



# NISOA 2010 PRESEASON GUIDE

## Concussions Result in Substitution

The rule changes found in this *NISOA Preseason Guide* were made by the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee at their recent annual meeting and approved by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP). Rule references are from the 2008-09 *Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Book*. The NCAA is on a two-year cycle and no changes were made last year.

**Concussion (3.5.3.2).** Players with a bleeding injury, blood on the uniform or signs of a concussion shall be substituted for and may re-enter the game (after being beckoned by the referee) at any stoppage of play or at any of the allowable times for normal substitution, providing the appropriate medical personnel have given clearance. Neither the injured player nor the substitute shall be charged with a substitution. However, if the injured player replaces a player other than the original substitute, that player shall be charged with a substitution.

If a player leaves the game for displaying concussion-like symptoms, that player must be cleared by the team physician or



**A certified athletic trainer checks on an Auburn player after she suffered an apparent head injury. Concussions are the focus of an NCAA rule change this year.**

their designee according to the concussion management plan. *Student-athletes diagnosed with a concussion shall not return to activity for the remainder of that day.*

For all other occurrences other than the permissible one re-entry in the second period, field players who are substituted for when leaving the field of play for illness/injury may not re-

enter the game in that same period.

The NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee became the second NCAA playing-rules

panel, after football, to address stoppage of play for players who exhibit signs of a concussion. The action comes after the NCAA

(see *Concussions* p. 7)



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## Message From the President

By Joe Miller

The *NISOA Preseason Guide* is an excellent publication that is produced jointly by NISOA and *Referee*. The instructional articles and points of emphasis should help each NISOA referee during the 2010 season. One of my goals for this year is to increase the amount of educational opportunities available to the membership.

In addition to this *Preseason Guide*, I would encourage you to go to [www.nisoa.com](http://www.nisoa.com) and view the critical incidents videos that have been posted. Those clips afford you the opportunity to review the situation, provide an answer and then have the correct answer displayed. That is another learning tool.

While you are on the site, take some time to review the many instructional articles that have been posted.

Each month there are intercollegiate articles, interscholastic articles and short articles titled “nuts and bolts.” All of those are very useful in improving referee skills. The NISOA instructional staff has done a fantastic job in preparing this year’s *Preseason Guide*. I am confident that you will find it to be very helpful. Have a fantastic 2010 season.

*Joe Miller is NISOA’s President for the two-year term of 2009-10.* □



COURTESY OF NISOA

# Protest Required Within 72 Hours

The protest shall be recorded on the NCAA Soccer Protest Form ... and forwarded to the NCAA Men’s and Women’s Soccer Secretary-Rules Editor *within 72 hours of the end of the contest* (10.9). Protests shall not be considered if they are based solely on a difference of opinion or decision involving the accuracy of the referee’s judgment.

Previously, protests had to be recorded before the referees signed the official box score form and left the site of the competition.

**Play 1:** The day after their most recent game, the

team A coach reviews the film and sees that in the 36th minute of play, B6 was holding star striker A10. The referee did not whistle the clear foul. The coach protests. **Ruling 1:** As in past years, protests shall not be considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of the referee’s judgment. That protest would not be accepted.

**Play 2:** There was a controversial decision in the 18th minute. Both benches were upset, yelling loudly and there was a four-minute delay before the restart. The referee, rattled, restarted the game

with a penalty kick. After losing a 1-0 game, the coach goes back to his office, reviews the game tape and looks up the proper rule. The evidence is there and clear — the referee stopped the game because of a second touch by the goalkeeper. The referee whistled, moved to the spot of the infraction and raised a single arm straight up (proper signal for an indirect free kick). Then the confusion started. Four minutes later, both teams are lined up for the penalty kick, which is made for the 1-0 score. The coach faxes a protest at 10:00 that night. **Ruling 2:** That protest pertains to a misapplication of a rule of conduct and the result of the game changed based on that decision.

Using all the provisions within 10.9, the secretary-rules editor shall make a binding decision and inform the respective teams and governing sports authority.

**Play 3:** The game ends at 4:04 p.m. on Thursday. The team travels on Friday and the coach is reviewing the game tape on Saturday. Overnight, the coach decides to protest a rule misapplication. Thinking no one will be in the office on a Sunday, the coach waits until Monday morning to file the protest. **Ruling 3:** Fax machines and electronic communications are all date-and-time stamped. The coach needed to file the protest within 72 hours of the end of the game. □

## Quick Tip

**During the pregame, take care of those responsibilities that only you can do.** If a ball needs inflating or a net needs repair, let the coach or home team take care of that. You have to inspect the field, check player uniforms and equipment, brief ball persons, conduct a referee pregame discussion, hydrate, stretch, etc. Do what only you should be doing.

# Fewer Cards Lead to Suspension in Regular Season

Any player or coach(es) who has received a total of five cautions in one season shall be suspended and shall not participate in the next regularly scheduled game, including postseason games (12.16.1). Three additional cautions shall result in additional one-game suspensions. Each *two additional cautions* shall result in additional one-game suspensions. ... Suspended players or coaches shall serve their game suspensions in an actual contest. Further, a player(s), coach or other bench personnel serving a game suspension(s) shall be restricted to the designated spectator areas and prohibited from any communication or contact, direct or indirect, with the team, coaches and/or bench personnel from the start of the contest to its



Joe Thompson, Covington, Wash., issues a caution to a player. Players and coaches are now suspended for accumulating cautions at the rate of 5-3-2-2.

completion, including all overtime periods and penalty-kick tiebreaker procedures (see Rule 12.16). Any game in which a suspended player or coach participates illegally shall be forfeited to the opposing team.

Last season, it took three additional cautions to receive the next sanction, so instead of 5-3-3, sanctions now accumulate at 5-3-2-2.

**Play 1:** B6 has accumulated eight cards so far in the season. The coaches can't agree about whether B6 should sit out.

**Ruling 1:** The referee should *not* try to resolve that disagreement, but rather report it to the proper authority to resolve after the game. If the coach wishes to insert B6, allow B6 to play and resolve it administratively. □

DALE GARNEY

## Has the Game Grown Beyond the Referee?

By Dr. Bradley J. Buchner

In reading what fellow assessors and clinicians are writing for various NISOA publications, it occurred to me that there were enough "technical" articles. Instead, I want to contribute some ideas about the game and how it is (or isn't) officiated.

A lifetime ago (as a high school student stationed abroad), I was first attracted to the world's game. Over the years, I've watched it change — unfortunately, not always

for the best. Like many pundits, I am distressed about what I see taking place on the fields today.

### Following the rules?

In a recent article in *World Soccer* (2/09), columnist Paul Gardner suggests that the game has become too defensive and too violent — and that referees have contributed to both situations. Gardner notes that in a match between Spanish rivals Real Madrid and Barcelona, "Lionel Messi ... was mercilessly fouled four times in the

first 14 minutes. Those were dangerous fouls on Messi's ankles. Yet the referee issued no cards. ..." He refers to that incident and others as "cynical systematic rule-breaking" and states that in order for it to occur "it needed help from the referees." He suggests "the rules do not give (referees) the tools to deal effectively with the systematic rule-breaking that has become so prevalent." It is with that last sentence that I take issue. I believe the rules are there, but referees often do

not enforce them effectively or consistently.

