

MYSL Referee Notes  
5/31/02

With Memorial Day weekend behind us we are getting ready to bring the MYSL season to a close. During the next couple of weeks we will be working very hard to make up matches that were rained out during the past couple of weeks. Make-up games always represent a particular challenge as midweek games are hard to cover. 6pm is a hard time for referees to become available due to commitments at work or at home. We ask for your help during the next week or so as we move to bring ourselves up-to-date with respect to those missing games. If you are available to work any weekday matches please contact Al Cosentino ([acosentino@mayouthsoccer.org](mailto:acosentino@mayouthsoccer.org)) and let him know. There are occasionally matches that crop up on us by surprise so any flexibility on your part to cover last minute games is much appreciated.

There are only two weeks left in the season before we start the playoffs and move on to the Commissioner's Cup! Please make every effort to begin preparing your end of season reports to the league treasurer. If you are planning to work the Commissioner's Cup you DO NOT have to wait until the Cup to submit your referee payment vouchers. All of the payment information for the Cup is taken care of by the tournament. Please be sure that you have everything ready and submitted to John Gallagher, league Treasurer, by the July 6<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Now, on to the notes!

#### Jewelry and Religious Articles

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Referees are instructed in the MYSL rules that jewelry of any type is not to be worn in any league match. Referees are instructed to always check players for articles that are dangerous and have the potential to cause injury in a match.

There will be, however, occasions where we must apply the tenants of Law 18 (the as yet unwritten but often quoted Law 18 – Common Sense) and allow certain articles of jewelry that are of a particular religious or medical significance. USSF Advice provides the following guidance to referees in section 4.3:

“All items of jewelry are normally considered dangerous; however, referees should consider carefully any item of clothing or jewelry that is clearly religious or medical in nature and permit it to be worn if it is not dangerous and not likely to provide the player with an unfair advantage.”

If team staff has made a reasonable effort to cover these articles and, to the referee's satisfaction, have made them safe, MYSL referees are instructed to permit the player to play. If, in the opinion of the referee, the article is too large or has too many parts that protrude in a manner that would still make them dangerous (even with covering) MYSL referees are instructed to NOT allow the player to play if they are unable to remove the

article. If the referee is made aware of the religious significance of the article and still cannot allow the player to play for safety reasons, the referee should report this matter to the league on a game report form.

## HEY REF, OBSTRUCTION!

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We have all heard this refrain at one time or another in our games.....one player steps in front of another with the ball in front of both....the player behind this intruder can't get to the ball. Is it obstruction? Is this player really "impeding the progress" of his/her opponent?

Obstruction is a commonly misunderstood concept among inexperienced players and coaches and even a few referees! Sometimes obstructing an opponent is a perfectly LEGAL thing to do, but there are other times where the clear impediment of one player on another is completely missed.

FIFA Laws of the Game, in Law 12, says that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

"impedes the progress of an opponent"

For this to be a foul, however, two conditions must be met:

1. The ball is NOT within playing distance of the players or it is not capable of being played by the players.
2. Physical contact is normally absent between the player and the opponent.

(paraphrased from USSF Advice section 12.14)

So, if you have an instance where one player is directly in front of another blocking him or her from the ball, but the ball is directly in front of both of them at close range you DO NOT have an instance of one player illegally impeding another since the ball is within playing distance.

"Playing distance" is defined by USSF Advice in section 12.15 in the following manner:

"The referee's judgment of "playing distance" should be based on the player's ability to play the ball, not upon any arbitrary standard."

The age and skill level of the players has to be accounted for when attempting to judge what the appropriate playing distance to the ball is. Younger or less skilled players will be less likely to be able to play a ball the further it gets from them while older and more experienced players might be able to get to and play a ball from a longer distance.

If physical contact occurs during the act of obstruction you must, according to USSF Advice, determine if this contact was unavoidable. If it is unavoidable you may still regard the act as impeding the opponent and award an indirect free kick. If, however, you judge that the contact was avoidable then you should award a direct free kick since you have one of the 10 penal offenses (charging).

