

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #2

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Most of us have already done a game or two this season. Now we are getting into the heart of the pre-league games. Sometimes, there will be mismatches and only rarely are these rivalry games. Don't go into a game blind. A team that comes in with a 2-0 record so far is probably going to have a different attitude than one that is 0-2. It would be smart to check team records before the game, at <https://www.osaa.org>. Right underneath the OSAA emblem on that website, you will find boys soccer and girls soccer tabs.

I am hearing about many players with shin guards that are too small. I know that very few of us want to deal with this. If you care about athlete safety, however, you do need to deal with it. Do this before the game. That means that you have to check the players while they are warming up. You might also look for jewelry at the same time. Look as early as you can, so they have time to deal with problems. Don't wait until after the coin toss. If you've forgotten to check them early, and the players are being introduced, they will be coming towards you, so take that opportunity to sneak a peek. Please do not hide behind the excuse that "I don't want to get off to a bad start with the coach." If nothing else, dealing with the issue will send the coach a message that at least this referee crew isn't going to just let things slide.

There are many new Athletic Directors this year. It is a killer, long hours job. Sometimes they don't know or don't remember all of the details of what has to happen for a soccer game. Be professional, be courteous, be understanding when dealing with them or someone who is acting as the 'game manager' of a varsity game. If there is a varsity game and no Athletic Director or game manager introduces themselves to you before the game, put that in your game report. A game manager, other than the home head coach, is required by OSAA regulations for all varsity games, even game that are not on campus. However, if there is no such person present, we start the game anyway at the scheduled time. For sub-varsity games, the home school's head coach will almost always be the game manager.

Most schools seem to know by now that goals must be weighed down or otherwise fastened to the ground. There is a type of goal which has two back bars, with the farther back bar having weights inside the bar. If you have any doubt, try lifting the back bar. If it lifts easily, then it is not weighed enough. This is not optional. Do NOT start the game until the goals are secured. If they can't be secured, then there is no game today. This rule applies at all levels, whether the game is on the school premises or in a park. This is a safety issue. It is rare that a goal falls over, usually after some contact from a player, but it can happen. And Murphy's Law says that if it can happen, eventually it will. There have been fatalities from unsecured goals falling over.

We must get a roster from each team before the game. Most, but not all, schools are printing their roster off of the OSAA website. Be sure that you have a number for every player and that the coach's name is on the roster, as well as the name of every other person in the team area who is not listed as a player, e. g. assistant coach, trainer, manager, injured player.

If possible, the team areas, as described in the NFHS rule book, should be marked. If the field is also a gridiron football field, the team area should be from the 40 yard line to the 20 yard line, and at least ten feet back from the touchline. If there are no lines, ask for them to put out cones. Coaches should not be roaming outside the team area during play. Subs, of course, can warm up outside the team area. They should be wearing a pinnie or jacket and they should not be behind the goal line, or behind the opponent's team area.

And, at the end of the game, ref and run. That means that, when you leave your bag at the end of half time, your keys and phone are quickly available. When the game ends, we do not stop to shake hands and we do not stay to watch the teams shake hands with each other. Any confrontations between players at that point are to be dealt with by the schools. If someone, player, coach or spectator, comes to you to give you the early reviews on your performance, try to ignore them and just keep walking to your car. If there's no way to avoid them, that's when your game manager's escort to your cars comes into play. If a post-game confrontation involves players and/or coaches, you do have the authority to issue cards as long as you are still in the area surrounding the field/stadium, which would include the parking lot. It is unlikely that such a situation will occur during your season, but it will be much more to your credit if you are prepared for such a situation.

Be safe out there.

Patrick Duffy
OSAA Soccer State Rules Interpreter