### Free kicks

Let's begin with Gardner's claim that referees contribute to a "defensive" match. Defenders have the job of helping the keeper keep the ball out of the net. They often, intentionally or unintentionally, violate the rules. Knowing defenders, left to themselves, would simply cluster around the ball and prevent any opportunity for a goal or other dangerous attack, the (see *Beyond the Referee* p. 11)



# Penalty Kick Stutter Step Allowed

Players taking penalty kicks may now make “hesitation moves” or feigning moves. Since the goalkeeper is permitted to dance or gesture back-and-forth on the goalline and feign moves before the kick, the committee allowed the same for the kicker. There is one important restriction: the hesitation move does not allow the kicker to stop completely.

With an added play ruling, A.R. 14.2.f, a slight

stutter step is now legal: May a player taking a penalty kick use a stutter step or a hesitation move? **RULING:** Yes, provided there is no stopping and there is continuous movement toward the ball.

**Play 1:** Team A is awarded a penalty kick. A8, taking the kick, starts the run-up with one long step, three short, quick steps and then, just before taking the kick, one long step. **Ruling 1:** Legal. Even if the

movement causes the keeper to mis-time a leap, that run-up is legal.

**Play 2:** Starting a run-up inches from the penalty arc (a 10-yard run up), kicker A9 changes direction four times before taking the kick. **Ruling 2:** Legal. As long as there is no clear stoppage during the run-up, A9 has made a valid move.

**Play 3:** Kicker A7 is facing keeper B1 during a three-step run-up. Once A7

takes the final step to fix the plant foot, B1 dives to her right. A7 holds her kicking leg rigid and unmoving at the top of the swing to see which direction B1 moves. Once A7 sees B1 dive right, A7 now kicks to the keeper’s left. **Ruling 3:** Illegal. Since the ball is not yet in play, follow AR 14.3.3.a, declare no goal, caution A7 and restart with a re-take of the penalty kick. □

## What’s Next After Officiating?

By Bill Wagner

There comes a time when a participant, whether a player or official, must decide that it’s time to “hang it up” and change roles. For players, that decision is often dictated by illness or injury. Unsuccessful attempts to move to the next level may also be the event that leads a player to a different sport or a different role in the game. I suspect many readers can identify in their own experience a player who hung on too long.

There are those who felt that N.Y. Yankee great Babe Ruth tried to keep it going one season too many — and his reputation suffered for it. Champions of the Masters golf tournament are granted a lifetime exemption to be part of the field. Masters officials decided a few years ago to send letters to several past

champions who it felt were no longer competitive — asking them to decline the invitation to play. Competitors are reluctant to call it quits, but eventually everyone must accept that it’s time for a different role.

I suggest it is the same for NISOA officials. We are all competitive and work hard to get to the next level. Each official wants to get assignments at the highest level possible. The NISOA National Referee Program offers a means to those most challenging assignments. It takes hard work and dedication to become a NISOA National Referee and continuous strong performances and personal commitment to remain there. There comes the time, however, when a role change to NISOA National Referee Emeritus becomes the right thing to do.

Deciding when a NISOA official should change roles is generally left to the individual official. That is unlike FIFA, which has a stated age at which referees must retire from refereeing at the highest level. Like players, the NISOA official may suffer from illness or injury that prompts a role change. Periodic feedback through the assessment program will give some the courage to say, “I’ve come as far as I am able and should now retire from the field before it is too late.” There are other possible triggers that result in an official deciding that it’s time to leave the field of play. The question then becomes “What’s next?”

Fortunately, for NISOA officials there are several possible answers to that question. Many local chapters have active mentor programs, which

involve experienced referees working with newer members to develop them as referees. The NISOA Instruction and Assessment programs offer additional opportunities to give something back to the game. Those programs may be pursued prior to deciding to retire as a referee.

Entry into a mentor role is less formalized than Clinician or Assessor. Mentors just need to be willing to devote time to a younger, less-experienced referee and offer encouragement and support.

The road to becoming a NISOA Clinician or Assessor requires attendance at one or more formal clinics. You will be trained in the NISOA methodology to be used by Clinicians or Assessors.

The instruction and  
*(see What’s Next p.5)*

# Goalkeeper Punches the Corner Kick

Increasingly, teams are going back-post with their corner kicks. In a throw-back to the 1960s and '70s, and with stronger athletes who can accomplish the kick, corner kicks are being driven in on a line drive to attackers looking to head the ball into the net.

Pregame might be your first clue that a team will attempt the tactic. Do they practice a few corner kicks? Or, to disguise the tactic from the opposing team, do they “chip” a few balls from the touchline, but not from the actual quarter circle. Do they try to surprise the opposition and try far-post on the very first corner of the game?

## 1. Check out positioning

The keeper was not expecting the far-post technique, so she is reaching backward and fully extended to deflect the ball away with a punch. In decades past, keepers used to position themselves 75-80 percent toward the back post and race forward to scoop up anything in front.



They've crept forward, so if you see a keeper setting up midway between the pipes and suspect the kick may

go far post, get to the vantage point the photographer used for the play.

## 2. Observe the ups

A well-struck ball is going to be about seven feet off the ground as it nears the back post with a strong horizontal path. There is going to have to be some jumping involved. Looking at the players' feet, the white-shirted attacker has a small advantage due to her run-up. Both red-shirted defenders jumped vertically from a stand-still. Those angles are important to judge fair from foul.

## 3. Hands and arms are key

With the white-shirted player coming in hard and high, it's natural that number 12 would extend an arm and there would be some minor contact. Seems fair in this case. Although neither of these terms is included in Rule 12.3, there are concepts such as “making oneself bigger” and arms “not in a natural playing position at the time” to help referees judge deliberate contact. Number 12's left arm seems suspicious in relation to the path of the ball. □

## What's Next

*continued from p. 4*

assessment programs also require periodic attendance at refresher clinics to improve and to advance. Chapters need Local Clinicians and Assessors who can assist with its education objectives and through formal evaluations of on-field performances. Regional and National Assessors evaluate on-field performances of National Referee Candidates

and National Referees. National Clinicians train Local Clinicians and conduct regional and national clinics across the country.

Those who decide that one of those avenues is the correct “What's next” for them can begin checking things out before they actively retire from the field. If your chapter has an active mentor program, check with the local coordinator and offer yourself as a mentor. You can move into a mentor

role at your own pace and think about how much you appreciated the encouragement of someone who mentored you. If your interests lie in the instruction or assessment programs, check them out on the NISOA website. The directors of those programs are listed. Letting them know you are interested is the first step.

