



June 19, 2009

Sierra Valley Soccer Referee Association

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Thank you

Thank you for refereeing games the last several weekends in Stockton.

Priority of Assistant Referee Responsibilities (USSF Memorandum March 24, 2009)

In a recent professional exhibition match, a group of referees, instructors, and assessors was discussing an incident in which the assistant referee was faced with a conflict in priorities – whether to hang back and observe the goalkeeper with the ball in case the goalkeeper went outside the penalty area with the ball still in his hands (a handling offense) or to move up field to get in position for assisting with offside in case there was a quick counterattack after the goalkeeper released the ball. The conversation was vigorous, but the matter should have been easily settled by reviewing the relative importance of the two possible violations.

A similar conflict in priorities can arise when a team is attacking along the touchline and the assistant referee must choose between looking up the touch line to signal if the ball leaves the field and looking across the field to monitor whether an attacker moves into an offside position. Dividing attention this way is not impossible, but both responsibilities will suffer.

The single most important responsibility for the assistant referee is making timely and accurate offside decisions. All other duties outlined in Law 6 are secondary.

Offside decisions are often “game critical” regardless of their specific result. A decision for offside is just as likely to be challenged as a decision against an offside violation. Whether the issue is offside position or involvement in active play, if a goal is called back, allowed, or interrupted as a result, the decision will be controversial. It must therefore be supported by the best fitness, mechanics, communications, and concentration that the assistant referee can bring to bear.

If there is not much difference between where the assistant referee must focus to handle each different duty then clearly both duties should be attempted. As one duty increasingly becomes a distraction for the other, the assistant referee should attempt to adjust positioning to reduce the conflict. Where the distraction is too great, the only solution is to focus on offside, leaving to other members of the officiating team the responsibility of covering to the best of their abilities the less critical conflicting duty.

Among the topics which must be covered in the officiating team’s pregame discussion is the issue of what the assistant referee should do to resolve a conflict between offside and such other responsibilities as determining if the ball has left the field, which team has possession, and the occurrence of violations which do not involve violence.

Serious Injuries (USSF Memorandum March 25, 2009)

There has been well established US Soccer guidance for referees at the highest level to be particularly mindful of serious injuries and to respond appropriately. Past National Program for Referee Development clinics have dealt with this matter in no uncertain terms and this was the specific topic of a directive this year which was covered at the Professional Seminar in Orlando and again in all the Referee Training Seminars preparing for the 2009 MLS/WPS/USL/PDL season.

In the DC United - LA Galaxy game (March 22), two players collided while attempting to jump for the ball. As a result, both suffered head injuries, with bleeding, that required stitches or staples to close the wounds. Play should have been stopped immediately.

Whenever a player's head is injured—regardless of whether the collision was with an opponent, a teammate, or an object on the field such as a goal post—the safety of that player is of prime concern.

There is no higher priority.

Upcoming Events

- June 27. In-service training in Turlock. (Free)
When: Saturday, June 27, 2009. 9:00 – 3:00
Where: Monte Vista Chapel, Monte Vista & Berkeley Avenues, Turlock, CA. Directions to Site: Exit SR 99 at Monte Vista Ave. Take Monte Vista Ave. East to Berkeley Ave.
Keynote Presenter: Bob Evans, FIFA Referee 1979-1988, Formerly USSF National Director of Referee Instruction, co-author of the book "For the Good of the Game".
What will be covered: Intermediate-level training on such topics as deciding what fouls to call and what you can let go, game flow, setting walls, etc. Morning will be classroom. Afternoon will be on field. Lunch is on your own, although you can buy from fund-raising group in the parking lot.
Why to attend: You get higher-level knowledge that will help you referee better, in order to get higher-level games (and paid more). You get a 20% pay boost for regular league games scheduled through SVSRA for one year.
How to register: Contact Mike Latham mike.latham@lmco.com or phone 408-368-1387 by June 23. Clinic is free. Stockton referees get a 20% pay boost for one year on regular league games assigned through SVSRA if they complete this in-service training.
- August 20-26 Referee class in English. Details are on the StocktonYouthSoccer.org web-site. You may attend any portion of the clinic as a refresher for free. If you refer a new referee to the clinic and they pass the class, you get \$10 provided they tell Doug that you referred them.