

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #5

2026

While there are some league games being played now, most teams are winding up their non-league schedule. Not infrequently, this means a game against a non-league rival, which will usually be challenging for us. And this is not just for varsity games as well. JV and JV2 are learning that 'we have to beat these guys' but, because they are on JV or JV2, they don't necessarily have the skills to do that.

Let me be very clear about this: We have had two games where a player or coach made deliberate physical contact with a referee. This is absolutely unacceptable, no matter how 'light' the contact was. The problem is that it was their intent to make the contact, to express how much they don't like your decision(s), etc. Any such contact **MUST** result in an ejection. If it is a coach, the coach must leave the venue. Do not restart the game until the coach is far enough away that you can't see or hear them. You should consider whether or not to terminate the game. As soon as you are in a secure location, you must call your assignor. They will notify OSAA. Your assignor or OAOA may be able to tell you more about your rights and options under the Oregon laws concerning assault of sports officials.

Naturally, the reverse is also not allowed. Referees may not make any deliberate contact with any player, spectator or coach. No touch on the arm or shoulder to make your point or get their attention. No getting in their face. You don't need to do any of those things to do your job.

There have already been several games where the referee reported that a player grabbed an opponent and "threw them down." It is your judgement about whether what you saw was a simple foul, a foul and unsporting conduct or a foul and violent conduct. A deliberate full 'throwing' action is probably violent conduct. You have to be there, of course, and there are lots of variables to that contact. But don't shy away from dealing with it because you just don't want to give a red.

If you hear discriminatory language and know who said it, you must stop play and eject the player. If you hear it but don't know who said it, stop play and go to the head coach. Tell them what was said or done, give them a chance to identify the person and, if they decline to do so, the head coach gets ejected. If you are told by players or coaches that discriminatory language or acts have been heard, stop play, tell both coaches what was reported, and give them a minute or two to talk to their team. Only then can you restart play. Any and all of this

must be included in your game report. If you are not the head official, you also must report what you heard or saw, even if you didn't hear or see anything relevant.

I am seeing more upper body fouls this year, particularly pushing or shirt pulling. We tend to focus on the ball, feet and ankles when they are about to come together. Step back far enough that you can see the whole body of the two or three players. That way, you can catch all of what happens, fair or foul. And if you are too close, you are in danger of getting in the way of play anyway.

Don't forget the eight second count down when the goalkeeper has the ball in their hand(s) and the ball is in play. The first three seconds are silent. After that, loudly count down the rest of the time, with your hand up in the air, showing the number of fingers for the remaining time. In a dual system game, the lead referee should be the one to count. If the lead has forgotten to do so, the trail should be prepared to help, even if they have to come in at 'four' or 'three.'

Just a reminder: there is no 'stoppage time' in high school soccer. We start and stop the clock, as required by high school rules, even in sub varsity games. When the clock hits zero, the half is over.

Be safe out there.

Patrick Duffy
OSAA State Soccer Rules Interpreter