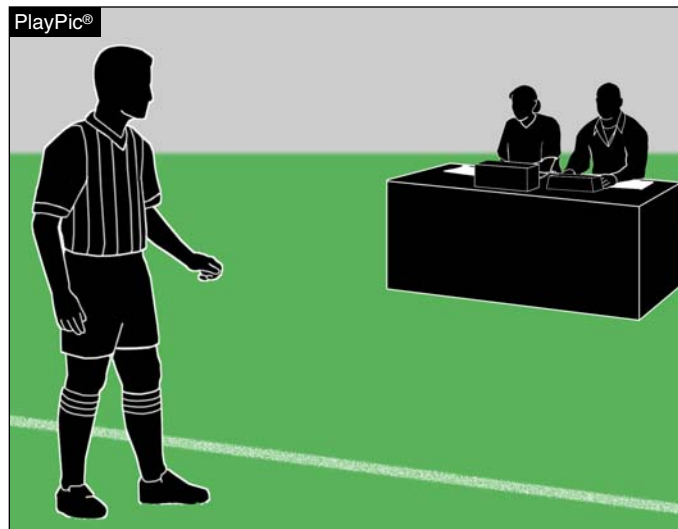
No one can be a soccer referee and expect to remain on the field forever. It should be encouraging to know that

NISOA officials have several avenues to explore that permit them to remain involved in the game they love — but in an alternate role. It may not be as exciting as on the field, but the future needs people with experience to make room for the next generation. You have to assist them in continuing to make NISOA “The future of college officiating.”

*Bill Wagner is a NISOA National Clinician from Oviedo, Fla. □*

# Scorekeeper Prevents Player From Entering

Much text was added to Rule 6.4.3. The entire paragraph now reads: "In addition, the official scorekeeper shall obtain the signatures of the referee and assistant referees on the official NCAA box score form or an 8 1/2 x 11-inch computer-generated scoresheet with complete game information after the game is completed, thus verifying cards issued, ejection reports and the official score of the game. That shall become the official record of the game. If the scorekeeper determines that a player is not eligible to enter the game he/she shall instruct the timekeeper to signal (by horn or other than a



whistle) either the referee and/or the assistant referee that the player is not eligible to enter the game. The referee shall suspend the game, approach the

scorekeeper's table (if at field level) and/or the field representative (mandatory if the scorekeeper is in an elevate press box), obtain the information and

instruct the player to return to the bench area. The game shall be restarted accordingly (see Rule 3.5).

**Play 1:** Due to the scorekeeper's error, B14 mistakenly gets into the game for a second time in first half action. The assistant referee notices that fact four minutes after the substitution has taken place and notifies the referee at the next stoppage. **Ruling 1:** The referee should continue the stoppage, remove B14 from the field, allow a viable substitute and restart the game accordingly. Based on circumstances, a discretionary caution might be issued. □

## Is It the End of the Match?

By Charles Vela

In most instances, match timekeeping is a simple exercise and presents little problem to an experienced referee. By rule, there is an electronically controlled scoreboard clock, visible to both benches and spectators (Rule 6.3 Timekeeper). *The Soccer Rules and Interpretations* goes on to state, "It shall be used as the official timepiece."

Additionally, there shall be an official timekeeper, designated by the home team and subject to the referee's authority. Most four-year schools and many community colleges rigidly follow that

requirement. Rule 6.3.3 further states that the referee shall become the timekeeper in the event of a clock failure or if there is no field clock present. In that event, the referee is required to follow the same time constraints as if there were a field clock and timekeeper.

Our association solicits evaluations from the coaches of the schools we serve. Those are reviewed as a teaching tool and provide some measure, in addition to formal assessments, of how our referees perform. One evaluation came from a community college match that was played without a field clock. The head

coach bitterly criticized "an inexperienced young referee" who (properly) signaled the end of the match before they could take a corner kick.

The most obvious point is the fact that all levels of soccer, from FIFA *Laws of the Game*, through the NFHS Rules, to NCAA's *The Soccer Rules and Interpretations* allow time extension only for the taking of a penalty kick. The Rules agree that play ends at "the moment when the timekeeper's timekeeping signal begins, regardless of the position of the ball." There are, however, other instructional issues.

The most obvious issue

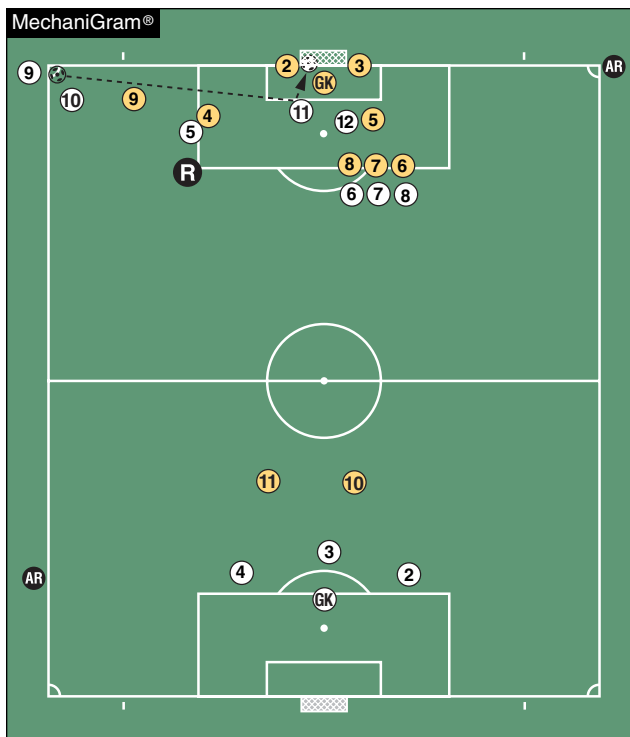
is actual timekeeping. The referee is obligated, by rule, to follow the same standards that an official timekeeper would follow. Rule 6.3.7 specifies the times that the clock shall be stopped and when it must be restarted.

Referees must know that rule, whether supervising a timekeeper or when personally keeping time. It is therefore easy to state that the young referee above was correct to signal the end of the match by the letter of the law. My question is: Was it in the *Spirit of the Game*?

Man-management is the somewhat collective

(see *End of the Match p.9*)

## Extra Player at Goal Scored



Referee responsibility was more clearly shown regarding an extra player on the field while a goal is scored (see MechaniGram). A.R. 10.4.j now states, "A goal is scored. Before the kickoff, the referee finds that the scoring team had more than 11 players and/or an ineligible player on the field at the time the goal was scored.

What action is to be taken? **RULING:** The goal shall be disallowed, *the coach and player cautioned, and the (twelfth) player sent off the field.* The game shall be restarted with a goal kick."

Previous wording implied a discretionary caution and did not dictate the removal of the extra player. □

## Quick Tip

When serving as an alternate official, there are moments of intense activity. **But always remember your priority — helping your referee.** You might have a goal scored, a caution shown and three substitutes in a two-minute span. But if your referee needs your attention, needs information or needs anything, that other stuff stops. You do what your referee needs. Then gather yourself and do things in the right order. Don't let a coach pressure you to get a substitute in the game until you inspect their gear.

## Rules Rewritten to Simplify

In an attempt to simplify the rulebook, Rules 12 and 13 were re-written and several of the approved rulings were taken out.

Two specific items that were re-written (without any change in the way the rules should be interpreted) were:

- 12.7 Obstruction is the deliberate act of impeding or attempting

to impede an opponent from access to a ball that is not within playing distance of either player.

- 12.10.1 *Six-second limit.* An indirect free kick shall be awarded from the point of infraction if the goalkeeper fails to put the ball back into play once the individual takes control of the ball with the hands within six seconds. □

## Concussions

*continued from p. 1*

PROP's endorsement of recommendations from the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports to manage concussion issues more effectively. At its meeting in January, PROP instructed playing-rules committees to review their policies in the areas of stopping play for injuries and to consider instituting rules that may further prevent head injuries.

