



January 23, 2009

**Sierra Valley Soccer Referee Association**

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**Upcoming Events**

Feb.14-15. JJ Minor div.1/3 tournament

Feb. 28 – March 1: BML end-of-season tournament (Stockton may host u14 girls)

March 7-8 – DOL, Kaercher end-of-season tournament

**Foul Language and Cards**

Just as there are gradations on how you call fouls for physical play, there are also gradations on how you handle foul, abusive, and insulting language and gestures. For young players, you call fouls tightly. For youth players (up through and including u19) you must be sensitive to taunting, put downs, and other interactions that can inflame the emotions of players, coaches and spectators. FIFA and USSF direct you to give a red card if the foul, abusive, or insulting language or gesture is directed at another person. CYSA directs you to give a red card even if the language is not directed at another person but merely uttered in frustration. The punishment is not so severe (fewer games) but still the behavior gets a send off.

You do not need to have rabbit ears and respond forcefully to every little comment that might have ambiguous meaning. However, you are generally doing a disservice to the game and the players if you ignore clearly obnoxious comments. Note that some coaches make critical comments that call the match into disrepute and try to hide under the guise that they were not talking to you but rather to someone else. You need to flush out such snipers and make it clear that their criticisms will not be tolerated.

You have a range of tools for dealing with player, spectator, and coach misbehavior. You might want to have a quiet gentle word with the person if the transgression is minor. It might be appropriate to make a loud public admonishment of the person if their action also was obvious to casual observers. And you have yellow and red cards. Do not show cards to coaches, but rather “book” them (equivalent to showing yellow cards) or you can send them off under extreme circumstances. Within the set of options that you have, the weakest one and the one most likely to get you in trouble is doing nothing. For further guidance on handling player language and gestures, please read the following memorandum from USSF.

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Player language, including gestures and other forms of nonverbal communication, can take many forms:

- passing information along to teammates or urging special efforts during play – *this is completely acceptable*. Referee action: no action needed.
- momentary emotional outburst – *borderline acceptable, perhaps a trifling offense only*. Referee action: a stern look or verbal admonishment.
- dissent or unsporting behavior – *unacceptable misconduct*. Referee action: caution and display yellow card.
- offensive, insulting or abusive language – *more serious misconduct*. Referee action: send off and display red card.

The referee must intelligently apply common sense, **feel for the spirit of the game**, and knowledge of the way in which player language can affect management of the match in order to distinguish effectively among these forms. Regardless of age or competitive level, players become excited as their personal or team fortunes rise or fall, and it is not uncommon for language to be used in the heat of the moment. Such outbursts, while possibly vivid, are typically brief, undirected, and often quickly regretted. The referee must understand the complex emotions of players in relation to the match and discount appropriately language which does no lasting harm to those who might have heard or seen the outburst. Of course, the player might well be warned in various ways (a brief word, direct eye contact, etc.) regarding his behavior.

When the words or gestures directly challenge the authority of the referee or assistant referees, actively dispute an official's decision, or are likely to be taken up by a widening circle of other players, the referee must determine if this dissent can be halted through the more formal action of cautioning the player and displaying the yellow card. The objective of the caution for dissent or unsporting behavior (in the case of language which is not dissent but which falls short of deserving a red card), is to protect the referee's ability to continue to manage the match.

Language or gestures can also be “offensive, insulting or abusive” with the result that the player involved is required to leave the field and is shown a red card. The **fundamental principle** in recognizing offensive, insulting, or abusive language is that the referee must protect the safety and enjoyment of the participants as well as the fairness of the play. Accordingly, language that is generally accepted by players, does not produce adverse or aggressive reactions, and is generally tolerated by them should less likely result in a red card being shown.

The referee might well choose to talk to, warn, admonish, or caution players whose undesirable language occurs in a short, emotional outburst and send off a player whose language is a sustained, calculated, and aggressive verbal assault.

The three **critical criteria** to be used in evaluating whether language needs to be handled as misconduct warranting a red card are:

- The specific words and/or gestures used. Some words are inherently more offensive than others and are more likely to provoke aggressive reactions. Words that focus on religious, ethnic, racial, or sexual characteristics generally fall in this category and often require a fast, strong response by the referee.
- The audibility or visibility of the language. Language which might call for a more limited response if said quietly and/or to a restricted audience might require a sendoff if performed more publicly.
- Specifically targeted language. Language that is clearly directed at specific persons (for example, opponents or officials) is more likely to spark a reprisal and will usually require a stronger response by the referee.

Referees must take care not to inject purely personal opinions as to the nature of the language when determining a course of action. The primary focus of the referee must be on the effective management of the match and the players in the context of the overall **feel for the spirit of the game**.

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## **Substitutions**

Every sanctioning soccer organization seems to have slightly different rules for substitutions. Coaches often learn one set of rules and then confuse/convince young/new referees so that the rules for that particular league are not properly enforced. Here are the standard CYSA competitive rules for substitutions (and a couple clarifications not in CYSA's rules but that CYSA abides by).

Substitutions can be made as follows during regulation time:

- a) Either team at a goal kick
- b) Either team after a goal
- c) Either team at half-time
- d) Either team at a card
- e) Team taking a throw-in
- f) Team with an injury. Clarification: If the referee stops the game for an injured player and the player is attended to by a coach, the player must go off the field. The team can substitute for the player. If the player is a goalkeeper, or injured the same time as the goalkeeper, he/she does not have to go off. If the player has fresh blood, he/she must go off.

There is one more unusual circumstance: On a penalty kick, a team can replace the goalkeeper with a field player. Technically this is not a substitution since no player is leaving the field and being replaced by a player off the field.

All substitutions, and the switching of the goalkeeper, have to get the referee's permission first. Referees are not to deny team's requests unless: a) A team is putting the ball into play and the request comes at the last second; b) The substitute is not ready to play. It is permissible for you to direct the exiting player to go off the field at the nearest boundary line so that you can speed up the process.

CYSA has unlimited substitutions. By "unlimited" we mean two things: The total number of replacements is not limited and also players can re-enter the game after they been substituted for.

## **Administrative Responsibilities: Game Cards**

Please see the enclosed information on filling out game cards. It is your responsibility to do this.