

Referee Responsibility

Getting to the Field:

- You should arrive at the field at least 30 minutes prior to the game.
- If you do not drive, make sure that someone knows you need a ride to your field and make arrangements for someone to pick you up to take you home.

Pre-Game Responsibilities

Inspect the Field:

- Look for holes or depressions that could cause twisted or broken ankles and see if holes can be filled. All dangerous rocks, trash, or other objects that do not belong on the field should be removed.
- Nets should be securely fastened to the goal posts and netting pulled back so as not to interfere with the goalkeeper.
- Goal posts must be securely anchored to the ground. Posts don't have to be in the ground, but the goal frame must not be easily tipped over. No matter how good the goals look at a distance, always carefully inspect them. If they are not securely anchored do not start the game. Safety first!
- Corner flags are in place and are not dangerous to players (at least 5 ft. high).
- Entire field is properly lined.
- If anything is needed, the home team is responsible for fixing field problems.

Check in the Players:

- Home team players/coaches should be checked first but it is not a requirement. You should start with the team that appears to be most ready for inspection.
- Make sure that all jewelry, earrings, watches, etc. have been removed. (Earrings must be removed. Covering them with tape does not make them legal.)
- All players **must wear shin guards** and **socks must be pulled over shin guards**.
- Player's shirts must be tucked in.

If You Are the Referee:

- Be aware of your position on the field. It's tough enough to properly call a soccer match when you are on top of the play. It is impossible to make correct decisions when you stay close to or within the center circle. Even when officiating at the small-sided game level, get in the habit of being in the proper position and working hard.
- At first, you may have to remind yourself to lift the focus of your vision from the ball and the legs of the players so you learn to take in the whole area of active play. It is normal for new referees to have to make this conscious effort to lift their eyes. Once you are more experienced, it will be instinctive for you to see a large area of play if you condition yourself to do this from the beginning.
- Always think about your positioning - you should know why you are where you are. What do you gain by being in this position?
- Make your hand signals clear.** Point the direction with a straight arm, fingers extended together.
- Blow clear and sharp whistles.** Learn how to make your whistle "talk" for you.
 - Use the whistle to communicate control. Too many newly certified referees make a call with barely an audible "tweet" which tells everyone on the field that you are unsure of yourself. On your first call, give the whistle a firm blast and confidently point in the direction of the play. A firm whistle will eliminate 50 percent of the arguments. Vary the strength of your whistle depending on what happened – if there is a serious foul, for example, blow the whistle very

loudly an/or several times.

- Be decisive in your calls.** Players and coaches may try to take advantage of the situation if you seem unsure.
- At half time and after the game, review all the results (number of cards, scores for each team and any incident that occurred, as well as the information required to be reported by that particular league) so your game report is accurate.
- When you are working with more experienced officials, ask them for help after the game and discuss situations where you think there was a problem.

Dealing with Problem Coaches:

- Set the ground rules – be proactive
 - o Show them where the team and the coaches will be seated. Make sure they understand that they must stay in that area.
 - o If there is more than one coach, ask which coach will be giving instruction to the players and who will be asking for subs.
- Don't let the coaches intimidate you.** Give them respect and ask for respect in return
- Be confident in your knowledge of the Laws of the Game and Rules of Competition.
- Remain calm.** If someone is yelling at you, do not yell back at them. Speak respectfully and quietly, so the coach must quiet down to hear you.
- Do not take someone yelling at you personally.** It happens to all referees, even the most experienced. However, once the coach steps over the boundaries of the game and begins to make his comments personal or abusive, you must deal with it. Slowly and calmly walk over to the coach. In a polite and respectful way, inform the coach that this type of conduct is unsporting and continuing with this type conduct will result in his or her removal from the game. If the behavior continues – respectfully and professionally ask the coach to leave. If the coach refuses to leave, give the coach a warning that if he or she does not leave, you will end the game. If the coach does not leave in a reasonable amount of time (a few minutes), end the game. Be sure to file a very detailed report with the league so there is a good understanding of why the game was ended early.

Dealing with Problem Parents

- Remain calm.
- Do not get into discussions or arguments with the sidelines.
- Enlist the support of the coach.** Ask him to speak with the offending spectators and let him know that, if the behavior continues, the game will not. This will usually be enough to quiet most parents (other parents may understand the consequences and help with the problem spectator).
- If you have asked the coach to deal with problem parents and the situation continues, ask the coach to have the spectator leave the area. If the spectator refuses, tell the coach that, if the spectator is not removed, the game will end. Give the coach a reasonable amount of time (a few minutes) to deal with the situation. Remember, you cannot dismiss a spectator directly but must work through the coach or a tournament or league official.
- If the parent does not leave, you should feel free to end the game. Include any misbehavior on the part of the spectators in your game report to the league so that this type of behavior can be disciplined and stopped. Most leagues and state associations have methods for dealing with bad behavior, but doing so often requires a written report from the referee.