**Play 1:** In the 25th minute, A8 and B6 collide, with all the spectators seeing A8 unconscious for about 10 seconds. The trainer looks at and talks to A8, determines it's OK to move A8 to the team area. After an examination, the certified physical therapist determines that, according to that school's protocol, A8 may play in the second half. The referee, who also officiates NFHS contests, does not allow A8 to play.

**Ruling 1:** The referee is correct. A8 may not participate. With the loss of consciousness (sign of a

concussion), the new mandate is that A8 "shall not return to activity for the remainder of the day."

**Play 2:** During action in the 10th minute, A11 is pushed, and as a result of the foul, falls to the ground. His shoulder bumps the ground rather hard, and the nearby referee hears a sound like bones popping and immediately stops play. A certified athletic trainer looks at A11, determines it's OK to move A11 to the sidelines and A14 replaces A11. **Ruling 2:** Using the guidance in 3.5.3.2, A11 was removed from the playing field to allow the team's medical staff to conduct a full evaluation and treat the injury. If the medical staff clears A11 in accordance with their protocols, A11 may report to the scorekeeper to enter the game at any point in the second half. It is only the diagnosis of a concussion that would keep A11 (or any other player) out of activity for the remainder of the day.

For more on concussions, see "How to Recognize Concussions" on p. 8. □

# How to Recognize Concussions

By Joe Bean and  
Michael A. Miller, MD

It sounds as simple as it is scary. To a medical professional, it's a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) involving a change in mental status, with or without losing consciousness. To a coach, trainer or student-athlete, it's a "dinger" or "bell ringer." Whatever the term, it results from a direct blow to the head, or force transferred to the head, that slams the brain into the skull.

"It" is a concussion — TBI. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) says 10 percent of student-athletes in contact sports — baseball, basketball, football, soccer, ice hockey, lacrosse, gymnastics and wrestling — will get one this season. Half a football team's players will suffer concussions and ACSM data shows more than one-third of them will endure two or more during this school year. Female student-athletes are more likely to have a concussion than males, regardless of sport.

Concussion is the most common athletic injury; indicators range from obvious to relatively obscure. Less than 10 percent of concussions result in the loss of consciousness, the most obvious and urgent TBI. If the athlete's head hits the playing surface — or collides with another player or object on the



**NISOA referee Doug Ferguson, Ft. Wayne, Ind., calls for an athletic trainer to come onto the field. If a player shows signs of a concussion, the player must be substituted for according to a new NCAA rule change.**

field — and the athlete goes limp, even for an instant, look for these symptoms:

- The player's eyes are closed and the player does not or apparently cannot open them.
- The player is unresponsive to voice commands, questions or statements.
- The player is unresponsive to tactile stimulus, such as a sharp hand or finger squeeze.

If any of the symptoms are noticed by a player, an official, a spectator or another coach, get immediate, qualified emergency medical assistance. If coaches choose to err on the (recommended) side of caution, they will see that the player is taken to the hospital for examination. A student-athlete who has

lost consciousness should not return to the game unless cleared by medical personnel. Moreover, any athlete who has lost consciousness in a game or practice should not play, practice or take part in physical activity until cleared to do so by a qualified health-care practitioner who has administered a neurological examination.

Other recognizable signs of concussion include:

- Short-term memory loss. The player doesn't remember the immediate past: the injury, the action that preceded it, the score of the game or who last scored.
- Poor physical coordination. The player seems "out of sync" physically or verbally with teammates, or appears to

be having difficulty moving with ease around the field or court.

- Slurring or incoherent speech. The player's words are slurred, or the player says or repeats phrases or sentences that make no sense.

- A blank stare or display of disproportionate emotions.

An accurate diagnosis is the purview of qualified medical personnel. However, a coach or sports official concerned about a student-athlete showing signs of a concussion can ask some simple questions. "Simple" means exactly that. The questions should elicit easy and obvious answers: What's your name? Where are you? Why are you here? When is your birthday? Alternatively, the player could be asked to follow simple directions, such as "put your gear down" or "stand next to me."

A player unable to answer such questions or to follow such simple directions must be taken off the field and kept off. The player must be observed carefully for at least the next 30 minutes for any additional signs of concussion.

Nausea and vomiting, disorientation, dizziness, momentary loss of consciousness, amnesia or persistent confusion can indicate a more serious concussion, requiring medical attention.

Keeping a player on the sidelines might be (see *Recognize Concussions* p. 10)

## Quick Tip

When serving as an assistant, **if a coach asks you a question, don't try to shout an answer from 30 yards away.** A rare exception might be: "Who kept him on?" after an offside flag is not raised might be responded to via "Number 4." But if the coach asks, "What did you just flag?" hold up a finger, point at yourself, then point at the coach (implying: wait a minute, I'll be right there), then when play allows you to be near the coach, the response might be, "Coach, your number 6 had a handful of his shorts and number 6 pulled him off the ball." Make sure your response is nice and calm.

## End of the Match

*continued from p. 6*

term that separates the top referees from the less-skilled and inexperienced referees. Many top referees seem to sail through a match without serious criticism from coaches, team captains or players. No referee calls a perfect match, but many exude an aura of good judgment, an understanding of the game and a presence that defies contradiction. Referees who exhibit good leadership and presence throughout the match are far less likely to attract the criticism that was directed toward that young referee.

The experienced referee looks ahead and is aware of the game situation and what the significance of play may be. What is the score? Is the match tied? Would a goal tie it? Is a championship riding on the outcome? Does the conference use the overtime provision? Be aware of the implications of a corner kick or a goal kick. How much time, exactly, is left in the match? If the ball is kicked over the goalline, how long does it take to retrieve it or for another ball to enter play? Does the kicking team hurry to put the ball in play or do they attempt to confuse the defending team? Does the defending team

encroach to delay the restart?

Those are all factors that the referee must weigh — along with the actual time on the clock. Make allowances for ball retrieval or in case of defensive encroachment. Referees should not illegally add time to the match, but if time can be managed to allow the ball to be put in to play, then the teams can come away with a feeling of fairness and good sportsmanship. An obvious attempt to extend time will result in the defensive team having a legitimate complaint. A rush to end the match, even if correct, often results in a complaint by the kicking team. Obviously counting down the last 10 seconds notifies the kicking team that they do not have time to waste.

The most important thing is to be aware, make good decisions and stand by them. Emotions will cause some decisions to be challenged, no matter how correct they may be. If you have a good foundation of the rules, apply them properly and act with integrity, you will earn the respect of coaches, teams and your fellow officials.

*Chuck Vela is a NISOA National Clinician from Yelm, Wash. □*

# Did You Hear That?

By Gary W. Huber

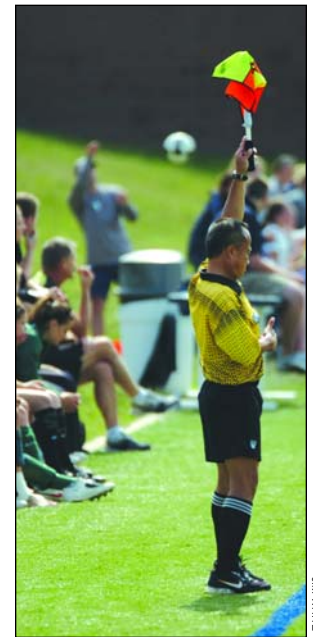
"Hey Ref, you have to make that call." Or, "Linesman, help him. He is having a nightmare."

