

MYSL Referee Notes
10/6/02

Well after an extended break, the referee notes are back for a bit!

As we pass through the mid-point of the Fall season I thought it would be appropriate to go over a few important points regarding this season and why we play it:

- It is an opportunity for newly promoted teams (U10 moving to U12 for example) to play for the first time in a less structured atmosphere
- It is a developmental experience for players and coaches alike. Standings are kept, but they absolutely have no bearing on anything.
- It is a time for referees who may not get to do very many full sided games in the spring to gain some experience.

Referees working in the Fall season should use this opportunity to work on areas of their game that may need improvement so that when the Spring comes you are well tuned up!

Dealing with difficult coaches and parents

Sometimes there will be people who forget about the most important aspects of the Fall season as listed above. These folks seem to believe that every season in the MYSL represents an opportunity to win another award and to advance to greater things. These folks tend to cause disruption in matches where none is necessary. As referees you are to be given the same level of respect in the Fall as you would expect to get in the Spring season. If you aren't getting that respect and your games are disrupted then, as in the Spring, do be sure to act! The MYSL has rather strict rules regarding the behavior of Coaches and Fans and these rules must be adhered to. If you are one of our young referees and you are just getting your first experiences on the big field remember that it's ok to be nervous in the face of people who are giving you trouble. You must, however, be sure to take action and to stop those who may be disrupting your game.

Here are a few points to remember when you're out there and dealing with these problems:

If the problem is a coach

If a coach is giving you trouble and is loudly dissenting your calls and making it hard for you to control the match you should:

1. Approach the coach in a quite and calm manner leaving a few feet of distance between you and the coach (close enough so you can talk quietly). Yes, you might be angry or even a little nervous doing this, but always try and be cool and collected. This will make the coach settle down when he sees how in control YOU are. Remember one thing....the control of the field is YOURS not the coach's. While the game is for the players ***you*** decide what is appropriate and

- what is not. A coach who is screaming and yelling his disagreements out onto the field at you is doing something that is inappropriate.
2. Try and hear what the coach has to say for a moment, let him/her vent a bit, then calmly and quietly inform the coach that you will try and watch for what he/she is concerned about but that further outbursts won't be tolerated.
 3. If after you have had a chance to talk to the coach he/she still does not settle down then you must verbally caution the coach. Inform the coach, quietly and calmly in a firm manner, that he/she is warned for misconduct and that any further outbursts ***may*** result in his or her dismissal from the game. Never say something like: "You say one more word and I'm gonna throw you out!" Because if the coach does say something else....you have to follow through! By saying you will do something you are boxed into having to do it. By saying you ***may*** do something you have left yourself options.
 4. If the dissent or belligerence continues then you have no choice, you must act to stop this coach from impacting the game. Dismiss the coach from the game by getting within earshot of the coach and gesture for him/her to leave the field. If the coach fails to leave the field, DON'T restart the game till he/she leaves. Seek help if you can. If no help is available then abandon the match. ***Try not to abandon the match, however, until you are convinced that you can't first dismiss the coach. We would prefer to try and play the game to completion, if possible.***

If the spectators are the problem

1. Approach the coach or coaches and ask them to settle the spectator(s) down. All coaches are responsible for the conduct of their spectators. DO NOT let them tell you otherwise. If they refuse to help you, caution (show no card) them.
2. If the spectator(s) won't settle down after the coach speaks with them then ask the coach to remove the person(s) from the playing field. Once again, if the coach refuses to help, caution (no card) him/her.
3. If the coach refuses to assist after being cautioned then you may dismiss the coach. If dismissal of the coach does not work then you may abandon the match.

While it might be hard for a young referee to stand up to an adult it must be done. Remember...you are out there working hard and you are one of the most powerful officials in sport. Soccer referees wield a tremendous amount of authority on the soccer pitch and if they use it they will be backed up by the league. Don't let difficult people intimidate you...you've always got the upper hand out there.

Hey Ref, Offside!

For referees who are just getting used to working full sided matches, nothing about the game can be as hard as judging the offside. As a single referee working on a large field you see the game from many different angles and perspectives. You may not always be in the best position to see precisely where the player in question was at the time of the kick. Remember Law 11 says:

“A player in an offside position is only penalized if, *at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team*, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play
- Interfering with an opponent
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position”

So, if you can't quite tell where a player is at the moment of the last touch or play by his or her teammate then your ability to judge the offside may be hampered. So, how might you help yourself when you are out there alone and trying to judge this most difficult event.

1. Keep up with the play as best you can. By being near the area of activity you will be in a better position to line up approximately with the second last defender. While you won't always get to be in exact line with the defender, you might get close enough to judge the offside.
2. Try and get wide and deep when moving with the play in the attacking third of the field. As you get closer to the penalty area you are in the area where passes to forwards may be tried to advance toward the goal. By being wide of the play you will have a view of all the players in the area of active play and you will be better able to see any offside players and all the defenders. If you are too close to the play you might actually miss a defender and call someone offside that really was on! (I know this because I've done it!)
3. As you advance up field take a quick glance ahead to see if there are any attackers in an offside position. Take this mental picture and try to remember it if a pass is made. You still need to judge the offside from the time the kick was taken, but if you know that you might have a problem you can accelerate to get into the best possible position ahead of time. Try to anticipate things before they happen as much as possible.
4. If you have a coach pulling “the trap” you might constantly hear him or her telling the players to “pull up”. Use the coach's communication with his/her players to your advantage to anticipate potential offside situations. You might need, in games like this, to run extra hard to get into position to see the offside event. Concentrate on the offside in these situations. Yes, it's possible that you can miss a foul at midfield, but in this situation players may forgive the missed foul. Players will not, however, forgive the missed offside that results in a goal!

If anyone has any other suggestions for how to best position for the offside in a single referee system send them along to myslref@attbi.com and they'll go into the next issue of the notes!!

In the news

Some significant changes were made to the Referee Administration rules of the MYSL at the October Board of Directors meeting. For more information on these changes, go to www.myslref.org and click on the link under the What's New? section for further details!

QUIZ TIME

Yes indeed boys and girls it's back! Our weekly referee quiz!

Back in June we asked this question:

When starting the game, what **MUST** the referee do to signal that the players may proceed?

- A) Nod his head
- B) Say "Start Play" to the players
- C) Blow the whistle
- D) A hand gesture toward the kicker
- E) Any of the above

The answer to this question was:

E) Any of the above

The USSF publication *Advice To Referees On The Laws Of The Game* (known here as USSF advice) in section 5.4 states:

“When starting or restarting the game, the referee may signal to both teams by using his whistle, a hand signal, a word or two, or a simple nod or other acknowledgment. Such a signal should be clearly understood by both teams.”

So no whistle is required to start the game....just a signal!

Everyone who responded to this question got it right!

For our next question we'll stay with the start of the game.....

Is it mandatory for the Referee to check with the goalkeepers (Keeper ready?) prior to blowing the whistle for the start of the game?

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Only if they are not looking like they are ready
- D) A and C
- E) What's a goalkeeper?

Well, until next week.....keep on calling 'em like you see 'em!