## U10 Referees and Educating Players

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Referees who work our U10 matches are in a position to provide a great service to the youngest players in our league. Often times U10 players do not understand why a certain call was made or what it was that they did wrong. Referees who work U10 matches should take every reasonable opportunity to explain their calls to the players. This will go a long way toward helping these players learn the game of soccer and get a good feel of what is right and wrong out there on the field. Referees can ease the task of explaining calls to U10 players by trying some of the following tricks:

- Keep your explanation short, simple, and to the point. These are young players and won't understand a long technical explanation.
- Keep your tone light. While the player may have committed a fairly nasty foul, U10 players will be sufficiently stunned by the fact that the referee is talking to them. Most of the time a younger player will feel badly for committing a foul and could even be distressed by it. Explain to them what they did but keep a smile on your face. If it was a particularly rough foul you may take a stern approach initially, but lighten the tone once you've seen they got the point.
- If you have to give a card (which should be a rare event), be prepared for the player to react emotionally and be supportive. If you think the player will be unable to handle the card, consider asking the coach to substitute the player and explain your reason to the coach. Most coaches will understand.
- Try and show them specifically what they did wrong and show them quickly how to do it right. This is especially easy in the case of the throw-in. Quickly demonstrate the proper form for the throw-in before moving on.
- Get down on their level. Taking a knee before addressing a call with a player will bring you down to their level and will prevent you from seeming intimidating to the player.
- When players do something right, CONGRATULATE THEM! This is a fun sport and referees are out there as teachers as well as arbiters of the game. Giving a quick comment to players from both teams on a good shot or a great throw-in will make the atmosphere fun for all!

## Foul Recognition

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One of the hardest concepts for referees to master is recognizing when a challenge for the ball is unfair. There are many angles to view a play from and it might be possible for a referee to see a foul from one position and not from another. Foul Recognition is the

bread and butter of refereeing and the better you become at it the better your officiating will be.

Fouls are generally caused during the challenge for the ball. While it is very rare to have a *perfectly* legal challenge for the ball, since players in the heat of the moment will commit trifling fouls all the time, there are some very basic elements of a “fair challenge” that should be present. Those elements are:

- The charge must be in the shoulder area.
- The arms must be close to the body.
- Both players must have at least one foot on the ground.
- The ball must be in playing distance of both players.
- It must be non-violent.

Referees should look for these elements when determining whether or not a challenge is fair. If one or more of these elements are missing then you may very well have a foul on your hands.

QUIZ TIME!!

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First the answer to last week’s quiz question.

To review, the question was:

When a penalty kick is being taken and after the referee has given the necessary signal, a team mate of the player identified to take the kick suddenly rushes forward and takes it instead. What action does the referee take if:

- 1) The ball leaves the field of play?
  - 2) The ball is pushed out by the goalkeeper?
  - 3) The ball is deflected by the goalkeeper, rebounds into play and the player who took the kick scores a goal?
- A) Indirect Free Kick for the defense
  - B) Goal Kick
  - C) Corner Kick
  - D) Goal if 3
  - E) Retake the Kick
  - F) None of the Above

The correct answer for all elements of this question (1, 2, and 3) is:

***E) Retake the Kick***

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick requires that the player taking the penalty kick is “properly identified”. If a player other than the one who was identified takes the kick you have an improper restart and the restart must be redone! You may also decide to caution the person who took the kick illegally for unsporting behavior.

Congrats go out to the following people:

Ed Flanagan  
Phil Good  
Dean Michelini

Nice work!

Now on to this week’s quiz.

A team is awarded an indirect free kick inside its own penalty area. The player taking the kick hits it against a team mate who is inside the penalty area and the ball enters the goal. What is the correct call?

- A) Goal
- B) Indirect Free Kick for the offense at the 6 yd line.
- C) Retake the Kick
- D) Corner Kick
- E) None of the above

Good luck and see you next week!