Ever hear that from a coach or the bench as you perform as an assistant or the alternate official? You likely have, whether at youth contests or the highest professional games. What do you do when you hear it?

In the pregame, the referee should give you instructions on how to deal with that. Did you get instructions? Did the referee give you the usual — "Deal with what you need to" or "If you call me over, I'm sending him home." No pressure there! Did the referee assume you knew what you were doing and gave you no instructions? Did you ask how you should handle certain situations?

What needs to be dealt with and what can be ignored? When do you bring the referee into the mix? A study of 500-plus assessments of high-level NISOA games shows that referees correctly deal with coaches' comments about 70 percent of the time. That means we don't deal with it 30 percent of the time. In baseball, a .300 hitter earns millions — in officiating, it earns you trouble.

By tradition, when a coach or bench personnel starts to have a negative impact on the game, you need to deal with it. Referees are mantled with making the event more enjoyable and fan friendly;



**Vinh Trinh, Ft. Wayne, Ind., signals in front of the team benches. Assistants will hear a lot of comments during a match. They must sort out if any demand action by the referee.**

not losing sight of the main objective — enforcing the rules and protecting the players.

You can ignore the coach. That sometimes works. Or let the coach make a point and get on with coaching. Sometimes you can give the coach a look as you walk toward the bench area. A simple head acknowledgement or a hand gesture may work. Or it may not. As the game intensifies, you can expect the same to happen on the touchlines. You've ignored that irresponsible behavior long enough. Now what?

## Respect

When you decide to deal with the comments, what  
*(see Hear That p. 13)*

# Get Your Message Across to Players

Various statistics point out that others only get a small percentage of communication from the actual words we speak — some say it's as low as 10 percent or as high as 20 percent. But the tones we use, the volume, the looks on our face when we say it, the hand gestures we use — that's how the message gets across.

## What should you say?

From this single frame, we can clearly see that both number 1 and the referee are trying to get a message across. If it's early in the game and number 1 has been behaving and was just fouled, it might be wise to let her have her few words, then say, "OK, my turn, ... ." But if number 1 has been



**Mike Rottersman, Tacoma, Wash., has a brief discussion with a San Francisco player. There are many ways officials can get their point across when talking to players.**

carrying on a steady stream of "advice," then you want to do exactly

what this referee is doing — stand erect with good posture, lean your upper

body in toward the person you want to get the message, speak clearly and emphasize your words with strong body language and hand gestures.

## Do you have a witness?

It's nice when you have a nearby witness to what was said. Best is when that witness is part of your refereeing crew (and in a small percentage of cases you want to make certain you do bring a member of the crew in to overhear the conversation). It's especially nice when, two minutes after the conversation, you have to give number 1 a card, and a teammate yells, "Mary, he just told you he was going to card you if you didn't settle down!" □

## Recognize Concussions

*continued from p. 8*

unpopular — with the player, the team or the coaching staff — but it is the most prudent action. In such cases, it's helpful to know concussions are graded by severity, from one — a step above the "dinger" — to three, the most severe.

It's generally agreed that a grade 1 concussion is characterized by some confusion, symptoms lasting 30 minutes or less but no loss of consciousness. A grade 2 concussion can range from a loss of consciousness of less than five minutes to any symptom of more than

15 minutes duration. All grade 3 concussions include a loss of consciousness.

Regardless of its severity, a concussion isn't "treated" — rather, the brain must be allowed to heal over time. A medical professional should advise the student-athlete, his/her family and the coach as to how much time is required for the brain to heal and hence, return to play.

Student-athletes who have had one concussion are more susceptible to another, which increases their risks if they return to the sport prematurely. Second impact syndrome — suffering another concussion before the prior TBI has healed completely

— can result in swelling of the brain, and that can be fatal.

While giving their brains adequate time to heal, student-athletes might experience a variety of post-concussion symptoms, ranging from chronic headaches to vertigo, dizziness and poor concentration. How long such symptoms last depend on the student and the severity of the concussion.

The student-athlete's full recovery means no sports competition, no practice, no contact drills and no weight training. Doing homework is perfectly acceptable, however.

Here are four websites for additional (and

authoritative) information: [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org) (American College of Sports Medicine); [www.cms.org](http://www.cms.org) (Colorado Medical Society); [www.aan.com](http://www.aan.com) (American Academy of Neurology); and [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC155416](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC155416) (Journal of Athletic Training).

*Joe Bean was the 2008 Illinois High School Association Girls' Soccer Referee of the Year and has done three state finals. Dr. Michael A. Miller of the American Academy of Pediatrics deals frequently with sports-related injuries and with required pre-participation examinations that allow students to participate in athletics in his Peoria, Ill., practice. □*

# Dimensions for New Fields Updated

A change was passed to make the field size more standardized. The width of newly constructed fields should now be between 75 and 70 yards (it was previously 80 and 65 yards), and the length between 120 and 115 yards (was 120 and 110 yards) [1.1.1].

Facilities in use prior to 1995 need only to be rectangular — the width of which shall not exceed the length.

In another change, it is permissible to conduct collegiate soccer games in an indoor facility as long as the dimensions comply with 1.1.1. Some ground

rules were written regarding that change.

A ball that hit the upper edifice shall result in one of two actions:

- If the ball lands “in touch,” the opposing team shall be award a throw-in from the nearest point where the ball crossed the touchline.

- The referee should indicate dead ball and suspend play. Restart with a drop ball on the field nearest to where the ball made contact. If the ball falls inside the goal area, start at the nearest corner of the penalty area.

Cover ground rules with coaches before games. □

## Beyond the Referee

*continued from p. 3*

rules provide that the offending team must move at least 10 yards away from the point of the foul.

Reading every version of the rules (NCAA, NFHS, FIFA), nowhere does it say that players may linger around the ball until they are shooed away; or that they may opt to move at a snail’s pace while directing players as to where they should stand; or that one player may stand right behind the kicker and use hand gestures to move teammates around. Nor do the rulebooks state that the team granted the free kick must ask for the 10 yards to be given. No, the rule states the offending team players must move at least 10 yards away from the ball — and that failure to do so is a cautionable offense — at the referee’s discretion. Yet how many cautions are given for that rule violation?

The problem starts with the short, repetitive, one-act play invented (or at least willingly acted out) by referees, called, “setting the wall.” That rather tedious

drama may be replayed a dozen times or more in a match. That process is among the most unnecessary time-wasting activities — and it clearly benefits the defense far more than the offense. Wall situations break the momentum of a sustained attack. Referees are culpable because they fail to use the tool at their disposal — the yellow card.

### Use the tool that’s there

What if referees began dealing seriously with opponents who make no real effort to get 10 yards away on a restart? The referee may caution for encroachment, but how often do you see it used as a preventive measure? Players who just can’t get to their defensive positions without cutting across the path of the kicker: Why not reward that action with a caution? The player’s only purpose is to delay the free kick, which is against the rules and contrary to the spirit of the game. A free kick is awarded because the rules were broken. The 10-yard stipulation is *intended* to be a punishment against the violating team — to allow

the offended team an opportunity to regain the advantage that was lost due to the foul. What kind of punishment is it if the defense is allowed time to organize itself?

