an ejection. If it was not an attempt to play the ball (e.g. a push, a hold, pulling the attacker’s body or clothing), then it is an ejection.

When you write up your game report and describe any foul for which you gave a card, please be very exact about the words you use. There have been several cautions written up as the player having ‘committed a slide tackle with excessive force.’ Excessive force is described in the rules, 12.1.9.c, as “when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent....” If you say in your report that excessive force was used, you are saying that it should have been an ejection, not a caution. Please re-read 12.6.1.d for a description of what has to be sanctioned as serious foul play. And it would be better if you refreshed your memory about this before it happens in the game you are doing, so you get it right.

I am still seeing players with tiny shin guards in almost every game I do. Please discuss this specifically with the coaches before the game. I know that none of us likes to be the ‘fashion police,’ but it’s part of the job. I am also seeing a lot of home team players wearing huge amounts of white tape ‘to hold up their socks.’ What they’re really doing is trying to get the visiting team player, for just an instant, see white and so pass them the ball. Again, please deal with this before the game. It’s just easier than having to deal with it during the game.

Be safe out there.

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