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Sierra Valley Soccer Referee Association

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Priority items from the first two weeks of the fall season

Most of these items are based on things reported by referees at the September 20 meeting. Thank s are due to the insights of the people there.

#1 Problem Reported by Assistant Referees: Controlling Substitutions.

Coaches switching players in the middle of play and/or asking for substitutions when they did not have the legal opportunity: This could be due to coaches not knowing the rules, or momentary confusion, or willful disregard of the rules. Our approach to addressing the first two causes:

- a) I will send an e-mail to the age-level coordinators to pass along to the coaches reminding them of what the proper procedure is.
- b) Before the game, you can remind them. "Coach, just a reminder, these are the only occasions when SYSA rules allow you to make substitutions: On your own throw-in; Either team on a goal or goal kick, or half-time. For injuries, the injured player must be substituted if they are attended to (except goalkeepers). If a player gets a yellow card, he or she may be substituted if you want to. (No other player may be substituted on the caution.) Please have your substitutes up and ready when you ask us. We will give you two signals-- the first to call your players off the field and the second to send the substitutes on. Thank you."
- c) When you are checking in players is a good time to remind them that players come off before subs come on.
- d) During the game, center referees can help avoid confusion by making clear throw-in signals and maybe even vocalizing them, "Orange throw-in!" "Goal kick!" Assistant referees should always make throw-in signals when the ball goes over their touch line and hold the signal a couple seconds. If the coach asks you "Can I sub now?" Let them know. If it's not a legal occasion, tell them, "I'll signal for you when it's your turn."

With whole platoons of players coming and going, you can lose track of how many players left the pitch vs. how many went on. Whoever is closer to the team bench should go there and count the players coming off and make sure that the same number enter. It wastes a lot of playing time if the center referee has to count all the players on the field for both teams if the assistant referee didn't control the players coming and going.

What may appear as willful disregard of the rules by coaches may in fact be coaches' frustrated response to your disregarding them. If they ask for a substitute on a legal occasion and you don't give it to them, they may feel entitled to make the substitution anyhow. Assistant referees, be sure to acknowledge the request if it's appropriate either by raising the flag with the proper signal, or answering them audibly "Not now, Next chance we'll get you." Center referees, to avoid missing requests, be sure to look at both assistant referees at every stoppage.

Lastly, if coaches tell you they got approval or they agreed to different substitution procedures for their game, don't back off from what you know is right. They didn't get permission to change the rules!

I hope these tips will help solve most of the problems that have been coming up.

#1 Problem Reported by Center Referees: Dealing with coaches and spectators.

This problem area was raised by center referees, but they are not the only one having to deal with it. ARs also have to deal with it.

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Getting off to a good start is very much in your control. Get to the game on time (see notes below). Look sharp: Wear your referee socks pulled up, your shirt tucked in, your badge straight, your hair neat, and no jewelry. This sends a message that you are sharp.

When you speak with the coach, speak loudly and firmly enough that you send a subtle message that you are confident. Remember Mr. Miyagi's advice to the karate kid: "Look eye." That is, look the coach in the eye while you are speaking together. Do not look at the ground or off to the side. Again, it sends a subtle message of confidence.

At kick-off, blow the whistle louder than you think is necessary: This sends a message that you are in charge. When you make signals, make them promptly and do not have your hand or arm limp or crooked. Look "military" sharp. This sends a subtle message that you are confident in what you are doing and most people will pick up the vibes and go with them.

If you make a mistake, (gosh, who doesn't?!) don't dwell on it. If you do dwell on it, it might distract you from the next call that you have to make. You will have plenty of time at half-time or after the game to figure out what went wrong and how you can do better the next time. Analyzing it during the game generally gets in the way.

If any spectator is giving you problems, communicate the problem to the coach as soon as possible. Between the center referee and assistant referees one of you ought to be able to identify any obnoxious parent(s) or spectators and expose them. Coaches are expected to deal with their spectators.

Field Arrival times and Keeping games on time

We try to be realistic in the time when we ask you to arrive at the fields before games. It should be early enough that you can get everything done in time for the game start on-time without having to stand around idle. Based on those two commonsense criteria, you should arrive at Commodore and McNair, at least 20 minutes before your first game.

Commodore, kick-off times are 8:00 am, 9:15 am, 10:30 am, and one game at 11:45 am.

McNair kick-off times are 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am, 12:30 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:30 pm, 5:00 pm.

These times will remain the same throughout the season until the end-of-season tournament. At Arch Road you should get to the fields 30 minutes before your first game. On a week-by-week basis, the starting time of the first game will change and you need to make sure you get your times straight from Doug. If in doubt, check the StocktonYouthSoccer.org web-site. We post the referee schedule there no later than Friday each week for SYSA games. If you don't have access to a computer, call Doug.

When you arrive at the fields, do not hang out in your vehicle or sit down. Get into your uniform right away and go to your field. Either inspect it or start checking in teams right away. If you are unsure which field is yours, choose one, preferably one where there already is a coach and players so you actually can be doing something productive. You can always hand off the paperwork to the correct official if you chose the wrong field or if we need to move you. Many families have other things to do on Saturdays besides soccer. Let's get their games started on time so that they can get out of there on time and get on with the rest of their lives. If a player shows up at the last minute and you are ready to start the game, don't hold up the game for them. Let them check in with their AR at a break in the action.

If you do not have the first game of the day, when you arrive you do not need to wait for the game before yours to end before you make a move to start checking in the teams for your game. Find the teams right away and check them in. This gives you a better chance to get your game started on time.

If you are running late, it is acceptable at the end of the game for one of the referee crew to fill out their portion of the game card, hand off player passes if you've been carrying them, and skip the handshakes to start checking in the teams for the next game.

Referees for Dennis Olson League and Kaercher League

Two major things have changed that you need to know about.

Send-Off Procedures

You no longer need to hold on to the player or coaches' pass who has been sent off for Dennis Olson League and Kaercher League games. You do need to get their name and their ID number so you can fill out that information on the send off report. Return all passes to the teams after you have gotten the information that you need. For recreational games, you still need to hold onto the player/coach pass and send it along with the rest of the paperwork.

Coaches' Knowledge of the Laws of the Game

In past years, all head coaches and assistant coaches for district 8 Dennis Olson League and Kaercher League teams were required to have a current USSF referee license. This meant that on paper at least they had good knowledge of the laws of the game. As of this year, coaches can meet the requirement for knowledge of the laws of the game by completing an alternate 4-hour workshop. This workshop does not cover every aspect of the laws of the game so you have a higher likelihood of encountering situations where coaches do not have good knowledge of the laws of the game. Please be patient with them. In reality, the coaches with referee licenses may have gone through the class years ago and forgotten the details or missed changes in the laws, so you might not notice any more problems this year than last.