Suppose, for a season, referees used the caution liberally to enforce the 10-yard mandate. Certainly players and coaches would not like it — but *they would adjust*. That practice would save a fair amount of wasted time and would help signal that the officiating team intends to enforce the rules. The analogy would be when NFHS, then NISOA, mandated that incidental profanity must be cleaned up. Many referees did not like the new rule — feeling that it was not a referee’s job to impart moral standards. Yet, after the first season, the behavior diminished.

### Throw-in location

All the rules state that the throw-in is to be taken within a yard of where it went into touch. Nowhere does it say that the referee or assistant should indicate the throw-in location but, as a courtesy, they often do. From

there, however, things break down. While assessing, I occasionally keep a graphic that indicates the distance from the point indicated to the point where the throw was actually taken. Sometimes the distance is astonishing — 10-15 yards — sometimes more! Worse, on several occasions, the referee blows a whistle after the throw is taken — and awards the same team another throw-in from the point originally indicated!

That doesn’t speak well of rules knowledge — you only get one chance to do it right. That may seem trivial, but it isn’t in the era where big players can throw the ball great distances. Ten to 15 yards may turn a routine throw-in into a scoring opportunity. Enforcing that rule sends a signal that the officials will enforce all rules.

### Penalties

Referees show a notorious reluctance to award penalty kicks — particularly when doing so might alter the outcome of a game. Gardner notes in his article that it cannot help but influence (see *Beyond the Referee p. 14*)

# Tactics and Their Impact on You

By Tom Richardson

In managing an intercollegiate or interscholastic game, the referee team (referee, assistants and, if assigned, alternate official) needs to recognize and manage either negative or unfair influences brought by team formations, as well as tactics used by players and coaches. There are skills and techniques that referees can use to control some of the more common occurrences.

Team formations, or systems of play, can affect both positive and negative play on the field. So, consider the effect of team formations and playing systems on the individual tactics that players and coaches use to gain an edge. Here, it will be general and limited because there are many variations possible, but you should be able to recognize and deal with the two more common types of team formations: offensive formations and defensive formations.

## Offensive formation

The offensive formation generally tries to increase the number of strikers while maintaining adequate defensive coverage. When might you see it? It is most commonly used with either a 3-4-3 and 4-3-3 system of play, where there is a four-player diamond at midfield (i.e., four players in midfield as a 1-2-1 group), where the attacking center midfielder is the forward point and the holding midfielder the back point.

A variation of that four-player diamond used in an offensive formation can be found when positioned deep in attack against a stopper up and sweeper back.

Those offensive formations increase the number of strikers and the pressure on the defending team to stop, impede or cancel out any attacks on their own goal. That increases the pressure upon the defenders to consider more physical play against attackers. It also increases the pressure on attackers to consider using more physical efforts to counter the defenders. Referees (and in all future uses, we mean the entire referee team) need to exercise increased oversight at each end of the field.

## Defensive formation

A defensive formation generally reduces the number of strikers and packs more players back into defensive positions. It may sometimes be used when a team is defensive in nature or when there is less skill or speed than the opponents. Teams may shift into that system of play late in a game in order to try to protect a lead. There are usually 10 players behind the ball with only the lone striker (perhaps two strikers) up top. When might you see that?

It is most commonly used with either a 4-5-1 or 3-5-2 formation with a five-player diamond at the back. It can also be seen as a 4-5-1 or 3-5-2 formation with five

players in a diamond-shaped group in midfield.

When thinking about those team systems, remember that because of the formation, the lone (or dual) attacking striker up front are generally more vulnerable to increased physical play against them. Also, be aware that the increased number of defending players at the back in a defensive formation may increase the rate of physical play against opposing attackers. Both those possibilities need increased oversight by the referees. A final item is that when a system of play uses only one or two strikers up front, the likelihood increases of the long ball to the forward(s) on an attempt for a swift counterattack. That may mean a good bit more rapid turn-around movement and coverage by the referees.

## Player tactics

At first, consider negative tactics intended to intimidate opposing players.

One is a violation committed by rotating “assassins” (purely my term) who literally plan to “take turns” at committing specific violations. That includes violations committed by design against the star opposing forward or playmaker by multiple individuals in order to avoid the appearance of persistent infringement. At the same time, those contacts plant the seed in that opposing forward’s or playmaker’s

mind that any time the ball comes their way an aggressive, physical challenge may be coming.

Another is the use of elbows to establish space and send an intimidating message. Effectively used by both men and women players, women especially use elbows when they are receiving the upper-body fouls that are not being called by the referee. It’s a “Get off me!” elbow. The elbow is like a weapon and when the fist is clinched, it’s like “Ready, Aim, Fire.”

## Negatively influence the opposition

One common violation is the taking of a “dive.” That unfairly penalizes the opposition when a referee is mistakenly led into calling a foul and penalizing a violation. Where do “dives” most often happen? Either near or inside the penalty area!

Another common tactic is faking an injury or embellishing minimum contact. How many times have you seen a player go down with a scream and roll around on the ground, then miraculously recover from the supposed injury — sprinting back into play? Players who attempt that negative tactic are seeking a more severe punishment for the innocent opponent in order to gain a numbers-up advantage. Also, the mistaken call by a referee of a faked injury might well result in hesitation by the opponents when challenging in the future.

(see *Tactics* p. 15)

# You Know You're Effective When ...

By Carl P. Schwartz

Every game should have a postgame analysis. It's best to do it as a crew, but 10 minutes alone after you arrive home may yield lasting results. Review cards, penalty kicks and that decision to wave down your assistant.

Maybe there was no assessor there to give you feedback. Sure, the coach

gave you his feedback (at full volume) but there can be subtle cause-and-effect moments that can teach you how to handle difficult situations. Nearly a decade ago, while watching NISOA and USSF referee Ricardo Salazar, three moments tied together to show effective communication.

During the second half, Salazar had to caution A9 for a reckless foul. About 10

minutes later, B5 committed a similar foul but one that in my mind hadn't risen to the level of reckless. Salazar agreed, because he talked to B5 but didn't show a card. I couldn't hear the words A9 spoke to Salazar, but I'm sure he voiced displeasure that B5 didn't get a card "for the exact same foul." Salazar said a few brief words and play restarted.

How do I know those

words were effective? I had two clues — A9 was well behaved over the final 20 minutes and A9 was the first person, after jogging 25 yards out of his way, to offer Salazar well wishes after the game. Now, if in self-analysis, you can piece that together and remember what you told A9, you have a tool for future games.

*Carl P. Schwartz is Referee's soccer coordinator.* □

## Hear That

*continued from p. 9*

approach will you take? In order to gain respect, you must give respect. *Webster's Dictionary* defines respect as: "high or special regard, esteem, an expression of respect or deference." Remember that.

Once you acknowledge the coach and start into a verbal dissertation, the "price of poker" went up. Some referees have a more nurturing way of dealing with that. Sometimes, referees who are also parents can deal with the tantrums because of exposure to them during child-rearing.

