

## GC SOA General Membership Meeting 21 September 2003

CTO: 7:05pm

Announcements: none

Points of Order: next meeting in two weeks, 3 October 2003, usual place and time. I HIGHLY recommend attending the meetings, as we will change assignments based on attendance when we have a schedule to work out (this has happened the past two meetings)

Issues:

Offside: Griffin gave us a wonderful explanation of the mysteries of this call. Please review the rule and its components.

Notes from the secretary...

Lets talk about match recording –

FIRST every referee should keep some record of the match as it is happening. Showing up with nothing to write with or on is not excusable, as you are responsible for maintaining an appropriate kit before showing up, but if it happens the other referee is expected to be equally prepared and you can borrow pen and paper from them. If both of you are not so prepared, then find something to write on/with. Its first purpose is to back each other up, as I have worked matches before where one of us had a different score than the other, or one forgot to write down a yellow or red card. It's the same reason why BOTH of you should keep time.

SECOND each referee is required to send a complete match report to the assignor. It is evidence that you worked the match. Emailing a list of match times worked may pass if you suddenly have computer problems, but the problems occur when you forget to report who you worked with, or which teams played, or where they were played, and especially when two referees working the same match report different scores or reported they worked alone (by leaving of the simple fact of the other referee's name).

THIRD if the league has a question about a score or an ejected player, and the assignor does not have a complete report from you, and you didn't fill out all the info before throwing away the card you wrote on at the match, or you didn't even have a report because you relied on the other ref to do it, or you are too silly to go buy a ball point pen and a pack of 4x6 index cards, it makes us look bad and you even worse.

Understand how assigning and scheduling works – if you are unable to work any given day, you must notify the assignor, otherwise you may or may not be assigned games. It is your responsibility to check every schedule that is emailed out to the membership, verify what games you have been assigned, if any, and accept or decline by communicating with the assignor. You do NOT ignore

schedules on the basis of “I didn’t sign up” to do matches, you should assume that you may be scheduled, unless you have specifically told the assignor not to, and in that case you should check to make sure you were not assigned by mistake. There were a few instances of referees not showing up for their assigned matches due to this error in THEIR responsibility, and the result is a fine.

Remember that CYO rules dictate different restarts for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter for different divisions. Divisions 2 through 4 restart with alternating kickoffs (one team kicks off 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, the other 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, with teams changing sides at the half). Divisions 5 through senior restart with a throw-in to the team with possession at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and it does not specify where.

There have been some complaints from Corpus Christi parents about the first Saturday of games at Lourdes for the 5v5 league, where they were expecting calls to be made for various fouls, mostly handballs and pushing, with their comments as follows:

*“I would like to send a letter or email to the ref. association. The (young) refs did make any foul calls- not one time in either game. I'm not kidding. The girls were (equally) tripping, pushing, fouling, etc. as any typical third grade girl would do, and the refs did not blow the whistle even once. Neither did they say "play on" or do anything that would show that they recognized what just happened. I realize they are just young kids- probably without a lot of referee experience, but someone needs to tell them that they have to do more than keep score and time for us! As you know, allowing this to happen teaches the girls that the rough play is allowable, and there are no consequences for not keeping control of your body! Can we talk to the ref association? Do these refs "train" on the young kids, and the more experienced refs move up to the older teams?”*

I responded:

“Thank you for voicing your concerns. We take what we do seriously, and appreciate the opportunity to handle any problems that occur, and we will definitely bring this up at the next meeting. But I do want to share with you what goes on with the association.

Yes, the fall season is used to train new referees, but the matches are assigned on a senior/junior referee scheme, meaning that the match should have a senior level referee with experience to guide the junior official. I am going to assume this is in regard to 5v5 matches, since the attached email referred the "girls." We did something new and assigned two referees for the match, although it has only been assigned one in the past, in order to train the newer refs on this specific rule set and match play as it is very different than "full field" soccer. And we really have no other way of training refs other than getting them involved in match play. We do review the rules at the few meetings we can squeeze in before the season starts, but nothing is better than actual match experience, so the first few weeks of the season is always rocky in that regard. Also, games always get reassigned because of other referee commitments (tournaments, other leagues, etc.) and we do our best to assign games to qualified referees, and a lot of reassigning occurs during the first few weeks of the season.

Another thing we do talk about things that have happened in matches during the week and this is where your input will have great effect, because I will add the following topics to the discussion:

Advantage calls

Foul recognition (this I admit is very difficult to teach other than match experience, but we do have some videos we show)

To provide you and others with some information - the concerned parent mentioned that the teams were equally pushing, etc. This is a gray area in refereeing when two players go for the ball and if one uses arms, hands, etc to push the player away then it is an easy call, but if both players are going in with arms, elbows, hands up to the other player, it becomes difficult to call on one player vs. the other unless it is violent, which should result in someone, or both, getting a card (yellow or red). But if the parent is talking about one player pushing, then later in play another player pushing, then there should have been a call. And I agree, the ref should have indicated in some manner to play on, either by extending open hands forward, or more preferably, by yelling "play on," if in fact this is what was intended. However, we have to rely on the referees' judgment during an actual match, as there are several factors playing into a referee's call or no call that all of us involved in this discussion are not aware of.

Some general ideas about advantage-

If two players are challenging for the ball and are putting up arms and elbows to each other, advantage is generally given to the player or team that eventually gains possession, unless one player becomes violent or more aggressive.

If a player who has the ball is fouled and loses possession but a teammate regains possession, advantage is generally given.

