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Sierra Valley Soccer Referee Association

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Two-referee system, not!

You may be tempted to use a 2-referee system when you do not have all three officials for a game. For USSF-affiliated games (and this includes all Stockton Youth Soccer and CYSA games), do not do this. USSF does not approve of a 2-referee officiating system and you were not trained for it. If you have two officials “book-ending” players (at opposite corners of all the field players), the chances are that each of them will be far from play most of the time. This increases the likelihood that both of them will get screened out from fouls. The natural inclination in this configuration is not to run close to play, so you are less able to influence what happens by talking with players to rein in their behavior, expressing concern on injuries, etc. There also is a natural inclination to not blow the whistle for fouls that you see that are closer to the other referee. Need I say more?

If you are short one official on any given game, ask the home team for a club linesman. If you are short 2 officials on a game, ask both the home team and visiting team for a club linesman. Give the club linesmen their flag and instructions in the center circle in front of the captains after coin toss. “Please stand at the corner flag and raise your flag when the ball goes totally out of play. Hold the flag up until play stops. Do not signal who gets the ball, off-sides, or anything else.” Let the captains know that you will be calling off-sides by yourself on the end of the field with the club linesman. Since it is hard to do without a licensed assistant referee, players should not stop playing when they think there is an offside but there has been no whistle.

Coaches should be prepared for this request. If coaches do not provide a club linesman, do not go to a 2-referee system. Note: High School has a 2-referee system but that is not part of US Soccer.

Player Check-in and Getting Games Started on Time

Do not leave it to the last minute to start checking in players. You should have started checking in players at least 10-minutes before scheduled kick-off time. Tips:

- Do not check in players without a game card (so you can't split up the referee crew and check in two teams separately).
- Collect coaches' passes as well as player passes and check the photos.
- Put a checkmark next to the players' name that you check in. Cross out the name of any player not there or not playing. The game card becomes an “audit trail” not only for scores, who gets paid, and also who played.
- Do not leave the field after the game without returning the passes to the coach. This is more than a little inconvenience.

We have had accusations a couple times this year of teams playing illegal players and the game cards have been important evidence in settling those claims.

Being alert at all times

It's easy to get lulled into complacency if you haven't been told in advance that a match has any particular importance, you haven't noticed any hard fouls, haven't sensed animosity between players, and haven't listened to yelling from spectators or coaches. If you have preconceived notions that females are the gentler sex, and that young players have only innocent motives, these also can lead you to mentally check out. But if there is lingering resentment from a foul that you missed, a grudge hung over from a previous match, or something not even related to soccer that affects the attitudes of a couple participants, then the illusion of a genteel atmosphere can be shattered in a split second during one of your games. Or it might be after the game during handshakes. Not to be cynical and think the worst of everyone, but you must always be on alert and prepared. Your preparation and vigilance may help you spot the cues of imminent problems and head them off. Times you need to be especially on guard are when you least expect there to be a problem. Here are situations where referees are prone to let their attention wander:

- Assistant referees when the play is at the opposite end of the field. What you should be doing is covering the referee's back. That is, watch the players that the referee can not see. If you have any sneaky dirty players, this is the time they often do their deeds.
- Assistant referees when the ball goes out of play in their quadrant or when there is a game going on behind them with yelling. Don't watch the player retrieving the ball. You are not paid to watch the other game. Watch your own game.
- Center referees after the ball has been passed away may tend to shift attention to the ball in flight. The ball never fouled anybody. But what about the opponent who arrives late and fouls the passer after they've released the ball?
- All three officials: Dead ball situations: injuries, substitutions, free kicks, cards, goal kicks, corner kicks, etc. So if you are the center referee, what should you do to gain a grasp of what is going on around you? There are two easy steps:
 - Position yourself to have a view of the most players possible and the part of the field where you expect play to go next.
 - Make eye contact with both assistant referees. This allows you not only to get signals from them of brewing problems that they've sensed, but it also allows you to scan the full field of players. Are their small groups with tense or agitated postures, or players taunting their opponents? If players paying more attention to each other than to the game, is it friendly or antagonistic? You might want to visit some of them, or at least make a mental note to monitor their interaction.

In this past week in local games one girl was elbowed in the stomach while the referee was setting the wall for a free kick. The center referee was screened out but fortunately figured out what happened and gave a red card to the perpetrator. You might not be so fortunate. If you have not seen replays of the BYU vs. New Mexico women's college soccer game last week, search for a video on the Internet and see some of the incidents that escaped notice of the officials in that game. Ask yourself, "How could I have caught these?"

If you catch fouls or misconducts that players are trying to hide from you, you do a great service for all the good players in the game who might otherwise be injured or scared of playing hard to the ball for fear of opponents making no effort to play the ball, or fouling them once play has moved away.

Upcoming Events

SYSA end-of-season recreational tournament. Saturday Nov.21-Sunday Nov.22. All the u8-u19 recreational teams will have 2 games on Saturday and 1 or 2 games on Sunday. That's twice as
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many games as usual on Saturday, and a lot on Sunday, too. (u12 and u14 will use all 4 fields at McNair). Please keep your calendars free for games then. Note: Games will be shorter but same pay.

DOL/Kaercher end-of-season tournament. Saturday Dec.5 – Sunday Dec. 6 u14 girls division 3.

In-Service Clinic – Sponsored by California North Referee Administration Saturday, December 12th from 9 AM to 4:30 PM at the CARR America facility in Pleasanton. Instructor: David Olmos, retired National Referee and a National Assessor/Match Inspector from Texas. Topics include recurring themes from the Week in Review and new USSF material geared specifically for the youth game. Note: Stockton referees who complete this clinic get a 20% pay boost for a year. Directions: Take I-580 to Hacienda Drive exit. Go south to Owens Drive. Go southeast to Rosewood Drive. Go north to 4400 Rosewood Drive.