Will you be the understanding third party, telling the coach, "I will take care of it"? Will you be the "good cop," and say, "I understand," letting the coach get it off her chest and get on with the game? Will you nod to the coach with understanding? Will you acknowledge jumping up off the bench to critique a call?

When that does not work, what are your next steps? Your personality may not

match that of the coach or bench personnel. Will you now become belligerent, threaten, demean and "draw lines in the sand"?

### "Pendulum" theory

Do you remember how a pendulum works? It swings back and forth. Your personality can do the same. On one side is the "Strict Enforcer," the other side of the pendulum has the "Good Guy." As the game progresses, and the anxiety increases, you have to see where you fit. Do you now talk with a stricter dialogue? "Coach, we can't have that." "Coach, I heard you." "Coach, enough!" Or do you swing to the other side? "Coach, pick your battles." "Coach, I will discuss that with the referee at half." "Let's be positive over here." No dealings with bench personnel will work if you can't use all of your tools.

Once you draw your line in the sand, you must stick to it. Nothing is worse than telling the coach, "This is the last, last, last time I will ask you to stay in the coaching area." Or, "This is the last,

last, last time you can use that type of language in this match." You and the crew lose credibility. You must have the confidence to make the next decision.

When you decide that enough is enough, and call the referee over to deal with the coach or someone on the bench, follow these guidelines: As per your instructions from the pregame, be brief, informative and tell the referee why you brought him or her over. Do not exaggerate or interject anything more than what was said or what happened. Do not insist. Allow the referee to consider the information, make a decision and deal with it. As the alternate official or assistant, you must accept the referee's

decision and get on with the game. No egos here.

The job of assisting the referee includes more than offside, balls in and out of play, substitutions and foul calls. You must deal efficiently, effectively and ethically with the bench area. The choices you make will make the difference. Find out where your personality falls on the Pendulum Theory. Know when to be the "Good Guy" or the "Strict Enforcer." After a difficult match, knowing things went well because you dealt with the bench will give you and the crew happiness in a job well done. *Gary W. Huber is the NISOA National Director of Assessments and the Missouri Valley Conference coordinator of officials.* □

## Quick Tip

**Learn about any distracting mannerisms you might have.** One very strong referee always starts off the game with a very weak whistle, then after five minutes executes that skill properly. Another has a pat phrase he uses every time a player is cautioned. He gruffly says, "No, you come here." It's OK to show some emotion for some cards, but do not have standard phrase and use it for all cards.



# Take the Team Approach to Assessing

By Ed Michaud

As veteran officials and assessors, most of us can reflect back to earlier days when the traditional assessment was a more stern discussion. During that chat, the majority of conversation, at the assessor's direction, was solely between the assessor and the referee. In the old days, the critique toward linesmen may have been summed up as, "You linesmen had no bearing on the outcome of the match today, so you're dismissed" or "You guys did a good job, so unless you have any questions, you can go ... but I need to talk with (referee)." Do you recall that empty feeling that you would've liked to sit in on the discussion also, to extend the learning from what you witnessed that day?

You may not have experienced that in your

career, nor was it the norm for the assessment process, but the "style" of some assessors was that all the game notes mainly applied to the referee's performance so his duty was to go one-on-one with the referee.

## Team approach

Fortunately, today that is not the NISOA-preferred process toward critiquing the entire team. During the postgame critique, active involvement by each member of the team helps everyone. A critical element with the team approach is the pregame briefing among the referee crew: How do they address specific match situations?

The faster pace and higher skill of players today demands clear instructions about what assistance the referee may need. That also requires the total focus of the assistant referees and alternate official to provide

that assistance. During the post-game discussion, when covering a significant game situation (including a bench problem), all members have to be able to respond to what was covered in the pre-game and — was the matter handled correctly?

What typically comes out of the team approach or shared discussion after the match is, perhaps there was a misunderstanding of what was said during the pregame briefing. That is nothing new — as crews will get their heads together during the halftime break to make sure they are together.

## Participate

The assessment program's overall goal is for *each* member of the officiating crew to improve their related duties. We've already said that process starts with the team's pregame briefing. The next step is the observation/

evaluation by the assessor, in the role of a counselor to assist. At the debriefing, each member of the team should be ready to discuss what their involvement, or lack of, was for the game situation being discussed. There is an old saying — *any* member of the team can make the team look good or look bad.

## Improvement

NISOA's commitment to the schools we service is to provide the best-qualified officials. That commitment does not stop when the crew walks off the field or the critique is completed. Our final report card rests with what the referee crew learned or gained from that team assessment session — and the next one.

*Ed Michaud is a NISOA National Clinician, National Assessor and the Region IX Area Coordinator from Midwest City, Okla. □*

## Beyond the Referee

*continued from p. 11*

referees — knowing that a penalty kick awarded, even in the first minute, may well be the deciding goal.

In assessment debriefings, I have often discussed penalty kicks with officiating teams — and have (incorrectly) learned that in order for a penalty kick to be awarded there must have been a clear goal-scoring opportunity. In a recent match, I was positioned to see a defensive player hold and ultimately throw down an attacker off to the side of the goal. The attacker had

no goal-scoring opportunity, but was well-placed to pass the ball into the goalmouth for a teammate — if only he could have gotten to the ball (his jersey was being tugged). Both the referee and bench-side assistant acknowledged seeing that, but said that since it wasn't a goal-scoring opportunity, and it was late in the game, it wasn't appropriate to call it! I've combed through my rulebooks looking for the section that justifies that decision but have yet to find it (and know I won't).

Rather, the rule states that if an attacking player is fouled inside the penalty

area, the result shall be a penalty kick. By taking the position that a clear goal-scoring opportunity must have been negated, referees send the signal that rough play in the box will go unpunished if it doesn't occur right in front of the goal. Hence, one sees nasty fouls off to the sides of the goal, but less in deemed "goal-scoring" areas.

## Next level

College players, by and large, have not yet grown as cynical as those on the world stage. The sort of concerted attack one sees on star players like Messi is not as often a part of the college

game. Still, as the game gains popularity, more college players are out to prove they have the stuff to play at the next level. That often means showing a disregard for the rules. If referees are to control the matches, they must refuse to pander to violent play and must enforce the rules.

I hope my musings give you food for thought. Many may disagree with me, but hopefully the thoughts encourage a dialogue that leads to better, more consistent officiating.

*Dr. Bradley J. Buchner is a NISOA National Assessor and a National Clinician from Blakeslee, Pa. □*

# Cool Down Heated Situations

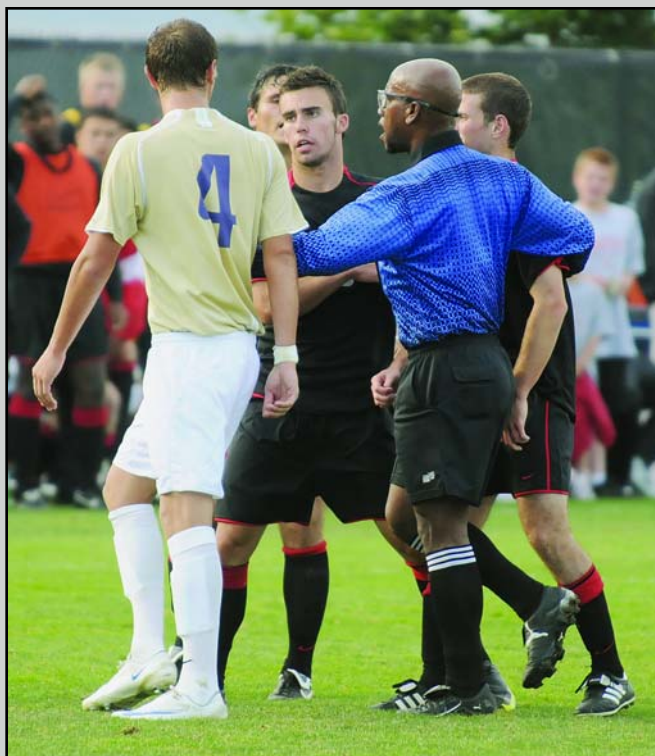
When things get heated on the field, the referee needs to be the calming influence.

