



February 20, 2009

Sierra Valley Soccer Referee Association

4824 St. Andrews Dr.

Stockton, CA 95219

Ph.209-603-3549

e-mail: [doug @ e-chards.com](mailto:doug@e-chards.com)

Thank you

Thank you for refereeing games the last 2 weekends in Stockton. We got a lot of compliments on the job you did.

Upcoming Events

- Feb.28-March 1, Bill Meyer League u14 girls end-of-season tournament
- March 7-8 – Dennis Olson League u17/19 boys end-of-season tournament
- March 7 – CYSA Equipment Show and workshops. San Jose McEnery Convention Ctr, 150 West San Carlos St., San Jose. In-service clinics include: 9:00 – 10:15 Handling; 10:45-12:00 How coaches and referees can work together for a better game; 1:30 – 3:00 Youth referee of the year; 1:30 – 4:00 Referee development.
Stockton referees: Remember if you complete 5 hours of in-service training, you get a 20% pay bonus for 1 year from the date of the clinic.

How strict do you call fouls and misconducts?

The game of soccer is officiated differently in the United States than around the rest of the world. We referees tend to call fouls and give cards on offenses that in other countries might be considered trifling and doubtful breaches of the law. At the top level, many players would rather play through non-dangerous challenges than to have the whistle blown and then have 7 or more defenders set up in better position. For those of you who watch games from other countries, or for that matter, the MLS this past summer, you see players exhibiting their skills with less interruption by referees, more exciting plays, and overall more entertainment for spectators.

That said, U.S. Soccer is passing the word down through the referee ranks to change how we are calling games. And they are giving us some specific guidelines for how we can adjust without letting games get out of hand. Please read on.

When you can consider calling advantage or letting the minor fouls go without being called.

You may take some calculated risks not stopping play as follows:

- depending on the location on the field (if the fouled player is in goal-scoring territory);
- depending on the type of challenge (upper body challenges and minor tugs are easier for players to play through; incidental contact is clearly forgiven by even-tempered players);
- depending on the opportunity for successful results (if the fouled player has the ball at his/her feet and has good options available for dribbling or passing to teammates in advantageous positions, i.e. the opportunity for a “fast break”)
- depending on the skill level of players (older, more-skilled players are more likely to be able to convert the opportunities that you see into real advantages)

If you are not calling a foul under these circumstances or when there is some hard but legal contact it is helpful if you make some signal or gesture to let everyone know that you saw what happened and are choosing not to stop play. There are no official signals for this but if you watch professional referees you will see them gesture to a fallen player to get up or hold their hands out to the side similar to a baseball umpire’s “safe” signal.

If the conduct is not dangerous but warrants a card because of persistent violations you can allow the play to continue and administer the card at the next stoppage.

When you need to call the game more strictly.

Here are warning signs that you need to stop taking risks and slow the game down:

Retaliation

Dissent from players

Dissent from coaches or spectators (Note: This will be a topic of a future newsletter).

Escalating level of challenges. Adolescent boys may be especially quick to retaliate for even the most trifling of offenses if they are let go.

Players changing their focus from the ball to their opponents

Small confrontations off the ball

Fouls near team benches

Wet field: Comfort level to make tackles increases

Tackles extended from 3 yards to 7 yards

Sequence/succession/repetition of challenges in a short time span (cluster of fouls)

More body contact

Mismatched body contact (e.g. feet to head)

Retaliation foul after play restarts

Players falling into goal (e.g. after a score)

Winning team protecting ball at corner flag

Excessive fouls on star player

Fouls on goalkeepers. They are often the team's most valuable players and they are often in a vulnerable position when they are going after a ball.

The teams did not come to play today.

If your assistant referees are calling more fouls than you are.

If your assistant referees signals you to tighten up your calls.

What you should always call.

If you judge the foul endangers a player's safety, call the foul. This bears emphasis for children.

When we are working with children's games, the weight is heavier toward their protection.

100% misconducts. (This concept will be explained in a following newsletter).

If you are in the first 2-3 years of your career as a referee, you may not have trained your "referee eyes" yet. At this stage of your referee career, you may be missing more than you see.

You had better call everything you see!

While you may adjust the strictness of your officiating using the suggestions here, do not ever let competitive-minded parties dissuade you from the primary directive of keeping players safe.

Other notes from games the past 2 weeks

Unless you have been explicitly notified by your assignor or a league authority (not a coach on the game), do not do a "2-man system". Here are some reasons why: U.S. Soccer does not approve of the 2-man system. It is harder to do a good job calling fouls in the center of the field (where the majority occur) when you are on the outside looking in. If your third official shows up late, it is disruptive to switch from a 2-person system to a 3-person system. A couple weeks ago we had games started with 2-person systems. Multiple late-arriving referees lost the first half of their games (and half their pay) because they could not get into their assigned games. If the on-time referees had recruited a club line, it would have been easier for the late-arriving referees to get the flag from the club linesperson. Remember: A club linesperson is restricted to merely informing you that the ball went out of play. Give him/her instructions in front of the captains after the coin flip. Make it clear that the club line is not to give you direction of throw-in, whether it is a goal-kick or corner kick when the ball goes over the goal line, off-sides, fouls, etc.