

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #6

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Wow, have things heated up! Some leagues are now in league play, and most other teams are at least finishing their non-league season. In the minds of the players, coaches and spectators, league games are more important. Sometimes the game is between rival schools and sometimes the game has implications for who wins the league championship, who makes the playoffs or even who finishes last in the league. You should be checking the OSAA website before your game to see where these two teams stand and how their season has been going.

There have been a number of situations already where spectators have been directing abusive language at players from the other team. When any member of the officiating crew hears this, the game should be stopped. The referee should notify the game manager of what has been heard and then give them time to deal with it. Don't restart the game until they have had that opportunity to fix the problem. Dealing with spectator behavior is the job of the game manager. That may be the home school's head coach. Referees can not order spectators to stop their language or to leave, only the game manager.

Any trash talking by players directed to opponents must be treated as taunting and result in an ejection. 12.6.1.c.1. Deal with it as soon as you hear it. Hoping it will go away is not going to work. If you don't deal with it, it will escalate and almost certainly become a fight. It will not get better until you deal with it. Any directed offensive, insulting or abusive language must also be an ejection, first time, every time, whether it is directed to the referee, a player, a coach or a spectator. And players pretending that they were just talking to themselves also has to be ejected.

Somewhat similarly, if the coaches are yapping at each other, stop the game and give cautions, unless what they were saying was offensive, insulting or abusive language. In that case, of course, it's red. R1 or AR1 is in the best position to notice that this is happening. When it does AR1 should raise their flag and get the attention of the referee to deal with it.

Many of the more experienced referees can feel that a game is heating up. Everybody isn't experienced, of course. No one can start out with 10 years of experience. If the contact in the game is getting harder or less likely to win the ball, it's time to slow things down. Let the adrenaline dissipate a bit. The way to calm things down is to call more fouls, fewer 'play on, advantage' decisions. When you stop play in this situation, even though there might have been an advantage, tell the player who was fouled, 'Sorry I had to take away the advantage there,

but I had to send a message to those guys.’ Almost 100% of the time, the player will thank you for protecting them from the next foul challenge.

This year, OSAA changed their previous policy about ‘ref & run’ to allow the officials to watch handshakes, accept fist bumps, etc. However, we have already had some coaches or other bench personnel try to take advantage of that, by getting in the face of the officials after the game. They can still be cautioned or sent off even though the game has ended. The referee should consider the temper of the game and decide whether to exit quickly or not. If so, be sure to let the other member(s) of the crew know before the game ends. If you don’t have headsets, do a fly by. Since you don’t know in advance if the game is going to be contentious, put your bags etc. in a safe place, close to the nearest exit. The home school’s game manager should be offering you an escort to your cars. If that doesn’t happen, especially when you need it, put that in your game report.

A final, small thing. One home team has reportedly been wearing shirts with white sleeves. Those do not contrast with the opposing team’s all white shirts. They are, therefore, not legal to wear in a game. Please continue to check that the goalkeepers are not wearing socks the same color as the opposing team’s field players. And the home team players cannot cover their socks with white tape. Too obvious gamesmanship. It only takes about 10 second to check.

Be safe out there.

Patrick Duffy
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