If awarding the foul somehow penalizes the team awarded the free kick, such as losing field position, stopping a developing attack or a shot on goal, or allows the opponent to regain field position, then advantage is generally given.

Foul recognition, believe it or not, is the one skill a referee develops over time, and continues to evolve no matter how many years of experience a referee has, and it is usually a result of seeing what senior referees call as a foul. I myself find that every season I begin to recognize a specific foul better and make better calls, and I also continuously find weak areas and try to improve.

I just wanted to share that with you so that you have our perspective on both assigning games and referee judgments. We will certainly attempt to better our game, and the association expects this to occur just as a coach expects his players to develop during the season. If problems continue to occur, please let me know and we will continue to deal with it on our end."

*"That parent is right and so are you. They didn't call anything that I can remember. Jim was even begging them to "call that on us" when one of our Lady Cougars committed an apparent foul. Jim, Russ, and I were thinking that these young refs were new and a little shy about making calls, and they adopted a "let 'em play" approach. Of course, that doesn't work, as chaos could ensue and the girls don't learn to play by the rules. The referees have to understand that we expect a closely called game by the rules, and that we will be sportsmanlike as coaches in our handling of calls that go against us. We appreciate the refs--these volunteers are the guardians of rules and fairness."*

**I responded:**

"Without knowing all the facts and circumstances it is difficult to respond to a situation where parent/coach expectations of every foul called meets the referee who wants to "let them play." Personally I let the verbal and physical response of the players on the field dictate the style of calls I make rather than parents and coaches calling out from the sideline, but if I am approached by a parent or a coach at a break or before/after a match in a non-aggressive manner I respond in kind and am usually happy to answer any

questions, even those that may expose a weak area in my game. I have even gone so far as to apologies for mistakes or for having a bad day. Aggravated parents and coaches are generally ignored and I "run."

Also remember that new refs don't have the "thick skin" to prevent the complaints from parents and coaches from taking them out of the game, so if they make a mistake and everyone lets them know it, they are more apt to continue making the mistakes that aggravated you in the first place and dig themselves into a deeper hole and stop making calls altogether (could this possibly be what happened? We are all humans first after all...). I'm not saying to treat them with kid gloves, but try to switch places with them and imagine how you would react, especially on a small 5v5 field.

I will continue to pursue resolution on my end, and continue education efforts on both sides. Our intent, as an association, is to provide an appropriate venue for the game.

There is a terrific website where anyone interested in the game can post questions or search a database, [www.asktheref.com](http://www.asktheref.com) and I have found some things that may help.

<http://www.asktheref.com/action.lasso?-database=asktheref.fp3&-layout=main&-response=more.htm&-recid=38892&-search>

<http://www.asktheref.com/action.lasso?-database=asktheref.fp3&-layout=main&-response=more.htm&-recid=38533&-search>

<http://www.asktheref.com/action.lasso?-database=asktheref.fp3&-layout=main&-response=more.htm&-recid=38564&-search>

<http://www.asktheref.com/action.lasso?-database=asktheref.fp3&-layout=main&-response=more.htm&-recid=38421&-search>"

#### Further comments:

*"Thanks for pursuing this. I appreciate Mr. Oetken's view and experience, as well as, his dissertation on officiating and its difficulties. I've officiated since I was 12 years old (I won't tell you how long that is). That makes me a pain as a coach to other referees and that I am very aware. I also wanted to stay out of this and really intend to, but this was not a case of referee judgment as to who was pushing (or tripping or hands ball for that matter), it was not a question of advantage - verbalized or not. It was clearly a question of the referee holding the whistle, but not using it. There is no way that you can put 10 girls on a field for 2 straight games and not have one foul. These refs need to blow the whistle otherwise the girls will learn the wrong thing and it will get rough and potentially dangerous. These refs need to realize that their job is first and foremost safety of the players. The need to blow the whistle once, once they make that first call the rest will be easier."*

I am not certain if this is just parents complaining as they generally do, not fully understanding the game and its referee aspects, or of a more serious situation. I would not doubt the judgment of any referee on the field without being there

myself, so that issue is mute. But if there is anything to be learned here let's learn it and move on.

But let us review some interpretations anyway:

*A fair charge* does NOT involve use of arms, so when two players are challenging for the ball, the foul should be whistled once one player uses an arm illegally (examples are pushing away with hand or arm, raising an elbow, "stiff-arming") unless you play the advantage. If you call it back because of loss of advantage, award the first foul, even if it escalated to both players doing it.

*Handball* MUST be intentional – the rule states "deliberate use of hand"- and nowhere in the rule does it use "gaining an advantage" (a favorite argument of coaches). Interpret intent by hand/arm position, where contact was made, did ball hit hand or hand hit ball, was the player running or otherwise naturally moving the arm to balance or turn, did he really intend to play the ball with his foot/head/chest but misjudged/mis-hit and the ball struck the arm/hand...

*INDICATE advantage* given by raising both arms forward and yelling "play on" or "play" or "advantage." Remember if advantage is lost you can whistle the foul you played on and "bring it back."

Adjournment: approximately 8 pm

Board Members present:

Jaime Abastoflor

Ed Oetken

Signed Attendance:

Krishna Parsard

Tiffany Hanks

Nicole Jordan

Wyley Shreves

Eric Shreves

Dale Alidor

Griffin Shreves

Ray Dumas

Chris Dumas

Joe Williams

Nathan Grube

Brent Grube

Daniel Roppoli

Barret Dungan

Charles Johnston

Brandi Niolon

Faithfully Submitted 20 September 2003

Ed Oetken

GCSOA Secretary