## 1. Presence

With the referee directly on the spot, there is a far greater chance the situation will remain under control. Can you imagine these players being this restrained if the referee was 30 yards away? While there are those who suggest *never* touching a player, here a simple arm bar (not an offensive move to push away, but rather a barrier or a “line in the sand” that should not be crossed) is seemingly effective. So, the ability to read play and know this is coming — and the fitness to get there as it does — is important. What you say and what you do next is equally important.

## 2. Communicate

Clearly the referee is saying something that those players can hear. He’s not



Ray Moffatte, Tacoma, Wash., is effectively handling a conflict between players.

showing any evidence of being rattled, upset or not in control of himself and the situation. Let those

involved know what you want them to do or not do. “Step away,” “Easy, easy” or if you know you are

going to give someone a yellow card, say, “I’ve got him. I’m gonna get him.”

## 3. Control the other players

Two opponents getting into a fist-fight is the easiest thing for a referee to handle — play will resume with 10-against-10. A third person upsets the balance. You can never know the intentions of that additional person charging in from 20 yards away: They may be coming in to help you by restraining their more aggressive teammate; they may be coming to restrain the opponent; they may be coming in to be a show of force to intimidate the opponent. The third player brings the fourth and so on. Keep the third player out of the squabble and you stand a great chance of keeping control. It appears the referee has said something and the two black-shirted players are moving in to calm their teammate. □

## Tactics

*continued from p. 12*

A third negative tactic involves intentional time wasting when dynamic play should be continuing. Throw-ins, goal kicks, free kicks and goalkeeper punts are common occasions for that tactic. As examples: a player near an into-touch ball unnecessarily calls a teammate to come take a throw-in; a goalkeeper or player sets the ball for a goal kick, then decides to move the ball to the other side of the goal area for the

restart; or a goalkeeper who calls for the sweeper to come over to take a goal kick when the team is ahead in the last minutes of the game; a deliberate delay in taking a free kick by a player who instead hands the ball to the referee; an opponent who stands in front of the ball placed by the opposing team for a free kick like a statue as it is about to be kicked, etc.

### Coach tactics

One common, if unfortunate, tactic is seen when a coach substitutes in an “enforcer.”

The intent is to have the designated player either disrupt play by fouls, or defend a specific player or area by whatever physical force, including unfair and unsporting play, is necessary. An enforcer is often willing to take a caution or ejection, as he/she deems necessary, to gain an advantage for the team.

### Gamesmanship

Some coaches have been thought to solicit a caution or ejection in order to fire up their team during a tough or losing game. Others have

been said to encourage players taking an unfair “statue” stance to delay or stop an opponent’s free kick. Also, some encourage players to form and maintain an unfair defensive wall at an opponent’s free kick — especially if the kick nears their penalty area.

Some coaches still attempt to talk to opposing team players in a negative manner. That has long been a violation in the rules, and should be promptly dealt with the very first time attempted.

*(see Tactics p. 16)*

# Not in Sync With Your Referee

There will be days when your idea of a foul differs considerably from what your referee is whistling. What can you do?

Consider your location and experience. Ask yourself: Is it my inexperience at this level that is making me think

more fouls should be called? Have I moved from a less soccer-savvy area to one where players expect this level of intensity?

Watch the players' reactions. Are they upset? Are they retaliating? That's the clue you need to step up and offer help.

For a few fouls, you must offer a flag: a blatant off-the-ball elbow, a head-butt, an attacker scoring via a deliberate handling infraction. Flag, signal direction and pat a pocket to request the proper card.

In most cases, you will simply disagree without

taking action. Remember one or two moments (actions the referee would remember) and ask about them after the game. Don't tell the referee what you would have done; just ask why the referee chose a particular action. That will expand your insight. □

## Tactics

*continued from p. 15*

### Referees counter

Referees must deal with the intimidator as soon as the tactic is spotted. Delay works against successful game and behavior control. Be sure to learn to anticipate and recognize persistent infringement. To do so, it is helpful to know who those players are on any team before the game takes place. How do you identify them? Through research. In other words, do your homework before the match! There are many ways to research that information. The best resources are your referee colleagues.

- Learn to recognize the unfair elbow that is intended to send a message to the opposing player. Much like we did in years past with the tackles from behind, those elbows are an area that must be cleaned up. The elbow, when used with a clinched fist, becomes a very dangerous weapon against an opponent.

- Penalize a dive. Seeking a call against an opponent, particularly in the penalty area, is an especially unacceptable tactic. Identify through research and your own observations if there is one specific player more prone to do that than others. That is often the case where — fortunately — not many players have practiced or mastered the “art” of taking a dive.

- Learn to recognize players who fake an injury after being fouled, and thereby seeks a more severe punishment for the offender. Do you allow that behavior and just laugh it off? Or, do you deal with it? Consider that it is sometimes done to get a pause in the game and change the game flow, unfairly, by causing the opposition to slow down.

- Deal with time-wasting! The best way to keep that problem under control is to set the behavior standard you will allow in the game early. Consistently demonstrate your standard by penalizing specific violations or unfair play.

Also, question and review your practice for players who delay restarts by standing over the ball or kicking it away. Do you consider an incident differently if done early or late in a game? What is your standard as a referee? How do you regard throw-ins that frequently take up to 30 seconds to make a throw, look, look, then call for a teammate to come take the throw. How about players simply refusing to throw it in, or those who attempt to move well beyond the designated spot just so the referee will be forced to move them to the appropriate spot. It wastes time. Some goalkeepers are masters at delaying tactics.

- Deal with an “enforcer” substituted into a game. Have you discussed the teams, coach and players of the game you are scheduled to referee with other referees who have been assigned to their games in the past? Have you shared the information with your referee team during the pregame briefing? If so, you

are all well-prepared to deal with such tactics. It is critical to know and be on the lookout for an “enforcer,” for without prior knowledge of that type of player, you could have game-control issues if you are caught by surprise. That player usually only has one mission — and is willing to take the card for the team, if necessary.

- Deal with gamesmanship. Recognizing a gamesmanship tactic is important for good game management. If referees are not familiar with some of those tactics, then the temperature of the game could rise and they would not recognize the reason.

Your continued study of the art of soccer refereeing, your interactions with and exchanges of information with referee colleagues and your seeking advice and input from all valid resources will help you eventually reach the level of personal excellence you seek in this avocation.

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