

Subject: Youth Soccer Insider: And the Refs Who Do Care

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And the Refs Who Do Care

By Randy Vogt

Recently, I wrote about the [refs who don't care](#). They are the refs who do as little as humanly possible to survive on the soccer field that day.

But I'm a positive person so I would also like to write about the many refs who do care. While I can cite a few odious examples of the refs who don't care, I know many more refs who care. Like the refs who don't care, you can also find them at your local soccer field. The refs who care are also training by running in 30-degree weather or attending advanced referee clinics in other states. If you are up early enough on weekends, you might see them on the roads as they are traveling far for a game or off to a ref clinic.

Many of these refs have been spotted as having a future and they dream of refereeing MLS, the NWSL and international games. I respect them but I particularly respect the youth refs who are too old to advance to these levels but do all they can to be the best official they can be.

The refs who care contact their colleagues days before the game to touch base. They are at the field at least 30 minutes before kickoff for their first game of the day, arriving in a clean uniform and clean shoes plus they properly check the field and teams before the game. The refs who care spend hundreds of dollars every year for referee uniforms and equipment.

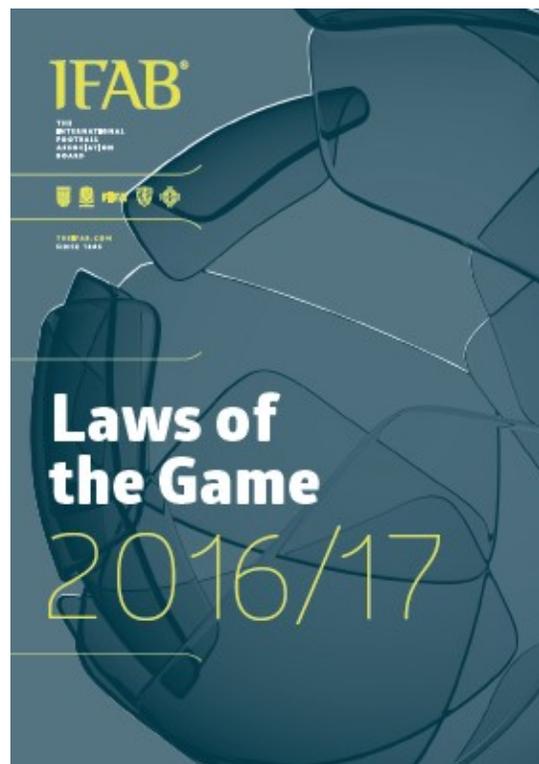
The refs who care are 20 yards within the ball for nearly the entire match, particularly when the ball is in the hot areas: the penalty areas and in front of the team benches. As assistant referee, these officials run with every ball down to the goal line.

They receive the choice assignments. A team made their first State Cup semifinal ever and as the experienced crew, a Who's Who of local officiating, was checking their passes before the game, the coach remarked to his players, "This is what happens



when you get to the State Cup semifinals. We get refs who are experienced and worked all the levels of the game instead of three guys off the street.”

The refs who care regularly read the rulebook and could give you a pretty good explanation of the subtleties of the offside rule.



For every defensive penal foul inside the penalty area, they whistle a penalty kick, no matter if it's the 5th minute or the 85th minute, no matter what they score is. The refs who care send off players for ejectionable fouls, no matter if it's the 5th minute or the 85th minute, no matter what the score is. Yes, they make mistakes but they always try their best to avoid them.

The refs who care officiate every game as if it's their most important assignment of the day, no matter if it's Division 1 or Division 6 North. They are very happy to be an assistant referee as well as fourth official in addition to being in the middle.

Are the refs who care universally popular? No, they are not as this coach might be annoyed that his or her team lost the game on a penalty kick that the ref who care whistled. Or that player might be annoyed that he or she was sent off for violent conduct when that player deliberately kicked an opponent off-the-ball. After all, the ref who did not care the previous week did not whistle any penalty kicks or give out any cards. Geez, that ref hardly did anything!

The problem is not with the ref who cares but with the ref who did not care the previous week who didn't enforce the rules so the team was surprised in having a ref who actually did.

(Randy Vogt has officiated over 9,000 games during the past three decades, from professional matches in front of thousands to 6-year-olds being cheered on by very enthusiastic parents. In his book [Preventive Officiating](#), he shares his wisdom gleaned from thousands of games and hundreds of clinics to help referees not only survive but thrive on the soccer field. You can visit the book's website at www.preventiveofficiating.com)

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